



Super Scirocco

With injection, a smoother Scirocco

Performance Update



The practice of turning loose one model, usually the sportiest, of a line of cars several months early as a sort of bellwether for the forthcoming year is becoming more prevalent. The latest manufacturer to do this is Volkswagen. Without a great deal of fanfare, flourishes or ruffles of drums, VW released a mid-year number billed as the Super Scirocco.

The major difference between the regular '76 Scirocco and the new mid-year offering is the replacement of carburetion by Bosch CIS fuel injection on the otherwise identical engine. To ice the cake, they also added front vent windows, a wiper and washer for the rear hatchback and special trim consisting of bronze metallic paint, gold lettering and gold-colored alloy wheels.

The addition of the CIS injection provides 78 SAE net bhp at 5500 rpm and 88 lb/ft of torque at 3200 rpm in the 49-state versions and 2 less horses with 1 less lb torque in the California models. The carbureted '76 Scirocco, in comparison, has 71 bhp at 5600 revs. Weight being the same, these figures should add up to at least marginally better performance. Unfortunately for those to whom straight-line performance is of importance, they don't. Surprisingly, the new Super Scirocco is slower than the carbureted model to all speeds up to the quarter mile, being a full second and 3 mph slower over that distance.

This was a definite puzzle. Here we had more horsepower, better fuel distribution, the same weight and measurably less straight-line performance. Several phone calls and a search of the specifications provided only one answer: a minor change in

the 3rd gear ratio. The carbureted '76 carries a 3rd gear ratio of 1.37:1, while the new Super Scirocco carries a 1.29:1 ratio in that particular cog. It would seem that this would make little, if any, difference, especially in light of the added power and torque. But it does, at least in the 0-60 and standing-quarter exercises. On the 2nd to 3rd shift, which occurs at about 54 mph when you are pushing it hard, the rpm apparently drops below its best pulling power. Nobody, either here or at VW, had a better explanation, so it has to suffice as a reason. It still doesn't explain the increase in 0-30 times, which were also consistently a second higher than those of the carbureted version tested earlier (MT, Feb. 1976). The only logical explanation for this is that the carburetor, with its accelerator pump action, gives a needed shot of enrichment at low rpm that the injector doesn't provide. Also, our test car had only 700 miles on the clock. Better performance could be expected with more mileage.

This is not to say that the Super Scirocco doesn't get up and go; it does. The injection has other advantages that offset the minor drop in dragstrip-type performance. Starting cold or hot is no problem at all. Crack the throttle, turn the key and it's running clean. There is also no problem in driving away from a cold start, a welcome change from the behavior of a number of carbureted German cars of recent vintage. Since about 1973 the usual Solex carbureted German car, from VW through Opel to Audi, unless perfectly tuned, has been an example of frustration in cold start situations, taking forever to warm up. With the switch to injection on all of the cars mentioned, that problem is a thing of the past. The

new Scirocco is no exception. Warm-up, or at least smooth running, is immediate and you can drive away from an early morning start without a hitch, buck or miss. To anyone accustomed to the problems inherent with the carbureted versions, that factor alone is worth the price of admission.

Speaking of price, there is a break for the buyer of the Super Scirocco that isn't readily apparent when looking at the base figures for the standard and Super versions. The base price for the standard model is \$4995, and the base for the Super Scirocco is \$5270, a difference of \$275. However, a number of items such as alloy wheels, rear wiper, leatherette seats and other trim are standard on the Super Scirocco. A standard version optioned out like the Super model would actually cost

	'76 Scirocco	Super Scirocco
0-30 mph.....	3.4	4.3
0-60 mph.....	10.9	13.1
Quarter mile.....	17.6	18.5
MPH.....	76.9	74.2
Fuel economy		
73 mile loop.....	33.2	34.0

a couple of hundred dollars more, a point that explains why the Supers are moving off dealers' floors almost as soon as they appear.

On balance, the new Scirocco is just that much more car than the similarly equipped standard version, in spite of the slight loss in straight-line performance. It carries as standard all the desirable items that are extra cost on the regular '76 version, driveability is immeasurably enhanced and, as it wears in, there is a mileage bonus. While it might lose a drag race to a carbureted version, it very likely would pull away in a cruising situation due to its better driving manners. What it amounts to, simply, is a better Scirocco. ■