

The Third Generation SEAT LEON

by Ian Lynas

SPANISH style with German engineering, quite a combination in any book. Well that is the recipe that SEAT has come up with in bringing the latest generation Leon to the market.

Northern Ireland drivers should be able to get their hands around the steering wheel of this attractive package from early March next year.



In order to get an early taste of Leon I spent a couple of days, based in Malaga, driving on a variety of roads which were ideal to put the newcomer through its paces. a mix of motorway, urban and hilly driving.

Roadholding and handling were good and no great surprise as the Leon shares the new VW Group platform as featured in the new Audi A3 and VW Golf.

The suspension set up varies with power and trim and not only does the customer have a choice in equipment levels etc., but the opportunity to select the ride and handling they prefer.

I have already tested both the Audi and the VW and the Leon is a worthy

contender to steal customers from these pair.

The Leon has been a very popular SEAT model in our market, second in terms of sales to the Ibiza and indeed there was a period in the history of the outgoing car when it topped the SEAT sales charts in the UK.

This is in fact the third generation Leon and the five door version which will reach dealer showrooms early in the New Year is the first in a family of models, the SC will arrive next June followed by the ST at the conclusion of 2013.

A comprehensive range of engines will be available from launch, three petrol and three diesels with outputs ranging from 105 to 184PS, something for every taste.

Worth noting that the range topper the 2.0 TDI FR can whisk you from rest to 62mph in a mere 7.5 seconds and still deliver 65.7mpg and another surprise the emission rating is just 112g/km.

I sample two diesel variants a 1.6 and two litre with respective power outputs of 105 and 150PS and the amazing 1.4 litre



TSI petrol engine with 140PS. The latter is going to challenge the smaller diesel units and you really have to try this car for your self.

Trim levels are the usual from SEAT, S, SE and FR and even the entry level S trim provides a very acceptable level of standard equipment. Air conditioning, remote central locking, SEAT Easy Connect five inch touch screen media system to name but a few.

SEAT Drive Profile enters the Leon world, standard on FR variants. This permits adjustment of steering and throttle feel in four ways, Eco, Normal, Sport and Individual. Select Sport mode and backlighting changes from white to a race like red.

SEAT XDS electronic differential is standard on versions SE and above, yet another useful handling aid.

The latest Leon features a longer wheelbase and this has a two way benefit for driver and passengers, improved interior and boot space, the latter is up by 39 litres.

With good residual values predicted and prices to start from £15,670 and

sharp clean lines this new addition to the SEAT line up has success written all over it.

