

Alfa wagon
The Stelvio stakes its own claim to the segment.
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Don't get stranded
Is your car ready for that summer road trip?
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Civic Si
Honda offers the same power, but more fun.
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TEST DRIVE

Golf, Simplified

2017 Volkswagen Golf TSI

DAN LYONS | text and photos
Special to the Times Union

Year to year changes in new cars are mostly a matter of “more.” Once a model makes its debut, the formula for the annual updates that follow is generally this: a mix of styling tweaks, expanded trims and new features.

Surprising it is, then, when the opposite occurs, and such is the case with the latest Volkswagen Golf. Now in the third year of its seventh generation, the 2017 Golf offers a streamlined trim walk and a consolidation of body styles. Last year's lineup of S, SE and SEL is now S and Wolfsburg — with a starting sticker price just an eye blink short of \$20,000. The other main difference between this year and the year before is the number



2017 Volkswagen Golf TSI
MSRP: \$19,895 (S) · As Tested: \$30,810

of doors. Where Golf was formerly offered in two- and four-door variants, two doors are no more. Golf came in for a full redesign in 2015. The latest gen models are longer (2.1 inches), lower (1.1 inches) and a skosh wider (.5 inch) than the previous versions. More slippery, too (the coefficient of drag dropped from 0.32 to 0.29). Golf's squared-off shape is passenger friendly, and there's adult-size room in both rows — even with the moon roof (standard on Wolfsburg).



VOLKSWAGEN HAS STREAMLINED both the design and lineup of body styles for the Golf TSI. Both S and Wolfsburg editions are available only in four-door versions, powered by a 1.8L TSI four-cylinder turbocharged engine.

Storage space also benefits from this generation's slightly larger footprint. Cargo capacity ranges from 22.8-52.7 cubic feet. Split, rear seatbacks fold and the load floor can be raised or lowered about 4 inches.

The cabin design is straight forward, in the manner typical of German cars. Controls are logically placed and easy to reach. The 6½-inch touchscreen is modestly sized, by current standards, but it follows the car's function-first theme nicely. The infotainment system is compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. Particularly when you opt for black cabin colors in base cars, the interior looks somewhat sedate. The beige colors fare better, and in any event,

Golf's squared-off shape is passenger friendly, and there's adult-size room in both rows.

fit and finish are of high quality. Stepping up to the Wolfsburg edition will cost you \$1,700, but it's a good value. Added here are: a moon roof, leatherette seating surfaces, keyless access with push button start, heated front seats, automatic headlights, rain-sensing windshield wipers, heated front washer nozzles, 16-inch aluminum rims, forward collision warning with emergency braking, blind spot monitoring with rear cross-traffic alert, and a set of Wolfsburg edition floor mats. With the reduction in

trim levels comes a (surprising) cutback in available technology. Formerly available features like the Fender sound system, 17-inch rims, adaptive cruise control,

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