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Volkswagen ID.5 – First Impressions

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Chris Adamson samples VW's all-electric 'Premium SUV Coupé...

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Although relative late-comers to the electric vehicle segment, Volkswagen has been setting some benchmark figures with its ID family (part of its ACCELERATE brand strategy) starting with the ID.3 hatchback, which for some-time led the way in the segment, and then came the ID.4 SUV which captured the World Car of the Year title.

Now VW has added a new top EV model in the shape of the ID.5, a vehicle they describe as a 'premium SUV Coupé' but which, to my eye, looks more like an enhanced five-seat executive saloon.



Shape is where you have to start talking about the ID.5 and here the designers at VW have



gone for function over form. Seen as a natural progression from the lines of the original ID.3 and ID.4 (most notably the LED strip lighting front and rear) the new ID.5 is essentially an aerodynamic box created to house its running gear and occupants in the most efficient package.



Slippery it may be but pleasing on the eye it isn't; well certainly not from my perspective - the modular ID.5 is rather neutral and characterless. There are few touches of individuality or personality to connect with and the finished product is rather soulless.

Others will no doubt disagree and I am sure VW will defend its choice of panel work by pointing out it has a low drag coefficient of 0.26 which increases its efficiency and helps to



boost the ultimate driving distance.

The clam-shell bonnet and grille-less front end features electric cooling air vents in a deep air dam which open when required to optimise air flow, while the aerodynamically sculptured multi-level rear end has an integrated spoiler that does little to enhance the looks.



Inside it is again all business with very little personality. Admittedly the ID.5 does have a cavernous cabin thanks to a 2,766 mm (9.07 ft) long-wheelbase (out of an overall length of 4,599mm (15.09 ft) and only the rear headroom shrinks a fraction due to the coupé lines of



the roof, so it is going to be comfortable for all occupants.

A rather bare and featureless dashboard (which has a hint of BMW feel due to the slim-line air vents) is only interrupted by the huge raised central screen that controls most of the vehicle systems and a tiny five inch instrument display sitting behind the steering wheel. This is augmented by an optional heads-up display.

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As has become a new trademark for VW, virtually everything to do with the vehicle is contained in the central touch screen menu which takes some time to work your way around and is not the easiest to use on the move - you almost need a tutorial before getting behind the wheel.

I am old fashioned enough to want to feel the solid click of a switch when operating a lot of functions, that way you feel more connected to the vehicle - here you are very much at a distance.

And when you do get to play with a switch for the gear selection, this is tucked almost out of sight, tacked onto the side of the instrument screen and hidden from view by the steering wheel.

If all this complex tech is not enough, VW has also installed voice control which even its makers admit they have been having some problems with and only quote a recognition rate of 95 per cent.

Adding icing to the cake for any techo buffs the ID.5 has an over-the-air software capability which will update on-board systems remotely as the technology improves - in the future might this mitigate against people wanting to change their cars on a regular basis to get the latest gadgets?

As well as the generously proportioned interior the ID.5 comes with a good sized boot - 549



litres (19.39 cu.ft) under the electronically operated hatch with the rear seats in place. This swells to a very acceptable 1,561 litres (55.13 cu.ft) with the 60/40 split seats folded almost flat.

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Equipment on the ID.5, in the case of the Pro Performance trim level as tested, includes a whole array of goodies – here are just a few: Park Assist Plus that memorises parking procedures, Driver Alert warning, Adaptive Cruise Control, Lane Assist, Emergency Assist and Side Assist and We Connect.

These are in addition to the more familiar premium features such as: three-zone climatronic air conditioning, electrically heated and operated front seats (with massaging feature), heated leather steering wheel, Pro Navigation, Bluetooth, DAB radio (six speakers) and a panoramic sunroof.

There is very little by way of comfort and safety features not included so the options list is extremely limited.

On the Road

Power for the ID.5 (in this case 204 PS) is supplied by a rear mounted electric motor driving the rear wheels (there is an all-wheel drive 299 PS GTX version) powered by a 77 kWh lithium-ion battery that has an eight year/100,000 mile warranty and is the largest in VWs current line-up, and here the torque to the wheels is controlled by an XDS electronic differential lock.



For its bulk the ID.5 offers brisk if not outstanding performance with 62 mph coming up in a seamless 8.4 seconds thanks to the now familiar electric motor instant acceleration.

The ID.5 rides on a very conventional MacPherson strut front and five-link rear suspension set-up which has been tuned for comfort rather than sporty handling with the added confidence boost of Electronic Stability Control and traction control.

Assisted steering offers responsive if not pin-sharp handling, while you are always aware of the vehicle's bulk and a suggestion of understeer which can temper any desire to push the ID.5 hard, so it is more of a relaxing, cruising driving experience.



Volkswagen quotes a potential maximum range of 315 miles which is very competitive in the sector if it can be achieved in real world driving conditions and like most EVs coming off the production line today can be charged to 80 per cent in around 30 minutes at a 135 kW public rapid charging point (if you can find one that's working).

Home charging to 100 per cent is going to take the best part of half a day (VW's bi-directional charging function means it can feed electricity it doesn't need back into the owner's home system so there is no wasted charging time) and at the more accessible 11 kW three-phase chargers something like seven and a half hours to full can be expected.

VERDICT

Like, loath or undecided about its looks the ID.5 is a comfortable, relaxing large vehicle that does a lot of things well but nothing exceptional and in many ways is hampered by its over-complicated technology - which I am not sure many drivers really want, need or appreciate.

It is also a vehicle that is not quite sure if it is an SUV or a saloon and for a VW quite expensive with starting prices from £52,000 which puts it very much in Audi family territory.

Wheels-Alive Tech Spec. in Brief:

Vehicle: Volkswagen ID.5 Pro Performance

Powertrain: Electric motor powered by a lithium ion battery (77 kWh)

Transmission: Direct drive single-speed

Power: 204 PS (150 kW)

Torque: 310 Nm (229 lb ft)



Performance:

0 - 62 mph: 8.4 seconds

Top Speed: 99 mph

Fuel Consumption (Official WLTP Figures):

Combined: 4.1 miles / kWh

Range (WLTP): 315 miles

Charge Times: 135 kW rapid charge - 29 minutes to 80% / 7.2 kW 1 phase - 12 hours
40 minutes to 100%

CO2 Emissions: 0 g/km

Price (On the Road as tested): £55,490