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Volkswagen Golf Estate Alltrack Road Test

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The VW Golf Estate Alltrack - Takes the Rough with the Smooth...

Says David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Despite Volkswagen's emissions indiscretions they are still the top selling brand in Europe although their global profits have fallen by 20%. Their range of Golf models is the Europe's



best selling model range overall.

An addition to the Golf Estate range is the Alltrack which adds four wheel drive capabilities to its already polished on-road driving credentials.

The Alltrack range consist of three different powered versions, all with the same equipment and trim specification and 4MOTION all wheel drive. The engine choices are all turbodiesel units. These are a 1.6 litre 110 hp and the main selling 2.0 litre 150 hp unit, both with six-speed manual gearboxes and a 2.0 litre 184 hp with six speed DSG twin-clutch auto gearbox. Prices now start at £27,250 and rise to £31,055.

The Golf Alltrack is an alternative option for those customers who need an element of off-road ability from their vehicle but do not want the bulk of an SUV or perhaps VW's own Passat Alltrack large estate.

I got to grips with the mid-range Golf Alltrack version and the most popular model with UK customers - the 2.0 litre, 150 hp TDI turbodiesel unit and its six-speed manual gearbox. This version now costs £28,615. There are of course several extra cost options such as the all-important Dynamic Chassis Control variable rate suspension with Sport, Comfort or Normal settings at £830, or the Winter Pack which includes heated front seats at £380 and a rear view camera at £165.

Visually the Alltrack can be recognised by its higher ground clearance of up to 20 mm (0.79 in), off-road style bumpers, flared wheelarches plus side sill and front and rear underbody shields. It is fitted with unique design 17-inch alloy wheels and thankfully a steel space-saver spare wheel is included.



The 4MOTION system is on-demand, in other words it only sends drive to the rear wheels when the fronts start to slip. The system includes an electronic differential function and the electronic stability control system takes on the role of a differential lock at both axles. There is also an 'Offroad' function triggered by the touch of a button which activates the hill descent control, softens the engine responses and modifies the ABS system for off-road braking.

For on-road use there is the usual driving mode selector, going from Eco through options to Sport. Most of my driving with the usual motorways, country A/B winding roads, some short



shopping trips and a brief drive along some farm tracks, was done in Eco mode with the Comfort suspension setting which felt a perfect blend most of the time. For less busy road conditions the Sport mode brought the engine to life so Eco mode got relegated to being used once cruising speeds have been reached.

The 2.0 litre, 150 hp turbodiesel engine is well known and well used throughout the VW family group brands. With 340 Nm (251 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm it produces strong mid-range power delivery and generally it felt smooth and quiet. Top speed is 129 mph and the zero to 62 mph acceleration time is a spritely 8.9 seconds.

The Combined Cycle official fuel consumption figure is 58.9 mpg and my test driving covering all types of roads returned 48.7 mpg. Although missing the official figure by a large margin I was impressed by its fuel frugality given it is a four wheel drive vehicle. The CO2 emissions are a relatively low 125 g/km so VED road tax is £0 for the First Year rate and £110 thereafter. Company car drivers will pay 25% Benefit-in-Kind tax. Insurance is rated in group 17E.

Combined with the standard-fit six-speed manual gearbox driving in stop start busy traffic was easy enough but if there was an automatic transmission option, as there is with this engine in other VW Group models, I'd opt for that as my preference because it adds to the overall driving refinement. I would also add the £830 variable rate suspension option for that extra bit of comfort and driving refinement. The Alltrack might be a four wheel drive model with a higher ground clearance but it still drives and handles just like the highly rated Golf Hatchback models. But it has advantages with added on and off-road grip and it will tow up to 2,000 kg (4409 lb) so it is a versatile vehicle both for work and leisure activities.



Inside the Alltrack is pure Golf, well made with clean lines and conveniently placed controls. There are decorative inserts for the dash, centre console and door panels, giving life to what some might see as a bland mix of

textured black fascia coverings. The seats are upholstered with cloth centre sections with Alcantara leather type side bolsters. There is a leather covered multi-function steering wheel and gear knob, brushed stainless steel pedals and door sill protectors with the Alltrack logo. In the centre of the fascia is a 5.8-inch touchscreen which operates numerous functions and the standard fit sat-nav system. In the rear are split folding rear seats which allows the large 605 litre (21.36 cu.ft) boot to grow to a cavernous 1,620 litres (57.21 cu.ft) which is very large for a C-segment estate vehicle.

The list of standard equipment is relatively commonplace and typical of most top models in the C-sector of the market. It has front and rear parking sensors, dual zone air-con, electric front/rear windows and door mirrors, cruise control, Bluetooth, DAB radio and automatic lights and wipers. An extra £125 will provide the Car-Net App-Connect function which allows mirroring of a smartphone display onto the infotainment touchscreen via USB.



VERDICT

The Volkswagen Golf Alltrack is a solid, well equipped and capable offering for those customers wanting an estate car with the ability to cope with on-road and some lighter off-road travel; it is spacious and it's a capable tow vehicle. One of its main competitors comes from the VW Group as well. It's the Skoda Octavia Scout which uses the same platform, engine, transmission and 4x4 system. It has a slightly larger boot, a little less equipment but it is over £2,000 cheaper. The choice is yours.

For: Spacious, comfortable, huge boot, combines excellent on-road driving performance with extra off-road ability, well equipped, strong engine.

Against: Pricey, real-life fuel economy figure was well below the official one, no auto gearbox option.



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

Volkswagen Golf Alltrack 2.0 TDI, 150 hp, 4MOTION manual estate.

Engine: 2.0 litre, 4 cylinder, turbodiesel, 150 hp, 340 Nm (251 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm.



Transmission: 6 speed manual with all-wheel-drive.

Performance:

0-62 mph: 8.9 seconds.

Top speed: 129 mph.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 58.9 mpg, (48.7 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 125 g/km, VED road tax £0/£110, Benefit-in-Kind company car tax 25%.

Insurance Group: 17E.

Warranty: 3 years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,578 mm (15.02 ft), W 2,027 mm (6.65 ft), H 1,515 mm (4.97 ft), boot/load space 605 to 1,620 litres, 5 doors/5 seats.

Price: £28,615