



FUEL-INJECTED VOLKSWAGEN SCIROCCO

A special interim offering for the enthusiast driver

VW HAVE WE GOT a deal for you! That familiar sounding phrase has been with us at least since the days of P.T. Barnum and maybe since Shylock was demanding his pound of flesh in *The Merchant of Venice*. Somehow, it usually makes us a bit suspicious but Volkswagen recently did offer quite a deal on the Scirocco—a special model with brown metallic paint, "Scirocco" script along the rocker panels, velour carpeting and leatherette upholstery instead of the standard tartan plaid, vent wings, a rear wiper/washer, and most important, fuel injection. All of this for a mere couple hundred dollars more than the standard car.

The special Scirocco was a 1976½ model and previewed most of the significant changes coming on the 1977 cars, such as the fuel injection, improved interior trim, etc. Only the California models will have catalytic converters for 1977, and the bhp rating for that state will be 76 instead of 78 as with the 49-state cars. Another change for the new Sciroccos will be an oil temperature gauge replacing the voltmeter in the center console.

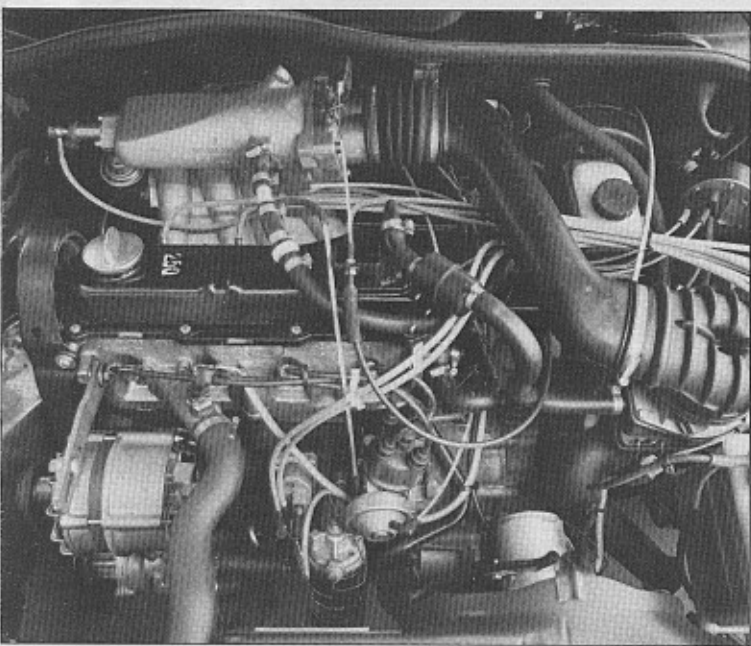
But, back to the special 1976½ car. In our last road test of a Scirocco (February 1975), we stated that, "it's exciting to look at, delightful to drive and technically fascinating." We not only stand by that statement with the newer model but would even upgrade it somewhat. First, nearly all of us on the R&T staff will

give high marks to a manufacturer who bucks the modern trend and puts in vent wings. Sure, single-piece front windows may be esthetically tasteful and so on, but when it comes to function, vent wings somehow work better than anything else. Why, then, is VW removing vent wings from the 1977 Scirocco?

The CIS fuel injection system, however, is purely positive; it boosts performance and it has cleared up the annoying surge problem we noted on the last Scirocco tested. The fuel-injected car turned in a 0-60 mph time of 12.2 sec compared to 12.7 sec for the 1975 car, and there was an even more dramatic improvement in the standing-start quarter-mile run: 74.0 mph at 18.5 sec vs 73.0 mph at 19.4 sec for the carbureted version which was rated some 6 bhp less than the FI car.

Improvement has also been made to the shift linkage and changing gears is now more precise in the Scirocco than in many other front-wheel-drive designs. We criticized the previous Scirocco gearbox for vagueness, especially in finding reverse, but we had no problem with the linkage in this interim model car.

The ride and handling characteristics are as precise as the shifting. The Scirocco is a firm-riding car but without being harsh and jerky, and the firm ride pays great dividends in handling traits. Fast and predictable fwd handling with minimal roll when cornering all add up to a car that is easy to drive with confidence



PHOTOS BY JOE RUSZ



at high speed. It understeers slightly but the line through a corner can be altered by backing off the throttle. As one tester noted, it's "a very entertaining car on twisty roads."

