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SEAT Arona FR Black Edition 1.0 TSI Petrol 115 – Road Test

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Author:

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Volkswagen has decided that SEAT will in future be its entry level brand to the Group and with the Arona that's a good move, says Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales).

Instead of going for the upper end of the market and thereby limiting appeal to those with most money, the brand will become all things to all men and women.

Its range is wide and benefits from the engineering, design and technology available in and from a massive resource which does not skimp on anything



but delivers more than many might expect of a entry level brand.

The Arona has been sold since 2017 as one of the first “crossover” models which are essentially tall hatchbacks sitting under the larger Ateca series.

It is SEAT’s best selling model over eight years with more than 500,000 registrations globally and that slowed up development with the second generation appearing in 2024 but a new model is now on the horizon with the group’s latest platform underneath.

That’s not to decry the current model’s abilities which will please many owners who want a comparatively cheap yet technically competitive car.

This spring, SEAT introduced FR Black Editions across its model line-up, boasting new interior and exterior design flourishes, black roof spoiler, side skirts, keyless entry and new alloys.

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The Arona FR has a simple Black Edition name on the B-pillar while inside there are specially trimmed fabric finished bucket seats, adaptive cruise control, park assist and particularly useful rear view camera for urban exploits.

Our test car is the most popular in the 18-model line-up from just over £20,200 to almost £31,000, powered by four different petrol engines and choice of manual or automatic transmissions.



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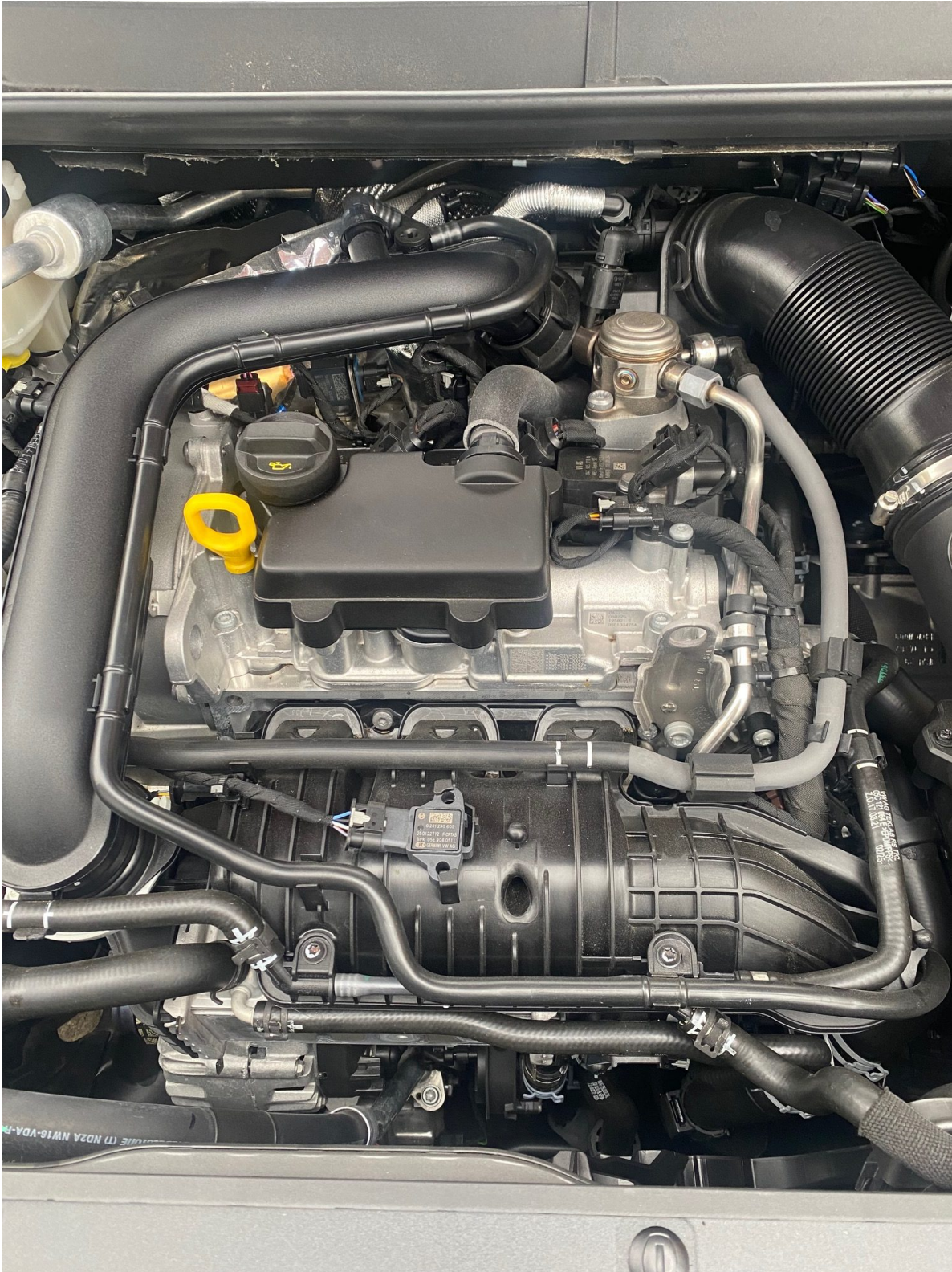
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We have always liked the remarkably quiet and smooth three-cylinder 1.0-litre engine and happily put up with its busier engine note under hard acceleration because it is highly economical when it matters.



