

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF TDI

By Jim Mc Cauley

For over 40 years, the Volkswagen Golf has been the benchmark 'C' segment hatch with two million of them finding homes in the UK. Now the 7th generation model has received a mid-life update with revised styling, new engines and more technology but at an average of £650 less than the

comparable outgoing model. As is now the established pattern, the Golf continues to be offered in a wide range of power units and several bodystyles.

Two diesel options were considered at launch – the 1.6 litre and 2.0 litre units which are available in a range of trim options, while a third high performance engine is reserved for the GTD model.

First driven was the 1.6 litre model, fitted with the optional 7-speed DSG automatic transmission. Finished in the most popular 'SE Nav' specification, this model features the standard upgrade revisions of new bumpers and LED lighting. The 115PS engine takes the car

from rest to 62mph in 10.5 seconds en route to a potential top speed of 123mph. The DSG gearbox complements the smoothness of the power delivery and discreetly steps through the ratios up and down the 'box. In addition to enhancing the performance of the car, the DSG option also contributes to improved economy, bettering that of the manual gearbox to return an official combined figure of 68.9mpg.

Stepping up to the 2.0 litre model, there is the obvious sharper response with a 0-62mph time of 8.6 seconds and a given top speed of 134mph. Again the frugality of these engines continues to impress and in this case the official combined figure is given as 65.7mpg, some 20mpg better than some of the smaller capacity competitive models.

The 6-speed manual gearbox remains a joy to use, locating precisely in each position while steering in both cars maintains good feedback.

Ride in both cars provides the ideal balance of comfort versus cornering support and while the competition may have closed the gap on the Golf, it clearly maintains its lead in sector to provide the



ultimate driving experience. Even with the lowered sports suspensions in the 2.0 litre model in 'R-Line' specification, overall response in no way threatened the comfort of the occupants, yet maintained the poise of the car over poor surfaces.

With the wider range of criteria now considered for the EuroNCAP ratings, the new Golf range comes with a comprehensive package of supporting electronic safety aids including Electronic Stability Control with Electronic Differential Lock, Driver Alert system and 'Predictive Pedestrian Protection'. However from 'SE' grade upwards the package is substantially increased with Adaptive Cruise Control including Front Assist, City Emergency Braking, Cruise Control and Speed Limiter.

Also standard is Driving Mode Selection which allows the driver to select various control responses as well as Driver Personalisation profile which sets up to four profiles assigned to a key to preset selected data bases.



With regards to the test cars, the 1.6 litre was finished in popular 'SE Nav' trim with standard revised bodywork, while the 2.0 litre model in 'R-Line' specification featured the extensive bodywork upgrades including bumpers, spoilers, grille and side skirts.

In terms of running costs, the 1.6 litre car is in insurance Group 14E and has a BIK for company car users of 20% while the 2.0 litre TDI is in Group 21E with a BIK rating of 22%.

Although the diesel range opens at £19,770, the models tested are listed at £22,613 for the 1.6 TDI in 'SE Nav' trim and £25,065 for the 2.0 TDI in distinctive 'R-Line' trim. All models are covered by the company's comprehensive 3-year / 60,000 mile warranty.

(Driven March 2017)