



Weekend roadtest: Volkswagen Golf Mk7

Published: 12th January 2013

Author: Robin Roberts and David Miles

Online version: <https://www.wheelswithinwales.uk/weekend-roadtest-volkswagen-golf-mk7/>

Deliveries to UK customers of the all-new Volkswagen Golf three and five door hatchbacks in its seventh generation form began this week at prices starting from £16,285 rising to £24,880.



The starter model price is £157 less than its predecessor whereas other models have more or less carry-over pricing. The all-new models offer more space, have added specification, are lighter with lower CO2 emissions and offering up to 23 per cent better fuel economy.

The new Golf uses Volkswagen Group's new MQB (Modularer Querbaukasten) platform, already used for the new Audi A3 and will be used by the SEAT and Skoda brands in future.

Volkswagen say that one quarter of fuel consumption can be attributed to the weight of a car so the new Golf uses lightweight high strength steel giving savings of up to 100kg over the range it replaces.

Since the launch of the first Golf in 1974 over 29 million of them have been sold worldwide of which 1.6 million have found homes in the UK.

Around 58,000 Golf Hatchbacks are sold in the UK annually, 90 per cent of which are five door versions. (62,000 Golfs of all types, hatchbacks/cabriolet/estate and Plus variants are sold each year in the UK).



Fleet and business customers account for 68 per cent of Golf Hatchback sales with 85 per cent being diesel powered. The single most popular version of the new Golf Hatchback will be the 1.6-litre TDI SE 5-Door priced at £20,500.



The Volkswagen Golf traditionally competes in the C-segment (lower medium) of the UK's new car market against the volume selling Ford Focus and Vauxhall Astra ranges however top of the range Golf versions (GTI/GTD are to come in July) also compete against premium brand hatchbacks such as the new Audi A3, BMW 1-Series and new Mercedes-Benz A-Class. This sector still accounts for

around one in every three new cars sold in the UK.

In 2012 the Golf range was the fifth best selling model; range overall with 62,021 UK registrations. The Focus was third with 83,115 sales and the Astra fourth with 63,023 sales.

With GTI, GTD and BlueMotion Golfs to arrive in July and Estate versions in October, initially the Golf Hatchback range offers S, SE and GT levels of specification. When the range is complete the SE specification will be the choice of 55 per cent of UK buyers, S will take 24 per cent of sales and GT 13 per cent with the GTI/GTD versions taking the remaining 8.0 per cent.

The new Golf is not just a new lighter and larger bodyshell with more specification. All engines are new although they carry the same titles as the outgoing units.

All engines now have Stop/Start and battery regeneration functions as standard and all are modular construction. This means they are the same dimensions so they all use the same mounting points and pick-up connections for electrics and fluids within the engine



compartment.

Volkswagen says this speeds up production time and is also more cost effective in reducing the number of installation components needed for different models.

At launch the petrol engines are a 1.2-litre TSI 85PS unit returning 57.6mpg for the Combined Cycle with 113g/km of CO2 emissions. There is a 1.2-litre TSI 105PS with 57.6mpg and 114g/km plus two 1.4-litre TSI units: one with 122PS giving 54.3mpg and 120g/km and the headline grabbing one with 140PS, 60.1mpg and 109g/km which features Active Cylinder Technology. This can deactivate two of the four cylinders under certain loads, such as the overrun, so saving on fuel and reducing emissions.

Diesel engines are a 1.6-litre TDI 105PS unit which returns 74.3mpg and 99g/km of CO2 and a 2.0-litre, TDI 150PS unit returning 68.9mpg with 106g/km



Volkswagen UK said initial orders show a high proportion of fleet and business buyers, the 1.6-litre TDI unit is the most popular taking 30 per cent of sales.

The next most popular unit and the preference of retail buyers is the 1.4-litre 122PS petrol unit which appeals to 25 per cent of customers. The new technology 1.4-litre active Cylinder Technology petrol engine is expected to appeal to just six per cent of buyers.



On the road

Volkswagen and new Golf owners must be in seventh heaven, writes ROBIN ROBERTS.

This latest version of the ever-popular hatchback is the best so far delivering refinement and sophistication through its engineering and holding out the promise of extremely good residual value down the ownership line.

We tested three versions of the Golf MkVII and all shared its eerily precise build quality with tight fit and fine finish to doors, panels and trim.

But unlike some of the previous generation Golf models, the newest also has eye-catching interior trim which is still immensely practical and functional and you know is going to stand the test of time and toddlers.

The roomier interior is immediately apparent when you sit in the car and even those in the back seats will find plenty of legroom with the front seat set for a six-footer. Head and elbow room is generous and bootspace sensible and large.

The seats' comfort is backed up by the very compliant suspension which soaked up road shocks without complaint or letting them into the interior but you can hear how hard it's working underneath with constant road rumbles and occasional bump-thump noises from the suspension.

The anticipated best seller 5dr Golf SE with 105ps 1.6 TDI engine and five-speed manual gearbox emitting 99g/km sets a new benchmark for this class. What it lacks in absolute power from the sweet sounding and smooth engine it makes up for with 48mpg consumption, a really light powertrain and good steering and brakes.

The 150ps 2.0 TDI with 6sp box managed an even better 51mpg, possibly because it did not have to be pushed so hard to deliver very good usable performance on a mixture of country, town and motorway roads. If you do high mileages and need a versatile car, this is probably



the best of the new breed, and it emits 106gkm.

But before you make that choice, I urge you to try the Golf GT with 1.4 TSI 140ps petrol engine and 6sp box and which boasts the automatic cylinder deactivation.

This very clever and smoothest of engines holds a lot of promise but the 112gkm CO2 figure and test consumption of 38mpg was not as remarkable as it might have been. If you regularly drive on a very light throttle and in town it might achieve better economy.



Little wonder that VW do not anticipate it being a big seller in the new line-up.

Verdict

The latest VW Golf is a force to be reckoned with if you are a competitor while customers can simply enjoy one of the best family cars on sale today, so long as you carefully pick the best one for your needs.