Kia EV3 GT Line S – Road Test

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Some cars immediately impress, others take a bit longer and they stand out against models which made no measurable impression after a much longer period behind the wheel, writes Robin Roberts

(and WheelsWithinWales).

The Kia EV3 GT-Line S is an example of the series which seems to get better each time it's driven.

We first drove the new Kia EV3 last December and were impressed, but a lot's happened since and it's picked up numerous awards for the electric models which go that bit further, both on the road and in the market place.

Our range-topping GT-Line S came with a useful pre-heating pump and sunroof, higher grade seating and a number of desirable if not completely necessary extras.

Kia was among the first to enter the new ev-era with the Soul just over ten years ago. Its development taught Kia a lot about real-world ev use, customer expectations and experiences.

That knowledge meant Kia was able to expand its range of evs across different sectors to the commuters' category.

Over the years Kia has added 70,000 BEVs to UK roads with the EV6, Niro EV, EV9 and now the latest EV3 in showrooms as it rolls out a plan to produce nine fully electric vehicles into the UK by 2027. That also includes at least one pure electric van which has just gone on sale to compete against zero emission rivals.

The new EV3 is about the same price as the Soul EV after adjusting for inflation and comprises not the single model of the predecessor's series but

three grades and five variants based on Air, GT-Line and GT-Line S trims with 58.3 kWh or 81.4 kWh powertrains in the entry and top models while the mid-range gets only the long range pack.

The GT-Line S also gets a heat pump for optimal performance from the bigger battery and a higher specification of equipment. All have the standard Kia 7 years and 100,000 miles transferable warranty with zero deposit finance at 3.9% APR.

Prices rise from £33,005 on Air models, to £39,405 for the sole GT-Line and onto £43,005 for the top model and £43,905 for the version with the Heat Pump. Paint grade adds to these figures.

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Depending on how hard they are driven the range quoted by Kia begins at 270 miles up to 375 miles, subject to use.

Outwardly similar styling cues to the brand topping EV9 are matched inside by highlights which could have come from the medium sized EV6 or smaller Niro EV. It all looks very attractive.

Let’s not deny the GT-Line S list price is a lot of money but for that you get a cutting edge design both inside and out with a highly sophisticated powertrain and a lot of real-world range.

That includes five selectable driving modes to stretch economy, make the most of power underfoot or even go gingerly on slippery surfaces, and even

mix them up a bit. Using different modes over a mixture of roads including some brisk motorway trips we saw an indicted 325 miles range.

With home charging at a lower VAT rate it makes this car much cheaper to run than a conventional petrol equivalent, although you have to pay more to acquire it.

The powertrain was simple with a sit-down-to-start system before selecting the direction of travel. Acceleration was strong even in the eco mode and noticeably quicker in normal or power modes.

Steering was quite direct but not particularly light, the turning circle reasonable and the brakes very strong.

Secondary controls were close to hands, worked well and you have a large infotainment screen above the console which was very clear and quickly changed settings while the driver’s screen was also easy to read and supported by a head-up display for essential information.

The infotainment screen held all the data you needed and was linked to some short-cut switches immediately below which were very useful to save scrolling through the onscreen menu which can be distracting.

Heating and ventilation controls ensured extremely good balance between direction, output and temperature, backed up the GT-Line S powered windows all round and shaded sunroof.

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Oddment space was good for a family car with many big compartments, trays and pockets throughout the cabin. The bootspace was about average and quickly increased as the offset split back seat was dropped almost flat.





Underbonnet storage compartment...

It was easy to load and the doors had large openings to get in or out.

The faux-leather seats were wide and deeply padded but not particularly supporting under longer thighs although they came with heating and cooling on the front pair as well as electric adjustment and lumbar support. The front headrests were particularly comfortable.

Headroom as very good all round but legroom was a bit restricted in the back.

Ride comfort was good and the seats did a lot to absorb the suspension’s firmness and how it coped with bad bits of tarmac.

The GT-Line S generally handled safely and roadholding was good but tight turns could result in body roll being more than expected. There was some road noise too, but otherwise it was quiet.

Visibility to the rear was not great so you relied on sensors and the camera when reversing but it was clear to the sides and over the bonnet. Wash and wipe systems did a good job clearing the glass both ends.

The lights were bright with wide, far reaching main beams.

The GT-Line S comes with a host of safety features to protect the vehicle and occupants including collision avoidance, lane keeping, junction turning, safe exit and parking aid.



VERDICT

The GT-Line S neatly packs a lot into a compact model and while it’s not cheap it does make rivals look overpriced.

For: Powertrain, comfort, range, equipment, cabin room

Against: Road rumbles with firm ride, body roll, average bootspace

FAST FACTS

Model:	Kia	EV3	GT-Line	S



Price: £43,905

Mechanical: 201 bhp motor, 81.4 kWh battery

Max Speed: 105 mph

0 – 62 mph: 7.9 secs

Range: 325 miles

Insurance Group: 36E

C02 emissions: Zero

Bik rating: 3%**,** £10FY, £620SRx5

Warranty: 7 years/ 100,000 miles**,** 8 years powertrain

Size: L 4.31 m (14.14 ft), W 1.85 m (6.07 ft), H 1.57 m (5.15 ft)

Bootspace: 486 litres (17.16 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,885 kg (4,156 lb)

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