

A taste of restraint in an aftermarket bonanza



X1 Scirocco

by Kevin Smith

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HENRY THOMAS

If it's possible to be subtly high-profile—or blatantly sneaky—this full-house Scirocco is. Assembled by KS Marketing as a showcase of parts from aftermarketers the public relations firm represents, the slick coupe comes on strong without being wild. Both visually and functionally, it makes its point, yet stops short of being loud and obnoxious—just the way you'd like more people to be.

Setting off the Scirocco's appearance is a selection of aerodynamic and dress-up items from Kamei, available individually or as a package called the X1 kit. Coordinating front spoiler, side skirts, and rear skirt are formed in ABS plastic, as is a grille insert. Together these pieces give the body a purposeful, high-tech look; the front end, in particular, is transformed.

According to Kamei, the effect is more than just cosmetic; the chin spoiler purportedly reduces drag by over 3% and front lift by 50%, and the side skirts cut drag by 2% and rear lift by 5%.

Resilient polyurethane windsplits ride atop the front fenders. Theoretically, these can help channel air over the car, rather than around it, for a small reduction in lift, though at any street speed the effect is negligible. Lastly, multi-tone gray stick-on graphics highlight the car's beltline.

We rate the Scirocco's Kameized exterior as creeping toward overdone; it's saved from this extreme by its monochrome silver paint. (The Kamei plastic matches VW's original finish.) If it's a stealth car you're after, the side stripes and windsplits could stay on the shelf. But even with the complete Kamei package, this Scirocco does not make of itself the kind of rolling spectacle that arrests the attention of every law enforcement official in the country.

KS refers to this car as the X1 Scirocco, giving the Kamei add-ons center stage. But the project reaches beneath the skin as well. Inside, a pair of LS-model Recaro seats cradle driver and primary passenger in the familiar fashion: Firm cushions give fine long-haul comfort, and pronounced side bolsters afford excellent lateral support. With a matching upholstery kit for the rear bench seat, the Recaro conversion did wonders for the car, though it accounted for nearly a third of the total modification cost.

For the other major point of man-machine contact, the steering wheel, KS made the same fine choice Ferrari did in equip-

ping the new Quattrovalvole 308. Momo's Veloce wheel (350mm diameter) incorporates leather over firm padding, subtle finger indents on the rim's underside, nicely formed grips at 3 and 9 o'clock—in short, exactly what we want in taking hold of a performance car.

Everything we could want to listen to is also provided in the X1 Scirocco, compliments of Audiobahn stereo components. A model AB-390-ETX AM/FM/cassette headpiece, AB-100-EQ equalizer, and AB-100-WPB amplifier (100-watt) work through Art Audio full-range speakers and Polydax woofers to fill the cockpit with rich music.

Another sound device—not intended for entertainment but something you wouldn't want to miss—is the CAT auto alarm. It's a passive system, meaning you don't need to operate any switches or buttons to make it work. It arms itself automatically when you leave, then a delay (adjustable up to 30 sec) allows you time to enter and turn on the ignition key. If the ignition isn't activated, it sets off a 110-db siren. The unit wires into the car's interior light pin switches, and also has an adjustable motion detector.

While KS Marketing chose to leave the Scirocco's powertrain unmodified, the

Observers will know the car is different, but it doesn't broadcast pretensions




car's over-the-road performance profile is decidedly un-stock. All the major suspension pieces have been changed, to produce a vastly tauter feel. Bilstein gas-pressure dampers front and rear give tighter spring control that doesn't fade under heavy use. The springs they control are progressive-rate units from Suspension Techniques (Rosemead, California), which also supplied 7/8-in. anti-roll bars for both ends. Putting the action to the road are 205/60HR13 Pirelli P6 radials on 13x6 Momo Gemini wheels.

Ride harshness with this chassis setup is higher than we'd prefer for routine use, as it feeds jolts into the body structure sharply enough to bring out plentiful new squeaks and rattles. And the less compliant suspension does not allow the tires to follow a rough road surface as accurately, leading to a skating sensation when cornering on bad pavement. This has the effect of amplifying the car's basic understeer (which is a little too heavy anyway) and letting the nose plow to the outside of a turn more readily than it might with softer springing (or a bit less front roll resistance).

The bright side here is that the understeer makes the car safe and easy to fling about, and on smooth pavement (say, a test track or skidpad) the tires are able to generate some pretty serious traction. We recorded all of 0.85 g on our skidpad, solidly ahead of a stock Scirocco (0.78) and even a lick up on a Porsche 911SC (0.82). Plenty of steering effort combines with the car's stiff legs to give a heavy, solid feel, and the good grip on the car afforded by the Momo wheel and Recaro seats makes all speeds seem less dramatic than might otherwise be the case. In all, the X1 Scirocco is great fun to whip down a winding road, and you

almost don't mind that it has only Volkswagen's original 74 hp to propel it forward. You just adopt the technique used by Formula Vee and Alliance Cup racers: Conserve all possible speed through the corners because there won't be much power for the straights.

It's not a bad way to go for street running, though. You have a responsive chassis you can enjoy anytime, and meanwhile the engine remains smooth, quiet, econom-

ical, and even legal. Same thing with the car's visuals, really. If anyone looks, they'll know the car is different, but it doesn't broadcast pretensions. Though the tab for these modifications would run half again the Scirocco's \$10,000 base price (without counting labor), the investment produces a truly liveable custom performance car. KS Marketing's X1 Scirocco is just the thing for cutting a high profile in a private way. 

MODIFICATIONS MENU

Parts	Source	Price
X1 kit (front spoiler, side skirts, rear skirt, windsplits, decor tape)	Kamei Auto Extras 300 Montowese Ave. North Haven, CT 06473	\$683.00
Seats (front buckets plus rear upholstery kit)	Recaro USA 1152 Dominguez Carson, CA 90746	\$1770.00
Steering wheel	Momo West 17642 Armstrong Ave. Irvine, CA 92714	\$124.00
Road wheels	or Momo Accessories P.O. Box 358 Alexandria, VA 22313	\$532.00
Sound system	Audiobahn Electronics 20600 Gramercy Pl., Suite 203 Torrance, CA 90501	\$789.85
Alarm system	California Electronics Industries 5480 Katella Los Alamitos, CA 90720	\$169.95
Shock absorbers	Bilstein Corp. of America 11760 Sorrento Valley Rd. San Diego, CA 92121	\$396.00
Springs	Suspension Techniques 4204 Temple City Bl. Rosemead, CA 91770	\$190.00
Anti-roll bars		\$150.50
Tires	Pirelli (available locally)	\$748.00
	Total	\$5553.30