Kia Stonic GT-Line – First Impressions (model ‘revisited’)

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Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) assesses Kia's Stonic compact SUV…

When a prolific manufacturer keeps rolling out new models it's all too easy to overlook their older vehicles, as is the case with the Kia Stonic GT-Line S.

Kia is on a roll with its brand in Britain, bringing new EVs to market in a

constant stream and more are on the horizon this year as it enriches its range and wins awards within the industry.

So it was good to slip behind the wheel of a Stonic GT-Line S for a short spell and eight years after its launch to refresh the feelings it generated of a well sorted compact family car.

The range comprises nine models between £20,190 and £26,615 in 2,3, GT-Line and GT-Line S specifications with 6 speed manual or 7 speed automatic transmission for the 98 bhp triple cylinder 1.0 litre engine with or without hybrid assistance.

Our test car was the top of range version, a MHEV with 7 speed Dual Clutch Transmission. It has a 109 mph maximum speed, with 0 – 62 mph taking a leisurely 12.4 seconds. On a short test route of A and B-class roads we recorded 41.2 mpg.

The Stonic GT-Line S is the smallest SUV in their range and not as large as more modern competitors, but nevertheless the Stonic is a very good model in its own right and Kia annually sell about 8,000 of them.

The powertrain utilises soundly developed petrol-electric technology with an easy to use automatic transmission fitted with good ratios for smart getaways and relaxed main road journeys; it provides a smooth shift in normal or sport modes.


TURBO
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In the driver’s hands the steering has good feedback, a convenient turning circle and no vibration. Underfoot the brakes needed only modest pressure to bring about rapid deceleration.

The car looks like a conventional hatchback but it handles well with a modest tendency to run wide on tight turns and quickly comes back on line if the throttle is lifted. Grip is good in the dry.

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The Stonic doesn’t have a particularly long wheelbase but the ride is better than some bigger cars and it really absorbs bumps very well without jarring the cabin and occupants.

Road and wind noises were all low but it produced a delightful throbbing sound when pressed.

Inside, room is good for four but a pinch at five and those behind will find the legroom is short if over average height – and rear seat headroom might be restricted for them as well.

The precision of the major controls is matched by the convenience of the secondary switches, excellent clear instruments and quick changing display of the infotainment system with its mobile compatibility and clarity.

Access is good to the cabin and into the boot where there is a small lip, but it really is only capable of taking a couple of suitcases or shopping bags, and the offset split seat backs need to be dropped for bigger loads.

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Visibility is good to front, sides and back, wipers and washers clear the glass with ease.

VERDICT

The Kia Stonic is more than capable of keeping up with the best in the market today and its future looks assured.


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