

Framo Stromer (aus <http://heinkelscooter.blogspot.ch/2013/12/framo.html> entlehnt)

Rasmussen's first project at Framo was the Stromer - a highly aerodynamic streamlined three-wheeled budget vehicle. Built around a simple tube chassis, which was hollow and doubled as the exhaust. The car was front wheel drive, powered by a 200cc air-cooled DKW motorcycle engine, driving through a three speed gearbox with reverse. Although powered by a very small engine, the car was extremely light at only 300 kilograms unloaded, which allowed it to reach 60 KPH. The streamlined bodywork was constructed of wood covered with leatherette. It was priced at 1460 RM, which was slightly cheaper than a contemporary DKW.



The Framo Stromer on display at the 1933 Berlin Auto Show. The car was sleek and sporty, but the retention of a very conventional looking bonnet and false radiator screen used up valuable space in what was a very small car.

"This is the new Framo 2 seater personal vehicle - the Stromer!

The Stromer makes its way - whether the road is good or bad - in sunshine, rain and snow, up mountains and down valleys, is economical on fuel, undemanding maintenance and does not need garaging."

Being a three wheeler with a small capacity engine meant owners needed neither a drivers license or pay road tax - an important selling point - but unfortunately the tiny two-seater did not sell well, with only 360 cars sold in three years. Even the car's exceptional performance in the 1933 endurance trials failed to boost sales.

<http://heinkelscooter.blogspot.com.au/2014/02/framo-stromer.html>



In a 13 hour endurance trial on 2 June 1933 the Stromer covered some 8819 kilometres.

Stromers on the production line. A quick comparison with the production line photos from DKW's Zwickau factory (here-<http://heinkelscooter.blogspot.com.au/2011/01/dkw-germanys-wonder-car.html>) highlights Rasmussen's challenge at Framo - Framo simply wasn't big enough to challenge the established companies. In 1933 the Army reclaimed its barracks at Frankenberg, forcing Framo to relocate to new premises in Hainichen. The Army allowed Framo to move their production in stages over several years.

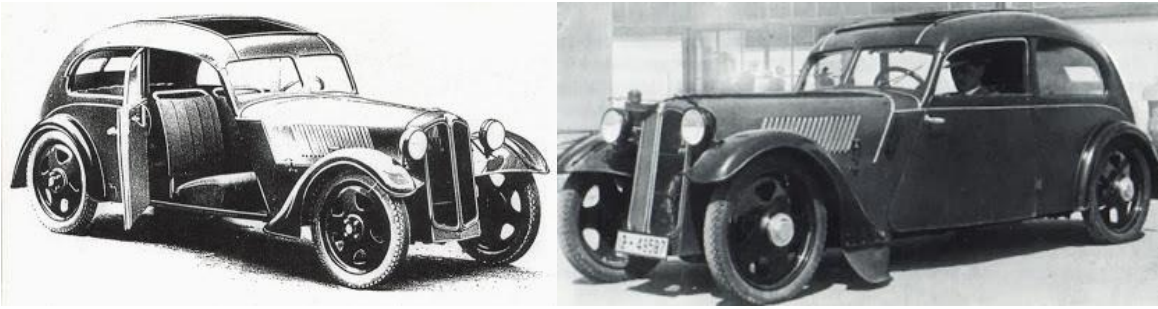


Rasmussen presents the Framo Piccolo to Adolf Hitler at the 1934 Berlin Auto Show. Note that to save costs the car had no left hand door, only a single door opening on the right. Hitler was not impressed, describing the car as "not half a grape." Nevertheless, the international press saw the Piccolo as the embodiment of Hitler's Volkswagen. As The Daily News, Perth, Western Australia reported, "Every German should have a car," declared the Chancellor (Herr Hitler) in opening the Berlin Motor Show, a feature of which was a four-seater Framo car costing 60 pounds.' 10 March 1934.

Unfortunately for the German auto industry Adolf Hitler was deadly serious about his 'volkswagen' project and for the avoidance of any doubt about his requirements, he spelt them out explicitly at the 1934 Berlin Auto Show. The new car was to be of modern steel construction, should seat four adults comfortably, have a top speed of 100 kilometres per hour, and would cost no more than a 1000RM. The German people would not make do with second-rate baby cars, three-wheelers, and motorcycle engined plywood and leather contraptions. Rasmussen's Piccolo, which was priced at 1295RM, was summarily dismissed from the running.

