

FIAT TIPO 1.6 MULTIJET

By Jim Mc Cauley



Fiat has re-introduced the Tipo badge for its all-new hatchback model which will feature as a serious contender in the keenly fought family hatchback sector. Competition comes from every other manufacturer in Europe as well as those from the Far East, so to challenge the established players, Fiat has to have something extremely good up its sleeve.

And this starts with the car's appealing looks, its nicely balanced lines disguising its clever packaging that gives it class-leading legroom and outstanding headroom. It also provides the best-in-class boot capacity of 440 litres.

Powering the new range is a choice of two diesel and three petrol engines with automatic and dual-clutch transmissions available in addition to the standard 5- or 6-speed manual gearboxes. Test choice was the 1.6 litre diesel model with switchable stop/start to tease out its excellent fuel economy even further. This 120PS unit drives through its standard 6-speed manual gearbox and provides excellent pace, pulling strongly from rest. Gear changes beautifully and the car eases its way from rest to 60mph in a shade over 9 seconds with a potential top speed of 124mph.

A firm suspension set-up provides excellent cornering control but is compliant enough to maintain overall cabin comfort on poorer surfaces. There is a reassuring firmness to the Tipo and a feeling of durability experienced in its practical cabin layout as well. With their smaller cars in the 500 and Panda ranges, the interiors reflect a younger and more diverse range of designs, but the Tipo provides a sensible and practical interior with a no-nonsense layout easy to navigate and operate.

The main binnacle contains the now industry-standard twin dials for engine and road speed with miles and kilometres per hour clearly indicated on the main speedometer. Featuring a comprehensive call-up menu, the digital panel between the two main instruments can be set to display a range of information including a duplicate digital speed read-out.

The dash moulding sweeps out to contain the central screen which provides both satellite navigation and infotainment access, with audio and phone controls duplicated on the steering wheel spokes.

Accommodation-wise, the cabin provides excellent room for five adults with generous storage in the central console bin, good sized glove compartment and pockets in all four doors – in total 12 litres of useful space.

In terms of equipment, the Tipo is offered in three specification grades with all models equipped with air conditioning, remote central locking, electronic stability control, six airbags, electric front windows, DAB digital radio, split folding rear seats, Bluetooth connectivity and chrome door handles.



The mid range 'Easy Plus' trim adds the 5-inch 'Uconnect' touchscreen, powered rear windows, LED running lights, 16-inch alloys, front fog lights, rear parking sensors and cruise control. This mid trim is a £1,000 step up from the standard model specification while the top 'Lounge' trim steps another £1,000 and adds satellite navigation, climate control, 17-inch alloys, automatic lights and wipers, rear view camera, auto-dipping rear view mirror and a chrome pack to upgrade exterior detailing. 'Uconnect' allows you to download the App on your smartphone and gives access to Facebook, Twitter, Tunein, Deezer and Reuters news as well as other selections.



A range of optional equipment is also available including a leather upholstery upgrade with heated front seats and a safety pack which features a speed limiter with automatic emergency braking which initialises braking if the driver fails to respond in time to a hazard ahead. This £250 extra is worth considering as it further upgrades the car's official safety rating.

With regards to economy, this diesel model excels with an official combined fuel consumption of 76.3mpg, and with a CO2 emissions of just 98gms/km is in Band A for zero road tax. While Tipo ownership starts at

£13,145, the range topping model in 'Lounge' specification is listed at £17,400 and is in Group 14E for insurance purposes. Like all Fiat models, the new Tipo comes with the company's comprehensive 3-year/60,000 mile warranty.