

Volkswagen e-Golf

By Jim Mc Cauley



If it looks like a Golf, it must be a Golf, but the latest variant to carry the famous Volkswagen badge breaks new ground for the range with the move to full electric power. The e-Golf is a plug-in model which totally depends on being charged from the mains and as well as entering the market place to be welcomed by the environmental lobby, it also brings with it the fear of range anxiety.

Volkswagen's all-electric dream is available only as a 5-door hatchback and is virtually indistinguishable from the standard range models except for the thin blue line running under the grille and LED headlights, indicating its environmental credentials.

On road, and the orchestrated tyre noise replaces the sound of an internal combustion engine as the motive power is totally silent. Benchmark acceleration figures give the car a 0-62 mph time of 10.5 seconds with the potential to top 87 mph. Mid-range acceleration is excellent and the handling and braking of the car are on par with other range derivatives.

But while there is an environmental appeal to electric vehicles, the downsides are their restricted range, long charging periods and availability of convenient charge points with reference to the distance to travel.

The e-Golf has an official range of 118 miles achieved in its reduced power mode of E+ restricting its standard peak power of 95PS to 75PS. An optional add-on heat pump for the air conditioning system can help to maintain the targeted range in winter when it uses heat from the ambient air and the vehicle's drive systems to reduce battery drain.

On a short test drive, I found that the predicted mileage fell quicker than initially indicated, attracting unnecessary attention to the odometer. There is also the recharging time of a minimum of eight hours at home or at the very best in a quick charging connection, 80% charge in 35 minutes. This compares to the accepted





industry time of 4 minutes to refuel a petrol or diesel car at a filling station.

In terms of appointments, the car is extremely well equipped to tease the potential customer to pay just over £30,000 for it. It may be a lot of money but it is also a lot of technology for what in most cases will be a second car for those who can fit their daily journey safely within the given range and who are confident of having a convenient charge point at journey's end if needed. They must also remember to put it on

an overnight charge each evening.

It is a car that requires more attention and a greater sense of responsibility than a traditional vehicle, but it clearly highlights the owners' commitment to a cleaner future if they can deal with the additional concerns. They also get a car that is extremely well equipped in terms of active safety provision which includes the 'Driver Alert System' and 'PreCrash' occupant protection as well as a high level specification that includes dual zone air conditioning, Bluetooth connectivity, automatic headlights and wipers, heated windscreen, front and rear parking sensors, and satellite navigation with an 8-inch colour touch screen.

The e-Golf is available in one trim only and is listed at £30,244. The car is in Band A for zero road tax and for insurance purposes is in Group 10E. Like electric vehicles from other manufacturers, the warranty is split between the traditional 3-year / 60,000 mile basic cover with 5-years on e-components and 8-years on the batteries.

