

The Canadian Champion

WHEELS

SUPPLEMENT TO THE CANADIAN CHAMPION FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2008

Hyundai is 'in tune' with the tuner market

By NEIL MOORE

Metroland Media Group

I like tuner cars – when they're done in good taste. And no, unlike 'jumbo shrimp,' 'plastic glasses' and 'rolling stop,' a tasteful tuner is no oxymoron.

What I look for are body kits that flow naturally into the contours of the base vehicle – and spoilers that don't spoil the look. Wheels and tires that perform, without looking too radical. Modifications that don't look tacked on, but appear organic to the car underneath.

No less care should be taken under the skin, as engine upgrades, exhaust kits and suspension systems are chosen to provide response and handling that far surpass any stock version.

Alas, there are still those who bolt on non-functional hood scoops, multi-level aluminum spoilers and loud coffee-can exhaust systems, not to mention decking the car out in neon and LED lights from bumper to bumper.

Fortunately, Hyundai has taken the higher ground.

Back in 2007, the company initiated a performance parts program to give Hyundai owners a dealer-backed way to pump up their ride in terms of performance and style.

To showcase the program, Hyundai created their own tuner Accent by hand picking an array of performance parts and installing them on a 2008 limited-edition SR trim level. The result was a 'one-off' dubbed the SR-X, and I recently spent a week behind the wheel.

I won't reach for the obvious cliché and state that the SR-X looks like an Accent on steroids, but will admit that it wears a certain 'cool factor' you won't find on the fami-

ly-friendly base hatchback.

How did it go from grocery getter to 'go getter'? Let's start with the addition of custom body-colour front and rear fascia, side skirts and wheel flares over 17-inch alloys and high performance tires. And at the rear, a second spoiler was

bobbed rear end, not to mention a custom, two-tone charcoal on white paint job (complemented by tinted side windows) and you've built a car that exudes energy and youth, without being over the top.

Under the skin, the Accent received Eibach lowering springs

of body roll in the corners.

With its five-speed manual transmission – aided by the air intake and exhaust – the SRX enjoys a surprisingly quick throttle response, noticeably more than the stock automatic Accent I recently drove.



Custom body-colour front and rear fascia, side skirts and wheel flares work with the Accent 3-door's original contours to create the sporty SR-X. The SR-X's short, bobbed rear sports two spoilers and a chrome exhaust tip.



added along with a dual-outlet stainless steel exhaust tip.

The body kit visually lowers the SR-X, giving this Accent a very four-square, ground-hugging stance. And I love the 215/45/17 Falken Azenis low profile tires that wrap around its beefy Fastco alloys like fat rubber bands.

Add to this mix the natural sweep of the Accent's headlamps, its subtle character lines and

for a 1.2-inch drop in the front and a front strut brace by DC Sports.

Its 1.6 litre four cylinder (stock 110 hp and 106 lb/ft of torque) sports a performance air intake by AEM and cat-back exhaust system by Vibrant. Combined, this is good for about five more horses.

For a car that is more econobox than sportscar, the Accent SR handles like go cart, with a minimum

Modifications to the SR-X continue on the inside as well.

Carbon fibre-look inserts are a dominant theme throughout the interior, and are found on the door panels, around air vents, instrument cluster, shifter, and on the centre console.

A Clarion 400 watt audio system with the pop up DVD monitor really kicks out the sound. Accomplishing this are four speak-

ers, and a monster, removable subwoofer that takes up nearly half the cargo floor behind the rear seats.

I like the aluminum shifter knob, but on cold mornings it can be a bit uncomfortable to the ungloved hand. Also a nice touch are the polished aluminum door sills with embossed logo.

Although there is no longer an SR trim level, you can build the same car by adding all of the above to the top-tier GL trim level with sport package. This will also get you power windows, locks and mirrors, keyless entry, air conditioning and power sunroof, as well as plenty of bottle holders and cubbies to store your stuff.

Rear seats are firm and supportive, and offer ample knee and head room for my average sized frame. Here, two adults can ride in comfort, but the third, middle position is best left for emergencies or kids.

