



TIM BARNES-CLAY

Motoring

ALFA MALE

The *Sorted* team loves cars. That doesn't mean that we're all good drivers, that we could talk to you about the state of the motoring industry, or that we could help you fix any automotive issues – but we adore the things, nonetheless. Unsurprisingly, our motoring editor, Tim Barnes-Clay, is the biggest petrol-head out of all of us. So, as usual, he's been touring Europe and the UK – all for the love of cars.

2017 Ford Fiesta

The Ford Fiesta is like a family member that's just always been there. It's a comfort blanket to know the model is still being made 41 years since it came on the scene. But that doesn't make it a crusty old thing that you love because it's just 'there'. No, the Fiesta is more like Doctor Who. It just keeps regenerating – and the 2017 Fiesta is the eighth incarnation.

The range includes the Titanium, the ST-Line and the deluxe Vignale model. And the exciting all-new Ford Fiesta is supported by an army of features. These embrace: technology to detect pedestrians, hands-free parking, a sound system from Bang & Olufsen and a panoramic glass roof.

With a fleeting look, the 2017 Fiesta doesn't appear any different, but gaze at the car's backside and it's a different kettle of fish. Horizontal tail-lights give the hatchback a more mellow appearance. And, significantly, it soon becomes noticeable that the Fiesta is now bigger. Not only is the all-new Fiesta 12mm broader and 7mm lengthier, the wheelbase has been extended by 4mm. All of this means there's more room than ever before.

I drove the all-new Ford Fiesta in the already well-regarded ST Line trim at the car's media launch in Spain. The engine in my test vehicle was the 140ps 1.0 litre three-cylinder EcoBoost petrol turbo. And, looks-wise, the ST Line

looks sexy with a body kit complete with side skirts, deeper front bumpers and a rear spoiler.

Due to the increase in size, there's better legroom for rear seat passengers. The boot is also a tad larger – offering up 292 litres of space. But it's the cabin that has the 'wow factor'. Much of the bargain-basement plastics are gone, the haphazard array of buttons has departed, and the passé, mono-colour screens have been updated. It's a much chicer atmosphere inside the Ford Fiesta now, with only some scratchy plastic surrounding the electric window switches stopping you from feeling that you're in an Audi A3. There are soft materials in most areas and the rest of the interior feels robust. This all-new 2017 Fiesta is going to be able to withstand years of use.

The most conspicuous piece of tech in the new Fiesta's cabin is the considerable touchscreen that's positioned on top of the dash. It looks a bit of an add-on, so maybe it could've been combined better, but it's instinctual to use. You can also link your smartphone via Apple Car Play and Android Auto. The ST Line I tested was also equipped with a remarkable-sounding Bang & Olufsen acoustic system.

So, what's the fresh Ford Fiesta like on the move? The ST Line rides lower and firmer, and that means the car doesn't roll through corners. The



suspension isn't so rigid that you're ill at ease, though – and the car sops up potholes and road humps delightfully. What's more, the driving arrangement is exceptional, with good seat and steering wheel adjustment.

The all-new Ford Fiesta 1.0T 140 ST-Line is very muted at speed, with only the strum of the three-cylinder powerplant breaking the peace – and then that's only when really pushing the car fast. And, on that note, the hatchback will do the 0-62mph sprint in 9.0 seconds, and it maxes-out at 125mph. Perhaps more essentially, you can achieve an average 62.8mpg when driving on a mix of urban and rural roads.

In short, the Fiesta is one of the most crucial cars for Britain, and it's clear to see that the eighth form of the Ford isn't going to dishearten anyone. The 1.0T 140 ST-Line Fiesta is a smile-inducer to drive quickly, yet it's pragmatic, classy and efficient. The car ticks all the right boxes – and more, if a small family car with a dose of dynamism is what you're looking for.

Fast Facts
(1.0T 140 ST-Line)

Max. speed:

125mph

0-62mph:

9.0 secs

Combined mpg:

62.8

Engine layout:

999cc three-cylinder petrol turbo

Max. power (PS):

140

CO₂: 102g/km

Price: £17,595

"It's clear to see that the eighth form of the Ford isn't going to dishearten anyone."

