

# The Volkswagen Scirocco 1600TS

## All-round ability from a pleasing Guigiaro shape

RARELY HAS THERE been such a versatile machine for enthusiast needs as VW provide in the three-door Scirocco 1600TS. Capable of nearly 110 m.p.h. and with acceleration and handling that one would expect of such a sharply executed Guigiaro body style, the Scirocco can double up as quite a useful small estate. We proved the latter point in over 1,000 hectic miles that saw fuel consumption drop from a normal 28/30 m.p.g. down to 26 m.p.g. for hard Welsh mountain road work.

VW have sold the Scirocco in Britain since October 1974. Then it had a £2,143 price tag and the same basic water-cooled, f.w.d. engine as the Passat at 1,471 c.c. Since then the Golf and Passat have both emerged together with the Scirocco for 1976, with an enlarged 1,588 c.c. version of the s.o.h.c. unit. The extra 171 c.c. is obtained by increasing the bore exactly 3 mm. to 79.5 mm., bringing the motor to almost exactly square bore-stroke proportion as the stroke measures 80 mm. Originally the Scirocco was listed in this country with a low compression 70 b.h.p. tune and 9.7 to 1 c.r., 85 b.h.p. option.

For 1976 VW retained the lower-powered engine's 8.2 to 1 c.r., but on the bigger engine, with a twin-choke downdraught carburetter, this is enough to produce the same quoted peak horsepower as before, though at 5,600 r.p.m. instead of 5,800 r.p.m. Maximum torque is increased from 89 lb. ft. at 3,200 r.p.m. to 92 lb. ft., but moves further up the tachometer to 3,800 r.p.m.

I didn't really follow the logic in that a bigger engine, built to provide much the same performance on low-lead fuel and in the more emission conscious German environment, should feature a torque curve with the peak raised, but VW in Britain assure me that this is so. Another point to bear in mind on the engine front is that a fuel-injected model will be coming to Britain during 1976, but these injection engines will only be available to



*Practical but sporting lines contain opening rear section and aerodynamic aids to stability.*

special order in l.h.d. cars: sounds like the prelude to the long-awaited VW assault on all kinds of motor sport? In fact, the factory are known to be keenly interested in both saloon car racing and rallying—an apparently private German Scirocco is currently putting up some startling performances in 175 b.h.p. Group 2 guise within the European Touring Car Championship—but there seems to be a lack of communication between top management and executives to get the necessary homologation properly completed and the teams into European action.

Another important change for the 1976 season was adoption of a 20.8 to 1 steering ratio on the rack and pinion system, a reduction in effort at the steering wheel rim of 10% being the reward for the mass market, though enthusiastic wet weather clients may well join us in feeling that there's a case for quicker, not slower, steering. Also aimed at improving the car's public manners was reduction in brake pedal effort for a given load in the order of 20%, simply achieved by relocating the pivot point. An improvement in lock and average turning circle was also included in the steering changes.

Interior comfort of the externally similar seating with cloth panel inserts has also been attended to this year by replacing steel springs by foam rubber and the squabs have been lowered to provide more headroom: the bane of virtually every modern coupé. Attention has also been paid to boosting the circulation of fresh ventilation air at low speed as well; there's certainly no cause for complaint at all today. Externally the 1976 model differs in adopting an extremely efficient single blade wiper for the front, and in standardising a less useful, but still appreciated, rear screen wiper.

On the road our Scirocco was used by a very wide cross section of people, from a housewife to a top-ranked works driver, and the reactions were all enthusiastic. The Scirocco is easy to drive to the shops or to hustle along in very determined style, the Continental 175/70 SR tyres clinging on well over bumps or smooth tarmac at any speed of which the car is capable. Our works driver friend said, "no getting away from it, the Germans really do know what they're doing, it really makes you wonder how we'll compete." For myself, I liked having the car around because it was so useful and yet still interesting to drive.

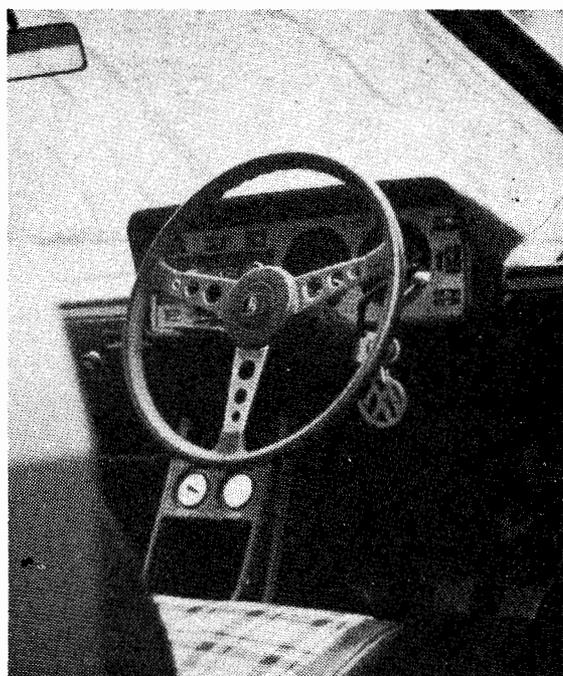
The strut and wishbone front suspension allied to what VW call a torsion beam rear axle

provides safe handling through the large steering wheel, but there certainly isn't the "feel" as to road condition that exists in the Lancia Beta Coupé. The mixed discs/drum braking system isn't extraordinary either, but like the car, things get done in a competent enough manner that reflects a vehicle built to sell for a competitive price.

It would be nice to say, after the sterling service that the car did all over Britain, that it never missed a beat in the best VW traditions. Nice, but untrue, for there were some nasty carburation flat spots that occasionally led to embarrassing stalls, even in skilled hands.

At £3,140 the Scirocco 1600TS has little opposition on the British market, for none can really match its design features and versatility at this price. The nearest rival we can think of would be the 1600 Lancia HPE, and that was £3,688 at the time of writing. However, the Scirocco comes with toughened glass as standard and replacing that, with the optional laminated and tinted glass, is a £111 extra. In fact the only other listed option is that of automatic transmission at £231.

Judging from our Scirocco the designers should get bonuses all round while the quality control and cost engineers should receive cautionary frowns in case they go too far and spoil that VW legend.—J.W.



*Large steering wheel dominates the neat interior with its comfortable plaid.*



*The versatile Scirocco made a useful service vehicle for J.W.'s RS2000 rally car.*