

In parallel with the production of the 2-stroke 309 cars EMW continued making its BMW derivatives, with production of the various body styles EMW 340/2 and of the 327/2 Cabriolet and 327/3 Coupe coming to an end in 1955.

Immediately following the start of production of the F9 / 309s, the Eisenacher management proceeded with the development of a successor model sedan, albeit without authorization from the responsible ministry in Berlin. This secret development led to some delicate political maneuvering by the plant management and the local Party



representative to obtain approval from Berlin to produce this car, named the Wartburg 311. Approval was eventually obtained, and in October 1955 production of the 311 commenced in Eisenach. With the introduction of the model EMW 311 a new company logo was adopted, reflecting the new corporate name VEB AUTOMOBILWERK EISENACH (VEB AWE). A number of variants of this logo, featuring a silhouette of Wartburg castle, remained the official emblem for cars produced in Eisenach until 1984 (at which time the name IFA Wartburg appeared as the final logo through April 10,

1991, the date of the cessation of automobile production in the former BMW plant).

The Wartburg 311, which continued to be produced in Eisenach through 1964, was offered in a large number of body variants.

During the course of this evidently very successful car's production run it underwent a number of significant up-grades, including a 1962 change to a larger (1,000 cc) engine with 45 HP (in place of the original 37 HP), still as a 3-cylinder, 2-stroke design. Because of the number of variants of the model 311, and the high demand for this car, some of the body styles were assembled in sister plants in Dresden, Meerane and Halle.

According to information from Eisenach, the Model 311 was actively promoted for export, not only to the Eastern Block countries, but also to Scandinavia, West Germany, Belgium, Holland, Colombia in South America and to the USA. Reportedly 1,215 Model 311 Wartburgs found their way to the U.S.

The production figures of this car for the period 1955 through 1964 were reported as shown in the next column.

Following the Wartburg 311 came the very short-lived Wartburg 312, of which a total of 36,287 cars were built between 1965 and 1967. This car was a transition solution, using the same drive train as the latest model 311, a modern chassis with independent trailing arm rear suspension and a slightly modified body. The 312 had to fill the time until the new Wartburg 353 was ready for production, which started in 1966.

During the first year of production, 1966, a total of 14,005 Wartburg 353s left the Eisenach factory; of these 6,854 were delivered to export markets, including large

### Total Number of Wartburg Types 311 and 313/1 produced

Year	Wartburg Type 311s built	Wartburg Type 313/1 Sport Coupes built
1955	162	
1956	14,223	
1957	23,197	88
1958	24,145	181
1959	28,955	65
1960	28,666	135
1961	30,232	
1962	26,209	
1963	28,980	
1964	32,592	
1965	20,651	
Total	258,011	469



Type	Model	Doors	Seats
Standard Sedans	311/0	4	4
Deluxe Sedan	311/1	4	4
Convertible	311/2	2	4
Coupe	311/3	2	2/2
Jeep	311/4	4	4
Camping Sedan	311/5	4	4
Sedan, right-hand steering	311/6	4	4
Delivery Van	311/7	2	2
Sedan with sun-roof	311/8	4	4
Station Wagon	311/9	3	4
Sports Car	313/1	2	2

numbers to The Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Finland, Norway, West Germany, Greece and Austria. – East Germans, i.e. citizens of the DDR, had to wait for between 12 and 17 years (yes, years, not weeks or months!) to take delivery of one of these cars. – Such were the economic circumstances in the Soviet occupied part of Germany in the 1960s!