2017 Volvo XC60

Volvo is a brand that conjures up thoughts of safety and comfort. The new XC60 doesn't disappoint here, but it also adds a smidgeon of sexiness. Who'd have thought you'd equate a Volvo with that? It's true, though, as I discovered driving the mid-sized SUV in basic D4 Momentum trim.

However, there's nothing basic about the entry-level XC60. This car comes bursting at the seams with kit. There's so much equipment that it hardly makes much sense going for a higher-up-the-range model. My test car came with factory-fitted leather seats, satnav and rear parking sensors. It also had keyless start, a power-operated tailgate and cruise control. Non-obligatory Pro trim adds a heated steering wheel and front windscreen, as well as active-bending headlights.

Looks-wise, the XC60 is very like the larger XC90 SUV. But the more compact dimensions make the Volvo even more compelling, not to mention easier to manoeuvre. Step inside, and the car sets new standards in the SUV sector. The dashboard centres around a large touchscreen while, elsewhere, soft-touch materials are plentiful.

While the fresh XC60's handling can be thought of as safe rather than dynamic, the Volvo is completely predictable and undemanding to drive swiftly. The Swedish machine's steering is accurate and the car feels nicely balanced in the corners. If you're looking for a more engaging drive from your next SUV, then the Jaguar F-Pace

is a tad better. The Volvo isn't bad at all, though – it just gives up a bit of sportiness for more comfort. Zero to 62mph arrives in 8.4 seconds and the top speed is 127mph.

The new XC60 is hushed and steady on the motorway – indeed my D4 diesel test model's engine was all but inaudible at 70mph. There's hardly any road and wind clamour, either, making the new arrival a soothing mile-muncher. It's also an economical cruising machine – with up to 54.3mpg possible on an average run.

All models in the range get selectable drive modes, with user-friendliness being another strong forte. Kneeroom is more than satisfactory and headroom is plentiful, putting the XC60 on an equal footing with the most



Fast Facts (2.0 D4 Momentum Pro)

Max. speed:
127mph
0-62mph:
8.4 secs
Combined mpg:
54.3
Engine: 1969cc
four-cylinder
diesel turbo
Max. power (PS):
190
CO2: 133g/km
Price: £39,005

commodious cars in this segment. The Johnny-come-lately doesn't have the XC90's seven-seat arrangement, but you do get a large 505 litre load area. The powered tailgate makes loading stress-free, while the seats fold over without difficulty to create a sizeable 1,432 litre boot, too. →

"This all-new 2017 Fiesta is going to be able to withstand years of use."





2017 Mazda CX-5

The Japanese-made CX-5 has always been a handsome motor. So, it's no shocker that because of its mix of style, driving dynamics and economy, the car has seen 1.5 million sales internationally.

Mazda's design crew had its work cut out to perfect something that, quite honestly, didn't need perfecting further. But what they've done is sharpen up the SUV, so everything looks tauter and fresher. It's more than just a beautification, though – improvements have been applied all over. And that involves an all-new cabin.

The 2017 CX-5 features a lower roofline and smoother sides. These changes accentuate its posture and erudite proportions. Inside, Mazda has fused scrupulous cockpit ergonomics with a chic, sizeable cabin.

Born out of the Japanese car-maker's 'Jinba-Ittai' car-and-driver-as-one belief, the latest CX-5 offers fresh stratum of comfort and driver engagement. Test-driving the 2.2 150ps 2WD Sport Nav Auto, it's clear Mazda has also cut vibration and clamour within the cabin. I drove the new model in rain-drenched Inverness – and the SUV managed to subdue the sound of the deluge, which went on for 24 hours.

Even though I saw some car accidents, undoubtedly caused by aquaplaning, I was able to push the Mazda CX-5 enough to note the SUV's handling precision is better than ever. In some ways, the wet weather was a blessing, as the Scotch mist forced us to fully concentrate on the test drive, rather than gawp

like tourists at the Cairngorms.

Because of that, we even became conscious of the CX-5's stiffer body rigidity (15% firmer than the first-generation car).

But the way the 2017 Mazda CX-5 drives is far more enchanting and comfy, due to the introduction of G-Vectoring Control (GVC). This essentially imitates the weight-transfer methods racing car drivers employ. It makes road cars piloted by average folk, like you and me, handle like they're in the hands of a pro-driver. But it's not all about the driver – GVC makes your passengers feel more chilled.

