

VOLKSWAGEN NEW TOUAREG

By Jim Mc Cauley

Volkswagen has introduced its new Touareg which will be available here from November. Of the three top German SUVs, Porsche and Audi being the competitors, the Touareg has been the crispest, design wise and the refinements on the latest model extend its appeal.

Although the model will be produced with a choice of V6 and V8 diesel engines, only the V6 engines will be available in the UK. These 3.0 litre TDI units are available in two outputs – 204 PS and 262 PS, both driving all four wheels through an 8-speed automatic transmission.



External tweaking is minimal but effective with revised bumpers and a thin stretched grille leading out to wraparound bi-xenon headlights. The vehicles also get new alloy wheel designs and a range of new colours. Overall, the rework gives the Touareg a firmer, stronger stance and with additional chrome underlining it enhances the premium look. The cabin is also updated with new leather and wood trims as well as aluminium switches.

On road, and the V6 engines provide refined and appropriate power delivery, especially at higher speeds where they are content to stay in top unlike the unexpected hunting from 7th to 8th in the V8s under steady throttle and on flat open roads. In the lower output V6, 0-62 mph is a sharp 8.7 seconds while the higher output engine pares 1.4 seconds off this. Respective top speeds are 129 mph and 141 mph.

Drive selection through the 8-speed transmission is virtually seamless while overall refinement provides a very settled cabin even at speeds in excess of 100 mph on German autobahns. Control weighting is nicely matched with good steering feedback and reassuring brake response.

Although the new model is available to order now, UK deliveries will not start until November when three trim levels will be available – SE, Escape and R-Line. All models are all-wheel drive with the mid-range Escape featuring the company's 4XMOTION off-road 4-wheel drive system with 50:50 torque split, higher



suspension and rear axle mechanical differential locks. It also has a 100 litre fuel tank compared to the 85 litre tank of the SE.

However, it is expected that 85% of UK customers will opt for the range topping R-Line model which additionally features a body kit with bespoke bumpers, sill and wheelarch extensions and larger 20-inch alloy wheels.



All models are lavishly equipped with bi-xenon lights and automatic post collision braking system standard across the range. However a long list of options is available which can substantially take the price well beyond the £43,000 to £47,500 range of the standard vehicles.

Among the extras are a swivelling tow-bar with electric release at £760, and a range of driver assistance packages which includes the 'Area View' system using front, rear and mid mounted cameras to provide a 360 degree bird's eye view of the vehicle as well as other active safety systems which can be purchased individually or in a competitively priced package.

The Touareg has been another success story for Volkswagen with the first generation model, launched in 2003 selling 470,000 vehicles and the second generation model launched in 2010 accounting for a further 300,00 sales world wide.

The company is confident that with the upgrades to styling, equipment and the latest Euro 6 engines that the customer appeal will continue.

The mid range Escape model has a given combined fuel consumption of 40.9 mpg with a CO2 emissions of 180 gms/km. The other two trim levels have similar combined fuel consumption figures of 42.8 mpg with a CO2 emissions of 173 gms/km. The vehicles are covered by Volkswagen's three year / 60,000 mile warranty which can be extended to five years / 90,000 miles. A fixed price service plan is also available, covering up to three years or 30,000 miles.