Honda HR-V Sport CVT – Road Test

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Robin Roberts (and *WheelsWithinWales)* assesses Honda's likeable HR-V…

The word 'crossover model' is often over-used and exaggerated, but not in the case of the Honda HR-V in its top Sport CVT trim.

The original Hybrid Recreational Vehicle from 1999 was a more sober suited trendsetter but a lot has happened in two decades as fashions changed.

More manufacturers have poured into the market for practical but performance edged cars, some without any real credibility, but others have made an impression. The range topping 182 ps HR-V Sport CVT is definitely a driving delight.



The HR-V range of manual or continuously variable automatics come with a choice of 1.5 petrol or 1.6 diesel engines in five trim levels from just over £19,000 to about £29,100. Top Turbo-Sport petrol models using the engine from the acclaimed Civic Sport deliver 182 ps but the other petrol units push out 130 ps and the diesels produce 120 ps.

Our test car was given the £525 optional pearlescent paint finish and that was the only extra, which meant on the road it cost £29,615 and standard equipment included a lot of really useful features, advanced entertainment and sound system, driving and safety aids, as well as performance tuned electric steering, springs and dampers.

Visually it stands out with high-gloss black wheels, different bumpers and side-skirts, thicker arches over bespoke bigger 18-inch alloy wheels and 225/50 tyres. Inside there was

soft-touch wine-red leather and black fabric seat upholstery, matching fascia trim and headlining.

A stronger sporty bodystyle gives the impression of a two-door coupé but the rear door handles are cleverly hidden in the C-pillar.



The powertrain is the secret of its success for sporty drivers, with excellent start-up, strong gutsy output and very smooth delivery, helped by the mode selectable software. The engine’s snappy response is matched by a quick reacting automatic transmission with creamy change action and overall we nudged over 40 mpg from the car.

The steering gave excellent feedback and assistance, a tight turning circle and virtually no vibration or kick-back on bad roads. Combined with the powerful and progressive brakes

and efficient parking brake and you have a very confidence inspiring family car.

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Secondary controls grouped close to the column and wheel spokes needed familiarisation but worked well and I really liked the large instruments with their clear and simple displays.

The climate controls were also straightforward, worked well and were efficient at their job, with powered windows but no sunroof to backup.

Oddment space was where I think the Honda HR-V is disappointing for a family, with the car's small compartments. There are plenty of spaces but they are not big and neither is the boot when used with back seats erect, but there's much larger capacity if they are folded away. The bootspace is behind a low lip and of a sensible shape anyway.



Access is very good throughout with big apertures and wide opening doors, a slight step up but once inside the thick and well shaped and deeply padded seats really cushion you on longer journeys as the miles roll away underneath.

You can hear how the Honda HR-V is progressing as road noise, possibly magnified by the bigger wheels and tyres, does come into the cabin and detract from the refinement. Tarmac changes, potholes and ridges are all heard and occasionally they jar the interior. You can expect a sporty ride and you get a firm ride as well.

Engine and wind noises are low by comparison, thankfully.

In a driver’s hands the HR-V really grips well, turning with confidence and composure,

never causing a moment's concern, and it had no nasty habits even on bad bits of road.



VERDICT

Given a really smooth piece of twisting tarmac it seemed to forget it was a big family car and behaved much more like a sporting hatchback, but a bigger one than usual.

It turns heads, brings smiles to a driver's face and fulfills its role very well for a family that wants something different and desirable.

For: Performance, economy, sophistication, handling, seats and room.

Against: Road and suspension noises, oddments room modest, small nominal bootspace,

high emissions and higher first year registration.



Wheels-Alive and Wheels Within Wales Fast Facts

Honda HR-V Sport CVT

Price: £29,615 inc. pearlescent paint

Mechanical: 4 cyl 182 ps 1.5 litre turbo-petrol, CVT

Max Speed: 134 mph

0–62 mph: 7.8sec

Combined MPG: 41

Insurance Group: 18E

C02 emissions: 163 g/km

Bik rating: 36%, £530FY, £145SR

Warranty: 3 years/90,000 miles

Sizes: L 4.35 m (14.27 ft), W 2.02 m (6.63 ft), H 1.61 m (5.28 ft)

Bootspace: 448 to 1,473 litres (15.82 to 52.02 cu.ft)

Kerb weight: 1,428 kg (3,148 lb)

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