Ford Mondeo Vignale – Road Test

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Author: Robin Roberts

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Ford Mondeo Vignale 5-door executive hatchback 2.0 EcoBlue diesel...

...tried and tested by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

Size can make a world of a difference to buyers and that's where the Ford Mondeo range packs them in. It has consistently won awards for its internal dimensions, roominess and popularity with families and business users and it's easy to see why.

The trend towards compact cars has seen the Mondeo D-segment shrink in sales numbers if not individual dimensions, but if you really need or want space there is little to rival the big hatchback, saloon or estate behind the blue oval badge.

It's a truly massive range of hatchbacks, saloons and estates with wide selection of

powertrains in petrol, diesel, hybrids, with manual or automatic transmissions and the station wagons cost approximately £1,400 more than their four/five-door stablemates.

Only the Skoda Superb comes millimetres close in size although even that is more expensive than the Mondeo Vignale hatchback we tested, but after that you are into the realms of riches to pay for the German brands and they will charge you an arm and leg for extras which come as standard in the Mondeo Vignale.

Since 2016, Ford has offered the Vignale as the top of its range in successive model series, beginning with the Mondeo. Vignale offers enhanced exterior styling and interior materials such as chrome bodywork detailing, unique wheels and fog lights, with premium leather and multi-contour climate seats inside.

Fine luxury is combined with technology in the cabin, thanks to SYNC 2 connectivity and Active Noise Cancellation, as well as Vignale’s All-Wheel Drive, hybrid and 210 hp high-power, bi-turbo diesel powertrains in the range.

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The Ford Mondeo Vignale five door hatchback 2.0 EcoBlue with front wheel drive only is probably the best considered buy in the series as it comes with a lot equipment and all the virtues of the Vignale name but you don't pay a premium for power or 4WD which you'll not use or need most of the time.

The engine does a good job of moving the Mondeo Vignale once you're rolling although it's not rapid from rest, but it packs a good punch if needed with 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) at 1,900 rpm and with eight gears seamlessly shifting you can easily get way over 40 mpg – and more if you keep down to 60 mph on motorways.

There is some rise in engine noise if pressed through the gears in its sporting mode but that's not annoying, in fact you may like it, but the constant road rumbles and bump-thump from suspension is more noticeable all the time. The slightly firm ride due to the standard 19-inch Dark Tarnish alloys and tyres does detract from the Vignale's refinement when you get off any smooth surfaces and they do manage to find every pothole and bump, while you cannot select softer riding mode as on some executive cars.

The firmness does help impart a more dynamic ride when you pick up speed and it is happy to gobble up miles on a motorway without sign of stress. Mondeo is a big car with a wheelbase of just under 2.85 m (9.35 ft) so it gives a spacious feel inside even if it's not agile and is dogged by dead-feel steering.

The suspension does a reasonable job of soaking up bumps and you can hear it working away while the big well shaped and comfortable, multi-adjustable and hugging seats really hold occupants very well and support even long legged users where it matters behind knees.

Access is very good through the four doors and the electrically opening and closing hatch has a big aperture, low sill and spacious flat interior to take a lot of luggage, with 40:20:40 split rear seat backs to give maximum practicality.

Vision is very good with a low waistline, deep front and rear windscreens, excellent big wipers both ends and very powerful long range turning and self-dipping headlights. Sensors and reversing camera help a lot as well.

It handles well for a big car once you adjust to the dead steering feel, as the throttle and brakes do good jobs and the grip is surefooted for a front wheel drive car without being too nose heavy.

For the driver, everything comes to hand and foot with little out of direct line of sight, and it combines some switches with touchscreen controls in a practical manner, but I am not a fan of the SYNC 2 system and reliance on mobile links to maximise every feature.

It certainly lacks very little otherwise and is bursting with features you would be charged a

premium for in other brands.

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VERDICT

At first I was very cynical of the Vignale name but in the flesh or metal it really is a landmark version of a model which has become synonymous with the brand.

For: Very roomy, excellent seats and adjustment, well finished, good economy, very high equipment level.

Against: Slightly firm ride, average performance, road noise, some deadness to steering feedback, ungenerous warranty.

Mini Milestones and Wheels-Alive tech. Spec. in Brief:

Ford Mondeo Vignale five door hatchback 2.0 EcoBlue.

Price: £33,140 including exclusive white paint & sunroof options.

Mechanical: Four cylinder, 190 hp, 2.0 litre, turbodiesel with eight speed auto gearbox.

Performance: 138mph, 0–62 mph 8.9 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 55.5 mpg (43 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 131 g/km, diesel rate VED road tax £530/145, BiK company car tax 30%.

Insurance Group: 27E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.88 m (16.01 ft), W 1.86 m (6.10 ft), H 1.49 m (4.89 ft), boot space: 541 to 1,437 litres (19.11 to 50.75 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.