

All New Honda Civic

By Jim Mc Cauley

The Civic badge is now well embedded in automotive history since the first Honda model to carry the name rolled off the production line 40 years ago. Since then the Civic has evolved as a safe and sensible choice until the dramatic 8th series was launched in 2006. Both the exterior and interior design were a huge departure for



Honda and gave the car a unique and eagerly accepted identity.

Building on its success, the latest model evolves this design while addressing the few shortcomings of the previous range, among them rear visibility and ride comfort. Although built in Swindon, initial production was upset due to disruption of the supply of electronic components from Japan as a result of the country's earthquake and ensuing tsunami. However, the problems were quickly addressed and production is now at full swing.

Engine choice comprises 1.4 and 1.8 petrol models as well as a 2.2 litre diesel. At the car's launch both the 1.8 petrol

and 2.2 litre diesel versions were driven, providing an excellent feel as to how the new model has developed. While the power of the 1.4 litre engine stays at the 100 PS of the previous model, its emissions have reduced. In the two larger engines, there are minor power increases with dramatic reductions in emissions. All engines drive through a standard 6-speed manual gearbox with stop/start technology as standard and

a discreet 'Eco Assist' system to advise drivers on how their driving style is impacting on fuel economy. For those who really want to stretch their economy, all models are fitted with an 'Econ' button that activates a gentler throttle map for a more relaxed and less fuel demanding drive.

Styling-wise, the car has been tastefully sculpted from the previous form with front bodywork seamlessly blended to enhance aerodynamics. The rear wheelarches are more pronounced to give the car a more purposeful stance and the entire shell sits 20mm lower than the previous model with a modest increase in width of 10mm. To improve



rear visibility, the back spoiler incorporating a high-level brake light now sits lower. Inside the refinements continue with a snug wraparound driving cockpit and notable improvement in instrument presentation and overall quality.

On-road and it doesn't take long to acknowledge the improvements in ride quality.

Attention is particular has been focused on the rear axle, and on demanding mountain



test routes the car's handling excelled.

However, to maintain pace, the 1.8 litre petrol engine had to be worked relatively hard through the gears, while the diesel engine emerged as the star performer beautifully maintaining momentum as well as its refinement at higher road speeds. It also tops the 1.8 litre car in every statistic including its 0-62 mph time of just 8.5 seconds, 0.6 seconds faster.

But the improvements in both cars are significant in terms of ride quality, steering precision and overall refinement offering a tempting advancement on the previous model range.

On the economy front, while the official

combined fuel consumption of the petrol model is 48.7 mpg, the diesel can add another 20 miles to each gallon, with the CO2 emissions of the petrol given as 137 gms/km compared to the 110 gms/km of the diesel – both substantially lower than the previous engines.

While the 1.4 litre engine option is restricted to two trim choices, the larger engines span six options giving a wide range of choice and prices to potential purchasers. The 1.4 litre range opens at £16,495 with the 1.8 litre petrol range starting at £17,995. The diesel range starts at a whisper over £20,000.

In their launch promotion, Honda is offering engine and trim upgrades, taking the customer to the next level while maintaining the lower price. There are also low-interest finance arrangements including 0% APR over two years through Honda Aspirations.