

Motoring

ONE SOLD EVERY 41 SECONDS!

By *Tim Saunders, Motoring Correspondent*

A well established, steady and reliable vehicle: That'll be the Volkswagen Golf, now in its eighth generation. It sounds like a long established family when you put it that way. Actually 35m have been sold since it was introduced in 1974, one every 41 seconds or 780,000 a year! Now that's a successful car.

It has always struck me as an aspirational car for many. My old boss drove a black Golf GTi and liked it a lot.

Externally this stylish new model looks a little more modern and crisp than its ancestors. The simple alloys show that this isn't a fussy car either. It's all about practicality and reliability.

Looking at the boot I notice how it shares similarities with my 18 year old Ford Fiesta because the glass window on both goes right to the edge; there's no metal frame down the sides. I've always liked that and it shows that this is quite a timeless piece of design.

Just opening the boot is enjoyable. Push the top of the large circular VW logo in and pull. This reveals a good size space and a steel space saving spare wheel. It is only on lifting the boot lid that you realise this model isn't the top of the range because there's no switch to push the boot lid down automatically, only an obvious space for where it would be.

Tim Saunders is an advanced motorist and journalist. He has always been passionate about motoring and regularly reviews cars from the leading manufacturers. His first report on a BMW 520i was published in the Dorset Echo when he was 17 (just after passing his driving test) in 1995. He went on to become business and motoring editor at the Bournemouth Echo.



Inside the rear seats provide enough room for our three children. Harriett (9) is now tall enough not to require a car seat and so she sits in the middle of Henry (4) and Heidi (7) in theirs. They're all comfy. There's enough leg room for all of us and the driving position is as I expect; very good indeed. The Soul Maze cloth upholstery is comfortable.

This model, finished in dolphin grey metallic, is called a mild hybrid thanks to the use of clever technology which makes it more efficient than standard petrol models. It comes with a seven speed automatic DSG box, which is futuristic by design and there are paddleshifts either side of the steering wheel should more engaging driving be required. The whole dashboard is modern and digital. There's a push button start in the centre by the gearbox and an electric handbrake.

My children discover that there's a neat drink bottle holder in the front centre console that moves into place by the push of a button. There are lights beside the external door handles; helpful for lighting the way at night. There's all round electric windows, heated steering wheel, air conditioning and the children once again discover that if you pull the rear centre armrest down it is possible to open the plastic to reveal a hole, ideal for oars, skis or anything long and awkward. That air conditioning isn't strong enough on a very hot day, though and the windows need to be down, too. There's no sat nav so I use mine.



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FACTS AT A GLANCE

VW Golf Life 1.5 TSi 110PS

Price: £29,410 OTR

Engine: 1.5-litre petrol

Economy: 48mpg

Power: 110bhp

CO2 emissions: 130 g/km

0-60mph: 8.5secs

Top speed: 139mph

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