Latest Honda Civic Type R – Road Test

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2019 Honda Civic Type R

By Robin Roberts (and Mike Batter News Agency).

Honda is best known for its sensible family cars, and then there is the rebel Civic Type R.

In my experience, every family has a rebel in its ranks, the wacky wayward one who may be a boisterous brother, an unconforming uncle, a shout-out-loud sister or audacious aunty.

The Honda Civic Type R comprises just two versions separated by £2,000 trim additions which raise it to the GT model's £33,525.

For the extra money over the standard car you get LED fog lamps, navigation and upgraded audio system, wireless charging, dual zone climate control, blind spot and cross traffic monitors, parking sensors both ends, and red trim highlights.

Take your pick and take your seat if it’s a memorable experience you want behind the wheel of the Honda Civic Type R GT. Derived from the BTCC winning Civics, and with a performance pedigree which created the mid-engined NSX coupé, the Civic Type R GT is a very in your face fast car.

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The only grey area with our car was its sonic pearl grey colour, everything else was very bright, very loud and very enjoyable.

Key to it all is the highly refined, sophisticated and purposeful powertrain. Honda’s 2.0 VTEC 320 hp turbo petrol engine pushes out a whopping 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) of torque for truly punchy passing and acceleration which gives it a sub-6.0 sec to 62 mph and, being Honda, the maximum is unrestricted and nudges 170 mph, so it’s ideal for a bit of track day fun at weekends after the daily commute is over.



You don’t have to endure the +R suspension setting for the track all the time, you can soften it to Sport mode on motorways, or ease into Comfort over the cobbles which today pass for many secondary roads.

Preselecting the ride modes is only a starter for fun as you push down on the moderately weighted short travel clutch and select first gear you become aware of how precise is the gearchange. Its rifle-bolt precision continues through the other five ratios as well, and it’s just as well because you can then focus on driving lines and make the most of the beautifully balanced and accurate steering.

If the enjoyment comes to an end you have a set of big brakes inside the 20-inch wheels to drag you to a stop, either very quickly or more comfortably, but you will be impressed. The

very low profile Continental 245/ 30 ZR 20 tyres do a great job of feeding back to the driver's hands as they firmly grip the road, and do a surprising job keeping it on the grey & black stuff despite only being front wheel drive.

Even so, the ride quality when in the Sport or +R modes is still good. It's hard but not uncomfortably so most of the time, unlike a lot of other hot-hatches.



There is generally a neutral feel to the handling but push hard on a damp surface and it does start to head wide, but quickly comes back when you ease off the throttle. Over bumpy

surfaces it does jump about a bit but all in a very controllable manner.

With all this sporting potential it's easy to forget the Civic is a practical family car, up to a point. The bootspace is good but not exceptional behind the rear sill. Inside, the oddments spaces are plentiful and well placed, with a large glovebox.

Infront of the driver, the secondary controls are immediately to hand and fingers, the instruments very large and clear with a central information panel to select different readouts. The centrally-mounted fascia info-tainment display is not very big and can look cluttered, and we found it a bit slow to change settings. Heating and ventilation filled the cabin and kept it comfortable but again it was slow to respond to changes.

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Getting in and out was very easy for rear seat occupants but a bit more demanding of those infront as the deep cushioning of the sports seats created a noticeable lip, but the shape of the cushions and their backrests was enveloping, supporting and very comfortable. I wish only that there was longer seat travel for a taller driver or passenger but you can quickly adjust the wheel and column to set up a desired position and the relationship to gearlever and pedals is very good.

When you are correctly seated and the mirrors set up the vision to front is very good, but it's restricted towards the back and over the shoulder by the thick pillars and the big aero-wing on the fifth door. A reversing camera and parking sensors are very useful additions in the GT spec.

Wipers front and back do a good job in the wet while the very bright and far reaching headlights are up to their high speed potential and the demisting system is almost instantaneous.

The 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine is surprisingly muted until you flatten the right foot and the triple-pipe exhaust is filled with a wonderful purposeful sound. Mechanical noises are all

very low except for that delightful click from the gearlever as you move through the gate, and wind noise is also untroubling. The road rumbles are modest except for the occasional deep pothole.



VERDICT

You will either love or hate the look of the Honda Civic Type R GT, but there is no denying it’s a great piece of engineering, well thought through and delivered for an enthusiastic driver to enjoy. Just expect to be asked for a lot of lifts.

For: Powertrain, positive gearchange, steering and brakes, dynamic handling and performance, good warranty.

Against: Restricted visibility to rear and sides, modest maximum boot space, limited front seat adjustment and rear seat legroom, high emissions mean raised ownership costs.



Mini Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Honda Civic Type R GT

Price: £33,525.

Mechanical: 320 hp, 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) torque, four cylinder, 16v, 2.0 litre turbo-petrol, six speed manual.

Performance: 169 mph, 0–62 mph 5.8 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined mpg 36.7 mpg, (31 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions 176 g/km, new from April First Year VED road tax £855 then £145 Standard rate, Bik rating 36%.

Insurance Group: 40E.

Warranty: Three years/90,000 miles.

Sizes: L 4.56 m (14.96 ft), W 2.08 m (6.82 ft), H 1.44 m (4.72 ft), five doors/five seats. Bootspace: 420 to 786 litres (14.83 to 27.76 cu.ft).