Latest Jeep Compass – First Impresssions

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Heading in the Right Direction – the new Jeep Compass.

First impressions, as assessed by David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

The new Jeep Compass compact SUV is heading in the right direction in terms of size, five star safety equipment, inclusive specifications and some competitive prices.

With sales of compact SUVs booming the second generation new Jeep Compass is priced

from £22,995 to £35,595 and the cars are scheduled to arrive in the UK from February 2018. The Compass range sits between the more compact Renegade and the larger Cherokee models in the Jeep range. The original boxy Compass was first sold in the UK in 2007 and facelifted in 2011 before departing UK showrooms in 2015.

The latest Compass models face strong competition from the already established Nissan Qashqai, which leads sales in this in this mid-sized C-SUV sector, with the new Peugeot 3008, SEAT Ateca, Skoda Kodiaq, Ford Kuga and VW Tiguan, to name but a few, all vying for sales.

Now part of the FCA, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, the Jeep Compass shares many of the components of the Fiat 500X and an extended version of the platform from the Jeep Renegade range. In its performance, dimensions and safety specification it is much more European in its nature, although built in India, than previous hard-core off-roader American iron. But in true Jeep fashion the specification is high and there are two and four wheel drive models.



At the media launch this week, FCA UK managing director Ashley Andrew said “The Compass represents everything that is Jeep with fantastic on and off-road performance, 70 active and passive safety features and includes the latest connectivity technology. Jeep with its 76 year history is now a global brand and our vehicles are built in six countries around the world, the latest being India where the Compass is being built”.

He added, “The new vehicle represents a key addition to the Jeep line-up, it is a critical vehicle for us allowing the brand to tackle the important and growing compact SUV segment that is expected to grow globally by almost 20% to 7.5 million in 2020. In Europe alone, this segment amounts to more than 1.6 million and is expected to achieve more than

two million units by 2020".

Rob Lake, Jeep's UK product manager said, "We have seen a 14.48% increase in sales in this C SUV segment so far this year. Diesel powered models still take 70% of sales, down from 78% last year, petrol models accounted for 28% and 2% are hybrids. Our research shows 63% of customers choose a manual transmission and 71% select a 2WD model. For our new Compass range we are predicting 49% of buyers will choose a petrol engine and the single best selling version will be the Longitude 1.4 MultiAir 140 hp 2WD manual priced at £24,995 which is planned to account for 28% of all Compass UK sales".

On the subject of how many Compass sales are planned for in 2018 Rob Lake said, "In the current uncertain market with Brexit issues and with the falling popularity of diesel, it is difficult to say but it should been between four and five thousand units but Compass will still be our best selling model range".

When it comes to engines choices the range consists of two petrol and three diesel engines. The petrol engine offering includes a 1.4 litre MultiAir II Turbo engine with Stop&Start delivering 140 hp at 5,000 rpm and 230 Nm (170 lb.ft) of torque at 1,750 rpm in combination with the six-speed manual gearbox and 4×2 configuration, and the 1.4 litre MultiAir II Turbo engine producing 170 hp at 5,500rpm and torque of 250 Nm (184 lb.ft) at 2,500 rpm, paired to the nine-speed automatic transmission and 4×4 configuration.

The diesel engine range comprises the 1.6 litre MultiJet II with Stop&Start delivering 120 hp at 3,750 rpm and 320 Nm (236 lb.ft) of torque at 1,750rpm, paired to the six-speed manual gearbox and 4×2 configuration, and the 2.0 litre MultiJet II with Stop&Start delivering 140 hp at 3,750 rpm, with the six-speed manual transmission, producing 350 Nm (258 lb.ft) of torque at 1,750 rpm, and comes with the 4×4 configuration.

A higher output version of the 2.0 litre MultiJet II with Stop&Start – delivering 170 hp in combination with the nine-speed automatic transmission and 4×4 configuration (including the Trailhawk specific low range mode) – completes the diesel offering available on the all-

new Compass.

