

**Thomas Braun**

**MODELS | TYPES | HISTORY**



**PUMA**

Dear Jürgen Lafery!

You have been involved in our common hobby since the 1980s. The entire Puma community owes you a lot. In the last decades you have done more than any other Puma friend for the preservation of the vehicles. For that we are forever grateful to you. We dedicate the third edition of this book to you!

Thomas Braun

### About the author

Thomas Braun, born in 1968 in St. Pölten, studied prehistory and early history, numismatics and business administration. In addition to publications in the humanities and social sciences, he has also collaborated on studies in the IT field. For more than 20 years he has been working on air-cooled vehicles from Volkswagen. His publications include „Durchgeboxt“ - the first major encyclopedia on the subject of special vehicles based on Volkswagen technology.

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Source: Auto News (Paper), from 22. June 1973

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Window Regulator Mechanism on the GTE/GTS  
1.5 turns, a cable must be led downwards over the  
two deflection pulleys marked in red. Th



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## Source Reference

The following is to be said about the picture and source reference: In general, for the good of the reading flow, a scientific way of citing (short quotations within the text) is refrained from. Also the humanities way of citing in the form of footnotes would have disturbed the layout and distracted from the richness of forms of the vehicles. Therefore we decided to place the sources for the contents as well as the sources for the used graphical material at the end of the book. Many pictures were taken during visits to classic car events or Puma meetings. However, most of the images were found on websites that are cited as sources in the form of corresponding links. The websites were accessed between 2019 and 2020, but may be obsolete today, which does not limit their importance as a source. In the case of old photographs, it can be assumed that the original of an image in a private or an institutional archive has hopefully survived the passage of time, but we do not know exactly in individual cases, since private collectors of old photographs almost never provide insight into their collection. Sometimes clues and pictures of lost vehicles were found in discussion forums and social media such as facebook, where in some cases descendants of the contemporary witnesses report about the events of that time. All of these efforts pursue a common purpose: to use digital means to create an information offering that can grow organically every day and every hour. The advantage of digital media lies precisely here. A book is printed and perhaps republished in a revised version later. Digital media can be kept current much more easily.

If the source is a magazine, the title of the magazine, the issue and, if available, the title of the article are referenced.

If the source for content or imagery is a book, the author or publisher, the book title, and the page number are referenced. Wherever „with the kind assistance of ...“ is indicated, the person indicated is the source for the content or visual material.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the numerous supporters of the project. In the course of the last years many personal connections could be made. What they all have in common is their interest in the history of Puma do Brasil. The names are listed in alphabetical order. This does not imply any kind of evaluation. If someone misses his name, this is not done in bad faith. As I said, thanks are due to all friends and owners of Puma models, some of whom have provided valuable information in personal conversations during various events.

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## **About the Book**

This work is intended to be an overall appreciation of the Brazilian car brand „Puma“. Here in Europe, the Puma is largely unknown. Only a few classic car fans, mostly Beetle enthusiasts, know that the Puma is probably the world's most successful licence-production based on Volkswagen. This makes it all the more important to report as extensively as possible on the activities in Brazil, South Africa and Europe.

Together with the Puma friends from Germany, Brazil and South Africa, it was possible to collect, sort and document the stories around the Puma do Brasil as good as possible. Special thanks go to Felipe Nicoliello, Marcos Pasini as well as Pieter de Troit, who have contributed significantly to the creation of this book.

During the research, it very quikkly became apparent that the manufacturers of the Puma were skating on thin ice and were often so economically weak on their feet, that they felt primarily committed to body production and wasted no time in preserving their own company history.

The most fruitful sources on the subject are former employees and their descendants. After intensive research, it is now possible to paint a comprehensive picture of the history of the Puma brand. Although some uncertainties still remain. Even after years of research, no claim to completeness and accuracy can be made with all the material available.

Every reader is invited to express opinions, ask questions, suggest material and, if necessary, contribute suggestions for improvements. Periodically, revisions will be made to this work so that the story of Puma do Brasil is told as comprehensively and historically accurate as possible. We are only at the beginning of a long journey, which desperately needs witnesses and evidence for further details.

In some cases, material researched on the internet, i.e. usually in the public domain, is used in this work for historical-didactic purposes, in keeping with the spirit of historical preservation that guides this work. It is primarily about safeguarding historical records and disclosing them to the interested public.