Fast Facts

(2.2 150ps 2WD Sport Nav Auto)

Max. speed:

124mph

0-62mph:

10.1 secs

Combined mpg:

50.4

Engine layout:

2191cc four-cylinder diesel turbo

Max. power (PS):

150

CO₂: 147g/km

Price: £30,195

The 2.2 150ps 2WD Sport Nav Auto is just so easy-going to drive. The 0-62mph time is 10.1 seconds, and the top speed of 124mph is more than adequate. Perhaps more crucially, you can also expect over 50mpg on an average run, while CO₂ productions are 147g/km.

All 2017 CX-5s are furnished well, with interior kit, such as dual-zone climate control, DAB radio and a touchscreen display with satnav. The Sport Nav trim adds an eight-way electrically alterable driver's seat, a reversing camera, and smart keyless entry. A heated steering wheel and heated front seats are also a bonus. But I've saved the best bit of tackle for last – the Sport Nav features a head-up display that shines information onto the windscreen – and it includes Traffic Sign Recognition. This is great, as it keeps you firmly engaged on the road ahead – something I needed to be, considering the squally weather north of the border.

There's no reason why you shouldn't look at the new Mazda CX-5, if you're in the market for a compact SUV. At £30,195 for the 2.2 150ps 2WD Sport Nav Auto, it's not an inexpensive set of wheels, but it will last you for ages. Mazda is well known for its dependable engines, and with the way it looks, steers and handles, this is a ride you'll savour. Furthermore, it's a voluminous, practical vehicle that doesn't guzzle fuel. It's also a bit different to all those rather omnipresent and often more costly Teutonic SUVs on the motoring market.



"The SUV's handling precision is better than ever."



2017 Honda Civic Type-R

From its styling to its brain-churning performance, the Honda Civic Type R is now an out-and-out supercar. Yes, it's a hot hatch, but it is the most desirable one out there – in terms of looks, image and clout.

The latest version I tested in Germany – on road and track – just blows you away. The rear spoiler seems the size of an aeroplane wing – and the car is so hunkered down to the tarmac, you swear it's sucking up asphalt for breakfast.

The underpinnings of the latest Type R are all box fresh. It's lower, wider and longer – and it sits on a platform that is even stiffer than the departing model. The six-speed bolt action rifle-like manual gearbox is the same as before, but the

Fast Facts

Max. speed: 169mph
0-62mph: 5.7 secs
Combined mpg: 36.7
Engine layout: 1996cc four-cylinder turbo petrol
Max. power (PS): 320
CO₂: 176g/km
Price: £32,995

"The Type R doesn't sound as beast-like as you might imagine, but the low rumble is enough to satisfy."

powerplant's muscle has been hiked from 310ps to 320ps.

Now, it might seem odd, but the car has been furnished with a comfort button on top of the Sport and +R settings. This is to give you some relief from the stiff suspension and growling alpha-male-esque drive.

But if you're like me, you'll want to hoon around all day in testosterone dripping +R mode. Sport is awesome, but +R is the one when you're either on track or in a 'racer' mood. Just be careful of your licence here in the UK, though. Out in Germany I got 258kph (160mph) on the unrestricted sections of autobahn. And on track at the EuroSpeedway Lausitz, near Klettwitz, I was too scared to look at the speedo.

But whether you're on track or tarmac, the newest Type R astounds with its cornering ability and sheer refusal to become unstuck from the road. It inspires masses of confidence and makes you push yourself to limits you didn't know you could get to.

So, what does it truly feel like to drive? Well, when diving into a bend, the brakes shave speed off in an instant. The Type R never rolls and under no circumstances does it get disturbed by potholes or changes

in the road surface. As I say, it is awesomely reassuring to pilot.

The front-wheel drive car's steering is pin-sharp and by no means feels skittish, so you can tilt the Civic into turns eagerly. The feedback is spot on, therefore it's easy to measure the amount of useable traction left on the tyres.

The Type R doesn't sound as beast-like as you might imagine, but the low rumble is enough to satisfy, and the sweet free-revving feel of the powerplant just tops it all off. Another plus is that manual gearbox. The six cogs are precise and engaging when asked to change up or down – making you feel like a racing driver, whether you're on track or not.

