Latest Honda Civic Type R – First Impressions

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Kim Henson briefly samples the newest version of the Type R…

It is more than three years since I enjoyed a week of test driving Honda's Civic Type R, liking its overall competence and its distinctly sporting personality, which also, cleverly,

didn’t detract from everyday family motoring practicality.

Fast-forward to 2023 and the latest incarnation of the Type R is with us, some 22 years after the first version was launched in the U.K. Recently I was able to take the new model for a brief drive to see how it measures up.

Notable changes for the latest version have included upgrades to enhance engine breathing and output, further improvements to the car’s handling, an increase in chassis rigidity and subtle styling tweaks.

The new car is immediately recognisable as the supercar that it is, not least because of the sports wheels through which the large diameter brake discs are visible, the trademark triple exhaust outlets and the large rear spoiler. There’s also a new, lighter aluminium bonnet.





The turbocharged 2.0 litre four cylinder engine delivers its power and torque instantly but controllably. Now with 329 PS on tap and bags of torque available throughout the rev range, this is an exciting car to drive but it can also cruise in quiet, sophisticated fashion at speed, when the need arises.

The sports front seats were accommodating and comfortable, as were the two seats (only) in the rear, with good head and leg room throughout – impressive for a truly hot hatch.





I found that the ‘Comfort’ drive mode provided a good compromise for normal motoring, with reasonably compliant suspension when this setting was engaged, yet also with exemplary, predictable handling. The low profile Michelin tyres, mounted on large diameter sports road wheels (19 inch – actually down in size compared with the predecessor model’s 20 inch types), provided grip galore on a twisting test route that took in main roads and country lanes.

A brief test of the ‘Sport’ setting (I didn’t sample the ‘Track’ and ‘R+’ modes) brought about an immediate change of character to an even more out and out high performance beast. Sure, it was sporty, but for road use the ride quality was harsh and certainly not appreciated by my passenger. A switch back into ‘Comfort’ mode restored a smooth ride and harmony within the vehicle!

VERDICT

Technically ‘state of the art’, impeccably put together and providing performance levels offered by few rivals – even more expensive ones – the latest Civic Type R is a fabulous motor car providing driving enjoyment galore. Yet it also has five doors, a large luggage compartment and plenty of room for a total of four passengers and their luggage. Expect around 30 miles per gallon overall; commendable given the performance available.



Wheels-Alive Tech Spec. in Brief:

Honda Civic Type R

Price: £47,645

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: 29.9

Insurance Group: 43

CO2 emissions: 186 g/km

Tax costs: Bik rating 37%, VED £1,040FY, £570SR annually for 5-years

Warranty: 3 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)

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

Kerb Weight: 1,429 kg (3,150 lb)

Note: My colleague Robin Roberts recently conducted a full road test of the new Type R; if you would like to read it, please go to:
https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/latest-honda-civic-type-r-road-test-3/