### **Note in advance**

For a historian, every source is a valuable puzzle piece for the reconstruction of a possible historical reality. Due to their age, but also due to the photography technology available at the time, some of the pictures in this book are of low quality. However, these illustrations are of great importance in the context of reappraising the history of the special models and/or prototypes. Often, the images compiled are the only images of the vehicles known or available to date. If there are further findings and higher-quality illustrations of the manufacturers and vehicles discussed, any information would be a valuable addition to the source material.

St. Pölten, 2022

Thomas Braun

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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### **History in Time Lapse**

- 1964 Foundation of the Sociedade de Automóveis**
  - **Lumimari**
- 1965 Start of production of the GT Malzoni**
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- 1966 Foundation of Puma Veículos e Motores Ltda;**
  - **the Puma GT is presented at the Salão do Automóvel presented**
- 1967 DKW Malzoni wins the Design Award DKW**
  - **parts no longer available;**  
**Puma Veículos Motores start with VW technology**
- 1968 Puma GT 1500 is presented**
  -
- 1969 3 Puma GT 4R are raffled to readers of Quatro Rodas**
  - **The 300th Puma GT is produced**
- 1970 Puma GT is delivered with 1600 Karmann-Ghia engine delivered;**
  - **Puma GTE is presented in New York**
- 1971 GT Spyder (GTS) is launched on the market;**
  - **an agreement is reached with Heliogás for the production of 400 special special cabs for trucks;**  
**GTB P8 concept is introduced;**  
**The 1000th Puma is produced;**  
**Puma wins the I. Rally of the National Integration**
- 1972 Puma GTO is tested;**
  - **Puma GTE Rally is released**
- 1973 Puma production starts in South Africa;**
  - **Puma GTB is launched on the market;**  
**Puma GTS is launched;**

- 1974 Mini Puma is introduced;**
  - **Puma GTB production starts**
- 1975 Puma GTE & GTS of the time series is brought**
  - **launched on the market;**
  - Change of name to Puma Veículos e Motores S.A.**
- 1976 The VW Brasilia provides the basis for GTE &**
  - **GTS;**
  - Change of name to Puma Indústria de Veículos S.A.**
- 1978 GTB S2 is introduced; Malzoni GT Filho is**
  - **introduced**
- 1979 GTB S2 is introduced to the market;**
  - **Puma 4.T is introduced**
- 1980 -Puma GTI and GTC is launched;**
  - Export model is produced for America;**
  - P-016 is tested;**
  - Participation in the Trans Chaco Rally in Paraguay**
- 1981 - P-018 project is launched;**
  - GTB S2 Super Clar is introduced;**
  - Elétron truck is developed;**
  - Flooding in the factory**
- 1982 - P-018 is launched;**
  - P-016 is discontinued**
- 1983 - GTB S3 is developed but not launched anymore;**
  - P-016 is brought to the market readiness**
- 1983 - GTB S4 is developed but not brought to the market**
- 1984 - GTB S2 production is stopped: Production at**

**Av Presidente Wilson is terminated**

**1985 - P-018 production is stopped; Puma P-018 convertible production is stopped**

**1986 - Araucária S.A. takes over the production in Curitiba-PR**

**1987 - Araucária production is stopped after only 15 vehicles; Puma vehicles;**

**Alfa Metais takes over the production rights of Araucaria Veiculos;**

**AM-1 & AM-2 are launched;**

**Puma Alfassi prototypes are created**

**1988 - Alfa Metais buys the production rights of the Puma GTB AMV is launched**

**1989 - AM-3 & AM-4 are introduced to the market**

**1991 - GTB AMV production is stopped**

**1992 - Truck changes and is now called 914**

**1993 - AM-3 & AM-4 production is stopped**

**1994 - Truck CB 7900 and CD 7900 are brought to market brought to the market**

**1995 - Ford buys the trademark rights for Europe**

**1999 - Alfa Metais is closed down.**

**2019 - Puma Sportscars stops production in South Africa, Jack Wijker sells the factory and the inventory.**



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## Type Plates

Today, we generally speak of the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number). In the past, some things were not taken so precisely. For example, over time a kind of standard had to be established according to which a vehicle could be identified. Especially when the chassis is supplied or borrowed from a donor vehicle, it makes a big difference whether you build a classic car on the basis of a body or on the chassis. This can also have legal consequences.

