



New models from a kit car pioneer coming to the U.S.

Westfield Rocks



The Sport 2000S FW body (top and above) has this sporty tail with molded-in quad tail lights, spoiler and diffuser slot.

story & photos by Harold Pace

I aimed the screaming roadster down the wide airport runway and mashed the pedal to the floor. It didn't just accelerate, it fairly exploded down the track without the tire-squealing hysteria of most V-8-powered kit cars, but with an effortless violence more akin to a serious formula racing car. At the end of the straight was a fairly quick right-hander and I set up wide so I could accelerate all the way through into the next straight section. I threw out the anchor and the four-wheel discs hauled down my speed and left it planted on the ground for the turn-in phase of the corner. The car



The new SDV-M is based on Mazda MX-5 running gear. Note Miata wheels. This should be a very popular kit.

transitioned over and I was rocketing off toward the next turn, grinning like an idiot (how else?) and laughing to myself. This has to be the best job in the world, and the Westfield Sport 2000S has to be one of the fastest vehicles, point to point, in the world!

TRADITION

Westfield is one of the longest-lived of British kit car manufacturers, and with good reason. Their products are among the best designed and assembled kits on the market, so when I had the opportunity to test a few out on their home soil I hopped an airliner and headed over. I had no inkling that I would soon be driving one of



The Westfield XI is a beauty from any angle. Only an expert could tell it from an original (hint: original Lotus Elevens had 15" wheels).

the most outrageous street cars ever.

Westfield was started by classic car dealer Chris Smith in 1982, beginning with an MG-based replica of the Lotus Eleven racing car. This model, the Westfield XI, was built until 1989, then recently revived (look for an in-depth test in a future issue). Their next model, the Westfield Seven, was inspired by the popular Lotus 7, which has been cloned with varying degrees of authenticity by dozens of kit car manufacturers. Lotus 7-style kits have the same popularity in the UK as Cobra kits do in the U.S.

In the 1990s Westfield revised the Seven to become the Westfield SE, which was substantially upgraded both mechani-



The proven Ford Zetec engine--1600 (left) and 1800 (right) is readily available both in Europe and America. Ford racing even sells crate engines and hop-up parts for these mills.



The Miata engine fits right in and looks at home in the SDV-M model.

Dunnell 250-hp Duratec is a potent mill in lightweight Westie.

cally and stylistically. The SE series was usually powered by British Ford four-cylinder engines. Another popular engine was the 16-valve Vauxhall, a very hot, if expensive, twin-cam. Although the SE originally featured a live rear axle, a later version, the SEi, was offered with independent rear suspension. Both suspension versions are available today.

POTENT LINEUP

Today Westfield sells five basic models: the XI, SE/SEi series, Megabusa, SEiGHT and the wild new Sport 2000S. They also have a new American importer, Manik Technologies run by Tom McClintock, who will be bringing all of these great kits to our shores.

The SE and SEi series are based on a space-frame chassis MIG welded in jigs at the spacious Westfield factory near Birmingham, England. Unlike many kit car companies, Westfield prefers to make most of their components in-house rather than farming out production to subcontractors. They have also resisted going offshore, preferring to hire British craftsmen and provide local jobs. Westfield is a family-

run company, with Chris Smith and wife Eileen at the top and daughter Holly Bond and son Richard in charge of daily operations.

The SE/SEi series is light at around 1,100 pounds and engineered for maximum street performance. Although Westfield offers kit and turnkey models in England powered by various Ford, Rover and motorcycle engines, they will only be sold in America in kit form. McClintock is currently lining up assemblers and engine builders for American buyers.

There are two body styles available for all SE/SEi variations. The standard body has a simple hood that is removed from between the nose cone and firewall for engine service, and a squared-off tail. The new FW (Featherweight) body is lighter and has a one-piece tilt-up nose with a rounded, stylized tail. It features a small spoiler and a recess on the bottom for a diffuser. The FW body is optional on all models.

The most popular Westfield SE variations are powered by Ford Zetec and Duratec four-cylinder engines. The Mazda-derived Duratec has recently replaced the

Zetec in American Ford models, and is a potent power producer. However, the Zetec is a proven performer as well and is common on the used engine market. The same SE/SEi chassis is used for either engine, with an assortment of interchangeable engine and transmission mounts to match them up.

