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2011 Volkswagen Sedan for U.S. – Official Info - Car News

Upcoming Passat-based VW designed for—and to be built in—the U.S.

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Despite an ongoing feud with Porsche over who actually owns the company, Volkswagen AG's management is promising the very latest engine technology and sleek new sheetmetal for a new car it is planning to build in the U.S. Based on the [Passat](#)'s architecture, but with its own unique interior and exterior looks, the new sedan will compete for the heart of the mid-size sedan market now ruled by the [Toyota Camry](#) and [Honda Accord](#). Although the current Passat architecture already underpins a stylish spinoff in the [2009 Passat CC](#), the new vehicle will reportedly *not* replace the Passat, leaving the family with three vehicles squeezed onto one platform.

Walter de'Silva, the chief of Volkswagen design, declined to show any drawings of the new vehicle to a group of Tennessee government officials visiting VW headquarters in Wolfsburg, Germany, but insisted the design of the new car is destined to stand out from the competition. "It's not boring," he said.

De'Silva, who was in charge at Audi when it rolled out the [Q7](#) in 2005 as well as the production [R8](#) and redesigned [TT](#) in 2006, confirmed he had "frozen" the final design of the new sedan. "The car is completely designed. I don't freeze a model that I don't feel passionate about," added de'Silva, who has also won awards for cars such as the elegant [Audi A6](#) and the [Lamborghini Murciélago](#) roadster. De'Silva indicated that the new American-built Volkswagen will incorporate the same design philosophy that animates the [2009 Volkswagen Golf](#), which has just gone on sale in Europe. "We gave the new Golf simple surfaces" he said. "It gives a clear look at what to expect from future Volkswagen models." The new Golf also has a new front-end and grille design that will carry over on future models, he said. "We need to be unique. We need to be consistent with VW's brand history and we need to communicate quality, solidity, simplicity, and sustainability," the latter of which is the car industry's new shorthand for responsible, eco-friendly vehicles.

For the powertrain, [VW](#) is clearly leaning toward a TDI diesel or a direct-injection gasoline engine, which the company has been steadily refining right alongside its new clean diesel engines. The direct-injection gasoline engine could be equipped with a new turbocharging system as well variable valve timing, while the automatic transmission would be ditched in favor of VW's computer-controlled, dual-clutch DSG. Earlier this year, Volkswagen won the "Golden Drop of Oil 2008" award for the new seven- speed DSG gearbox. The German Automobile Club awards the prize annually for technical developments which "reduce fuel consumption and safeguard the environment.

Tobias Loesche-ter Horst, the director of VW's advanced gasoline-engine development team,

noted that automatic transmissions generally don't have a very good reputation among European drivers. However, Volkswagen officials say that part of their plan for the new sedan is to move closer to the American mainstream. VW has been able to appeal to American enthusiasts, but the company wants to triple its sales in the U.S. by broadening its appeal among the more mainstream buyers who have made bestsellers of cars such as the Camry and Accord.

At the same time, Volkswagen wants to make sure the new car, which will be priced below the Passat, will retain much of its genuine German heart even if it's built in the U.S. "It's not our philosophy to develop a car for a particular market," says Stefani, who also added that VW does, however, pay close attention to the specific preferences of customers in key markets such as the U.S. and China.

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