There are four specification levels depending on the engine chosen. These are Sport, Longitude, Limited and the hard-core 4WD Trailhawk which joins the line-up next summer. The Sport version's standard equipment includes 16-inch alloy wheels, LED tail lights, leather steering wheel with audio controls, air conditioning, cruise control, forward collision warning and 60/40 rear seat split.

The best-selling Longitude specification adds 17-inch alloy wheels, front fog lamps, Parkview reverse camera, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto functionality, 8.4-inch audio and navigation, electric lumbar support, dual zone climate control and keyless entry and go.

Limited spec equipment includes 18-inch alloy wheels, halogen projector headlamps, silver roof rails, privacy glass, leather power and heated seats, windscreen wiper de-icer, heated steering wheel, rain sensitive wipers, Parkview reverse camera, Parksense front and rear park assist system, blind spot and cross path detection, and parallel and perpendicular park assist.

Trailhawk equipment includes halogen projector headlamps, hood decal, red rear tow hook, privacy glass, front and rear off-road bumpers, raised off-road suspension, front and rear skid plates, 8.4-inch audio and navigation, leather power and heated seats, 60/40 folding rear seat with boot pass-through, heated steering wheel, all-season floor mats, Parkview reverse camera, Parksense front and rear park assist system, blind spot and cross path detection, hill descent and Rock transmission mode.

Driver and passenger safety were paramount in the development of the all-new Compass, which attained a 5-star Euro NCAP score. The car offers more than 70 available active and passive safety and security features including Forward Collision Warning-Plus, LaneSense Departure Warning-Plus, Blind-spot Monitoring and Rear Cross Path detection, ParkView rear backup camera with dynamic grid lines, Automated Parallel and Perpendicular Park Assist, Adaptive Cruise Control, electronic stability control (ESC) with electronic roll

mitigation and six standard air bags.

The Compass is 150 mm (about six inches) longer than the Renegade models, giving it a longer wheelbase and an extended load area section. The Compass is 4,394 mm (14.42 ft) long, 1,820 mm (5.97 ft) wide and 1,644 mm (5.39 ft) high. There are 438 litres (15.47 cu.ft) of boot space as opposed to 351 litres (12.40 cu.ft) found with the Renegade models and a maximum load space of 1,693 litres (59.79 cu.ft) with the rear seats folded.



Not forgetting its long heritage styling wise, the new Compass has the traditional seven-slot

Jeep front grille heading up a far more European style sculptured and curved body shape rather than the previous American ‘boxy’ designs. There are still large trapezoidal shaped wheelarches which need the optional 19-inch alloy wheels which cost £700, rather than the standard 17 or 18-inch ones to fill them, although the larger wheels do firm up the ride comfort a bit. Where the Compass scores is for the exterior distinctive styling which is noticeably different and sets it apart from other mid-sized SUVs in this over-populated market sector. It looks a well proportioned vehicle.

Inside it is very much a Jeep with its large fascia panel with its trapezoidal shaped centre stack housing the touchscreen and below that a cluster of switches and controls for the heating and ventilation system and other functions which take some time to fathom out. There is the usual chunky thick-rimmed Jeep styled steering wheel, again with multi-function buttons. The seats are big and comfortable and the only noticeable lack of space was in the driver’s footwell where the clutch pedal for manual gearbox models is very close to the foot rest. It is obvious this platform in terms of foot-space is more suited for left hand drive versions. Otherwise it all looks well put together with lots of soft-feel plastic trim – and the leather upholstery, where applicable, looks and feels good quality. However with lots of dark coloured trim and upholstery the Compass can look a bit gloomy inside unless the lighter grey trim option is taken – and the optional double pane £1,200 panoramic sunroof certainly brings more light into the cabin. As with most Jeeps the specification is good and comprehensive and in particular the expected best-selling Longitude versions look the best buy in terms of value for money.

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For our test drive programme it was just unfortunate that the best-selling 1.4 MultiAir 140 hp 2WD variant with Longitude specification models were not available yet as sales start next year, so it was a bit of a mix and match as to what was available to drive, but it gave us a flavour of what the overall range is all about. All the test drive models had the high Limited spec, not the best-selling Longitude level which will arrive in time for its on-sale date next February.