Framo Rebell

It was clear that the Piccolo was not the car that would make Framo's fortune and so work began on a totally new car project. But the Piccolo and Stromer designs were not simply abandoned. A Stromer inspired body was mounted on an extended Piccolo chassis and fitted with a larger motor. The new Rebell was a handsome, sporty, yet relatively low cost car. Unlike it's predecessors it was a conventional design with front wheel drive and Rasmussen's trademark two-stroke air cooled engine. Unfortunately this promising project did not progress past prototype stage.



Design study of the Rebell. As with other Framo vehicles (and contemporary DKWs) the bodywork was plywood covered with leatherette for weather protection. The seats were cloth on metal frame.

What could have been? The handsome Framo Rebell prototype driven by Jorge Rasmussen's son, Hans, now CEO of the company. Despite its promise, Framo was simply too small a company to build multiple vehicle lines at the same time, and cancelled the project. Besides, there was another promising project in the wings.

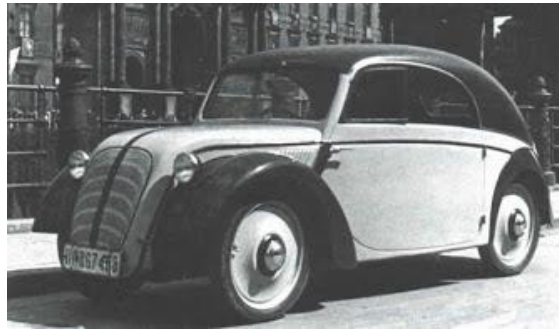


The Rebell outside Motor Kritik's office. Josef Ganz's Tatra 11 is in the background.

Framo Volkswagen

After the debacle at the 1934 Berlin Auto Show, Rasmussen was determined not to make the same mistake again and threw the company's best and brightest into the new 'volkswagen' project. Jorge's son, Hans, and chief engineer Fritz Goritz worked on a completely new design. Mounted on a narrow track, ladder chassis (Goritz patent) and powered by a 500cc 18 horsepower DKW two-cylinder two-stroke engine with water cooling, the car featured a handsome, modern looking wood and steel body.

The stakes were very high as Hitler's patience with the German automotive industry had finally run out - in spectacular fashion. In a fiery speech at the 1936 Berlin Auto Show Adolf Hitler raged against car industry for their inability deliver "the cheap car" and threatened to nationalise the entire industry. It was apparent to everyone that the volkswagen would be a nationalised project, which meant an enormous opportunity for the designer who could deliver the goods.



While his son and Goritz were working on the car, Jorge was working the political angle. He traveled to the United States with Ferdinand Porsche to study the US automotive industry and learn the lessons of mass production. Rasmussen was well aware that Porsche was working on his own 'volkswagen' project and had the Fuhrer's ear. He was also aware that Porsche's project was being held back by technical challenges with the rear engine layout. Rasmussen felt certain that if he could get his car presented first, he would be in with a chance. At the 1936 Berlin Auto Show, Rasmussen personally presented the car to Hitler. Hitler however showed no enthusiasm and would later openly declare his support for the Porsche project. It seems that Hitler had greater rapport with fellow Bohemian Porsche, than with the Danish Rasmussen. All plans and details of the Framo Volkswagen have since been lost. Only a handful of photographs of the single prototype remain.

Framo-Goritz Streamliner

Although the Framo volkswagen proved a failure Hans Rasmussen and Fritz Goritz continued experimenting on the design until 1938. Taking the narrow track chassis and fitting it with tandem seats and a torpedo shaped body to produce a totally space-age vehicle.



Hans and Jorge Rasmussen drive the Framo-Goritz streamliner chassis. Although space age in appearance it remained a budget car. The car's single cylinder, 200cc water cooled two-stroke engine is clearly visible in the photo.



Several versions of the car were built and presented to the Government for evaluation, much to their annoyance. The automobile association demonstrated the car's impracticality by assigning their tallest SS test driver to drive the car in a 12 hour endurance test. Needless to say the driver's report was less than complimentary. In 1938 the Schell Plan put a stop to all further passenger car development at Framo.