

The Sporty Side of the New KIA Picanto

by Ian Lynas

I have to admit I am fast becoming a fan once again and with very good reason. In this world we live in, parking a car is something of a chore, is it just me but are parking spaces becoming smaller. I can recall my first love affair with a small car; it was a very basic Mini, something which would not be acceptable today.



Clearly the small car is becoming more important than ever and we all like icing on our cake and so it is with a car. KIA has launched the new Picanto range and right at the top sporty models. A clever move by the South Korean company, recently Toyota announced that later this year they will bring to the market a real hot version of the new Yaris with links to their successful WRC rally offering.

With KIA two sporty versions of the new Picanto from launch, GT-Line and GT-Line S, both using an updated 1.25 litre petrol engine from the outgoing model, linked to a five speed manual transmission. Later this year they will raise the performance stakes to a higher level

with the introduction of a 99bhp one litre turbocharged T-GDi.

For the present those who want their Picanto drive experience to be sporty will have to settle for the afore mentioned pair.

So what makes the two sporty models stand out from the rest of the range? Right away the exterior indicates their nature, larger front and rear bumpers, red highlights with the upper grille and side air intakes, along the side sills and lower rear bumper, which includes a diffuser section and twin exhausts.

The sporty theme is continued to the interior, which feels more roomier than the previous Picanto, you are greeted by black and red faux upholstery, satin chrome door handles, a high gloss centre fascia trim and stainless steel pedals with non slip rubber insets.

There is a 7 inch centre mounted floating touchscreen, with access to navigation, infotainment and connectivity systems, which include integration with KIA Connected Services powered by TomTom and Android Suto and Apple CarPlay via apps pre- loaded onto a smartphone, GT-Line S.

There is no getting away from it; connectivity is very much the in thing with the modern motor car.

With the new Picanto and in Particular with the GT-Line S in the 9 strong range, equipment levels are very much on par with the larger car and so it should be.

Owning a small car offers virtually as much as a larger model with the exception of carrying capacity and of course returning to my lead subject, park ability.

When you take a close look at the segment the new Picanto enters, European sales per year are more than one million, and in the UK the Picanto has been a regular in the top five best





sellers. I suspect with the new range it will feature more often in the charts and of course it comes with the market leading 7 year/ 100,000 mile warranty which is transferable should you decide to part with the Picanto, surely a strong selling point second time around.

My opportunity to get behind the wheel of the new KIA model came in Italy with the focus very much on those badged GT.

The GT-Line S offers much more in terms of equipment which includes such desirables as heated front seats and a heated steering wheel.

In performance terms both are equal, in fact in this respect performance is adequate, with rest to 62mph in 11.6 seconds and on to a top speed of 107mph, certainly enough for a city car.



Handling has moved on as the new Picanto benefits from a much sturdier build and this transmits into improved road holding and safety. The emission figure is 106g/km and official figures re economy are as good as 61.4mpg. On my brief test drive in Italy I constantly achieved a figure in the mid fifties, nothing wrong with that.

Another positive with the new KIA model, much lower noise levels, which even at relatively high speeds on the motorway I could enjoy music on the move.

A key to success is value for money and with the two sporty variants; £12,450 for the GT-Line and £13,950 gets you in the driving seat of the GT-Line S.

I should add that all models in the new Picanto line up feature the five door style, three doors are currently not in fashion.

For those who do not demand too much performance but like the look of performance the two GT badged Picantos are sure to please and remember there is the bonus of that industry leading warranty.

Finally do you know what the Picanto is called in South Korea- Morning.

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