

The Much Improved Honda CR-V

by Ian Lynas

Four wheel drive or two wheel drive to be or not to be? That is the question that buyers of the new Honda CR-V may well ask.

For the first time in its history the CR-V is being offered with the choice of drive options. I fail to see why anyone would buy such a vehicle minus four wheel drive. However Honda probably know best and they have decided to give the customer the



choice, of course two wheel drive comes cheaper than four wheel drive.

The fourth generation model mixes the practicality of an SUV and the comfort levels of a passenger car, clothed in a very attractive body.

The first generation model arrived in 1995 and since then Honda has delivered improvement upon improvement, without doubt the newcomer is the best to date.

My opportunity to take the wheel of the new CR-V came in Scotland; roads on the West Coast which I know so well.

Driving a 2.2 i-DTEC SE 4WD I

managed to average 48.2mpg. In my book that is an excellent economy figure for this type of vehicle.

This fourth generation model continues to fuse agile, intuitive driving dynamics with incredible versatility. Significant improvements in every area and much improved efficiency create an exciting new vehicle that will satisfy current owners and attract a new generation of buyers.

With a new model we have come to expect much and the new CR-V delivers greater quality, practicality and refinement than its predecessors and with environmental concerns of increasing importance, both petrol and diesel engines emit significantly less CO₂.

Behind the wheel I was pleased with not only the handling qualities of this new Honda, but also with comfort levels. Of course the newcomer was developed to suit European roads.

I did observe that the model I tested was on Continental Tyres, perhaps they play a part. But this newcomer emits



much less road noise than earlier models.

There is a choice of four trim levels, EX, SR, SE and S. My test CR-V was in SE trim and at a cost of £26,605 it is an excellent package. There was only one option, polished metal metallic, adding another £500 to the final price tag.

Some of the highlights of the SE package, rear view camera, Bluetooth hands free telephone connection, power folding door mirrors, automatic lights and wipers, Cat 1 alarm and key fob window opening and closing.

The interior combines class-leading space and versatility with much improved materials and reduced noise levels and I was impressed with the car-like driving position.

The Driver Interface Zone allows you to focus on the road ahead and lays out crucial information behind the steering wheel at the natural point of focus.

Right at the heart of the new CR-V is a good palette of engines, both petrol and diesel and as Northern Ireland buyers in the main tend to opt for diesel, naturally this was the vehicle I selected to drive.

The 2.2 litre diesel engine delivers 150PS with lots of torque, rest to 62mph in 9.7 seconds and of course the already noted excellent economy.

Practicality is a major factor with such a vehicle and the new CR-V is quite a load lugger; with boot capacity ranging from 147 to 1,669 litres. There is 589 litres with the seats in place.

Worth noting, the one action 60/40 easy fold down rear seats will be appreciated by many.

Summing up, for me the CR-V has at last come of age and offers serious competition to its rivals.

Sharper styling and an overall good package should widen the buying audience for this vehicle.

Who does Honda see as the competition for the CR-V? Four contenders, the VW Tiguan, Toyota RAV4, Volvo XC60 and the Mazda CX-5.