The Westfield Megabusa starts with an SEi chassis set up to accept a Suzuki Hayabusa motorcycle engine and its' 6-speed sequential gearbox. With 180 hp (but only 91 lb-ft of torque) and very little weight, the Megabusa makes a highly responsive track car but seems a bit high-strung and stressed for regular street use. At the other end of the spectrum is the Westfield SEiGHT, a beefed-up SEi packing a tuned Rover 3.9-liter alloy V-8 (as used in Land Rover models). This is a vastly improved version of the old B-O-P V-8 offered by GM in the early 1960s. The SEiGHT is very quick and makes a relaxed tourer, but gives up agility in search of the Torque God.

The hottest Westfield is the Sport 2000S, a much-modified version of the SEi series that will out-perform both bike



The SDV-M even uses the Miata instrument cluster and dash binnacle.

No-nonsense interior sports Stack racing instruments and leather-wrapped racing wheel.

and V-8 versions. Under the hood is a 250-hp two-liter aluminum-block Duratec breathed on by British tuning wizard Dunnell Engines. Dunnell has their own special engine management system to work with the fuel injection and ignition systems, and a dry-sump lubrication system is fitted to prevent oil starvation problems in fast turns. This potent mill is backed up with a six-speed sequential gearbox controlled by a conventional shift lever that is pushed forward for downshifts and pulled back to go up a gear at a time. With straight-cut dog gears, the clutch is not needed on upshifts, but helps coming down. While this gearbox is ideal for track events, a more conventional non-sequential gearbox would be more friendly on the street and Westfield is currently developing one that will take the power of the Dunnell engine.

To cope with the added power, the engine is mounted with sturdy aluminum plates on the front and back of the block that turn the engine into a stressed member of the chassis. Although the chassis outwardly resembles the standard SEi unit, it is both lighter and stronger. The front suspension is also slightly altered to take on the extra power, with Nitron adjustable

racing shocks and an adjustable anti-sway bar. The rear suspension is standard SEi, with an IRS setup based on a Ford Sierra differential with limited-slip. The brakes are four-pot AP discs front and two-pot in back (standard SEi practice is two-pot calipers all around, with 4-pot units optional). The wheels are Team Dynamics Ultra Light heat-treated racing wheels wearing 205/50 X 15" rubber.

Inside the Sport 2000S is fitted with racing bucket seats and a competition harness system, and the racing steering wheel falls right to hand. The seats have been lowered by two inches from the standard SEi location for improved seating position and a lower center of gravity. Stack ST500 racing gauges monitor engine functions and feature sequential shift lights, lap timing and a speedometer. A roll bar is standard equipment and an FIA-legal racing cage is optional.

TRACK DAY

So how does the Sport 2000S work on the track? The answer is very, very well, especially considering it can also be driven on the street. The Westfield crew trailered one up to Bruntingthorpe Proving Center, an industry test track outside of

Coventry. By the time I arrived the Westie was already warmed up and I was ready to have a go.

After a few familiarization laps I got down to business. Bruntingthorpe is a former bomber base with miles and miles of wide runways and sweeping ess bends to connect them into various track combinations. With nothing solid to run into the track encourages aggressive behavior, and the 2000S was ready and willing to accommodate. Soon I was blazing down the straights, running it up through the gears (the car I tested had right-hand-drive, but American Westies will steer from the left) then hauling it back down with the potent brakes. The muscular engine never missed a beat and I have been told Westfield has seen zero-to-sixty times of 3.3 seconds with this combination. This is over a half-second faster than a new Z06 Corvette and nearly a second faster than a Viper SRT10 coupe! Top speed is close to 140 mph, but with your head sticking out into the airstream it feels like you're breaking 200!

