

Rip it Up



Ian Lamming assesses the brilliant new Honda Civic

RIP up the rule book, things have changed again.

Just when you think you know cars, hatchbacks in particular, Honda decides to move the goalposts with the new Civic.

Built in England, this new model should help the post-Brexit deficit as it flies from these shores all over Europe and to Trump-land USA. I've got to predict, they will love it as much as I do.

The previous Civic was a fine and splendid enough machine and while it always boasted radical lines, never seemed to date.

New kid on the block looks bolder still, wider, lower slung and sportier. Angular and edgy, even the wing mirrors look hard, like a back street terrier who has lost chunks from his ears through daily battles with next door's Alsatian. If that's not sporty enough, plump for the twin centrally mounted exhausts that have you believing that this must surely be a Type-R, even when its not.

Even though it's not – the mighty new Type-R is yet to come – the humbler variants seem to believe they are. And that's their strength.

New Civic is a five door hatchback but comes

with 17in alloys. There is the choice of a 1.0 litre three cylinder or a 1.5 litre four cylinder.

But they both come with turbos and incredible power outputs of 129 and 182PS respectively; the latter being more than the original Type-R. Interiors are sporty too with superb dash and controls, excellent leather seats and the best ride ever, whose firmness can be changed at the press of a switch. Either setting is superb, the softer remaining sporty and controlled, the harder sharper still but still compliant.

The six-speed box is typically Honda being precise with just the right amount of throw and weight – sporty again. The CVT is silky smooth and responsive.

Inside, the Civic is excellently equipped with touch screen infotainment and the latest hi-tech connectivity. Two things strike you immediately, the quality of the build – yeah, let's hear it for British craftsmanship – and the sense of feel you get through the seat of your pants.

This is a car you can't fail to enjoy – just make sure you pay attention to the other rule book otherwise it could be your licence that gets ripped up.

Fact File

- Honda Civic
- Engine: 1.0 or 1.5 petrol turbo
- Power: 129/182PS
- 0-62mph: 10.4/8.2 secs
- Top speed: 126/137mph
- Combined MPG: 58.9/48.7
- Transmission: six speed manual or CVT
- CO2 g/km: 110/133