

# HERE 4 MOTORING

## SEAT Leon Cupra

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My 'office' this week has been the Leon Cupra 280. It is the most powerful production hatchback SEAT has ever made, so the 2.0 TSI DSG-auto model certainly got my Monday off to a flying start.



Harnessing 276 horses the Spanish-made motor is capable of 155mph and will sprint from 0-62 south of six seconds. It feels every bit as fast as the figures suggest and the gear-change paddles on the steering wheel help with that 'boy-racer' thrill you sometimes need after a bad day at work.

As a true sports engine, the 2.0 TSI turbo petrol unit of the Cupra 280 reacts spontaneously to every movement of the accelerator pedal and is wonderfully high revving. This is paired with a rich and refined sound that is aided and modulated by a standard sound actuator. Throw the Cupra around corners – and it sticks to the road; dab the throttle on the straight and you're pushed back in your seat as the car gets down on its haunches for a gratifying sprint. But drive the SEAT sensibly and it behaves like any normal hatch. It's just handy to know that if you need a bit of 'oomph' to immediately overtake that annoying lorry then it's there for you.

Inside, the driver's seat is supportive and the steering wheel adjusts for a satisfying grip. The dials are clear and all the knobs and switches feel logically set out. Visibility is good and, in the rear, my children sat happily in their child-seats, which were fitted securely into the ISOFIX anchoring system.

My wife found the front passenger area spacious and cossetting, although on the one occasion when she travelled in the rear, she commented that legroom was a little limited. And when it came to loading, the 380-litre boot, which beats the 316-litre capacity of the Focus ST and matches the Golf GTI's, was large enough for a buggy and copious amounts of filled-to-the-brim supermarket shopping bags.

As a family man, I found the car reassuring to be in. Safety is excellent, with a five-star score in Euro NCAP crash-testing,

including a 94 per cent result for adult occupant protection. The Cupra feels well-made and there are driver and front passenger airbags as well as side and curtain airbags. The SEAT Leon is also equipped with traction control gadgetry to help keep it on the road and anti-lock brakes to ensure it scrubs off speed swiftly. The Cupra 280 is visually differentiated by its unique 19-inch wheels with a titanium paint finish, plus the Aerodynamic Pack, which comprises a spoiler on the rear roof edge, Cupra lettering on the brake callipers and black exterior mirror housings. The trim elements in the cockpit of this top sporty variant are a deep glossy black. What's more, bi-xenon headlights are fitted to help you see (and be seen) just that bit better –and it has useful parking sensors too.



The Leon Cupra 280 with the 6-speed DSG auto gearbox will set you back £28,865 on the road. It is by no means the cheapest hot-hatch, but the VW Golf GTI costs a similar amount and is slower. So, when you take into account its kit and performance, the SEAT justifies its price.

### PROS 'N' CONS

- Sporty ✓
- Fun to drive ✓
- Kit ✓
- Boot ✓
- Rear legroom X

### FAST FACTS

Max speed: 155 mph  
0-62 mph: 5.7 secs  
Combined mpg: 42.8  
Engine: 1984 cc 4 cylinder 16v turbocharged petrol  
Max. power (bhp): 276  
Max. torque (lb.ft): 258  
CO2: 154 g/km  
Price: £28,865