The **Malzoni GT** and the **Puma GT DKW** adopt the initial letter „G“, which begins with one-thousand. So the first one was number G-1000. The engine number followed the chassis number.



**VEMAG Type Plate from 1967**



**DKW Puma GT 1000 Type Plate from 1967**

The **Puma GT** (VW), **GTE Spyder**, **GTE** and **GTS** until 1976 were based on a Karmann Ghia chassis. The chassis numbering was done via a plate bearing the numbers and riveted to the chassis directly behind the handbrake under the centre console or under the carpet. The chassis came from Volkswagen rolling, i.e. with all mechanical parts assembled.



**Chassis number behind the hand brake lever**

Volkswagen numbered the engine, the gearbox and the floor assembly. To complement this, a product number was added to the bonnets, doors and bodywork at the Puma factory. With the delivery of the first Puma GT 1500 produced on the chassis of the Karmann Ghia, a register in book form was started. Today, this register book is in the possession of Rubens Rossatto jr.

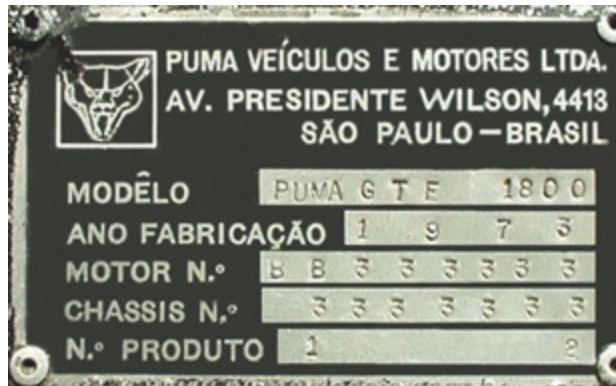


**Type plate from 1969 with Puma head without whiskers**

The product numbers began with 001 at the turn of the year. The chassis number always began with SP 143... as long as the Karmann Ghia supplied the chassis. The engine number followed the nomenclature given by Volkswagen. Each letter of the engine stands for a type, but that's another topic.

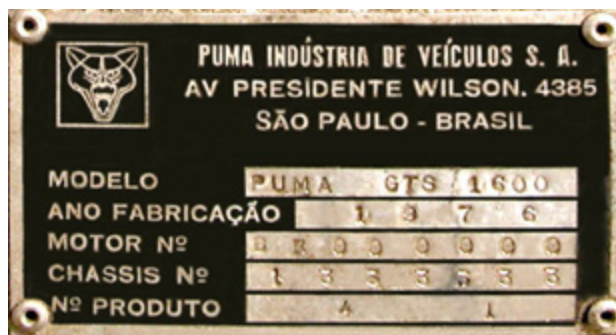


**On the type plate between 1970 and mid-1972, the Puma is shown with moustache hair. The engine number and chassis number were taken from Volkswagen, the product number identifies the body**



**On the type plate from the end of 1972, the Puma is shown without moustache hair**

At the end of 1975, the company form changed. The limited liability company became a private joint-stock company called PUMA VEÍCULOS E MOTORES S.A., which did not list any company shares on the stock exchange. In this year, the old nameplates were still attached to the vehicles until the reorganisation, then the new ones with „Puma Indústria de Veículos S.A. at Avenida Presidente Wilson 4385.



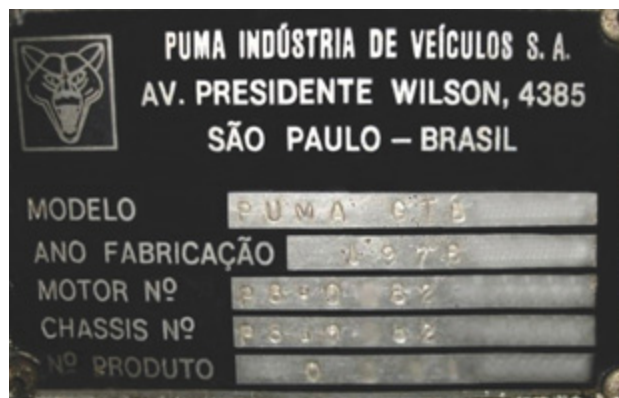
**Type plate of the Puma GTS first series of Puma Indústria de Veículos S.A.**

With the changeover to the VW Brasilia platform, the chassis number is preceded by the letter combination „SP“. The engine number gets a new acronym. The letter „B“ stands for Brasilia. The letter „A“ stands for the 1.6 litre Boxer engine with two Brosol carburettors (=Bromberger Solex).



