Honda Civic Type R – Road Test

Published: April 22, 2024

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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/honda-civic-type-r-road-test/



Honda Civic Type R – a legend in its own time.

Honda Civic Type R – Road Test

As we look down the road towards an all-electric future, enthusiastic drivers might want to refocus on the Honda Civic Type R, says Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales)…

It’s been with us in a few shapes for a quarter of a century and its enduring appeal is

undoubtedly its very driver-focused design and engineering which has steadily matured, not really grown up, just got better with age.

We tested one version exactly 12 months ago but after the current MY24 car won the prestigious UK Car of the Year award in the Performance Car category, we had to take in another whiff of its success.

Many sporting models have definitely become softer and more sophisticated as rivals to the Type R, but this quickest of cars bearing the red badge from Honda is ‘old-school’. It’s also a whopping near £50K before you add any options or special paint finish.

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That’s not to say it’s unsophisticated because it’s very focussed on delivering maximum attack attitude on track for a driver to enjoy.

You have comfort, individual and sport modes available to refine the standard six-speed manual transmission, but there is also a devilish red R button to flick and transform the car completely on a closed circuit.

Not only do the car’s engine mapping and responses change through the controls but a new landscape of lap times, G-forces, acceleration and deceleration displays appear infront of the driver.

These very finely display what the Type R is doing, and how good or bad you are at maximising the performance –and with a lot of practice you can learn to keep within limits to extract the very best out of it.

If you’ve ever been good at armchair racing games, the Honda Type R will make your hands sweat for real and put an enormous grin on your face. Very few cars can do that, least of all an electric model.

So, while the Honda Civic Type R is still available, and no-one really knows how long it will remain in production, it is something you should buy, enjoy and possibly keep for as long as high octane petrol is available.

Last year the car was given a host of electronic changes to sharpen the handling, improve the engine's breathing and power output, with a more rigid chassis, also a lighter weight bonnet – and the car is endowed with more intuitive steering and gearbox.



The Honda Civic Type R sits alongside luxury sporting coupes from Germany but really offers a different experience.

It is more hard-core than any other Honda and also a lot of competitors, but it really cossets a driver in a figure hugging racing seat with no-nonsense manual only adjustment for reach,

rake and steering column.

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There is room for only two brave rear seat passengers but they have a lot of shoulder space, head and legroom and the boot is a very good size for a weekend away.





The big wing over the boot lid and back window immediately attract attention but also serve to keep a smooth flow of air over the top of the car and push down the back end of this 170 mph+ front wheel drive car. Its not just for show but go.



The carefully sculptured body panels manage the airflow and keep the brakes cool, the car very pointed where it needs to be going and 19-inch wheels with 265/30 ZR19 tyres give it a more planted appearance.

The highly tuned 2.0 litre four-cylinder engine did show a bit of turbo lag from standstill but that almost immediately disappears as the revs rise and everything comes together and delivers 420 Nm (310 lb.ft) from 2,600 rpm to 4,000 rpm.

Meanwhile the driver can slickly move through the six-speed short throw gearbox and progressive long travel clutch.

Brakes were awesome in ability to slow the car from high speed without drama and under complete control, while the steering gave pin-sharp responses with hardly any kickback over

bad surfaces.

It’s hard to believe this is a front wheel drive chassis, so good is the handling and grip, even from the rear wheels, which must be due in part to that rear wing pushing down.

Secondary controls on the column, wheelspokes and on the central console and below the infotainment display in the centre of the fascia were conveniently placed.

The heating and ventilation worked very well and kept the interior and windows clear and fresh.

The multi-purpose infotainment display worked quickly and clearly and was compatible with Apple and Android phones and apps. Essential dials infront of the driver were very clear.

Overall we recorded between 26 and 32 mpg and this really reflected the changing modes we selected.

You sit low in the Type R but have a good view to front and sides, less to the rear and over the shoulder. You also have good wipers both ends and very strong, long range wide beams at night.

VERDICT

You won’t buy the Type R for its peace and quiet, which are there to be found however, but rather the noise from the engine and exhaust which can lift hairs on arms in a way few other cars do. It is an aural experience which comes to life under hands and feet.

It is a different, defining car to drive and enjoy before the electric era completely takes over.

For: Performance, handling, controls, roominess, looks.

Against:, Rear visibility, fuel consumption, just four seats, stiff ride.



FAST FACTS

Model: Honda Civic Type R



Price: £50,640

Mechanical: 329 PS 4 cyl 2.0 turbo-petrol hybrid, 6 speed, front wheel drive

Max Speed: 171 mph

0 – 62 mph: 5.4 sec

Combined MPG: 29

Insurance Group: 43

C02 emissions: 186 g/km

Bik rating: 37% ,£1,095FY, £600SRx5

Warranty: 5 years/ 90,000 miles

Size: L 4.60 m (15.09 ft), W 1.89 m (6.20 ft), H 1.41 m (4.63 ft)

Bootspace: 410 to 1,212 litres (14.48 to 42.80 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,429 kg (3,150 lb)

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