



Sunday drive: Hyundai i30

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The all-new third generation Hyundai i30 five door hatchback range went on sale in the UK from 1 March this year and it will be followed by Tourer estate versions due this summer.

The two ranges will be similar in terms of engine and specification choices, but a little more expensive and all are covered by Hyundai's much praised five years unlimited mileage



Hyundai i30 went on UK sale in March



warranty.

The new i30 prices start from £16,995 with 1.0-litre 120hp and 1.4-litre 140hp T-GDI turbo petrol engines and a 1.6-litre CRDi 110hp turbodiesel unit. Six-speed manual gearboxes are available throughout the range with a seven-speed dual clutch DCT auto transmission available for the 1.4 T-GDI petrol and 1.6 CRDi turbodiesel units at the higher specification levels. The full range of spec levels, depending on the engine chosen, are S, SE, the best selling SE Nav, Premium and Premium SE.

Whilst the bland and conservative exterior styling and purely functional interior design might not necessarily impress would-be buyers in this competitive class, it is the standard specification and long warranty that will attract as well as the prices.

All versions have a high level of safety kit with Lane Departure warning, Forward Collision warning, Lane Keep Assist, Autonomous Emergency Braking and Hill Start Assist. All models also get central door locking, electrically adjusted door mirrors, DAB radio, Bluetooth, air-con, electric front and rear windows and drive seat height adjustment as standard.

The additions to the SE grade include 16-inch alloy wheels, cruise control, front fog lights, 5-inch LCD screen and rear view camera. SE Nav additions include sat-nav, 8-inch touchscreen and Bluetooth with voice recognition plus Apple CarPlay and Android Auto phone connectivity.

The Premium level additions include 17-inch alloy wheels, dual zone climate control, electric parking brake, heated front seats, artificial leather/cloth seat facings, front and rear parking assist and LED front headlights. The top level Premium SE sees additions such as a panoramic sunroof, real leather seat facings and a heated steering wheel. Current prices top out at £24,885 for the Premium SE 1.6 CRDi automatic.

It's the competitive prices, long warranty and comprehensive specification that keeps the new Hyundai i30 relevant in today's competitive C-segment which is filled with



accomplished models such as the best selling Ford Focus and also the Vauxhall Astra, VW's new Golf, Skoda Octavia, Renault Megane, SEAT Leon and the more sharply styled Kia Cee'd which is essentially the same car with similar engine options from Hyundai's subsidiary fellow South Korean brand.

Although a South Korean brand the Hyundai i30 is developed, tested and manufactured in Europe but apart from the Cascading front grille walk around the five door car and it's a bit anonymous, a bit everyday and it doesn't stand out visually from lots of other offerings. It doesn't have the wedge shape or wide stance of the athletic looking Ford Focus, the edgier styling lines of the Kia Cee'd or the sharp looks and interior space of the Skoda Octavia. Still bland exterior styling hasn't stopped the VW Golf from selling well enough.

Inside the i30 is classier than before but not that inspiring. The materials look uninteresting but it seems well put together and on my best selling SE Nav version the eight-inch touchscreen brought a modern look to the fascia panel. The heater controls are on the small side



Looks better than before inside but still not among the best



and a bit fiddly to use and some of the plastics especially around the door storage bins feel a bit cheap. There is a lack of soft feel trim for the fascia for instance although the texturing is pleasing. The seats are comfortable and the driving position is good.



The rear seats are a shade short of legroom and the headroom for adults could be better however the boot has a generous 395-litres of space and 1,301-litres with them folded down.



Tight fit for those behind driver and passenger

My test model was powered by the new 1.0-litre, three cylinder T-GDI turbocharged direct injection petrol engine which is more impressive and is sure to be the best-buy option for retail customers. With 120hp and a useful 171Nm of torque delivered from only



1,500rpm this
lightweight unit
is really
responsive from
low engine
speeds with good
mid range
response and
seemingly
effortless ability
to maintain
higher 70mph
cruising speeds
on motorways.

In terms of pure acceleration it isn't swift but it's good enough for most users. It was the ability to cruise at legal maximum speed on open roads that impressed and the engine remained quiet whilst under load with the characterful sounding thrum of the triple cylinder engine. The six-speed gearbox needs to be used to keep the engine in its most responsive mode from 30 to 50mph but above that speed the engine responded well in top gear.

The official Combined Cycle fuel economy is 56.5mpg but in real-life I never got close to that with a 38.8mpg overall fuel economy for my week of long and short journeys. As usual most of these modern day three cylinder units do not provide the real-life fuel economy the official tests say they will.

With CO2 emissions of 115g/km the new costly VED road tax rate is £160 for the First Year and then £140 for the new Standard rate for year two onwards which is a big increase on the £0/£30 previous costs. Company car drivers will pay 22% Benefit-in-Kind tax.

On the plus side the new i30's suspension provided good ride comfort. The compliant



suspension absorbed bumps from potholes very well and the ride being on the soft side was appreciated especially on motorway journeys. It was a little on the soft side during cornering with a tendency for front wheel drive understeer and the steering was a bit number which didn't always give predictable feedback but overall it was easy to live with and more likely than not to be another plus point in the i30's favour.



Updated looks to latest i30

In short the new Hyundai's is very good in some areas such as price, specification, ride comfort, a willing new 1.0-litre engine and a long warranty. In other areas it is less striking such as its bland exterior design and lack-lustre interior trim. It's just a question on whether the pluses outweigh the minuses. For some potential owners they will for some they will not.



MILESTONES

Hyundai i30 SE Nav 1.0 T-GDi 120 5-door manual £19,805 (£20,230 as tested)

Engine/transmission: 1.0-litre, 3-cylinder, turbocharged direct injection petrol, 120hp, 171Nm of torque from 1,500rpm, 6-speed manual

Performance: 118mph, 0-62mph 11.1-seconds, Combined Cycle 56.5mpg, (38.8mpg on test)

CO2 115g/km, new VED road tax rates £160/£140 BIK company car tax rate 22%

Insurance group: 9E Warranty: 5-years/unlimited mileage

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,340mm, W 1,795mm, H 1,455mm, boot/load space 395 to 1,301-litres, 5-doors/5-seats

For: Attractive prices, low insurance cost, high specification, long warranty, comfortable ride

Against: New much higher VED road tax costs, anonymous bland exterior styling, functional interior finishes, fiddly heating/fan speed adjustment controls.

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