**Type plate where the chassis number begins with „SP“ (São Paulo)**

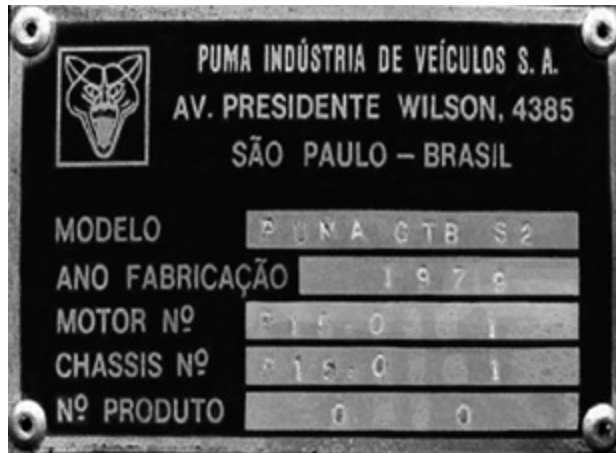
General Motors supplied the platform and the engine without a number. Thus, the chassis and the engine number could be assigned identically in the Puma factory. The type plate on the GTB is located to the left of the lock for the engine cover. The chassis number begins with „P8“. This acronym stands for the development project number from which the GTB originated. The first Puma GTB was marked P8 - 0001.



**Type plate of the Puma GTB from 1976**

On the second-generation Puma GTB, the chassis number and engine number start with „P15“, as the Puma GTB S2 is the result of the 15th development project. The first Puma GTB S2 thus received the identifier P15 - 0001.





**Type plate of the Puma GTB S2 from 1979**

The type plate of the Puma P-018 continues the tradition of the GTE or GTS. The engine code letters are taken from Volkswagen. The chassis number is preceded by the letter combination „SP“. The project number „P018“ is used in the model designation.



**Type plate of the Puma P018 from 1983**

The Puma GTB S3 and the Puma GTB S4 received the P15 designation for engine and chassis. Product numbers 940 to 942 are assigned to the S4.



**Type plate of the Puma GTB S4 from 1984**

After the closure of the Puma factory in 1984, some P-018s were completed by a factory manager in Lapa's shed in São Paulo in 1985 and even in 1986. More P018s were assembled in Capivari-SP, where Puma planned to build a factory. On these cars the chassis number starts with „W“ and some may have a different nomenclature as they are special editions. But they can never have the nomenclature „SP“, only the first 25 units assembled at President Wilson received this nomenclature. 51 to 55 Puma P-018s were produced. From the twenty-sixth onwards there is no entry in the factory book.



**Type plate of the Puma GTB S4 of 1984 with production number 942**

Some Puma sportscars were produced after the factory closed. Until 1986, for example, some Puma GTIs and GTCs

were still produced or sold on the premises of Puma Veiculos in Capivari.



**Type plate of one of the last Puma GTC from Capivari**

After Alfa Metais had bought up the bankruptcy estate of Puma, the Puma P018 became the AM-1 (coupé) or the AM-2 (convertible). The vehicles were delivered with the „old“ nameplates and the original designation of the predecessor model P-018.



**Type plate of the Puma AM-1 of 1988**

The Puma AMV 4.1 already received the nameplates from Araucaria.





**Type plate of Araucaria from 1988**

Puma vehicles intended for export were equipped with additional type plates, whether mounted on the C-pillar, in accordance with the legal situation prevailing in the country of destination.



**Supplementary plate for cars that were intended for export from 1981**

It is not until 1980 that a relatively important sticker is placed on the inside of the door. The indication of the optimum tyre pressure is especially important for sporty driving. The sticker was given to vehicles that were produced for the Brazilian market as well as to vehicles that were exported. The sticker is available in Portuguese and English. The Puma head is designed in the style of Alfa Metais.