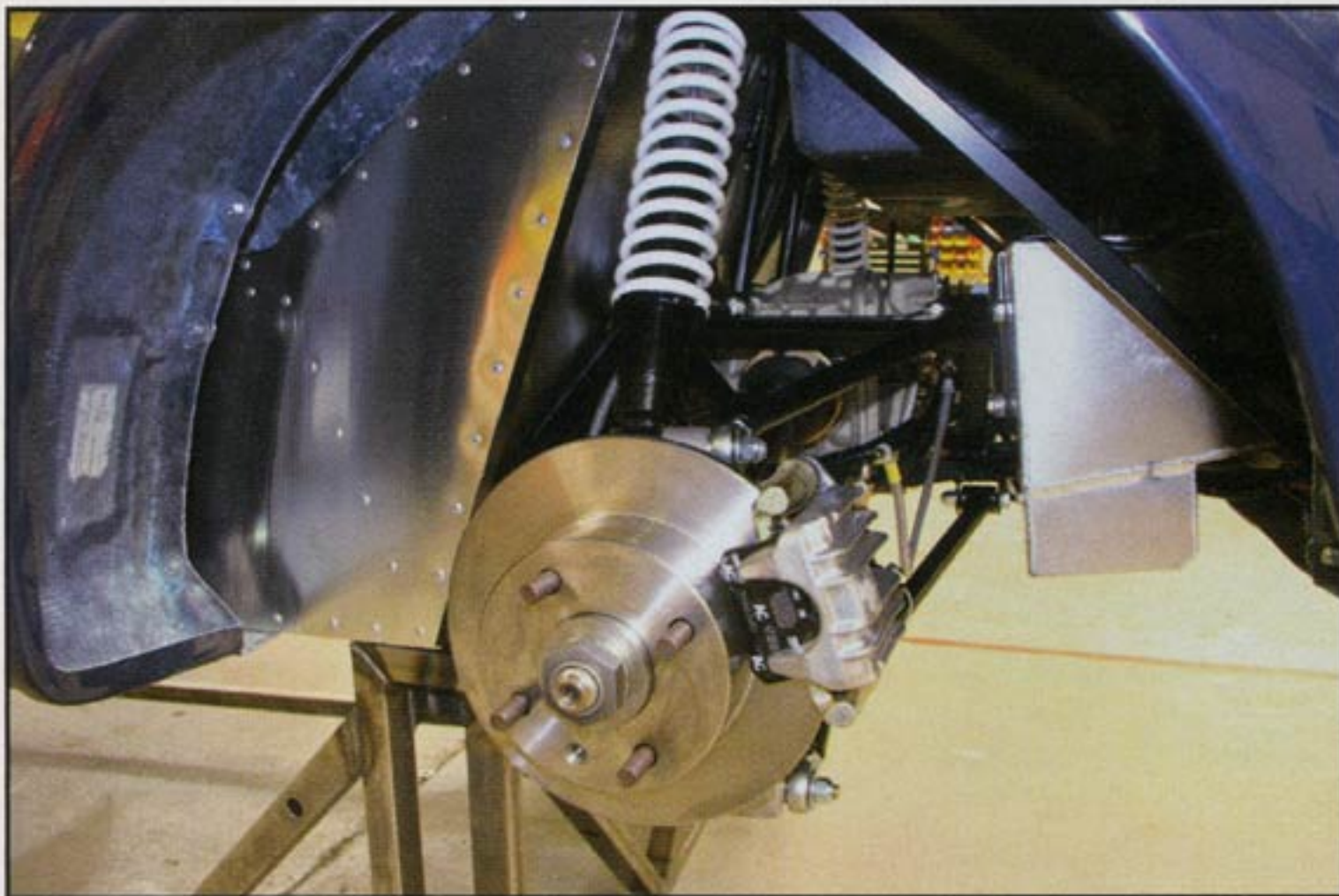
The Sport 2000S is a serious supercar, and at \$29,990 in kit form (less engine and gearbox) it isn't cheap. For around \$21,990 a Westfield SEi set up for a milder (135 to 200 hp) Zetec or Duratec



The chassis are welded up in these jigs for precision alignment.



Turnkey cars are paneled up in aluminum. The rivet holes are laser-cut so replacement panels can be attached directly to existing holes.



The SEi rear suspension has a Ford Sierra differential and coil-over adjustable shocks.



Turnkey cars are assembled in the factory to buyer specs. Americans will have to do this themselves or pay to have it done locally.



Kits awaiting shipment headed by a Westfield XI on the right.



makes better economic sense and is still a ton of fun to drive. The Megabusa sells for \$19,990, while the SEiGHT retails for \$21,990 in kit form. Manik will also be selling turnkey-minus kits that are assembled at the Westfield factory.

THE JAPANESE CONNECTION

The latest news from Westfield is the SDV-M, a special SEi variation configured as a single-donor kit utilizing the running gear from a 1990-1993 Mazda Miata. The engine, gearbox, brakes, hubs, instruments and rear suspension are all integrated into the proven SEi chassis structure. The early

Miata wheels even resemble the famous Minilite mags so popular on older British iron. I took the prototype for its first drive and the Westfield/Miata combination certainly seemed to be a match made in heaven (which is what Great Britain is to hard-core racing enthusiasts). Just imagine a Miata with half the weight and twice the performance...how much fun can you stand? At \$13,499 the SDV-M (it could really use a simpler, sexier name) is great value for a car that can be completed with the purchase of a \$1,500 to \$3,500 Miata.

The Smith family and the entire team at Westfield can be justifiably proud of

their efforts. The Sport 2000S is a world-class performer, the SE/SEi models are practical kits anyone can build, the SEiGHT is just about the lightest package you can wrap around a V-8 and the SDV-M promises to bring kit car building to rice rocket fans. Welcome back, Westfield!

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