We started off with the expected second most popular engine, the 1.6 MultiJet 120 hp turbodiesel with 2WD and its slick and precise six-speed manual gearbox, priced at £28,995. With 320 Nm (236 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm the engine was responsive but noisy at tickover and sounded stressed under hard acceleration. Top speed is 115 mph and zero to 62 mph takes 11.0 seconds. Officially this unit with its standard 2WD configuration will return 64.2 mpg in the Combined Cycle. But on our test drive around the very busy traffic in the seaside town of Brighton and onwards around the winding and hilly roads that link smaller towns and villages in the South Downs National Park, the fuel consumption was a modest 35.9 mpg. With CO2 emissions of 117 g/km VED First Year road tax costs £160 and then £140 Standard rate.

The next engine we tried was the 1.4 MultiAir 170 hp turbo petrol unit with a nine-speed automatic gearbox and on demand 4WD traction. This unit was much quieter in operation and generally with 250 Nm (184 lb.ft) of torque was ideal for a long journey. However it delivers its best torque output from a relatively high these days 2,500 rpm, so the best performance for acceleration came higher up the rev-band although driving was easy thanks to the nine-speed auto gearbox with smooth changes. Top speed is 124 mph and zero to 6 2mph takes 9.5 seconds. The Combined Cycle fuel consumption is 40.9 mpg but our test driving only achieved 31.6 mpg. The CO2 emissions are high at 160 g/km so VED costs £500 First Year rate and then £140 Standard rate, so not only is the purchase price of this model with Limited spec and auto transmission at £32,595 on the high side, so are the running costs.

Lastly we tried the 2.0 litre MultiJet 140 hp turbodiesel 4WD manual version priced at £31,495. This engine felt a stronger unit but no less noisy. It produces a useful 350 Nm (258 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm so there is plenty of ‘grunt’ on tap. Top speed is 118 mph and zero to 62 mph takes 10.1 seconds. The Combined Cycle fuel consumption is 54.3 mpg and our test drive returned 40. 7mpg. With CO2 emissions of 138 g/km, VED road tax is £200 First Year rate and then £140 thereafter.

All versions seemed to handle in more or less the same way; well-balanced, with some

cornering body-roll due to its high stance, but the ride was compliant and comfortable and I suspect the standard 17 or 18-inch alloy wheels, depending on the spec level chosen, will be less harsh over poorer road surfaces than the optional 19-inch ones fitted to our test cars.

VERDICT

Overall, although we didn't get to test drive it – as examples had not arrived from its new Indian production facility, the new Jeep Compass Longitude 1.4 MultiAir 140hp 2WD manual, priced at £24,995, looks the expected best buy on paper because at that price it is a very good offer.

For: Fresh and crisp distinctive exterior styling in a congested market sector, high safety equipment and driving support systems, well-equipped overall, roomy, comfortable and practical, Longitude spec level looks good value.

Against: Noisy diesel engines, dark interior for some trim levels, cramped space in the driver's footwell, real-life fuel economy didn't get close to the official figures for any models we tried, higher spec models look expensive.



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

Jeep Compass Limited 1.6 MultiJet 120hp, 2WD manual.

Price: £28,995. (Pick of the trio we tried, as the best selling 1.4 litre selling Longitude

£24,995 variants are yet to arrive).

Engine/transmission: 1.6 litre, four cylinder MultiJet turbodiesel 120 hp, 320 Nm (236 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm, six speed manual, 2WD.

Performance: 115 mph, 0–62 mph 11.0 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 64.2 mpg (35.9 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 117 g/km, VED First Year tax £160 and then £140 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 25%.

Insurance Group: TBC.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,394 mm (14.42 ft), W 1,820 mm (5.97 ft), H 1,644 mm (5.39 ft), boot/load space 438 to 1,693 litres (15.47 to 59.79 cu.ft), braked towing weight 1,000 kg (2,205 lb), five doors/five seats.