

Size really does matter

Ian Lamming gets familiar with a new improved old favourite

THE Civic has now been with us for generations but until now there has never been an estate version.

It started life as a tiny city car and has matured over the past decades into a sophisticated and capable contender in a market where buyers have never been so demanding.

Having a sports tourer is a necessary addition and turns out to be a stroke of genius, particularly as it is no cut and shut, bolt-on bodge job.

ST is a thoroughly well designed and delightful member of the Honda range. Firstly, it looks fabulous; long, sleek, modern and eye-catching. It has an air of sportiness about it and is a far cry from the utilitarian looks of many estate cars.

It sits low, is wide and aggressive and the window line hints that this is a car of considerable performance.

Inside, things get better still. The Civic has an incredible two-tier dashboard that would not look out of place in a spaceship. Everything is top notch. There's a colour touch screen, useful controls on the steering wheel, a cracking hi-fi and hi-tech trip computer with ultra-modern graphics.

Add wonderful leather trim and high-quality trim and you can't help but feel you are in something special, out of the norm.

ST comes with the super new 1.6 litre diesel, a peach of a motor that offers stunning performance, economy and levels of sheer refinement. Add a stunning automatic gearbox and suspension that can be altered on the hoof from comfort, to normal, to sport, and you have a car that is superb to drive.

Grip the gloriously chunky leather steering wheel, fire up the motor and head for the Dales for a drive to remember.

All that and of course this doesn't even address the purpose of the ST itself; it's an estate, so the load bay is massive, bigger still with the rear seats down, and there is a fantastic storage area under the floor in which you can hide the valuables.

The Civic name may be as familiar as an old friend but the latest variant has to be the best yet thanks to the estate bodyshell and fantastic new motor. It has come so far over the decades and has assured itself of fans for many years to come.

Fact File:

Honda Civic ST
1.6i-DTEC EX
Engine: 1.6 litre
turbo diesel
Power: 120PS
0-62mph: 10.5 secs
Top speed: 121mph
Combined miles per
gallon: 72.4
Transmission: six-
speed automatic
Insurance: 16E
CO2 g/km: 103