The interior appointments of the 1976½ Scirocco are noticeably improved over the first Scirocco we tested. There's still quite a bit of plastic but now it all fits quite well at least. The new front seats offer a greater variety of positions as the seat cushion height and angle are adjustable along with the usual fore-and-aft and seatback rake angle adjustments. Taller drivers may still find the Scirocco somewhat uncomfortable because with the seat cushion adjusted down to allow head room, there's a feeling of sitting in a hole.

We have a few other criticisms of the Scirocco. The car we tested had an annoying problem with hot and cold starts and a rough idle that never seemed to go away no matter how well warmed up the engine was, but our overall view is that it's a fine car that offers a great deal of motoring fun for the money. The 1977 version, minus the vent wings and the rear wiper, lists for \$5250, \$20 less than the 1976½ model sold for. In these inflationary times that's got to be a bargain. The Scirocco has a nimble, spirited feel about it that is almost unmatched by any other car in its price range. And it's that certain feeling of excitement at the wheel that separates the enthusiast from all the rest.



PRICE

List price, all POE.....\$5270
Price as tested.....\$5287

GENERAL

Curb weight, lb.....1980
Weight distribution (with driver),
front/rear, %.....61/39
Wheelbase, in.....94.5
Track, front/rear.....54.7/53.1
Length.....155.7
Width.....64.0
Height.....51.5
Fuel capacity, U.S. gal.....10.9

CHASSIS & BODY

Body/frame.....unit steel
Brake system.....9.4-in. discs front,
7.1 x 1.19-in. drums rear
Wheels.....cast alloy, 13 x 5J
Tires.....Continental TS771,
175/70SR-13
Steering type.....rack & pinion
Turns, lock-to-lock.....3.3
Suspension, front/rear: MacPherson
struts, lower A-arms, coil springs,
tube shocks/trailing arms inter-
connected by L-beam anti-roll
bar, coil springs, tube shocks

ENGINE & DRIVETRAIN

Type.....sohc inline 4
Bore x stroke, mm.....79.5 x 80.0
Displacement, cc/cu in.....1588/97.0
Compression ratio.....8.2:1
Bhp @ rpm, net.....76 @ 5500
Torque @ rpm, lb-ft.....83 @ 3000
Fuel requirement.....unleaded, 91-oct
Transmission.....4-sp manual
Gear ratios: 4th (0.97).....3.78:1
3rd (1.37).....5.34:1
2nd (1.94).....7.57:1
1st (3.45).....13.46:1
Final drive ratio.....3.90:1

CALCULATED DATA

Lb/bhp (test weight).....31.1
Mph/1000 rpm (4th gear).....17.1
Engine revs/mi (60 mph).....3500
R&T steering index.....1.06
Brake swept area, sq in./ton.....203

ROAD TEST RESULTS

ACCELERATION

Time to distance, sec:
0-100 ft.....4.1
0-500 ft.....10.1
0-1320 ft (¼ mi).....18.5
Speed at end of ¼ mi, mph.....74.0
Time to speed, sec:
0-30 mph.....3.9
0-50 mph.....8.7
0-60 mph.....12.2
0-80 mph.....22.6
0-100 mph.....33.5

SPEEDS IN GEARS

4th gear (6000 rpm).....102
3rd (6250).....78
2nd (6250).....55
1st (6250).....31

FUEL ECONOMY

Normal driving, mpg.....30.0

BRAKES

Minimum stopping distances, ft:
From 60 mph.....155
From 80 mph.....270
Control in panic stop.....very good
Pedal effort for 0.5g stop, lb.....42
Fade: percent increase in pedal
effort to maintain 0.5g deceleration
in 6 stops from 60 mph.....36
Overall brake rating.....very good

HANDLING

Speed on 100-ft radius, mph.....32.8
Lateral acceleration, g.....0.720
Speed thru 700-ft slalom, mph.....58.6

INTERIOR NOISE

All noise readings in dBA:
Constant 30 mph.....67
50 mph.....72
70 mph.....81

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph indicated is actually.....28.0
60 mph.....60.0
70 mph.....70.0