There's a 'normal' Honda Civic Type R and a GT variety, which costs a couple of grand more. I drove the latter, and reckon the extra money is worth it. You get extras that include: LED front fog lights, an infotainment unit with satnav and an upgraded sound system.

Overall, the Type R is a car that you will relish driving – and never get sick of. I was genuinely gutted to only have two days with the hatchback, and I can't wait to try the Type R out in Britain. →





2017 Škoda Kodiaq

Škoda's Kodiaq is a competitor to SUVs, such as the Kia Sportage.

The car isn't massive, but it's big enough to fit up to seven people across three rows of seats. There's a five-seater only version, too.

I tested the car in Edition 2.0 TDI 190PS 4x4 DSG seven-seat guise, which means lots of equipment comes as standard. Kit incorporates 19-inch polished alloys; seven airbags; blind spot detection and a satnav with an eight-inch touchscreen. The car is also furnished with leather and has electrically adjustable front seats.

The Kodiaq could never be described as a cheap car, especially in seven-seat Edition format. £35,360 will need to be handed over if you're paying for it upfront, but there's no denying you get a lot for your money. And that includes a very fine diesel engine.

With 190 horses pulling under the bonnet, the 2.0 oil-burner accelerates from zero to 62mph in just 8.8 seconds, while the top speed is 130mph. There's lots of low down shove, making the 2.0 TDI 190PS Kodiaq a perfect towing vehicle. And the drive is made easy, thanks to the smooth-shifting seven-speed automatic transmission.

This power makes the Kodiaq a bit of a giggle to drive on the right roads, too. It doesn't lean much in corners, which is unusual for an SUV, and this means you can hoon it around twisty UK rural routes without becoming unstuck. Naturally, the car's 4x4 ability helps traction on tarmac – and off. Although this Škoda should never be seen as an out-and-out mud-plugger.

"The Kodiaq's cabin is comfy, classy and clever all at the same time."

On the black-stuff, you can dial into the kind of handling that suits you and the road. The Škoda's adaptive suspension and steering system (named DCC) gives you three choices. You can motor along in 'Normal' mode. This delivers a firm ride with light-ish steering. Then you get 'Sport' mode, which weights up the steering and gives you an even stiffer ride. This is great for cornering, but can jar after a while. Then you have the 'Individual' setting, where you can create a mix of the above.

The Kodiaq's cabin is comfy, classy and clever all at the same time. There are lots of storage places, and the earlier mentioned touchscreen is intuitive to operate. In the second and third tier of seating, the SUV has

strengths that contend with the best its seven-seat adversaries can provide. The chairs in the middle provide plenty of head and legroom for two adults, and the third row of seating, while cramped for most adults and taller teens, are great for smaller kids. But if you've no need for the third set of seats some days, you can collapse them, making the boot seem comparable to a canyon in size.

The Kodiaq is a very practical, calm and fine-performing SUV, and it brings the fight to the likes of the Kia Sorento, Nissan X-Trail and the Mitsubishi Outlander. Indeed, all the above should be worried because this Škoda possesses a winning blend of ingredients that will undoubtedly entice many people towards the Czech-made marque.

Fast Facts

(Edition 2.0 TDI 190PS 4x4 DSG Seven-Seats – as tested)

Max. speed:

130mph

0–62mph:

8.8 secs

Combined mpg:

49.6

Engine layout:

1968cc four-cylinder diesel turbo

Max. power (PS):

190

CO₂: 151g/km

Price: £35,360



And finally... One for Alfa Romeo Aficionados

The Museo Storico Alfa Romeo is Alfa Romeo's official museum, located in Arese, Italy. It displays a permanent collection of the brand's cars, and after being closed down in 2011, the museum reopened in June 2015. I dropped in on it recently while in Milan testing the latest Alfa Romeo Giulia Veloce.

The Veloce, by the way, plugs the gap between the super-fast Giulia Quadrifoglio (QV) and the standard zoops petrol-powered Giulia. It looks very like the flagship QV, and it still provides a meaty performance hike over less significant Giulias. Zero to 62mph arrives in 5.2 seconds and the top speed is 149mph. These figures, alongside the fact the car is around a third cheaper to purchase than the Quadrifoglio powerhouse, means it's undoubtedly the sweet spot in the Giulia line-up. The Veloce is now available to buy or lease in the UK, if you're tempted.

