VW Tiguan Road Test

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Keith Ward assesses the latest version of VW's compact SUV…

Tiguan marked VW's first venture, eight years ago, into the emerging and soon-to-explode compact SUV market. Since then some 2.8 million Tiguans have been sold globally – more than 100,000 of those in the United Kingdom, where it is now the company's best-seller after Golf and Polo.

Summer 2016 saw an all-new version debut here, boasting improvements in styling, technology, engineering, space, safety, performance and economy. It is lower, longer, wider, lighter and more aerodynamic than before. In 4WD form, it claims a class-leading 2,500 kg (5,511 lb) towing capacity.

Externally, radiator grille and headlights are now horizontally aligned and the waistline is noticeably higher. Inside, there's a significant gain in boot space. With the sliding rear bench folded, at the simple tug of a strap, cargo volume, at 1,655 litres (58.4 cu.ft) is up by 145 litres (5.1 cu.ft).

The deck extends, according to our tape, to 1,480 mm or almost five feet. Deep rear-wing pockets

plunge handily either side of the wide 1,000 mm (3.28 ft) floor.



Seating is generous, with width enough for three to cosy up in the back or for two to take the outer sections and fold down the skimpier middle as a table. Behind an average-height driver there is around 220 mm or 8.5 inches of knee room in the rear, cashing in on an extended wheelbase.



Seats are generally 8 mm (0.31 in) higher than in the old model, so better for seeing out. Instruments and furnishings are good enough to compare with an Audi A4,

Competing with such as the Nissan Qashqai, Honda HR-V, Ford Kuga, Kia Sportage, new SEAT Ateca and Mazda CX-3, the Tiguan sits on the same VW Group platform as the Golf, Passat and Touran, with a footprint between those of a Golf and Golf Estate.

A huge 34-strong range, 20 of them with 4WD, takes in five trim levels and seven engines of between 115 PS and 240 PS at prices between £22,510 (1.4 petrol 2WD) and £36,375 (2.0 diesel 4WD auto).

Standard base spec includes a media system with eight-inch colour touch-screen, Bluetooth connection, DAB digital radio, CD player and eight-speaker audio as well as all-round airbags, manual air-con, cruise control, lane assist to stop you wandering on motorways and automatic emergency

braking in city traffic.

Around 95 per cent of Tiguan sales are diesel. Our test car was the best seller in the UK – a 2.0 diesel 150 PS manual with 4MOTION (4WD) in mid-range SE Navigation trim, priced at £28,945.

First thing to remember is that you are not in a Golf. The Tiguan is tall and roomy and practical but with neither the grace nor balance of its stablemate. At first the ride can seem fidgety and agitated, especially perhaps on the larger 18-inch wheels with this spec. Some passengers were not altogether happy.

I was grateful for the Dynamic Chassis Control fitted as a £790 extra which allowed you to opt for a Comfort setting (as opposed to Sport or Normal). That felt much more civilised.

Welcome though not as dramatic in their impact were other options: Head-up display in the windscreen (£495) – which you quickly come to rely on; electric tailgate (part of a £655 package), especially with the larger boot opening on the new model, and Area View with Park Assist (£815) – three cameras giving a 360-degree view of the vehicle on the dashboard screen.

This and other items boosted the final price to a hefty £34,160.

While you are aware of the four cylinder unit calling on its 150 PS to produce a fair performance, there was no denying its economy – a week's unsparing motoring over a variety of roads recorded 50-plus mpg.

Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

VW Tiguan SE Navigation 2.0 TDI 4Motion 150 PS.

Type: SUV; five door; five seat; five trim levels.
Size: Length 4,486 mm (14.72 ft); width 2,099 mm (6.89 ft); ht 1,643 mm (5.39 ft); kerb wt. 1,641 kg (3,618 lb).
Tow Max 2,500 kg (5,511 lb).
Boot Length 840 to 1,480 mm (2.75 to 4.85 ft); min width 1,000 mm (3.28 ft); vol 615 to 1,655

litres (21.7 to 58.4 cu.ft).

Engine and transmission: Diesel; 1,968 cc; four cylinder; turbo; six speed manual gearbox; 4WD; stop-start.
Power: 150 PS @ 3,500–4,000 rpm; max torque 251 lbs ft (340 Nm) @ 1,750–3,000 rpm.

Performance:

0-60 mph: 9.3 secs.
Top speed: 125 mph.

MPG: On test 51.1; official Combined: 52.3; tank capacity 60 litres (13.2 gallons).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 141 g/km; Road Tax Band F; VED £145; EURO 6 emissions; BIK tax 28%

Tyres: 235/55 R18 on 18-inch alloys.

Insurance Group: 18E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles; paint 3 years; anti-rust 12 years; breakdown 12 months.

Price: £28,945; with options, as driven £34,745 (range from £22,510 to £34,160).

Rivals: Nissan Qashqai; BMW X1; Mazda CX-5; Kia Sportage; Audi Q3; SEAT Ateca.