The rear seat armrest is wide and well designed with both a round and square receptacle – ideal for a large Tim's coffee along with a milk carton or juice box.

The five-speed GL with sport package starts at \$16,995. To recreate the SR-X, you can add another \$10,100 for the parts, installation and custom paint job.

Bearing in mind the relatively low price of the base car, a \$27,000 tuner Accent isn't out of line when you consider what some people spend on custom rides. Add to that the company's one-year, unlimited kilometer warranty on these dealer-installed parts, not to mention the assurance you won't void the existing factory warranty, and it becomes apparent that Hyundai is 'in tune' with the younger car buyer.

OUR GIFT TO YOU MILTON!

FREE WAX

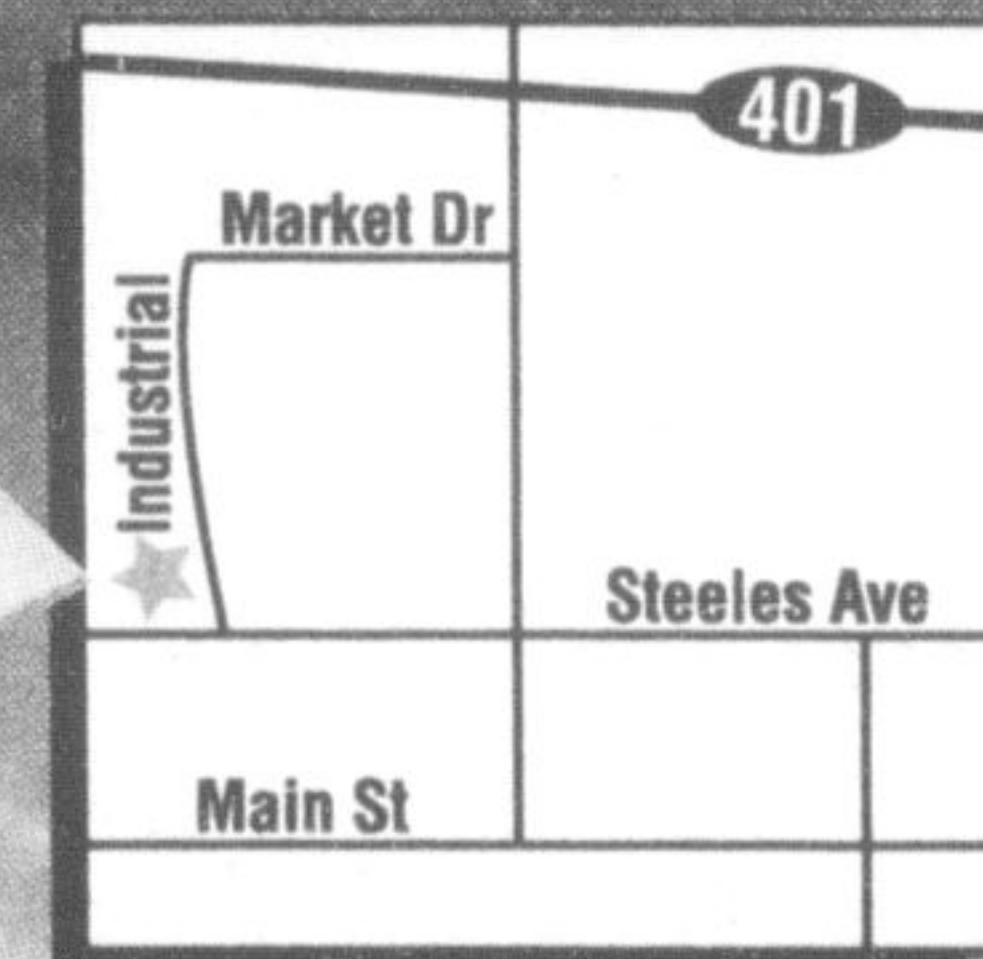
WITH EVERY COMPLETE INTERIOR DETAILING!

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

*expires Dec 24/08



WE ARE
HERE



Scott's Car Care

410 Industrial Drive,
Milton

905-875-3367