

The Everything-of-Everything VW Paint Code Bible, 1948–1979

Guide | 14 Oct 2026 | Limebug Guide

Limebug / The everything-of-everything series

Every Shade of Aircooled.

The classic Volkswagen paint code bible, 1948–1979. Look up factory L-codes, browse model-era colour options and compare approximate on-screen swatches for Beetles, Split Screen and Bay Window Transporters, and Type 3s.

VW paint colour catalogue

Browse by model, year, colour family or paint code. The catalogue displays all colours on initial load.

No colours match these filters.

Click any colour row to open the enlarged viewer with applications and notes.

Swatches are approximate digital representations, not factory paint chips or mixing formulas. Always verify production details before ordering paint.

Indexed models shown are based on the records included in this guide. Always verify production month, market and original VW literature before paint matching.

Understanding original VW paint codes

What does an L-code mean?

Many classic VW exterior colours use an L-prefixed paint code such as L41 Black, L313 Reed Green or L90D Pastel White. The name on its own is insufficient: names can vary with translation, market and date. Other short numeric or letter codes may refer to a paint option on a specific production or M-code plate, not a substitute universal formula.

Build date versus model year

Do not assume January–December dates are always model years. VW often switched to the next model year around August, with different conventions on early vehicles. Some factory charts list exact month and chassis-number cutovers. See the Wolfsburg West FAQ and relevant factory colour books for the precise transition.

Where to identify the original finish

Start with the original data plate, Transporter M-code plate, surviving paint stickers, period service documentation, and unrestored hidden panels. Type 2 records may identify a lower and upper two-tone paint combination separately. Confirmation from the VW birth-certificate/archive process or contemporary period documentation may help when plates are missing.

Restoration paint matching

Give a paint supplier the exact L-code, model and build month; ask for a current verified formula and sprayed sample. Compare a test panel in daylight and under artificial light. Decades of oxidation, repainting, varnish and differing paint systems mean a hex colour on a monitor cannot establish a factory-perfect match.

LIMEBUG