



## New VW Golf tees off for 2017

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The seventh generation VW Golf has received a mid-life refresh with more equipment, mildly refreshed styling, updated engines and on average they cost £650 less than the corresponding outgoing models, writes David Miles.



VW Golf gets comprehensive make-over for 2017

Prices now start after the 1 April rise in First Year rate VED road tax costs from £17,765 for the entry level Golf S 1.0 TSI 85hp three door hatch up to £34,250 for the 310hp Golf R 2.0 TSI auto DSG five door hatchback. The 2017 range also consists of five door estates priced from £19,470 for the 1.0 TSI 85hp rising to £35,300 for the 310hp R version.

The best selling single version out of the 113 models in the 2017 Golf range is the GTD 2.0



TDI 184hp turbodiesel, manual gearbox and five door body which is priced from 1 April at £27,880 with demand driven by company car user-chooser customers. Overall the sale of new Golf models in the UK see 65% of registrations go to Fleet and business customers with 35% to retail buyers.

Around 55% of Golf customers in the UK choose a diesel powered model, 83% choose a five door hatchback with three door hatchbacks and five door estates each taking around 8% of sales. The most popular level of specification is SE Nav chosen by 33% of customers.

The Golf since its launch in 1974 has achieved in excess over 33 million global sales, more than two million of which have been to UK buyers. A new Golf is produced every 40 seconds from their factories around the world. The VW brand sells in 150 markets and produces vehicles in 14 countries. The Golf is VW's best selling model range worldwide. The Volkswagen Group of associated brands, including Audi, SEAT, Skoda and Porsche, was the world's largest vehicle producer in 2016 with 10 million units a fraction ahead of Toyota with Ford in third place.

In the UK in 2016 the VW brand sold 207,028 new passenger cars a fall of 7.5% due partially to the fallout from the emissions scandal. The Golf remained as the UK's fourth best selling passenger car with 69,492 registrations, a reduction of 5.25% over the sales in 2015 when it was also in fourth place in the UK's top ten new car sales chart. That's all history now as the 7.5 generation revised Golf models arrive in UK dealerships.



VW claim the new models will again redefine the C-segment bringing 'big car' technology to its sector. Standard across the range are LED rear lights while the majority of models across the Golf hatchback and Estate line-up have a new generation of larger and more sophisticated touchscreen infotainment systems.



Apps are cutting edge for latest Golf owners

The new Golf bristles with technical innovations so for the first time in the compact class and depending on model, the new Discover Navigation Pro radio-navigation and online system can be operated via gesture control.

Now with a 9.2-inch screen, the system complements the Active Info Display that is also new in the Golf and appears as standard on all Performance Golfs. Meanwhile, the range of



online services and apps has also been enlarged.

The latest updated Golfs also create a new benchmark for assistance systems in the compact class, employing technologies that will significantly improve safety. Depending on model, these include City Emergency Braking with new pedestrian monitoring (Front Assist); a new Traffic Jam Assist that offers semi-automated driving at speeds of up to 37 mph and Emergency Assist which is also new to this segment.

Emergency Assist notices if the driver is incapacitated and initiates various measures to rouse them in escalating stages culminating, if the driver remains inactive, in carrying out an emergency stop.

The UK line-up retains a familiar feel, beginning in the hatchback range with S and rising through SE, SE Nav, GT, R-Line, GTE, GTE Advance, e-Golf, GTD and GTD BlueLine to GTI, GTI Performance and the hard-core R.

The estate family offers a wide choice as well with S, SE, SE Nav, GT and GTD and GTD BlueLine models being joined by Alltrack and R.

Engine choices are numerous with 1.0, 1.4 and 2.0-litre TSI turbo petrol engines ranging in power outputs from 85 to 310hp. There is a new 1.5 TSI Evo unit with Active Cylinder Management joining the line-up in June replacing the current 1.4 TSI unit which only continues in the petrol/electric hybrid five door models.

Turbodiesel power units are 1.6 and 2.0-litres with power outputs from 115 to 184hp. There is also the choice of GTE plug-in hybrid or pure electric (e) power. The revised Golf range arrives in three waves up to June this year with 77% off the range available now.

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## First impressions

*By Robin Roberts*

Anyone who plays knows that inconsistency is probably the biggest challenge to a round of golf, and so it is with the latest 2017 Volkswagen Golf range.

We had a chance to try some of the latest, but sadly not all, of the new Golf Mk7 series and they produced both disappointment and delight.



Quality interior very evident in 2017 Golf

The best in the bag is in my opinion the stunning 110ps 1.0 petrol engine and matched with a six speed manual gearbox in the Estate SE tested, which returned an indicated 46mpg.

This could become the most popular petrol engine in the range with its instant start-up,



surprisingly good torque from rest and through gears, its smoothness, economy and quietness.

You might think it's too small to pull along a model weighing just under 1.3 tonne but it actually does a very good job. The estate bodystyle is falling out of favour but the Golf carry-all takes a minimum 605 litres up to 1620 litres and it has a low loading floor and wide high lifting tailgate, so it is still a very practical car for those who really need the space.

Not only was the powertrain a delight, but the ride comfort was very good on 17-inch wheels and it even felt softly sprung at times. The wheelbase is only 9mm longer than the hatchback yet felt a lot longer with its more compliant ride.

That contrasted with the 115ps Golf SE TDI 1.6 five-door hatch also sampled, which retains the attractive handling which has helped make it one of the most popular of all Golf models, but which is now trailing rivals in terms of comfort on its 19-inch wheels.

With its different driving modes briefly sampled and selected we saw about 48mpg, but it was not an involving experience and at times the engine sounded rough and was not helped by its five-speed box, while the suspension was jiggly and road noise intrusive. No doubt if you are undemanding, settle for what you're given in the way of a company car and just rattle off the miles week after week, the 115ps 1.6 TDI will be ok for you. It's unchallenging although it is challenged by better rivals.

The better diesel was the 2.0 TDI putting out 184ps through a 6sp manual box. This returned almost 43mpg, the lowest economy we had in the day, but it really was a model which showed off the Golf to its best.

In normal mode and before selecting sporting mode, this hatchback version packed a punch from standstill to scenery zapping speed.

The ride was biased towards firmness but it somehow managed to retain a high degree of comfort as well to go with the handling and roadholding qualities.



New lights but traditional outline to Golf

There are a numbing 113 models in the 2017 Golf range and its going to grow later this summer with a new petrol engine coming, so it's a truly massive choice which really needs you to play with before making a final choice and decision you'll have to live with for a few years. Who would have thought a few rounds of Golf could be so hard on the heart?