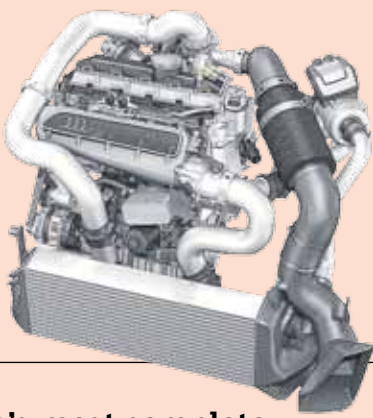


### Turbo lag...

and other problems of the distant past.

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### Planes and automobiles

A look at some upcoming area car shows.

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### A Mini sedan?

Is the diminutive BMW brand looking to add a four-door coupe?

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**How much is too much?**

"When I was in the Navy, machines leaked oil all the time..."

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## TEST DRIVE

# Refining the Line

## 2016 Volkswagen Beetle Convertible R-Line SEL

DAN LYONS | text and photos  
*Special to the Times Union*

Volkswagen revamps its Beetle lineup for 2016. The charismatic compact with the retro roots is now offered in two body styles (two-door hatchback coupe and convertible), two model tiers (1.8T and R-Line) and three trim levels (S, SE and SEL).

Convertible prices range from \$25,490 to \$36,050. My test drive this time was a top-ranging SEL Convertible. With zero additional options and an \$820 destination charge, it had an as-tested price of \$36,870.

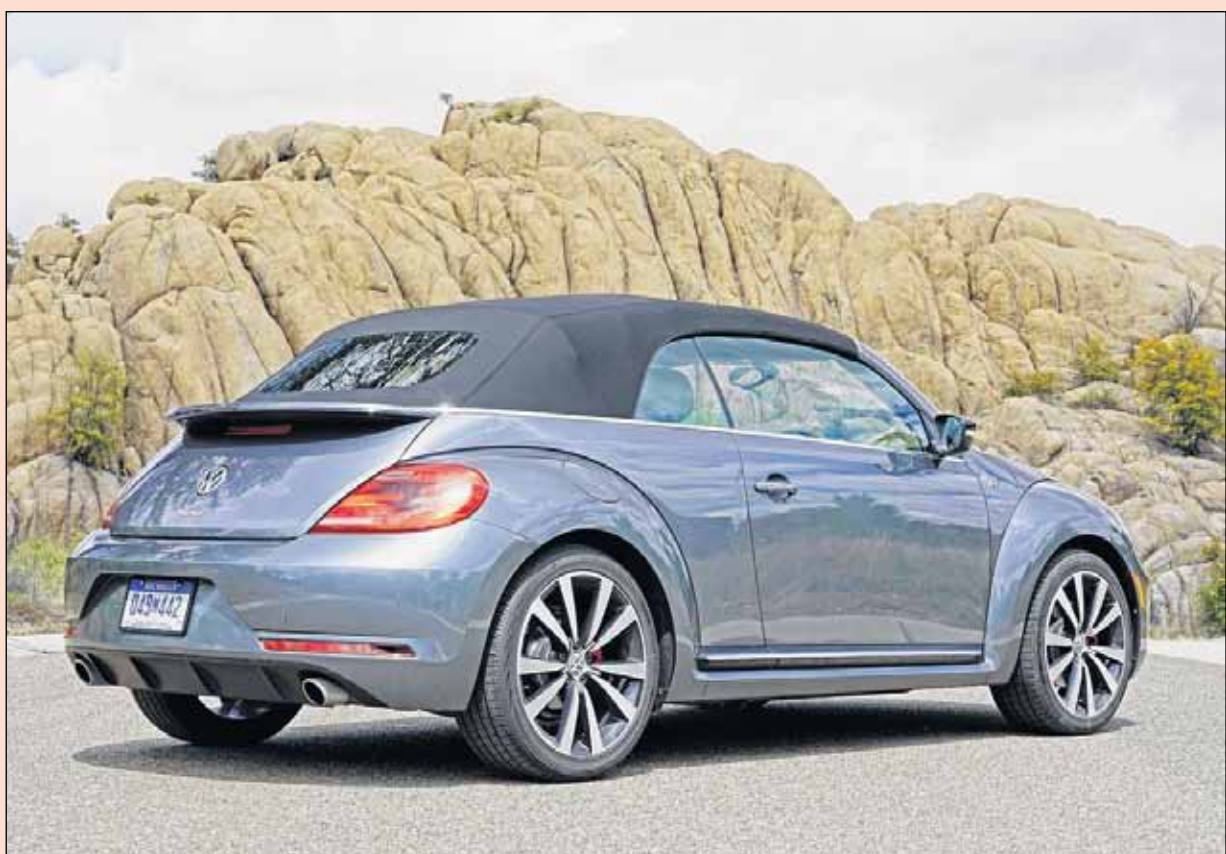
When this second generation of New Beetles launched in 2012, it was coupes only. The convertible

### 2016 Volkswagen Beetle Convertible R-Line SEL

MSRP: \$25,490 (base convertible) · As Tested: \$36,870

followed a year later. Both versions look much cooler than their predecessors, to my eyes. Dialing back the cute factor has broadened the car's appeal to a more gender neutral level. Like its closest competitors — Mini and Fiat 500 — the Beetle lends itself easily to personalization. VW is feeding the flames, rolling out special editions and a steady stream of new color choices. Five new hues will be added throughout the 2016 model year: Silk Blue, Habanero Orange, Dark Bronze, Sandstone Yellow and Stonewashed Blue.

Added technology is the model year headliner on the inside. VW debuts its new, MIB II infotainment system



2016 Volkswagen Beetle Convertible R-Line SEL. While ragtops are thought of as summer cars, the Beetle's combination of front-wheel-drive and electronic stability control adds confidence when dealing with winter conditions.

with USB connectivity in all models and trim levels. Base, "S" models get a 5-inch touchscreen interface. SE and SEL trims have a 6.3-inch touchscreen, along with Car-Net App-Connect technology, which supports the big three of connected car systems: Android Auto, Apple CarPlay and MirrorLink. The 6.3-inch display is a plus, in that a bigger screen is easier to see than a smaller one.

The only caveat is that the new screen fits flush with the dash surface, with no hood. So, when the top is down and the sun is out, it's subject to washout in strong light.

The Beetle Convertible feels fairly agile, given its compact foot print, and ride quality is good.

Drivers are greeted by a three round main dash display, viewed through a flat bottomed wheel. Top-level SELs are better trimmed (though there's lots of hard plastic afoot), and have a fine, Fender premium sound system, to bend your ears. Switchgear is straight forward, as in the trio of rheostats that control HVAC functions.

The front seats adjust to fit most any size. The usefulness of the Beetle's back seats is dependent on the height of those in the front seats. The taller the front seat occupants, the more likely it is that back seat leg room will disappear. The car's arched roofline leaves

*Continued on page 4*

## UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL.

Times Union Automotive section gives you auto news, Dan Lyons' car reviews, interesting car facts, advice, and just plain fun.

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