Demand for the Wartburg 353 was high, despite a price which was exorbitant. In his book “100 Years Auto-production in Eisenach”, the author Michael Stück describes the price structure for the 353 as follows:

Manufacturing cost ex Eisenach in E-Mark	7,522	
Factory Margin	1,038	
Factory price ex-works Eisenach	8,560	100%
DDR government “Production Fee”	6,890	
Factory price including “Production Fee”	15,450	
IFA Trading Company mark-up	1,500	
Retail price to DDR citizens	16,950	198%

This same car was sold in West Germany in 1966 for DM 5,150. This price approximately corresponded to a conversion from E-Marks (DDR currency) to the D-Mark (BRD currency) at a “realistic” exchange rate (although as traveler from the West to the East one would only receive 1 E-Mark for each D-Mark at Checkpoint Charley!). As a matter of comparison, a similar sized 4-door sedan, e.g. an Opel Record C 1500 or a German Ford Taunus 17 M cost approximately DM 7,500 in 1966, and a Volkswagen 1600 TL (2-door) DM 6,700, and all of these cars had larger 4-stroke engines! – Suffice it to say that while the Wartburg 353 was very price competitive in West Germany (where the average annual gross income at that time was DM 4,800), for

East Germans the price of E-Mark 16,950 for this car was extremely high. Just over half of the 14,005 cars produced in 1966 were sold in the DDR (which, apart from the high domestic cost in the DDR reflected the export promotion by the East German government, to generate foreign currency income!). In West Germany that year a total of 144 of these Wartburgs were sold, reflecting the fact that the West German market was highly competitive with far more advanced designs of cars.

During the life of the production of the Wartburg 353 a number of attempts were made to change from the old 3-cylinder, 2-stroke engine to a 4-cylinder, 4-stroke engine; internally, at VEB AWE this change was seen as essential to improve the competitiveness of this car in export markets, where 2-stroke engines were no longer acceptable. However time and again the political authorities rejected this proposal, regardless of whether a suitable engine had been developed in house (1968 4I, 1,592 cc, 80 hp), or the adaptation of an engine from Skoda in then Czechoslovakia (1972 4I, 1,300 cc) was proposed, or finally use of a Renault engine (1978 4I, 1,289 cc, 54 hp) was considered. Thus the Wartburg 353 remained a 2-stroke powered car until 1988, following a political decision to use a 1,272 cc VW 4-stroke, 4-cylinder, 58 hp engine built in Karl Marx City (formerly Chemnitz) under license from Volkswagen. Production of this variant of the Wartburg 353, henceforth referred to as Wartburg 353 W, started on October 12, 1988.

In 1989 George H. W. Bush was in the White House in Washington, Mikhail Gorbachev was the head of the Soviet Union, Helmut Kohl was the Chancellor of West Germany and Erich Honecker was head of the government in East Germany. Under immense pressure from within to allow the people of East Germany to travel to the West, Honecker resigned on November 9, 1989, and the process toward reunification of the two Germanies reached a point of no return. On October 3, 1990 the parliaments of both East and West Germany ratified reunification.

While this momentous event was celebrated around the free world, it also very quickly led to the collapse of many industries in the former East Germany, as nei-



ther the products nor the manufacturing processes in the East could compete in the free market economies of the West.

Thus it came that the last Wartburg 353 left the production line in Eisenach on April 10, 1991, half a year after the reunification of Germany. This, according to official records from Eisenach, was automobile #1,837,708 produced in Eisenach since the start of car manufacture at this location by then Fahrzeugfabrik Eisenach in 1898!

Following the end of production at what had started as Fahrzeugfabrik Eisenach, then DIXI Werke, BMW, Awtowelo, EMW and finally VEB AWE, in 1991, G.M.’s German subsidiary Adam Opel built a new, DM 1 billion automobile assembly plant in the west end of Eisenach, which was officially dedicated on September 23, 1992 in the presence of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl; while in no way connected to the BMW roots in Eisenach, this beautiful city in the western part of Thuringia has thus been able to continue its more than 100 year tradition of manufacturing automobiles, now producing more than 150,000 new Opels per year since 1995.



Top left: Wartburg 353 as sedan and as “Tourist” station wagon. Top: Wartburg 353 in rally trim. Bottom: The last car to leave the Eisenach plant, that started as Fahrzeugfabrik Eisenach, was this Wartburg 353, #1,837,708 leaving the assemble line on April 10, 1991.

