

Feisty Fiesta

Ford Fiesta ST

By Jim Mc Cauley

No other manufacturer can achieve what Ford achieves in taking a well-sorted staple seller that fulfils the needs of the everyday motorist and turns it into a proper demon.

Adding the coveted ST badge to Northern Ireland's top selling model, an eagerly anticipating fan base flooded the company with over 1,000 orders in its first week on sale. The Fiesta ST follows in the wheel tracks of the larger Focus ST but differs



significantly in that it is only available in a 3-door body option compared to the absence of a 3-door model in the Focus ST range which offers only 5-door and estate choices.

Like all sporting Fords, if the lower stance and aerodynamic appendices don't grab your attention, then the exclusive range of limited colours are sure to get you noticed.

I have driven fast cars on the slowest roads possible leaving the launch venue wondering if the cars are all that the

manufacturers say they are. But Ford always stand over their performance claims as fast demanding road routes always lead to a test track. And the launch of the Fiesta ST was no exception.

Developed by Ford Team RS, the European arm of the company's Global Performance Vehicle Group, the new Fiesta ST is fitted with the company's sweet 1.6 litre EcoBoost petrol engine which outputs 182PS at 5,700 rpm with 240Nm of torque from 1,600 to 5,000 rpm. Response is smooth, rapid and instantly controllable on the throttle, taking the car to 62 mph from rest in 6.9 seconds and onwards to a potential 137 mph. However, most noticeable on-road is the docility of the turbo delivery and the sheer smoothness of pace as you slip through the 6-speed manual gearbox. A higher geared electrically assisted steering offers direct response while all-round disc brakes with uprated power assistance promote the necessary confidence.

On-track, and the performance promises made on road are fully delivered in a car that exudes confidence in all departments. Underwriting the performance is the company's twin chassis package of three-mode Electronic Stability Control and enhanced Torque

Vectoring Control (eTVC). This latter package applies brake force to the inside front wheel when cornering to improve road holding and reduces understeer without affecting speed. Noticeable on track, it contributes significantly to the car's neutral handling complimented by a suspension system that offers greater support on track than anticipated from its acceptable forgiveness at normal road speeds.

Despite the performance attributes of the ST, its environmental credentials fare well with a quoted combined fuel consumption of 47.9 mpg and a CO2 emissions figure of 138 gms/km – a 20% reduction compared to the previous generation Fiesta ST, despite delivering 20% more power than the original's 2.0 litre engine.



To begin with, Ford has a well sorted and attractive car in the mainstream Fiesta and to raise the stakes in this ultimate edition may not have been a strenuous task, but nevertheless one impeccably executed. The car charms, performs and excites, and with prices starting at £16,995, it comes in at up to £2,000 less than segment competitors. It will have the performance Ford fan base queuing as can already be

seen from early orders, but it will no doubt attract conquest customers once they have had an opportunity to drive the car. Just two variants are available, the standard ST and the ST-2 at a £1,000 premium, and which to date is by far the most popular seller. ST-2 adds LED daytime running lights, privacy glass, partial leather and heated Recaro seats, Sony DAB radio and keyless start with power button. Special colours at £725 include Molten Orange and Spirit Blue while a £275 style pack adds red brake callipers, grey alloys and illuminated scuff plates on the door sills.

