

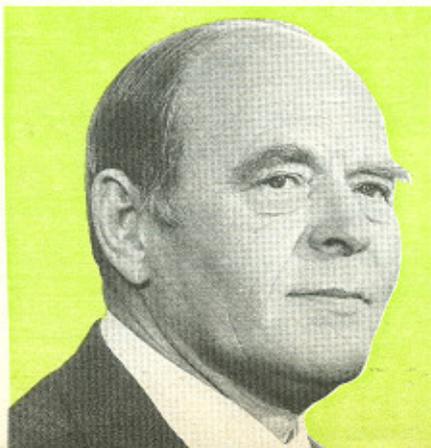
## Preview Test: Volkswagen Scirocco

BY D. O. COZZI

An example of what can be done with *proven* contemporary thinking

• "I drove it the other day. It's good. You can't tell it's a Volkswagen." The speaker: Giorgetto Giugiaro, Italian styling consultant to the German coachbuilding firm of Karmann—which will build the car slated to replace the Karmann Ghia for Volkswagen. The place: center stage at the Geneva automobile show where, along with Ford's Capri II across the aisle, the Volkswagen Scirocco made its

Rudolf Leiding: man for future seasons  
JULY 1974



debut.

Giugiaro had succinctly identified the essence of the new car: *You can't tell it's a Volkswagen.* The page has finally been irrevocably turned on 1937 by VW's chairman of the board of 3-year tenure, Rudolf Leiding. He has created a new thought process and resulting product line in a company once too firmly wedded to the past.

The Audi 80 (Fox) and its surrogate, the VW Passat (Dasher), were the first

results. The Scirocco continues the trend. And the Big One, the success to the Beetle is waiting in the wings. And if Giugiaro identified the absence of one trait (You can't tell it's a Volkswagen), the presence of another is equally vivid. The Scirocco is the epitome of the "Brand X" product planner/cost accountant philosophy, a technical "every-car"—with the notable exception of a unique rear suspension and flip styling—incorporating *proven* contemporary thinking. VW, once the most successful of the mavericks, is back in the fold.

That Leiding has created a valid compromise in the atmosphere that these competing philosophies create is apparent after a detailed look at the Scirocco.

It's a good if not outstanding car measured against any standard. Never mind that the overall layout and many of the internal dimensions were donated by the Fiat 128 Coupe. Or that the hatchback with sliding panel to hide the luggage is a strong point of the Renault 15/17 Coupe (and even showed up across the aisle at Geneva, in the Capri II). Or that the instrument panel seems slightly

BMW/Opel in form and material. The Scirocco retains "trigger" door handles . . . its Volkswagen identity is safe.

It also has Italian styling; the full-scale models were indeed built in Turin. Then a trip to the wind tunnel suggested some changes that were duly incorporated. Unfortunately, something was lost in the process: One of the defects of the Scirocco is its lack of rear-seat headroom. The Scirocco is a 2-seat vehicle, one with the advantages of a large luggage compartment certainly, but a 2-seat vehicle in the final analysis.



The steel unit body is built on a shortened floor pan of the future sedan—to be called "Golf" in Europe (pronounced as in "of Mexico," not as in Nicklaus). And of course, it reflects the safety statutes. The styling is high, wide and buxom and by juggling the accessories, four models will be offered.

The suspension systems are both conventional and different. At the front is the familiar coil-spring MacPherson system of the Audi, graced with genuine triangular control arms. In addition, the steering rack has been redesigned and

relocated; as a result, the geometry has changed. All of these modifications are aimed at sharpening the car's steering response . . . to give it a sports car flavor. The customer will be thankful.

At the rear, the Audi 80's rigid axle has been replaced by a novel trailing-arm independent suspension. A transverse T-section member connects the two trailing arms and, due to its rigidity, serves to locate them in two perpendicular planes. At the same time it is able to act as a rear swaybar. Being weak under torsional loading, the T-section does this auto-

vealed a car that reflects its outward appearance; its performance is within the tolerances of similar vehicles in present production. Performance levels are those of the Manta/Capri/128 Coupe: 18 second quarter-miles and 100 mph top speed. Fuel economy is touted as excellent—due to the wind tunnel refinements. And when driven within the limits of the law, the car does not willfully exhibit any vices. Absence of negative front-wheel-drive effects, good neutral cornering ability, respectable agility and good brakes are its strongest points. On

Its appeal is completely different from the Karmann-Ghia it will replace; so much so that its designer says you can't tell it's a Volkswagen

## VOLKSWAGEN SCIROCCO

Price as tested: N.A.

