

The New VW Golf GTi – the Legend Continues

By Ian Lynas

Hot hatches come and go, but none have quite the staying power of the Volkswagen Golf GTi; now the latest version takes to our roads, a key player in the new range which perhaps can be best described as generation 7.5.



May I remind you all that it is forty years plus since the Golf GTi burst onto the motoring scene and I was amidst the many who craved for one; alas my car insurance company had other ideas and I was left to settle for a set of wheels with a lot less power from under the bonnet.

Unveiled in 1975 at the Frankfurt Motor Show we in Northern Ireland had to wait a further two years for the cars to arrive and in 1977 there were 34 examples, all of them left hand drive.

Power then was a 1,588 cc four cylinder engine with K-Jetronic fuel injection which developed 110PS at

6,100rpm and 103lbs ft of torque at 5,000 rpm. This allowed the GTI, which weighed 810 kg unladen, to hit 60mph from standstill in nine-seconds before reaching a top speed of 110 mph.

The mix of a high-revving, responsive four-cylinder engine installed in a hatchback body with the emphasis on driving fun was linked to a pared down interior came as a revelation at the time. Especially when combined with tartan trim and the now iconic golf ball gearshift.

The Golf GTi was an instant hit and by the time right-hand drive cars arrived in the UK in 1979 a total of 1,573 cars were sold in that year, a number that would triple within two years. The success story continued at quite a pace and soon this offering from Volkswagen was the car to have, not only was it famed for performance but it quickly became a style icon.

As time passed by the GTi became a sub brand of the Golf range and the latest version is very much a warm over in terms of styling and it comes as no great surprise, it bristles with technology.

I had a broad smile when I climbed





onboard the newcomer at Woburn, there to greet me the tartan upholstery that I had craved for so long ago. No more spartan interiors, for me the mix is sporting and executive and above all an air of quality.

For those who seek performance the new two litre engine has 230PS on tap, up 10PS from the previous model which is allied to my favourite transmission the six speed DSG.

Front wheel drive remains the order of the day and the sprint from rest to 62mph is an impressive 6.4 seconds with a top speed of 154mph, that is if you can

find a racing circuit to explore the full potential of this very impressive car.

The emission figure is 145g/km and according to economy figures from Volkswagen, ranging from 34.4 to 44.1mpg; of course it is all down to the way you drive the GTi.

Earlier I commented on insurance, with the latest version the grouping is 33E, which at last I could probably afford.

Assisting the new GTi in the roadholding department the lowered GTi suspension and 18 inch alloys and braking is very impressive. The original car had one little niggle and that was in the braking department, the brake pedal was mighty soft, no such problem with the new model, stopping ability is well up to the performance which is most reassuring.

With a comprehensive safety/security package, high levels of comfort and convenience features and the highest level of in car entertainment and communication- the new Golf GTi is the complete package.

Now to the all important in the pocket news, price- £29,935. However the car I tried had a number of options which brought the final tally to £33,710.

In conclusion the magic that I first encountered all those years ago with the Mk 1 is still evident, but now it is packaged to a higher level.



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