

PRESS RELEASE

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## **Second "beetle invasion" at German racetrack BILSTER BERG was not to be missed by Australian Wayne Penrose**

**16,427 kilometers bee-line separate Wayne Penrose's home in North Nowra, Australia, from racetrack BILSTER BERG, which is located in the middle of Germany, about 200 km to the east of Cologne. With its extraordinary and challenging topography, BILSTER BERG is definitely a highlight in Europe. But why did an Australian come to BILSTER BERG - with his own Volkswagen Beetle?**



BILSTER BERG Overview

Normally, Wayne Penrose is the owner of a VW repair workshop in North Nowra, on the East Coast of Australia, but last weekend the Australian was at BILSTER BERG for the second time. And this time he brought his Superbug Race Car "Phoenix", which he shipped halfway around the world to drive and exhibit at the Aircooled Beetle Race at BILSTER BERG.

His passion for air-cooled VW models began early on. In 1985, at the age of just 20, the Australian joined the local VW club - initially just as a hobby. Extremely enthusiastic and fond of these little cars, he soon opened his own VW repair business. 38 years later, Wayne Penrose Volkswagen Pty Ltd is the Australian market leader for air-cooled VW performance.

"I've been racing VWs in Australia with great success since 1988," says Penrose. "I've won several Australian hill climb championships in different race categories or finished on the podium. That shows

you the level of performance that air-cooled Volkswagens can achieve. We are now also Australia's most honored VW company with over 200 show & race awards."

Through his work with the air-cooled Beetles, he became aware of the Aircooled Race Weekend, which has been held annually in Germany since 2018. Here the probably fastest VW Beetles, buses and 4-cylinder air-cooled Porsches meet to race against each other in a friendly competition. In 2023, the Aircooled Race Weekend took place at the BILSTER BERG for the first time.

"My wife Jill and I attended the 6th Aircooled Race Weekend last year, flying to Germany from Australia, to check out this event before I made the commitment to ship my „Phoenix“ half way around the world to participate in this event. I was so impressed with the track and facilities at BILSTER BERG that I knew I had to return - but with my 'Phoenix'," explains Penrose euphorically.



Wayne Penrose drives Phoenix at BILSTER BERG

As the shipping of the VW Beetle was very expensive, Penrose decided to use the time before the 7th Aircooled Race Weekend for a racing trip in the UK and Europe and to take part in several rounds of the British Hillclimb Championship.

"I took part in the Harewood Speed Hillclimb on 11 and 12 May, the Gurston Down Speed Hillclimb on 25 and 26 May, and the Shelsley Walsh Speed Hillclimb on 1 and 2 June, before we took the Euro Tunnel from the UK to France to make our way to BILSTER BERG," says Wayne Penrose.

Over 500 enthusiastic people and 70 cool racing Beetles took to the challenging BILSTER BERG circuit on 8 and 9 June. The oldest Beetle on the track was from 1948, still with its original chassis.



VW Beetle from 1948

„The experience for myself and my wife Jill this year at BILSTER BERG was incredible, to say the least. The welcome that we received from the organizers of the event, Andreas and Sandra Ruppert, was overwhelming and a few tears were shed. Then the welcome from the BILSTER BERG team made us feel like royalty. Many of the German VW Family were telling me how they had goosebumps when Jill and I arrived with ‚Phoenix‘. An experience that will be cherished forever by all involved,“ says the VW enthusiast . „As a participant at BILSTER BERG this year, I felt even more connected to the German VW community and had the feeling of being a part of the German VW Family myself. I am very grateful that Ben, my workshop technician from my VW workshop in Australia with his wife Cindy, and my son Dean also travelled to Germany to the BILSTER BERG to experience this event and support me. Without this part of the WPVW team and their tuning skills, "Phoenix" would not be as fast as it is. Also I am very impressed with the track layout and would describe it as one of the best tracks I have ever driven on.“



Wayne Penrose and his Team with the VW Beetle "Phoenix"  
(fltr. Wayne Penrose, Jill Penrose, Dean Penrose, Ben Ford and Cindy Ford)

„I'm very sad to leave and can't wait to return again.“

According to the organizer, Andreas Ruppert, the ticket sales will be increased again in 2025 due to high demand. Thus, the 7th edition of the Aircooled Race Weekend was a complete success.

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Photos: [Pressemitteilung - Zweite „Käferinvasion“ am BILSTER BERG lässt sich auch der Australier Wayne Penrose nicht entgehen](#)

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## **About BILSTER BERG**

Built on an ammunition depot of the NATO Rhine Army in Bad Driburg, approximately 200 km west of Cologne, BILSTER BERG opened on June 1, 2013. After a planning period of 7 years, this was the first time in 80 years that a new track started operating in Germany. Formula 1 architect Hermann Tilke and German rally legend Walter Röhrl were significantly involved in the planning and construction phase. However, BILSTER BERG was not primarily designed for use as a racetrack. Car manufacturers often rent BILSTER BERG as a test and presentation track. Due to the white label principle of the track, it is also often used for product presentations and by film crews. Part of BILSTER BERG is also an Off-Road Course, a Clubhaus, the restaurant TURN ONE as well as a Dynamic Driving Area offering possibilities for wet-track testing for example. The project cost 34 million euros and was fully privately financed by 180 shareholders. All shareholders have the opportunity to drive on the track themselves on selected dates.

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