Options on test car: None

### ENGINE

Type: Four-in-line, water-cooled, cast-iron block, aluminum head, 5 main bearings

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Bore x stroke     | 3.02 x 3.16 in       |
| Displacement      | 89.9 cu in           |
| Compression ratio | 9.7 to one           |
| Carburetion       | 1 x 2-bbl Solex      |
| Power (SAE net)   | 75 bhp @ 5800 rpm    |
| Torque (SAE net)  | 81 lbs-ft @ 4000 rpm |

### DRIVE TRAIN

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Final drive ratio | 4.11 to one          |
| Transmission      | 4-speed, all-synchro |

### DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

|                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Wheelbase                | 95.0 in      |
| Track, F/R               | 55.0/53.0 in |
| Length                   | 153.0 in     |
| Width                    | 64.0 in      |
| Height                   | 52.0 in      |
| Curb weight              | 1720 lbs     |
| Weight distribution, F/R | 63.2/36.8%   |
| Fuel capacity            | 12.0 gal     |
| Oil capacity             | 4.0 qts      |
| Water capacity           | 6.0 qts      |

### SUSPENSION

|    |                                      |
|----|--------------------------------------|
| F: | Ind., MacPherson strut, coil springs |
| R: | Ind., trailing arm, coil springs     |

### STEERING

|                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Type               | rack and pinion |
| Turns lock-to-lock | 4.0             |
| Turning circle     | 30.0 ft         |

### BRAKES

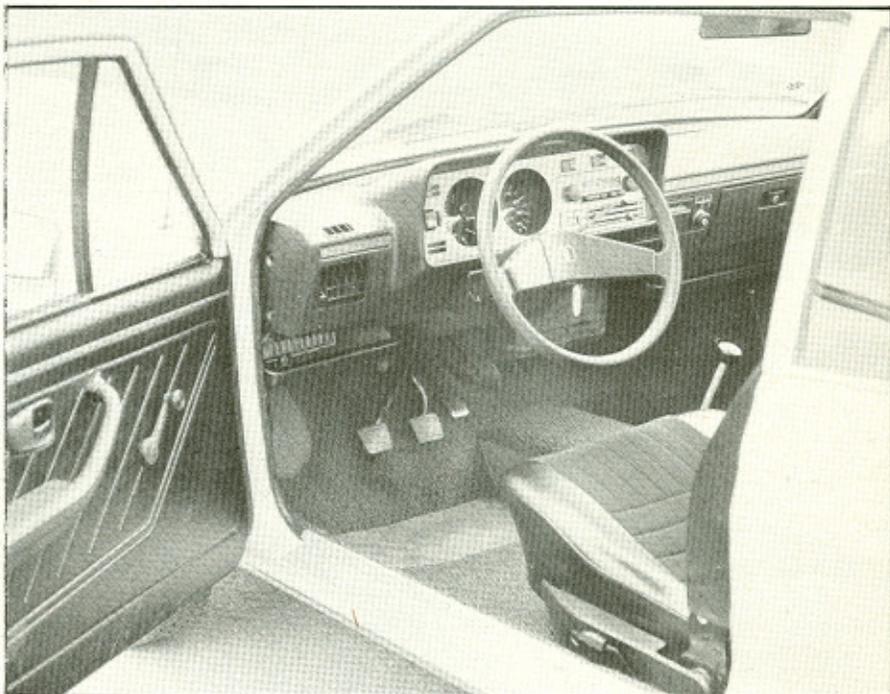
|    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| F: | solid disc, power assisted     |
| R: | cast iron drum, power assisted |

### WHEELS AND TIRES

|                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Wheel size         | 13 x 5.0-in           |
| Tire make and size | Uniroyal 175/70SR-13  |
| Tire type          | radial ply, tube type |

### PERFORMANCE

|                               |                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Standing 1/4 mile (estimated) | 17.5 sec @ 77.0 mph |
| Top speed                     | 110 mph             |



matically. Coil springs and shock absorbers between the trailing arms and the body support the weight of the automobile. The advantages of this concept of independent rear suspension are "accurate location of the rear wheels, a wide base for the rubber insulation bushings [allowing them to be soft, and therefore good insulators], compactness and manufacturing economy."

The power train presents innovation using existing parts. The Audi 80's engine (and a smaller version for the European market) is mounted transversely and coupled to a new transmission using many of the Audi's internal parts.

Transverse engine with front-wheel-drive is the latest fad among car makers. Its cost-saving elimination of the ring-and-pinion gears makes it particularly well-suited to the high-volume sedan which will soon be announced; the Scirocco gets it as a fringe benefit.

Driving the Scirocco in a mirthless world of speed limits and regimentation prevailing at the time of its debut re-

vealed a car that reflects its outward appearance; its performance is within the tolerances of similar vehicles in present production. Performance levels are those of the Manta/Capri/128 Coupe: 18 second quarter-miles and 100 mph top speed. Fuel economy is touted as excellent—due to the wind tunnel refinements. And when driven within the limits of the law, the car does not willfully exhibit any vices. Absence of negative front-wheel-drive effects, good neutral cornering ability, respectable agility and good brakes are its strongest points. On

the negative side, an uncooperative shifter reduces driving ease and pleasure considerably and a sustained engine noise level in the upper rpm range is surprising—both the passengers and any nearby pedestrians get to hear the Audi engine as the Scirocco is accelerated through the gears; the effect is not completely pleasant.

The one important difference between the Scirocco and its competition is a question of price. In Europe the Scirocco will have a price tag high enough (\$4000) to keep the competition smiling. But limited availability may match a price-limited demand; the maneuvers are clothed in deepest secrecy.

By the time it reaches the U.S. market, mandatory clean air equipment on the engine may dictate some additional increases, perhaps softened by an "American" trim package.

So the Karmann-Ghia is gone, replaced by an infinitely more important vehicle. Which, as a bonus, is also a much better vehicle.