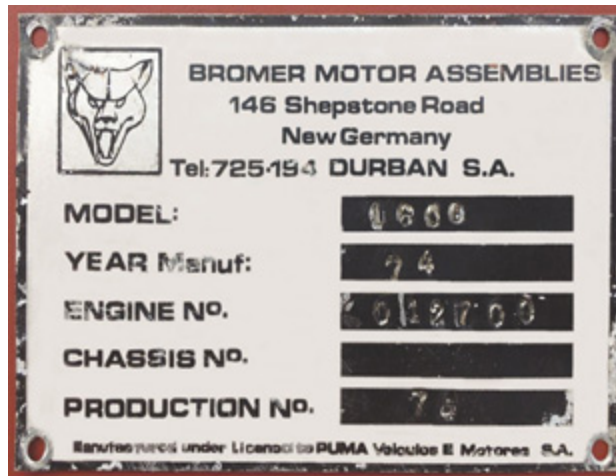
**Sticker indicating the recommended tyre pressure**

Puma owners who were hungry for more performance could order a performance upgrade from the Puma dealer Comercial MM in Sao Paulo. For this, mainly components of the PumaKit were used. This resulted in sports cars for the competition and so-called S-models, which were not recognisable as such from the outside. Pumas that had already been equipped with PumaKit components at the factory before delivery were given an „S“ in front of the engine capacity on the engine cover.



**Plate of Comercial MM**

In South Africa, Bromer Motor Assemblies initially assembled components supplied from Brazil with locally produced body parts. Later, at the insistence of the government, they switched largely to components from local producers.



**Type plate of Bromer Motor Assemblies from 1974**

After the bankruptcy of Bromer, Jack Wijker bought up the bankruptcy estate and founded Puma Marketing in 1976. The nameplates of the second generation Puma GTs started with body number 001. The chassis number was given the letters „PUM“ before the chassis number. Since second hand VW Beetle chassis were used for the South African Puma, the body number and chassis number are not identical.



**Type plate from Puma Marketing Pty Ltd. from 1976**

In 2010 Jack Wijker founded Puma Sports Cars pty ltd in Babelgehi /Waterkloof. Vehicles built between 2010 and

2019 were given a yellow nameplate. Body number and chassis number are identical on these vehicles. Most of the vehicles also received a so-called AAP number, which the police in South Africa could insist on.



**Type plate of Puma Marketing C.C.**

In the United States of America, the Puma vehicles exported as Puma kits received a special licence. An additional plate contains the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number).



**Type plate of US authorities**

## **Part Numbering**

If you want to produce 30 or more vehicles per month, you must also have a number of moulds available to do so. None of these moulds can be an identical copy of another mould. As a result, a vehicle has to consist of components that only make sense to each other. Since there was also an

obligation to make spare parts available to the market, a system of part numbers was developed.

In order to ensure that a bonnet, doors or front and rear panels would fit when needed, the part number attached to the vehicle in several places also had to be specified when ordering. In this way, it was always possible to ensure that only parts from the same mould family were used on a vehicle.

It seemed most logical to the people at the Puma factory to mark each Puma (product) with a production number in the factory register and to write down the mould from which this Puma came (e.g. mould 22). When ordering spare parts, only the corresponding mould had to be used so that, for example, a well-fitting bonnet could be delivered. This system also proved its worth during production. Well-fitting components led to a massive reduction in throughput times when assembling the vehicles at a very early stage.

All Puma vehicles have the product number on the type plate. As soon as the individual components were removed from the mould, it was marked with paint and a brush. It then took almost six months for the GRP parts to fully cure and for the preparation or subsequent assembly to be completed. Apparently, at least for a while, the factory had employed some people who were hired to paint on the numbering. Only shortly before painting were the metal plates with the part number riveted onto the parts.

## **Color Codes**

The first vehicles were still painted in colours from the colour palette of other car manufacturers such as General Motors, Volkswagen and Ford. At that time, there were metal

plates painted on one side for customers who had to decide on the colour of their future vehicle. On the back was the name of the colour and the colour code, which was passed on to the painter. The formulation of the paints changed over time.

In the meantime, a large part of the formulations of the Brazilian paints has been included in BASF's database. Over time, the Puma company modified the formulation of the paints taken over from other manufacturers. Today, we only know a part of the original recipes of the Puma colours. All other colours are approximations based on measurements on vehicles with original paint.