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VW up! First Brief Impressions from a Wheels-Alive reader

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Gerald Morgan gives his initial verdict on Volkswagen's latest 2020 up!

All variants are five door hatchbacks, powered by a 65 PS 1.0 litre petrol engine, driving the front wheels via a five speed manual gearbox. (The car featured, a 'Black Edition' version, was equipped with VW's Start/Stop system incorporating battery regeneration).



(All word and photographs by Gerald; the opinions expressed are entirely his own views).

This is not one of the usual car reviews expected from Wheels-Alive's more esteemed contributors. Instead this is a cursory look at a courtesy car lent to me whilst my own car, a Polo BlueGT, was being serviced at a VW dealership.

On first glance the up! looked as though it was very small - I once drove an early Corsa on my own, and felt that there was someone sitting in the passenger seat pushing against me! (It was the gear stick.) In fact, the up! turned out to be quite spacious in the front two seats with plenty of room. The driving position was very comfortable and had good visibility. The controls were easy to reach, although the three nearest switches to the steering wheel were not easily visible (hazard warning lights, lane assist control, and driver side heated seat). Hardly the most important of switches when actually driving.

I wasn't so taken with the fascia though (Black Cube upper dashpad) as it had a glossy finish with a black / grey cube pattern. It was the glossy part I wasn't so keen on as it had a slightly reflective surface.

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Last time I had a courtesy car I felt that its acceleration, especially at roundabouts, was too sluggish. The up! was much better, with its three cylinder, 65 PS petrol engine, although not up to my BlueGT. Driving around town was a pleasure, but on a dual carriageway it felt more comfortable to keep around the 60 mph mark rather than nearer to 70. Perhaps more familiarity with the vehicle would have led me to a slightly faster speed.

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A first for me was the lane assist control, so it was good to see how it worked in action. When changing lanes the use of the indicator overrode the feature. When doing so without the indicator, the steering wheel gave a resistance to moving, giving me notice of the change. This feature is now standard on the up!, so I presume it would be available on more



expensive marques, making it more difficult to understand why drivers of those cars don't use their indicators when changing lanes!!

The up! has a reasonable boot space for a small car, with a dual height shelf that just drops down on to the floor (under which there was a full sized spare wheel). The two rear seats are split and can be each moved flat to provide a larger boot space. There didn't look to be much room for adult passengers in the back seats, but I didn't have any to take – especially in Lockdown 2. In fact Lockdown 2 curtailed the original plan to visit a couple of places and have a meal out. Instead it was back home for lunch, to return to pick up my car in the afternoon. I had to replace the fuel used (or an approximation) and was surprised that the fuel cap was the type with a key lock, and not part of the central locking system. Whilst I didn't check the actual mpg, I think it was over 50 as I put in 5 litres and did about 55 miles, with the fuel gauge showing slightly higher than when I started.



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VERDICT

If I was looking for a small around town car this would definitely be one to consider for its driving comfort, fuel economy and relatively good storage ability for most shopping (when that becomes normal again).

Car supplied by Heritage of Dorchester Volkswagen, who gave verbal permission to publish an unseen article; thanks to them.





Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief ('Black Edition' as driven):

Engine: Three cylinder 999cc petrol.

Transmission: Five speed manual, with Start/Stop function and battery regeneration.

Max. speed: 101 mph

Acceleration: 0 to 62 mph: 15.6 seconds

CO2 Emissions: 119 g/km

Fuel consumption (WLTP Combined): 53.9 mpg

Items in the specification of the car featured ('Black Edition', costing £13,370 before extras), included:

'Proper' (i.e. manual control) handbrake

Air conditioning

Electric front windows

Start/Stop function and battery regeneration (to help save emissions and fuel)

Manually dimmable rear view mirror

Manual lockable fuel filler cap

Heat insulating tinted glass

DAB digital radio with USB socket and SD card reader phone /sat nav holder



Aluminium alloy wheels (La Boca black on car tested)

Front and rear cup holders

The 'Winter Pack' had been fitted to the model that I used, which consists of:

Heated front seats

Electrically heated and adjustable door mirrors

Front fog lights with static cornering function

Prices: up! prices start at £13,105, rising through £13,370 for the 'Black Edition' or 'White Edition' models, to £13,755 for the Beats variant.