

The Plug-In Hybrid KIA Optima Sportswagon

by Ian Lynas

My first car a bog standard Mini which was so basic that there were no interior door handles, instead I had to pull on a string-like device and power choice was petrol with diesel restricted to trucks and the like.



Electric power for the everyday motorist was not even a dream, my experience of electric power in a vehicle was a milk delivery vehicle in a Norman Wisdom film and it had the pace of a snail.

My how things have changed when it comes to power choices, petrol, diesel, hybrids etc.

My visit to the SMMT Test Day at Wetherby Racecourse permitted me to have a few minutes behind the wheel of a KIA Optima Sportswagon PHEV. Sportswagon being a fancy title for an estate car; however to be fair to KIA the

lines of this model are indeed sporty.

Hybrids are not new to KIA, but until 2016 they had never been previously brought to our market because diesels offer greater tax advantages in the company car market. The Optima Sportswagon and Saloon with their extensive all electric driving range, low CO2 figures and ultra low car tax rating make these models important to KIA.

The plug-in hybrid PHEV version of the spacious Sportswagon joins the Optima Saloon PHEV, all electric Soul EV and Niro dedicated hybrid crossover in helping the company towards its goal of a 25 per cent reduction in fleet average CO2 emissions by 2020, based on 2014 figures.

Delivering a range of up to 38 miles in the all all electric mode, the Sportswagon PHEV is able to complete many regular urban commuter runs with no tailpipe emissions, while its CO2 figure of just 33g/km means company car users pay a mere 9 percent benefit in kind tax in 2017-18.

This newcomer to the KIA family





driven September 2017

combines a 154bhp two litre direct injection petrol engine with a 50W (67bhp) electric motor powered by an 11.26k Wh lithium ion polymer battery pack.

The electric motor replaces the torque converter in the smooth shifting 6 speed transmission.

When working together, the combustion engine and electric motor generate 202bhp .

I was surprised by the performance and with the comfort levels making this a model worth taking a closer look at.