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Kia cee'd 1.0 T-GDi GT-Line Five Door Hatchback Road Test

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Kia's Family-sized cee'd Hatchback on Test...

Keith Ward reports.

Since it was first planted in UK showrooms a decade ago, the Focus-sized and curiously



named Kia cee'd has flourished enough to sell well over one million across Europe, blossoming into a second generation and further most recently into a mid-term upgrade for the 2016 model year.

Headline features are an addition to the engine range in the form of a 1.0 litre petrol turbocharged three-cylinder "eco" unit and a new high-end GT-Line trim package. They are combined in the version tried here priced proud of £20,000.

Kia vow to replace "within the next few years" 70 per cent of their engines with downsized, more fuel-efficient units. First up and making its debut in the cee'd range is this three-pot eco-turbo.

In 118 bhp tune (also available with 98 bhp) it pulls pluckily enough, is reasonably smooth and quiet, and settles into a fairly relaxed 2,400 rpm at 70 mph in top sixth of its easy manual gearbox.

A CO2 figure of 115 g/km is low enough to qualify for a £30 annual VED. An official combined mpg figure of more than 57 mpg contrasted with our average recorded 42.5, mainly on long motorway runs, so not unexpected.

A glitch was the ISG stop-start system which sometimes failed to respond instantly for quick getaways.

Not for the first time in our hands, the cee'd as a model impressed in general with its supple - even newly uprated - suspension, assured handling and nicely balanced steering, especially in the "comfort" slot of its three settings. It scores highly on driving pleasure.

By the way, do not be mis-led by that new top trim rating of GT-Line. It refers purely to looks rather than lusty performance, style rather than scorching the tarmac. There is an actual GT in the classic sense at the very top of the cee'd range, three or five-door, packing 201 bhp and priced at £23,000-plus.



So claimed top speed for the GT-Line is a modest 118 mph and 0-60 in 10.7 seconds.

And looks? Externally, clock if you will the side sill mouldings, a deep front bumper, graphite chrome surround for the black gloss grille, “ice-cube style” daytime running lights, bespoke 17-inch alloys and a pair of oval exhaust pipes which at least suggest they are the business.

Inside, GT-Line gets you a sporty leather steering wheel and gearshift, alloy pedals, chrome and high-gloss black facings and some fancy coloured stitching. Front seats have electric lumbar adjustment but are not the most comfortable in class.

These features are added to such as air-con, cornering lights, rear privacy glass, six-speaker audio and upgraded infotainment and navigation systems channelled through a seven-inch screen. Bluetooth, connectivity, AUX, USB and DAB now the rule and are to be admired. But does anyone else with a stack of audio books for long journeys regret the sudden passing of the in-car CD player? (“Yes, I do, for music in my case”, says Kim, “- and have said so in my road tests of other models too). It was still common on new cars until a couple of years ago.

The cee’d offers decent storage around the cabin, including a cooled glovebox, and below the boot floor is a useful compartmentalised tray. The rear seats tip and fold in two stages into a welcome flat extension of the boot, giving a deck totalling nearly 1.4 metres (4.58 ft).

The revamped cee’d continues to be available as a three-door “pro-cee’d” hatch as well as a stylish five-door Sportswagon estate. Prices covering all versions range from around £15,000 to £24,000 and include that industry-leading seven year/100,000 mile warranty.

Kia in the UK recorded a new annual sales record of 78,489 in 2015. The cee’d was named the most dependable compact car and Kia Motors ranked second overall brand for dependability in a UK survey by polling specialists J.D. Power.

UK sales in the first eight months of 2016 were up 14.7 per cent over the same period last year, which saw Kia break for the first time into both the top 10 makes (7th) and top 10



models (Sportage, 8th).

VERDICT

Practical, and impressive drive.

Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Kia cee'd 1.0 T-GDi GT-Line □five door hatchback.

Space/Size: Five seats; length 4,310 mm (14.14 ft); kerb wt. 1,402 kg (3,091 lb).

Boot: Length 750 mm (2.46 ft) extending to 1,390 mm (4.56 ft); min width 1,020 mm (3.35 ft); volume 380 litres□ (13.42 cu.ft).

Engine:

Petrol; 998 cc; three cylinder; turbo; twin cam; six speed manual; ISG stop-start. 118 bhp @ 6,000 rpm; max torque 126 lb ft (171 Nm) @ 1,500-4,000 rpm.

Performance:

0-60 mph: 10.7 secs.

Top speed: 118 mph.

Fuel consumption: On test 46.3; official combined 57.6□ mpg.

Emissions and taxation: CO2 115 g/km; Road tax band C; VED Nil then £30 per annum; BIK 18%.

Insurance Group: 12.



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Warranty: Seven years/100,000 miles; rust-through 12 years; paint 5 years; breakdown 1 year.

Tyres: □ 225/45 R17.

Price: £20,220.

Rivals: Ford Focus 1.0T Ecoboost 125 Titanium £20,595; Vauxhall Astra 1.0T EcoFLEX Elite Nav £20,015; VW Golf 1.4 TSI 125 £20,020.