

MOTORING MATTERS by Anthony Goodwin

COOL NEW SEAT LEON IS HOT HOT!!

SEAT's recently revised second generation of the Leon is out now with some great technology and a superb hot hatch version too. I was lucky enough to have the 2.0 TSI Cupra on trial in Kiwi green – shy and retiring it isn't, it really isn't a look at me car at all! Regular readers of Motoring Matters will already know how much I like and enjoyed the SEAT Ibiza and its big brother is no different, with sporty looks and impressive performance. For those that want even more sportiness, the Cupra R is coming out and will have a 2.0 ltr TSI 265 ps petrol engine. It will also be the quickest Seat to date with a 0-62 mph time of 6.2 and a top speed of 155 mph - where legal!

The revised SEAT Leon has not had many exterior changes, but why try and change something too much when it's already so good? With the Seat trademark dynamic line from front to back giving the Leon a great lean and low profile, this adds to its coupe style appearance. The front end has had the family nose added so you get the smaller logo with its chrome surround, with the larger headlights making the Leon look wider and sharper too. The funniest thing was when two friends tried to get into the back seats! There they were saying err where are the door handles? That's because they are concealed within the door frames. SEAT are very much into concealing things, as with the new Altea, the Leon has the vertical park wiper system. This means the wipers sit within recesses in the Front A pillars.

So now for the interior which has had a lot of improvements. These include a new steering wheel, controls, instrument clusters, central console and seats. Let's start with the multi-functional steering wheel which has been completely re-designed so that it is much easier to use. This is also the case with the switches for the lights and climate control systems. The seats have been updated with the upholstery options and are height adjustable on the driver's side as standard. Our test model had optional quilted leather bucket seats which were body hugging and definitely made another statement. The instrument cluster is backlit with ultra clear white LEDs. They are clever too; they are self regulating which means their brightness varies depending on light within the passenger compartment.



The Leon comes with a very impressive standard equipment list which includes ESP with EBA, ABS with TCS, air conditioning, front electric windows and 6 airbags which include side and curtain. The Cupra we had on trial had lowered sports suspension a single big bore exhaust pipe and dark tint rear windows. The options we had included electric slide/tilt sunroof and 18" Pavonis alloys in white (this also means you get white door mirrors too). There is a host of great options to include a media pack to include Bluetooth connection and integrated sat nav.

There are 5 petrol engines and 4 diesels to choose from. The petrol range available is a 1.4 ltr 85 ps, 1.6 ltr 102 ps, 1.4 TSI 125 ps, 2.0 ltr TSI 211 and the range topping 2.0 ltr TSI 240 ps. Fuel consumption figures range from 54 mpg for the 1.4 ltr and 42.8 mpg for the 2.0 ltr TSI 240 ps. The diesels are 1.9 TDI 90 ps, 1.9 ltr 105 ps Ecomotive, 2.0 ltr TDI 140 ps and 2.0 ltr TDI CR 170 ps. Fuel consumption figures for the Diesels range from 65 mpg for the 1.9 ltr 90 ps and 64 mpg for the 2.0 ltr TDI CR 170ps.

Prices start from £13,970 for the 1.4 ltr 85 ps petrol in S trim with the range topping Cupra being £21,090.

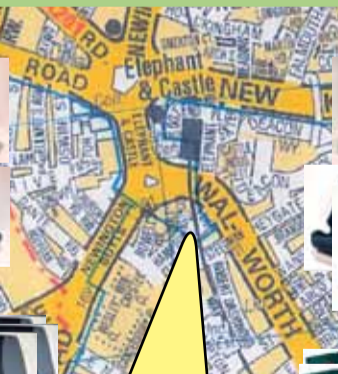
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