

RENAULT CLIO GT-LINE 120 EDC

by David M Ross

“Press the R.S. Drive button to select ‘Sport’ mode and you have that all important Va Va Voom when you need it from the 120bhp turbo engine”. So says Renault about its Clio GT-Line 120 EDC and I, for one, would not disagree. But, even on an all-too-short drive I had had my breath well and truly taken away long before I reached for the get-up-and-go button.

With the new Clio, Renault has taken a huge step forward. The looks are now much more contemporary with lines that embody dynamic, muscular, sweeps from the highly distinctive frontal treatment, up over the swept back windscreen and down over the curving roof to the highly stylised tail. Lines I understand that were inspired by Renault’s DeZir concept car.



It’s all a massive improvement with lines that are designed to create that all important “love at first sight”, an essential element in any car intended to appeal to largely private buyers spending their own money.

Even for people who have no interest in running a racy vehicle, sporty, youthful lines are essential, pride of ownership being of huge importance to purchasers.

But so sexy are the New Clio’s lines, they fit in perfectly with the Renaultsport image so there is no call for superfluous wings and oversize airdams.

For those determined to be first away from the traffic lights, Renaultsport offers the lightening-quick 200 Turbo EDC, its 1,600cc engine boosted to produce a tarmac tearing 200bhp. And it has the on-board technology to ensure that awesome power gets to the road without undue wheelspin or compromised steering.

But what about the driver who wants that little bit more but without going the whole hog, the driver who is looking for a car that can appear comparatively inconspicuous yet can liven that dreary drive to work and make it something to be looked forward to. And all without breaking the bank when it comes to purchase and running costs.

Step forward the Clio Renaultsport GT-Line 120 EDC. And what a great little car it turned out to be. Vibrant and mustard-keen, this visually attractive hatchback is as happy trundling in traffic as it is threading the eye of the needle down a narrow, twisty back road.

Maybe calling it a “little” car is not quite right as the new Clio is larger and roomier than its predecessor, but it’s also far more stylish. And, while it sports non-aggressive lines, its distinctive GT-Line package includes 17-inch GT alloys, an F1 inspired rear diffuser and twin chrome exhausts while inside there are GT dark carbon sports seats and GT kick-plates.



Buyers also get such cutting edge technologies as Renault’s R-Link multimedia system that includes a 7-inch touchscreen with Tom Tom Live satellite navigation, application store, Bluetooth and USB connectivity. With 2D Arkamys radio and the Renault Bass Reflex sound system you can sit back and enjoy your MP3 player whatever the traffic and road conditions may be.

But hey! This is a Renaultsport model so what about all that Va Va Voom? Well, one point two litres doesn’t sound likely to send this robustly built car along at any great pace. But, thanks to a superbly developed turbocharging system, it really does. Not only is there a thumping 120bhp at your beck and call, there’s a very impressive 190Nm of torque to ensure excellent pick up from low speeds and a flexible, undemanding drive.

And that’s not all. Adding greatly to the pleasure of driving the 120EDC is what those initials stand



for, Efficient Dual Clutch gearbox complete with a very switched on mind of its own when left in auto for a laid back effortless drive or with steering wheel mounted paddles for when it’s OK to bring out the Sebastian Vettel in you. And, for a real kick in the back, don’t forget that R.S. Drive ‘Sport’ button, so enticing it’s hard to keep your fingers off it.

Fortunately, the steering and brakes, the former precise and accurate and the latter progressive but immensely strong, are fully up to the levels set by the flashing performance.

With an attractive and very sporty interior and excellent seats front and rear, a usefully large load area accessed through a wide opening tailgate and firm but far from overly stiff suspension, what does Renault ask for this highly versatile model?

In some ways, a not inconsiderable £17,395 but I came away convinced it was worth every penny. It's a great everyday car and just the tonic when it comes to those mundane but essential journeys.

Renault claims a combined fuel economy of 54.3mpg and with an emissions figure of 120g/km and an insurance group of 14E, running costs shouldn't see you bank balance too far into the red.