

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GTD ESTATE

By Jim Mc Cauley

The pairing of the Golf name with a GT specification has established a legendary line of high performance hatchbacks from Volkswagen. However, it was not until 2015, some 33 years after the introduction of the GTD hatch that the company launched an estate version. Sharing the same



engine as the hatchback, the estate is distinguished by its 15mm lower ride height, 18-inch wheels, badge-specific bumpers and honeycomb radiator grille.

Power source is the 2.0 litre common rail TDI engine which is rated at 184PS with maximum torque of 280Nm from 2,500 rpm. This provides a 0-62mph time of 7.9 seconds with a potential top speed of 143 mph. But its true appeal is beyond basic statistics, and it is the overall performance response that defines the nature

and reputation of the car. Moving up the 6-speed manual gearbox, the response in terms of noise and progression is more petrol-like with the engine ever willing and smooth.

Steering is as pin sharp as that of the hatchback, while a firm suspension with sympathetic damping transmits its status into the cabin, but not at the expense of upsetting the occupants. Pace and grip indicate that you are in a performance car, and with the exception of the tyre noise on coarser surfaces, the cabin remains quiet and comfortable.

To accommodate individual preferences, the standard car offers a menu of five driving modes, while the test vehicle was also fitted with the optional DCC- Dynamic Chassis Control package that provides a choice of three suspension settings – Sport, Comfort and Normal. Even in Sport setting the ride could not be described as harsh, and indeed was the preferred setting with only the driver on board.

Carrying a premium of £695 over the equivalent hatchback, the additional appeal of the estate is its cavernous luggage capacity for its overall size. This is almost three times that of the hatchback at 605 litres, extendible to 1,620





litres with the rear seats folded. The luggage platform also provides storage underneath for an emergency spare.

The cabin continues the established GT interior trim theme with grey tartan seats on the test vehicle and detailing that includes the golf ball gear lever knob as well as a charcoal roof lining. Front seats are very supportive and comfortable with the added bonus of selectable heating elements. Instrumentation consists of a pair of clearly presented analogue speedometer and rev counter with insets for fuel and temperature, while a central digital panel can also be set to duplicate the speedo reading. The central dash features a 6.5 inch colour display screen for infotainment and systems information while an electro-mechanical handbrake system frees up the space between the seats for cup holders and additional switches.



Equipment-wise, the Golf GTD estate comes with comprehensive handling support systems including Electronic Stability Control, Electronic Differential Lock and Traction Control while Automatic Distance Control is also standard. This features a radar controlled distance monitoring system and City Emergency Braking which minimise the risk of a frontal impact. The vehicle is also fitted with seven airbags including a driver's knee unit, while a Driver Alert System is also standard.

Comfort and convenience items include keyless entry and push button starting, switchable start / stop system, front and rear parking sensors, 2-zone electronic air conditioning, automatic xenon headlights and rain sensing wipers.

On the economy and environmental fronts, this Euro 6 engine has an official combined fuel consumption of 64.2 mpg and with a CO2 emissions of 115 gms/km is in Band C for zero annual car tax. For business users the car has a Benefit in Kind rating of 21%.

The model tested is listed at £28,615 and extras fitted to the car included Dynamic Chassis Control at £830, and Car-Net 'App-Connect' allowing mirroring of smartphone display on the infotainment screen via the USB connection at £125. Metallic paint adds £545. The car is in Group 26E for insurance purposes and is covered by Volkswagen's 3-year / 60,000 mile warranty with one year's UK and Europe roadside assistance.

(Driven February / March 2016)