

SEAT LEON ECOMOTIVE ESTATE

By Jim Mc Cauley

SEAT has extended its head-turning Leon range with the addition of an estate variant. Carrying the distinctive wheel-arch swage lines of the hatchbacks, the rear creases extend further back to wrap around the tailgate adding to the elegance of the original design.



Sitting on a chassis shared with the Volkswagen Golf and Audi A3, power is supplied from a range of VAG petrol and diesel engines. However, test choice focused on the most economical of the power units, the 1.6 litre diesel carrying the 'Ecomotive' badge. This 4-cylinder turbocharged engine produces 110 PS and has 250 Nm of torque available from 1500 to 3000 rpm and returns a 0-62 mph time of 10.5 seconds with the potential to top 124 mph.

Power delivery through the standard 6-speed manual gearbox is smooth although at lower town speeds there is often the necessity to drop to 2nd with 3rd gear lacking the expected flexibility. Nevertheless, the overall package in an engine chasing maximum economy works well and settles nicely on the open road. Ride is firm, with little body roll, and road noise is well insulated increasing the luxury feel of the car, underwritten by its high equipment levels. The Ecomotive is available in SE trim only with a comprehensive package that includes stop / start technology, automatic lights and wiper operation, auto-dimming rear view mirror and folding door mirrors. This level also includes dual zone climate control, seat back trays and luggage restraining net to separate the load area if required.

Cabin equipment includes height adjustable and heated front seats as well as steering column reach and rake adjustment and dual zone air conditioning which are among the upmarket specification on the car.

With regards to the practicalities of the estate, it has a generous load volume of 587 litres extendible by the folding rear seats as well as the fitted chrome roof rails for extra load attachments. An adjustable height boot floor allows a variety of options while underneath in the test vehicle there was space for an optional spare wheel in lieu of the standard puncture repair kit.





But the main attraction of the car is its 1.6 litre engine with an official combined fuel consumption of 85.6 mpg. In real world driving over several hundred miles on Northern Ireland's roads, the car achieved 55.3 mpg which I believe could be taken into the 60+ bracket with little bother.

The engine is also beneficial to company car users with a CO2 emissions of 87 gms/km aiding both road tax and BIK taxation rates.

On the safety front, the Leon Ecomotive comes with Electronic Stability Control and Traction Control packages as well as seven airbags and front cornering lights. The model enjoys a 5-star EuroNCAP safety rating and is listed at just over £20,000 with a Group 14E insurance rating. Additional equipment includes metallic paint at £530, spare wheel at £100, rear parking sensors at £270 and leather upholstery at £1,500.