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# Honda Civic 1.5T Sport Plus – Road Test

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New Civic 1.5T Sport Plus – the last British built Honda model range...

...Test-driven by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

The Honda Civic currently made in Britain has been a cornerstone of the Japanese company, but times are changing.





Honda will be exiting their Swindon factory in 2021 after 36 years as the company realigns its manufacturing and concentrates on fuller utilisation of its home plants.

But that decision does not dent the appeal of the latest Swindon-built Civic hatchback, arguably the best so far.

Engineers have retuned the suspension to make it more agile and the designers have given it a facelift both inside and out while the technical team has now fitted it with their latest and improved Honda Sensing combined safety features.



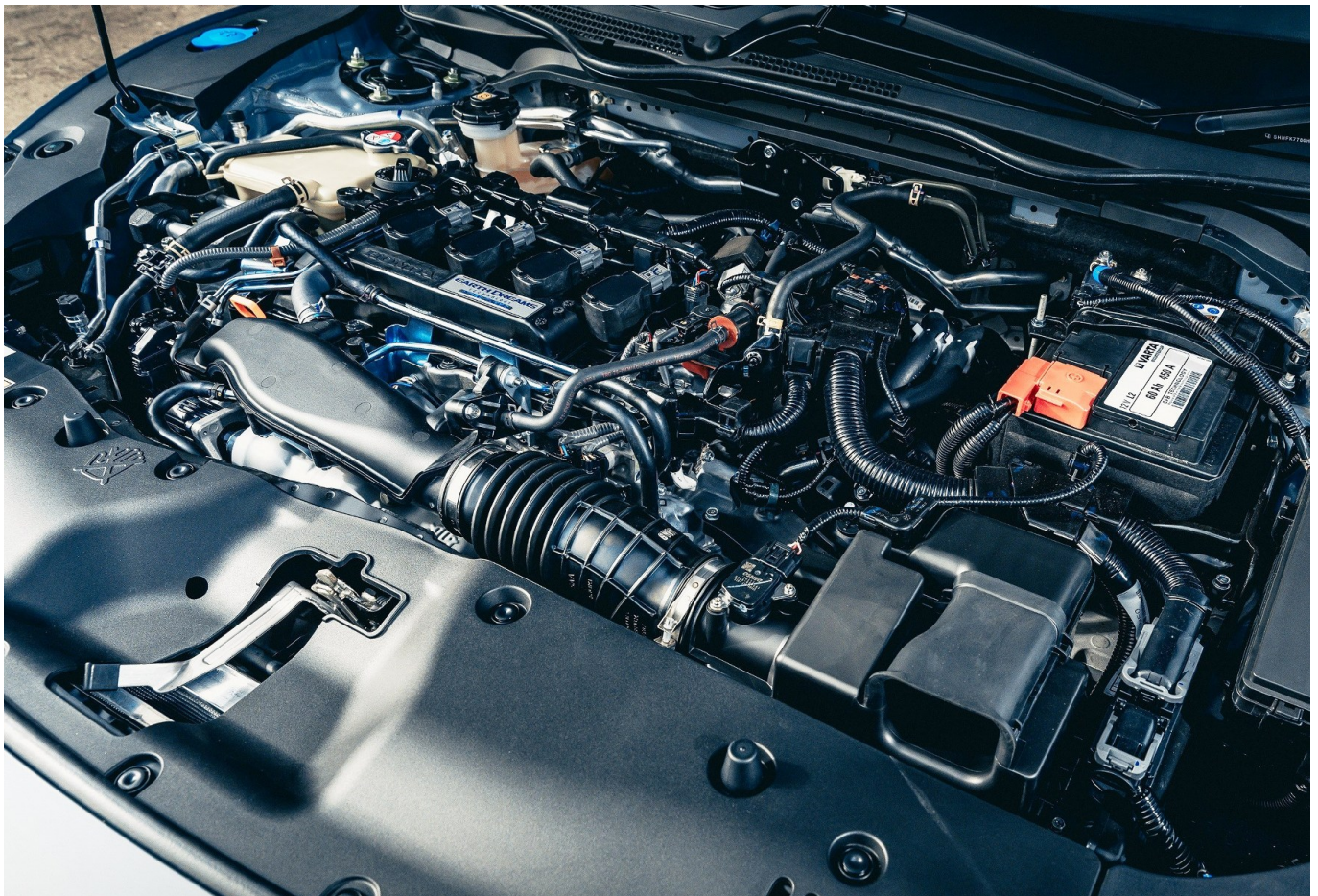
There's a lot to choose in the latest Honda Civic range between petrol and diesel engines,





