

Thanks for the Memory

Ian Lamming gets reacquainted with an old friend

IF MEMORY serves me well, my friend had an original HR-V and it had the longest back window ever – we called it the hearse just to annoy him.

The original HR-V was a bit quirky and sat alongside the more conventional CR-V like some sort of rebel brother, only to disappear for a bit while its sibling continued to prosper.

Well, it's back and there isn't a coffin in sight, nor my friend come to think of it; hope he's not dead.

New HR-V is a mix of coupe and SUV; it's less idiosyncratic but still not mainstream, which is a good thing and helps it stand out from the opposition.

The appeal has broadened because it looks quite sporty on the one hand but stocky and stable on the other, which is a clever blend and it drives the same way as it looks.

Climb inside the HR-V and it feels dynamic from the word go thanks to a truly excellent dash and tactile chunky steering wheel. The responses are great too. It drives like a sports saloon with well-weighted steering and a slick six speed gearbox that slots home like a coupe.

It is an SUV but the ride and road holding are more sporty, as is the perky performance from the superb 1.6 litre diesel that is both strong and very economical.

The whole package is energetic and enjoyable. Shapely lines seem to shrink HR-V's size but the car is actually spacious and accommodating with plenty of room for passengers and luggage.

Interior is also well built and thought through with 7in touchscreen operating the infotainment centre that features all manner of hi-tech wizardry.

Expect speed limit recognition and limiter, connectivity, City-brake that picks up hazards, warns you if you don't react and stops if you are still in a daze.

Economy is so good I stopped trying and enjoyed the ride. Anything around 55 does me but the official combined figure is more than 70mpg so expect anything in between.

HR-V made quite an impact and is definitely worth a dabble if you are in the market for this type of car.

I certainly won't have to try too hard to remember its many attributes.

Fact File

- Honda HR-V
- Engine: 1.6 diesel
- Power: 120PS
- 0-62mph: 10.2 secs
- Top speed: 119.3mph
- Combined MPG: 70.6
- Transmission: six speed manual
- CO2 g/km: 104

