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Latest Ford Mustang 2.3 – Road Test

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Tech is to be expected, reliability taken for granted, build quality must be very good, comfort cannot be ignored, so put this together and price it carefully and what you get is another car to take on remarkably similar rivals.



Then there is the 2019 model year improved Ford Mustang.



Few cars I have driven can stir emotions and raise pointed fingers from pedestrians and other drivers in the way of the Mustang.

It is the accepted and respected face of America and much more popular than its President. That's because it has a proud history in its homeland and abroad, a place in cinema history and an association with another American hero, Steve McQueen. It's earned its bragging rights long before social media was invented.



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These are all positives about the Mustang. Unfortunately, it has taken Ford a while to realise that what was good enough for its enormous American market just did not cut it in Europe, where roads are more demanding of drivers and the latest safety legislation is outpacing the USA.



Enter the latest revised Ford Mustang with improved powertrains, safety, ride and handling at prices which make many European-made rivals seem very expensive and less attractive. They don't have that cache of this car's credibility.

The new Mustang range is sold as Fastback or Convertible models with a choice of EcoBoost 290 hp four cylinder 2.3 litre or GT 450 hp 5.0 litre V8 petrol engines with six speed manual or 10 speed automatic transmission, and there are also Shadow and Bullitt special editions. The additional cost of the £36,645 test car included Kona Blue paint, MagneRide adaptive suspension and Shaker Pro sound system, adding about £3,000 to standard cost.

We had the better selling 2.3 engined Coupe version which is the first Ford to use a twin-scroll turbocharger for smooth and very strong power delivery, and it can utilise some 440 Nm (325 lb.ft) of pulling power, pushing through the rear wheels.



That means it really pulls away smartly and sweetly, has immense reserves for overtaking and will endlessly cruise along motorways. Six push-button drive modes make the most of the technology and performance from snow to drag strip.

This sophistication is matched by the directness of the gearchange and box so you always have the right gear for any situation, and if you need to, make a change that's quick and clean.

I loved the massive brakes and their very progressive feel underfoot and ability to undramatically slow it from high speed with utter control. The steering, too, communicated



a lot winding over the Preseli hills or twisting county lanes in West Wales.

Planted, powerful and a pleasure, the Ford Mustang gobbled up distance, and the secondary controls were fairly straight-forward and needed little thought to distract from the drive. I liked the big clear essential instruments in front of the driver and the size of the console screen was reasonable with not too much going on despite it being touchscreen.

Thankfully some most-used controls are not hidden behind the screen but remain on rotary switches beneath so the air circulation, temperature and output are almost instantly altered if you wish. More efficient and less distracting, and again, making the actual physical driving more pleasurable.

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Oddments room is fairly good but not as much as you might expect in such a big car. The exterior size of the new Mustang can be a bit daunting when it overhangs most parking bays or you face oncoming traffic in a lane.

It does, however, contribute to a lot of interior room for those in front or behind and you are never going to feel cramped. Smaller persons in the back may find the waistline a bit high but from the driver's view the corners are fairly clear and the wipers and lights are very good.

Don't push hard on the throttle and the only noise which lingers is that coming from the big wheels and tyres, however if you open it up the engine makes a wonderful deep roar as the Mustang heads for the hills.

The optional magnetic activated suspension really adjusts to selection changes in milliseconds and smooths out the worst bumps and is definitely worth considering for the UK's tracks, sorry, roads.



VERDICT

If you liked the former Ford Capri you can think of the Ford Mustang in a similar but better way and the product of some serious intense bodybuilding.

The Capri was for Europe, the Mustang is for emotions.

For: Muscle car image, powertrain, 2019 model year improved safety equipment, ride, handling, performance.

Against: A big car to manage in urban areas, slight vision issues, engine noise under load and road noise over bad surfaces, high emissions and associated costs, ungenerous warranty.



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Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Ford Mustang New Fastback two door Coupe, 2.3 EcoBoost.

Price: £36,645 (*as tested* £39,625).

Engine/transmission: Turbocharged 290 hp, 440 Nm (325 lb.ft) of torque at 3,000 rpm, four cylinder, 2.3 litre, six speed manual, rear wheel drive.



Performance: 145 mph, 0-62mph 5.8 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 31.4 mpg (30 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 199 g/km, VED First Year road tax £1,240 then £140 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 37%.

Insurance Group: 42.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,789 mm (15.71 ft), W 1,916 mm (6.29 ft), H 1,373 mm (4.50 ft), two doors/four seats.