manual or automatic transmission and five trim levels. Power units range from the 1.0 triple pot petrol producing 129 hp through to the mighty 320 hp 2.0T and we picked the best-selling 182 hp 1.5T manual, which is also available with a nine-speed automatic sequential box.

Honda has been famous and envied for its highly driver orientated powertrains and the responsiveness and willingness of the 182 hp 1.5 litre four-cylinder is truly impressive. It's not the quietest of units and can sound thrashy at times, but it is smooth, makes a delightful noise and packs a useful 240 Nm (134 lb.ft) over a modest rev range from 1,900 rpm. Driven gently it is much quieter.



With a six-speed manual gearbox hanging off the 'back' of the engine, the short travel clutch and pin-sharp gearchange are excellent, short shifting and very precise.



For drivers the delight continues with the easy flowing steering, its tight turning circle and lack of kickback or vibration, so it can be effortlessly placed in a parking space or threaded along winding roads with satisfaction.

If you need them, the brakes quickly slow the car and their feedback is very good, the parking brake easily holding on our regular test slope.

The secondary controls around and on the steering column and wheel are to hand, the fascia has a few more and the central console carries the rest, all clearly marked and precise. I liked the simple big instruments directly in front of the driver and their clarity was commendable.

Heating and ventilation is also easy to understand and use, and it worked well throughout the five-seat cabin. Powered windows add to that and the Sport Plus has a sunroof.

Access for everyone was simple with wide opening doors and a good sized deep boot to take luggage or shopping, quickly more than doubling in capacity if filled to the roof.





Once inside the extremely wrap-around front seats were very supportive if a little thin, and their adjustment range was not generous for a taller driver or passenger, but the rear seats were less well shaped although still comfortable.



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The Honda Civic Sport Plus gets smart entry and start, adaptive dampers, blind spot and cross traffic monitoring, auto dimming mirror, heated front seats and wireless charging with higher powered speakers.

The 17-inch wheels do make the ride firm even in the suspension's softest setting and explored further it could be very hard on all but the smoothest roads.

I loved the powerful long range headlights, big wipers with powerful wash and low waistline but the Civic's hatchback shape and high tail meant a large blindspot behind, particularly when pulling down a sliproad into a line of traffic. Sensors and a camera helped reversing.

The Honda Civic 1.5 Sport Plus gets the latest piano black treatment trim inserts to the interior and this added to the upholstery made it a very dark interior when a bit of careful





highlighting would have brightened it up and relieved the dullness,

The powertrain was generally quiet and this emphasised the road noise and some wind 'wufflng' around the big door mirrors, and over poor surfaces it was much worse. It's quite sophisticated in what it has but not all that refined in the way it performs.

## VERDICT

There was a boy (girl)-racer sportiness to this Civic, rather than a sober-suited slingshot, but having said that, there's no doubt it is a very enjoyable drive in any situation.

For: Reasonable performance and very good agile handling, supportive seats, economical.

Against: Dull interior finish, raucous engine when stretched, firm and noisy ride, short front legroom, some rear visibility issues.



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

**Honda Civic 1.5T Sport Plus 5-door hatchback.**

Price: £28,435 as tested.

Mechanical: 182 hp four cylinder 1.5 Turbo, six speed manual.

Performance: 137 mph, 0-62 mph 8.3 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined fuel consumption 45 mpg.





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Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions: 133 g/km, VED road tax £210/£145, BiK company car tax 30%.

Insurance Group: 22.

Warranty: Three years/90,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.52 m (14.82 ft), W 2.08 m (6.82 ft), H 1.44 m (4.70 ft), boot/load space: 550 – 1,267 litres (19.42 – 44.74 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.