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Skoda Fabia 'Edition Redline' – Road Test

Published: October 31, 2017

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/skoda-fabia-edition-redline-road-test/>



The Skoda Fabia Supermini hatch has pride on its side...

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Although the demand for compact SUVs is high, the similar sized but less tall supermini hatchbacks are still the UK's best selling new cars, with the new Ford Fiesta supermini range still leading the way as Britain's most popular new car.

One of the Fiesta's rivals is the not so new but cheaper and very popular Skoda Fabia. Other competitors are the very new SEAT Ibiza which uses the Volkswagen Group's new supermini platform, and the VW Polo which currently uses the same platform as the Fabia,



but a new Polo arrives early next year with the new platform.

Where the Skoda Fabia has two distinct advantages over the Ibiza five door Hatch and Polo three and five door Hatchback is lower price, and the Fabia line up includes three and five door Hatch plus five door Estates versions.

The Fabia Hatch prices start from £11,100 and the Estates from £12,980, whilst SEAT's Ibiza five door Hatchback prices start from £13,130, and the Polo five door Hatchback costs from £12,690. Of course all are available with either deposit contributions using their finance schemes, or discounts - and of course there are Scrappage Scheme savings. In the case of the Fabia it's a Scrappage Scheme saving of £2,500. This offer applies to owners of any make of pre Euro 5 emissions diesel car registered before 2010 and the customer must have owned the trade-in vehicle for at least six months. Under this scheme orders must be placed before 31 December 2017.



For this road test I'm looking at the Fabia Hatch, in particular the special Edition RedLine 1.0 litre three-cylinder turbo petrol TSI 110 hp five door, priced at £15,995. The full choice of specifications throughout the range are S, SE, SE L, Monte Carlo plus a new Colour Edition array of bright colours, and the sporty looking RedLine variant which is only available as a five door hatch and only with the 110 hp engine.

The full range of engine choices for Fabia models, depending on the specification level chosen, are 1.0 MPI normally aspirated petrol units with 60 and 75 hp outputs, the 1.0 litre TSI 95 and 110 hp turbo petrol units and 1.4 TDI turbodiesels with 90 and 105 hp outputs. Price wise the test drive RedLine model appears to sit in the range between the SE L and Monte Carlo mainstream specification levels.



The RedLine Hatch is about sporty equipment more than rev-counter 'redline' speed. My test car had a bright Moon White body colour with a red line and parallel grey line side by side running from the front grille, over the roof and down the tailgate. It had red door mirror cappings as well. Also included were black 16-inch alloy wheels, three spoke flat bottomed leather steering wheel, leather covered handbrake and gearlever, cloth-covered sports seats, uprated surround sound system with six speakers, DAB radio, electric front windows, electrically powered and heated door mirrors, front fog lights, manual air-con, trip computer, Mirror Link connectivity, Bluetooth and alarm. It also had radar rear parking sensors - unlike the new SEAT Ibiza. But like the Ibiza it didn't have electrically operated rear side windows or a spare wheel, but that is an £85 option; better than the £100 extra cost for the Ibiza.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

This third generation Skoda Fabia does lose out on interior space compared to the latest generation SEAT Ibiza with the new VW Group supermini platform. It doesn't have the same amount of rear seat legroom, and the boot with the folding rear three seat backs in place, is 330 litres (11.65 cu.ft) - and with them folded 1,150 litres (40.79 cu.ft) whilst the Ibiza offers 355 litres (12.54 cu.ft) and 1,540 litres (54.38 cu.ft) respectively.

The ride comfort is also not as compliant with impacts from potholes felt more often inside the car. Compared to the Ibiza's FR spec lower sports suspension the Fabia's ride was more unsettled and harsh. The Fabia still offers neat handling but doesn't have the fast steering response and sharp turn-in abilities of the latest Ibiza.

The VW Group series of 1.0 litre three cylinder turbo petrol engines come in various outputs in terms of power and torque, depending on whether the brand is VW, SEAT or Skoda. In the case of the Fabia 1.0 litre RedLine it's 110 hp with 200 Nm (148 lb.ft) of torque from 2,000 rpm. Top speed is 122 mph with zero to 62 mph taking 9.5 seconds, and the Combined Cycle fuel economy figure is 64.2 mpg. During my test driving, covering my usual longer runs plus some winding country roads and a few commutes in town traffic, the Fabia



returned 48.7 mpg overall but regularly recorded 54 mpg on longer runs. With CO2 emissions of 103 g/km the VED costs is £140 every year and company car drivers will pay 19% Benefit-in-Kind tax. Insurance is Group 11E.

By comparison the 115 hp version of the same engine I tried recently in the new SEAT Ibiza five door hatch has the same amount of torque, top speed is 121 mph, 0-62 mph takes 9.3 seconds, the Combined Cycle is 60.1 mpg and 48.3 mpg on test, CO2 is 108 g/km so VED costs are the same but BiK company car tax was higher at 20%, and insurance was Group 12E.

However the Ibiza 115 hp FR version, which is similar in spec to the Skoda Fabia RedLine, costs £16,630 so the Fabia might be a bit less refined and a shade smaller inside but it has price on its side to the tune of £635.



VERDICT

There's plenty of choice in this market sector, even within the VW family... You pays yer money and takes yer choice!

For: Well priced, high sports style specification, perky engine, slick six speed gearchange, good fuel economy potential, cost effective to buy and run for retail customers.

Against: Unsettled ride over poorer urban road surfaces, road noise intrusion, uses an older platform than the new SEAT Ibiza, no electric rear side windows, spare wheel is an extra cost option.



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

Skoda Fabia Hatch RedLine 1.0 TSI, 110 hp manual.

Price: £15,995.

Engine/transmission: 1.0 litre, three cylinder turbocharged petrol, 110 hp, 200 Nm (148 lb.ft) of torque from 2,000 rpm, six speed manual.

Performance: 122 mph, 0-62 mph 9.5 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 64.2 mpg (48.7 mpg on test), CO2 103 g/km, VED road tax £140, BiK company car tax 19%.

Insurance Group: 11E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 3,992 mm (13.10 ft), W 1,732 mm (5.68 ft), H 1,467 mm (4.81 ft), boot/load space 330 to 1,150 litres (11.65 to 40.79 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.