



A driving obsession

Ian Lamming drives the Honda Civic 1.6i DTEC SR

DISTANCE to empty 830 miles. That's it then, job done and it hasn't even turned a wheel.

Obsession is a strange thing and since the financial credit bubble burst mine has been about driving economically.

Even cars that are designed for performance, where their *raison d'être* is about power and speed, I can't help trying to eek as many miles as I can out of a gallon of juice.

Imagine the ballet pump throttle treatment required to get 37mpg out of 300BHP Impreza Turbo, but I managed it.

So how easy a week did I have with Honda's latest diesel powered Civic?

Frankly, with that many miles per tank, I didn't have to try very hard, in fact I didn't have to try at all.

With this particular Civic the driver could have easily worn old fashioned deep sea diver lead boots and still managed to return MPG figures most manufacturers can only dream of.

A week in its company, stamping all over the throttle pedal, saw 69.6MPG on the trip computer, which is astounding.

Not sure how the Honda engineers achieve these incredible figures but it certainly isn't by turning down the wick.

The 1.6 litre turbo diesel has big lungs and when it draws deeply upon them blows with a vengeance, hence the 300Nm torque figure.

It is a fabulous motor, willing in every sense. It accelerates, cruises and wallops through the mid-range in an incredibly refined and sophisticated manner, without slurping down the diesel.

A clever but subtle redesign of the front air dam, side skirts, lights and rear spoiler ensures the air passes over the bodyshell in a fluid and efficient way. Even the aerial is a shark's fin style piece of aerodynamics. The whole package freshens further an already contemporary aesthetic and this modernism continues inside.

Civic has an incredible two-tier dashboard that would not look out of place in the world of aeronautics.

High quality fittings and generous specification add to the ambience. There's a colour touch screen, useful controls on the steering wheel, an excellent hi-fi, chunky steering wheel and supportive seats.

The boot is huge, interior space generous, making it practical and comfortable – just what you need when you have 830 miles in the tank.

Fact File

Honda Civic 1.6i-DTEC SR

Engine: 1.6 litre turbo diesel

Power: 120PS

0-62mph: 10.5 secs

Top speed: 121mph

Combined miles per gallon: 78.5

Transmission: six-speed manual

CO2 g/km: 94