

MOTORING MATTERS *by Anthony Goodwin*

AUTOEMOCION WITH THE NEW SEAT IBIZA

Taxi Globe's editor was invited to the UK launch of the all new Seat Ibiza and was impressed with the changes. I had to wait slightly longer to road the new vehicles. From the moment I first saw the television advert for the all new Seat Ibiza I wanted to try one! Having driven and loved the old Ibiza, the new one looked interesting and very modern. So when we took delivery of firstly the 5 door version in what SEAT call Citrus colour in SE spec I was excited. This new version is certainly a step up for previous models with tactile interiors which are funky to look at but practical and driver focused.

Standard features on all models include electric front windows, CD player with steering column mounted control, ABS and 4 airbags. At present there are 3 engines to choose from a 1.2, 1.4 and 1.6. We road tested a 1.4 which was smooth and very nippy round town. It was even great on a motorway where I wasn't sure overtaking was going to be easy; it took everything in its stride. The 1.4 average fuel consumption is 45.5 mpg and it falls into group c for tax. More engines will be available next year to include a range of diesels.



After driving around in the Ibiza for a week I was sorry to see it go back to SEAT, but then came the Ibiza SC, the 3 door version. Yet again it came in the Citrus colour but this time in sports spec, which meant sports seats, suspension and leather clad steering wheel and gearknob. If I had to choose then I would have the 3 door version but then I am a single man and very rarely have rear seat passengers in my car. Both versions of the Ibiza are 5 star euro NCAP for passenger protection so amongst the safest in the supermini class. Also collecting some impressive awards including the Golden

Steering Wheel awarded by influential German newspaper Bild am Sonntag - one of Europe's biggest-selling titles. Nominations for the final five cars in each category were voted on by readers of the Sunday newspaper before going on to be judged by an expert panel of drivers and celebrities including former rally and race ace Walter Röhrl, and ex-F1 driver Hans-Joachim

Stuck. The Ibiza came out tops in the small car class after being judged best in dynamics, design comfort and handling. The SEAT's low CO2 emissions and outstanding value for money also helped it to the title. Meanwhile, only a few days before, the elegant Ibiza 5dr had been named 'Compact Car of the Year' by the Dutch automobile club ANWB. Monthly magazine De Kampioen, edited by the ANWB for its members, tested a five-door SEAT Ibiza 1.4 SE against a range of top competitors including the new Ford Fiesta, Mazda 2 and Alfa Romeo MiTo. The judges' verdict was clear: 'The Ibiza is one step ahead of its rivals.'

The SEAT's fine design, exceptional quality and extensive standard equipment helped it secure top spot in the Dutch test, with the ANWB judges praising in particular its 'big car' features such as the availability of ESP, EBA, Hill Hold Control and Tyre Pressure Warning.

The hill hold control is a great option I particularly liked. All you have to do is press the brake pedal down hard and the car will remain stationary for 2 seconds when the brake pedal is released before accelerating. This is great for those hill starts and also for parking and manoeuvring. Another popular option is the rear parking sensors, this one also automatically quietens the stereo to allow the beeps to be heard more easily. Bi-xenon headlights are also available, with AFS - a clever built in cornering function which means as you turn a corner the headlights turn with you. There's a six speaker stereo system, optional integrated SEAT Bluetooth technology, Aux-in and optional iPod compatible USB port.

Prices start at £8995 for the 1.2 S going up to £11295 for the 1.6 Sport in the 5 door version with the SC starting at £8595 to £10895.



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