But I digress, let's get back to my Alfa Romeo museum visit...

On entering the Museo Storico Alfa Romeo, it becomes clear that the building is the heart of a genuine 'brand centre', with a bookshop, café, documentation centre, test drive track, and a showroom. It is the perfect bond between past, present and future.

Museum curator Lorenzo Ardizio showed me around and explained it was inaugurated in 1976 and was open to visitors by reservation only. Apparently, following the decommissioning of Alfa's Arese production plant and the ensuing loss of the centre's directional role, the museum was closed in 2011. But as part of Alfa Romeo's global relaunch plan, it was reopened to the public in June 2015 during the world preview of the new Giulia.

The museum's layout emphasises the identifying features that belong to the Alfa Romeo DNA; depicted through a luminous installation that stretches across the building vertically: lights, words and signs of style that come to life in a display with a descending helical motion, symbolising stylistic continuity and technological consistency in time. The display exhibits 69 models marking not just the development of the brand, but the very history of the automobile itself. From the very first A.L.F.A. car, the 24 HP, to the legendary Mille Miglia winners, such as the 6C 1750 Gran Sport driven by Tazio Nuvolari, the 8C coach built by Touring and the Gran Premio 159 'Alfetta 159' world Formula 1 winner driven by Juan Manuel Fangio; from the Giulietta, iconic 1950s car, to the Championship 33 TT 12.



The very essence of the marque has been condensed into three principles: Timeline, which represents industrial continuity; Bellezza (beauty), which teams style with design; Velocità (speed), summing up technology and light weight. To each principle is devoted a floor of the museum.

Timeline occupies the entire first floor, with a selection of 19 cars which best represent the development of the brand, each accompanied by a multimedia information panel. The exhibit is completed by an 'interactive memory', a smart-tech station where you can access an interactive system for more details about the history of each model. The installation entitled 'Quelli dell'Alfa Romeo' narrates how a legend was formed in over 100 years, thanks to the work of thousands of men who contributed to the company's growth: from the workers to the mechanics, testers and designers, engineers and white-collar workers.

The second part of the exhibit, on the ground floor, is called Bellezza and features several themed areas. The layout has been designed with dynamic and smooth lines that recall the style of the major Italian coachbuilders: from the 'I maestri dello stile' (masters of style), which combines nine major design examples from each era, to 'La scuola italiana' (The Italian School), displaying cars built by the Touring

body shop under the Superleggera brand in the 1930s and 40s. In the centre lies 'Alfa Romeo nel cinema' (Alfa Romeo in the movies). This is followed by 'Il Fenomeno Giulietta' (The Giulietta Phenomenon) and 'Giulia: disegnata dal vento' (Giulia: designed by the wind), with models that accompany the growth of the economy and of Italian taste in the 1950s and 60s. The third part is dedicated to speed and it stretches across the entire sub-ground floor. This is the most exciting area, where Alfa Romeo enthusiasts can meet the stars of Alfa Romeo's major victories: from 'Nasce la leggenda' (a legend is born), a spectacular multimedia space which groups together the stars of the epic competitions between the two world wars, through to the debut in F1 racing, 'Progetto 33' and 'Le corse nel DNA' (racing in Alfa Romeo's DNA). You then enter the 'Tempio delle vittorie' (Temple of Victories), another space where a show of pictures, sounds and film footage presents the ten biggest triumphs in the history of Alfa Romeo.

The journey through the legend ends with a playful and spectacular finale: the 'bolle emozionali' (emotional bubbles) dedicated to the experience of the Alfa Romeo world, with 360° virtual reality film footage, and a full-immersion room where you sit in interactive armchairs and watch 4D films dedicated to the legendary successes of Alfa Romeo. ■



Whether you love cars or not, the Museo Storico Alfa Romeo is worth a visit. The exhibits are more like works of art and you'll be blown away by the history alone. For more information visit www.museoalfaromeo.com.

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Tim is an experienced motoring writer with a background in radio and TV journalism. He puts his pedal to the metal each issue with his must-read car reviews. Visit carwriteups.co.uk.

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