



## Weekend roadtest: Ford Focus 1500 ST-LineX Auto

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Britain's best selling family car has just got better, and it's going to get better still, *writes Robin Roberts.*



The newest Ford Focus had barely arrived in showrooms in the autumn before changes were being made to benefit from the latest WLTP emissions legislation, so the 150ps version tested here is now replaced by a 182ps derivative in ST-Line X form. However, a number of the lower powered and higher emission models are available and this is the model we tested.



The Ford triple-pot unit is now being made in Bridgend Engine Plant and combined with the new seamless eight-speed automatic gearbox it's a very smooth combination delivering lively, effortless performance and good economy at the pump.

This is the gearbox to go for if you want an enjoyable and stress-free drive in a busy town or quiet rural backwater. You can leave the car do its own thing or use the manual controls to push it along to your heart's content.

The 150ps engine is a quick starter, pulls well with up to 240Nm of torque available underfoot and it has plenty of punch to safely overtake or amble along motorways on longer journeys.

The Focus always had an edge over rivals when it came to steering, handling and braking and this advantage continues with the newest versions and I thought it was far better riding as well into the bargain when fitted with the optional continuously controlled damping and selectable driving modes.





It is slightly firm over some surfaces but generally now better copes with intermediate surfaces with the CCD system and the new seats have also cushioned the ride as well as more firmly located occupants.

Access is very good with big wide opening doors front and back, an easy-open fifth door and big boot which quickly expands as the offset-split back seat is dropped almost flat.

Inside the room is good for four adults, a slight squeeze for five, but the front seats have good adjustment room and visibility is very clear all round with excellent lights and wipers for bad conditions.



Our test car had the optional brighter LED intelligent headlights and I can thoroughly recommend this extra.





The test car was fitted with a convenience pack for manoeuvring and assistance pack for a level of automated driving which are ideal for the high mileage user.

The layout of major controls was ideal and the secondary stalks and switches were generally well placed but I think too much is done via the touchscreen and it's potentially distracting to go through menus when a simple push or turn control would suffice and be both quicker and safer even if they spoil the uninterrupted surfaces inside the cabin. In fact, a lot of effort has gone into the interior look of the new Focus and it really stands shoulder to shoulder with more expensive models but would benefit from less dark treatment and more highlighted areas of the fascia and door casings.



There are seven trim levels so you have plenty of choice with a range of the latest petrol or diesel engines as well and hatchback or

estate styles to the now stronger but lighter integrated chassis and body.

The new body has created a longer wheelbase (*above*) to improve ride and those in the back have greater legroom.



The ST-Line X offers unique body styling, unique upper and lower grille, rear spoiler and polished twin tailpipes with a flat-bottomed steering wheel, black



headlining, aluminium gear-knob, alloy finish pedals and red stitching, 18in alloy wheels, red calipers and features found on the Titanium X model.

The new Ford Focus builds on the strengths of the previous model and delivers improvements in a meaningful way without detracting from what has gone before.

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#### FAST FACTS

Ford Focus 1.5 ST-LINE X Auto 8sp

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Price:£25,650

Mechanical:150ps 3-cyl. 1497cc petrol, 8sp auto

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Max Speed: 129mph

0-62mph: 8.9secs

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Combined MPG: 33mpg

Insurance Group: 16E

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C02 emissions:133gkm

Bik rating: 27%, £205FY, £140SR

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Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Sizes: L4.38m, W1.83m, H1.46m

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Bootpace:341 to 1320 litres

Kerb:1404kg



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**For:** Performance, handling, powertrain, equipment, comfort and room

**Against:** Some road noise, average warranty, occasionally firm ride, distracting touchscreen.

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Also see what we thought of the [Ford Focus Titanium X 1.0](#)