

# Road test: Kia Picanto GT-Line

by Tim Saunders



It always ceases to amaze me how much power can be squeezed out of a tiny engine. The Kia Picanto GT-Line with its 998cc

three cylinder engine and a little help from a turbocharger is a good example.

Here is a car that will undoubtedly make a good city runabout; it's certainly nippy in town but I've got bigger plans for it – a run to Bury St Edmunds (over a 300 mile round trip), which will really show this car's mettle.

My first impressions are that it is well designed and attractive from the outside, helped by its white finish with a go faster red stripe beneath the doors, around the front fog lights and inside the black radiator grille. The chrome door handles are a nice touch as is the twin exhaust. And when the engine is revved hard there is a satisfying roar – for me the best part of this car; try getting that from an electric car. During my time with it I spot an increasing number of the more standard models on the roads; it is certainly a popular choice.

Over a short distance the driving position is comfortable but stay in it for too long and it becomes apparent that the seats are just not designed well enough resulting in very achy backs. The five-speed manual gearbox is smooth to operate and it's great fun to drive, just like the delivery driver told me. There's a traditional handbrake, too. All in all it feels well put together and the black and red faux leather seats are good quality. It comes loaded with goodies including all round electric windows, air conditioning, satellite navigation, reversing camera, heated steering wheel and front seats, cruise control and speed limiter. There's even a tilt/slide sunroof. This spec is often only reserved for larger more expensive vehicles. It

## FACTS AT A GLANCE

**Kia Picanto GT-Line S 1.0 T-GDi**

**Price:** £14,895 OTR

**0-60mph:** 9.8secs

**Top speed:** 112mph

**Power:** 99bhp

**Economy:** Around 40mpg

does feel a bit like operation overkill, though. Is all of this really necessary in such a small car?

Three sizeable children's car seats will squeeze into the back but it's very difficult to try using the seatbelts in such a scenario. A great car for four but five is going just that bit too far. Space is tight.

There's no need to put the key in the ignition to drive, simply put your foot on the clutch and push the start button. At the end of the journey the button is pushed again to stop the engine as in many vehicles these days. But when I leave the car there's always a lot of bleeping, which is really annoying.

The tiny 35 litre tank covers around 300 miles if driven carefully, which means it frequently needs filling up; not as impressive as its competitor the ultra frugal Skoda Citigo.

On the motorway it holds its own and easily keeps up with the flow of traffic. No matter what car you drive trying to maintain a consistent 70mph is difficult because invariably you get stuck behind a dawdler or the flow of traffic demands a faster pace. The Picanto is fitted with both a cruise control and speed limiter. They both deliver the same result but the former allows you to take your foot off the accelerator. On one occasion when the cruise control becomes fed up and refuses to work I resort to the speed limiter. When the set speed is exceeded a similar noise to that for a seatbelt being undone sounds, which unnerves me as I think one of the children has removed their seatbelts.

A very welcome addition on a hot summer's day is the electric tilt/slide sunroof but the switch to operate it is awkward; I still can't tell you whether it requires pushing in slightly to work but after some faffing about and a little talking to it, it does eventually work.

Overall though, it's a fun little car to drive with welcome character.

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