

The New Diesel KIA Rio Impresses

by Ian Lynas

Deliver a well proportioned hatchback, place an economical diesel engine under the bonnet, provide an appetising array of equipment and it will appeal to the Northern Ireland car buyer-such a car is the new Rio from KIA.



Yes despite all the doom and gloom as regards diesel, it still remains the most popular choice of power in our market; yes hybrids are gaining some ground and small capacity petrol engines have their place.

This South Korean carmaker in a relatively short period of time has come a long way and the new Rio is able to come head to head with its rivals and in that sector I include the German offerings, by the way many which are not manufactured in Germany.

KIA describes the new Rio as their supermini and it is a core model for the brand, the latest to bear the Rio badge is

fourth generation and it offers more space and it is the best styled to date.

In order to get the feel of the newcomer, on a wet, misty day when most sensible folks might have stayed indoors I took to the road in two versions of the new Rio, but for this article I concentrate on a diesel version.

I have already stated that small capacity petrol powered cars are proving popular; there is a Rio with a one litre turbo unit with low emissions and wallet pleasing economy.

Back to my diesel experience; right away I was struck by the low level of cabin noise and the pick up of the engine, I am talking about a 1.4 litre unit. I am not for one second suggesting that the new Rio is a GTi in disguise, however it has the body to become one.

The performance provided from this diesel engine make no mistake will satisfy the needs of most drivers.

Kia describes their diesel, which replaces the three cylinder 1.1 litre CRDi as their fuel economy champion. To be fair I did not clock up enough miles to give my own figures, but the manufacturer is quoting in the 70mpg plus region.

Two power outputs with the 1.4 diesel engine, 76 and 89bhp. All good news indeed for diesel fans.



My test car had a slick six speed manual transmission and all models feature Stop & Go to eliminate tailpipe emissions and fuel consumption while stationary in traffic and with an ever increasing volume of traffic on our roads that could be a regular occurrence.

Behind the wheel, roadholding is good, the new model featuring a similar suspension set up to the outgoing model but with a number of enhancements to deliver a better ride for all onboard.



One new feature I must highlight- Straight Line Stability, it senses any difference in applied brake pressure between the right and left of the new Rio and intervenes to keep it straight.

On the practical side, boot space has been increased by 13 percent to 325 litres and to improve driving range, the fuel tank can hold an additional two litres and now has a capacity of 45 litres.

The styling is conservative with the 'tiger nose' front grille; there are halogen bi-function headlights and LED running lights.

The styling of the new Rio was down to the efforts of design teams based in

Germany, the USA and South Korea; certainly they all came together to provide a well proportioned hatchback.

As we have come to expect from KIA, equipment levels are high, I even observed a heated steering wheel, usually a nice touch on far more expensive cars.

Keeping it simple for the buyer, four trim levels, 1, 2, 3 and a limited run First Edition. Like the rest of the KIA family, there is the industry leading seven year/100,000 mile warranty and should you decide to part with the Rio during this period, the warranty carries over to the new owner.

As I majored on the diesel aspect of the new Rio, now to pricing the 1.4 CRDi 76bhp costs £13,495 with the price range overall for the new Rio going from £11,995 - £17,445.

A word of advice should you be in the market for a well appointed hatchback with excellent economy and a first rate warranty do take a test drive in this new KIA, like me you will not be disappointed.

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