VW Golf GTE – Road Test

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The popularity of the Volkswagen Golf has hardly dimmed since it was launched over 52 years ago, and there is little sign of this achievement being changed with the GTE phev version. Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) puts this model through its paces…

There is a mind-boggling range of hatchbacks and saloons with a wide range of engines and selective trim levels, and we have been testing the only phev petrol model GTE with a beefy and practical petrol-electric powertrain.

The plug-in system means the car will cover more than 80 miles on a full charge while the proven 1.5 litre petrol engine will ease it along at 53 mpg, so a combined range of close to 500 miles will display on the instruments infront of the driver. That’s really impressive and realistic too.



Our on-road price included alloy wheels, full-length sunroof, styling pack, surround view camera and adaptive cruise control, which together added approximately £6,000 to the list price and pushed it into the higher excise duty class.

The dual powertrain is an excellent piece of engineering giving economy or extra urgency if required in a seamless, near silent and always immediate nature.

Ok, its not a GTR but it has a respectable acceleration, cruises without complaint along main roads and motorways and has a high top speed where conditions allow.



The smooth power delivery, creamy automatic changes whether going up or down the box, ability to select different modes for conditions and the car’s sharp responses to a very

feelsome steering system and progressive yet powerful brakes instil confidence and composure.

Handling was light yet precise and imparted a directness without being too twitchy, it generally absorbed bumps like a much larger car and was the most comfortable Golf I had driven in a long time.

Grip was good due to the low slung weight, big tyres and generally broad footprint of the GTE.

It had mild tendency to understeer but that’s not a bad issue and easily controlled on the throttle or through the steering.

Secondary controls have been placed well to reach without any trouble and both lights and wipers were exactly where you’d expect them to be with other buttons on the wheelspokes or close on the fascia.

If you needed to use the features buried in the central infotainment screen it was more of an issue of working through the menus and settings, and not ideal on a busy road or evening run. There is, possibly, too much hidden away.

Heating and ventilation was straightforward when the settings were found and selected and the cabin could be cooled or warmed as desired. Powered windows were quick and our optional full-length sunroof with moveable panel was really appreciated.

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Oddments room was reasonably good, not exceptional for a family car, and the bootspace lost capacity compared to a regular petrol Golf because the hybrid system beneath the floor meant it was higher.


ENGINE
START/STOP
P
R
N
D/S
AUTO
HOLD


KU75 ZYX
Press Office

Still inside, the seats were really well shaped and supporting infront or rear, with fairly good adjustment room unless you were very tall infront and this cut into the knee-room behind.

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Visibility was generally good with low waistline and deep front and rear screens, big washers and wipers and at night a set of brilliantly illuminating headlights.

Noise levels were really attributable to the suspension system, wheels and big tyres only with very low mechanical sounds from powertrain components or wind dragging over the roof and around the mirrors.

VERDICT

This Golf GTE is really a step up from the run of mill models before and while not a high performance five-door it really stood out as a practical, refined and sophisticated addition to a popular series, and you have to consider the traditionally strong resale value as well.

For: Performance, economy, controls, ride & handling, passenger room.

Against: Luggage space, road & suspension noise, fiddly infotainment system, average warranty.



FAST FACTS

Model: VW Golf GTE 1.5 TSi DSG

Price: £45,380

Mechanical: 272 PS 4 cyl 1.5 litre petrol-phev, 6 speed A

Max Speed: 143 mph

0 – 62 mph: 6.6 secs

Combined MPG: 55 mpg

Range: 81 miles

Insurance Group: 30E

C02 emissions: 8 g/km

Bik rating: 9%, £115FY, £640SRx5

Warranty: 3yrs/ 60,000 miles

Rating: 4.5/ 5

Size: L 4.29 m (14.07 ft), W 1.79 m (5.87 ft), H 1.48 m (4.86 ft)

Bootspace: 273 litres (9.64 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,670 kg (3,682 lb)

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