

A Sporty Small Estate from SEAT

by Ian Lynas

SEAT is part of the Volkswagen Group, although not manufactured in Germany but in Spain, in fact 80% of the cars manufactured are exported to some 75 countries.

What puts the brand apart from the rest of the VW Empire is the decidedly youthful and sporty style and nature of the cars, so it is fitting that they should have within their ranks a small sporty estate in the Ibiza range known as ST.

Recently the opportunity came for me to have the FR version of the Ibiza ST on test; a good idea to have such a vehicle especially as the younger generation today are so mobile and with a wide range of pursuits.

I must point out that when it comes to the Ibiza it is best known for the three door hatchback style and the five door hatchback and I must confess that I have rarely seen an ST on our roads and if you

just happen to be an Ibiza fan worth taking a closer look at the ST. It would be a perfect choice for a young family, delivering a sporty drive with a strong practical nature.

The current Ibiza range is celebrating its fourth generation and I was reminded that we have had an Ibiza in one shape or form for 30 years.

Engine choice for the Ibiza range is a wide one and petrol engines are amongst the most advanced in the class, ranging from the 1.2 litre 60PS to the powerful turbocharged and supercharged 1.4 litre TSI 180 PS of the Ibiza Cupra.

My test car was equipped with the 1.2 TSI 110PS engine mated to a six speed manual transmission.

Common rail diesels range from the frugal 1.2 litre TDI 75 PS in the Ibiza Ecomotive to the powerful 2.0 litre TDI 143 PS.

Excellent fuel economy is a strong selling point for this SEAT range, for example, the Ecomotive offers an astonishing 80.7 mpg and just 92 g/km CO₂, while Ibiza Cupra races to 62mph in just 6.9 seconds.

Every model in the Ibiza line-up comes with a very acceptable standard equipment package including alarm, immobiliser, electric front windows,





remote central locking, four airbags, height adjustable driver's seat, four speaker stereo and tyre pressure monitoring. As you progress through the various grades the standard equipment package rises.

I took time to have a word with a SEAT owner who had changed to a Golf and I simply put the question why change? He quickly responded that he would change back to a SEAT next time round as he felt he got a lot more for his money. Apart from the money side of things he felt that SEAT had right as it appealed to the younger driver.

I would not wish to claim that the SEAT range is simply just for the younger buyer, it is a fresh range with a wide appeal to all ages.

Which brings me back to the FR which I had on test with its small capacity petrol engine, performance was pleasing as was economy and with that extra space it proved a most versatile set of wheels.

Boot space is 430 litres and 1,164 litres with the seats folded for the ST version and the FR badge is reserved for engines of 100PS upwards.

The FR gets the sporty look with alloys etc. and sports suspension which adds to the handling and without being harsh.

There you have it, a small sporty estate which not only looks the part but delivers a rewarding drive and the cost - £17,840 which included £2,205 worth of options.



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