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Even pushed to perform, the triple-cylinder sound is not annoying, it's just there and when matched to the seven-speed dual clutch automatic box the combination feels like a much bigger powertrain. You only realise it's lacking cylinders and capacity if loaded and you're trying to overtake traffic.

It was slightly light footed on sharp bends but instantly responded to easing throttle or tapping brakes and never gave a moment's concern for safety.

It is at its best cruising main roads and motorways and with a range of driving modes as well to exploit we averaged 51 mpg and sometimes saw it head towards the high-50s as well.

Convenience is a high point of the Arona FR Black Edition and most immediately noticeable is the 'sit and shift off' keyless entry which means a driver merely has to slip into the sports bucket seat and the car starts, providing the key is close. There is park assist to automatically position the car, adaptive cruise control, intelligent headlights and forward collision warning including self-activating emergency braking and forward facing radar alert.

It is light to steer and park with a good turning circle and not too vague at speed on twisting roads while the brakes gave good feedback and power when needed and the parking brake securely held on a slope we use every few days.

All the secondary controls were close to hands and fingers, operated smoothly and were backed up by a good clear set of instruments and an



effective if slightly slow acting infotainment system. When in use the central console display was clear, compact and reflection-free.

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For a family car the amount of package and parcels space was not generous inside but the loadbed was flat and quickly increased when the seatbacks were dropped with a 60:40 split. It is probably best as a four-seater with tight rear legroom and limited shoulder width.

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The slim roof pillars, low waistline and big windows, good wash and wipe system and brilliant headlights were appreciated.

There was excellent connectivity too and a great sound system to enjoy entertainment from radio or phone systems.

VERDICT

At the price, the technology shines through and that's not at the price of a boring or uncomfortable drive and I think the Seat Arona FR Black Edition will tick the boxes of many owners.

For: Responsive handling, good ride, economical, reasonable equipment, fair performance, good warranty

Against: Small boot, tight rear legroom, road noise and some engine noise when accelerating.



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FAST FACTS

Model: SEAT Arona FR Black Edition 1.0 TSI

Price: £30,305



Mechanical: 115 PS 1.0-litre 3 cyl petrol, 7 speed DSG

Max Speed: 120 mph

0 - 62 mph: 10.3 secs

Combined MPG: 51

Insurance Group: 14E

C02 emissions: 132 g/km

Bik rating: 32%, £540FY, £195SR

Warranty: 5 years/ 90,000 miles

Size: L 4.16 m (13.65 ft), W 1.78 m (5.84 ft), H 1.53 m (5.02 ft)

Bootspace: 400 to 823 litres (14.13 to 29.06 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,231 kg (2,714 lb)