

# First drive

Ford's new supermini is bold-looking and really great to drive

## Fiesta grows up

### FORD FIESTA

The Ford Fiesta is a true icon, with 12 million sold since it was launched in 1977.

This bold sixth-generation model sees the car grow in every direction. Despite this, it's slimmed down by 40kg, partly due to technology it shares with the lightweight Mazda2.

It'll cost between £8,695 and £13,695. Engines comprise 1.25, 1.4 and 1.6 petrols, with 1.4 and 1.6 TDCi diesels; all use a five-speed manual gearbox.

There are six trims in three or five-door body styles. Versions with air con cost from £10,395. An Econetic model claims really low fuel use (76.3mpg) and CO2 output (98g/km). We drove the 118bhp 1.6-litre petrol unit and 88bhp 1.6-litre TDCi diesel.



The latest version of a true icon of the road

The former is lively but noisy when extended. The overly-short gearing makes for some tiresome progress. The quieter diesel engine makes motorway jaunts more relaxed and economical. However, the five-speed manual gearbox is occasionally notchy.

Ride quality is impressive. It corners with great confidence and little body roll. All models have strong brakes, but electronic

stability control is £300 extra. There's decent headroom and generous legroom in the front and back. The boot is slightly larger than the old model's, but the seat bases don't tumble forwards.

**VERDICT:** This is much bolder-looking inside and out than the previous model, and it's one of the most mature superminis to drive that we have tested.

MkVI Golf has a welcome renewed focus on quality

## A return to form?

### VW GOLF

The VW Golf MkVI faces tough competition from established rivals such as the Ford Focus, and new models such as the Renault Mégane. It costs from £13,000 to more than £21,000. Changes over the MkV are subtle – this is more a heavy revision than an all-new car.



The MkVI is shorter, wider and more angular. Interior refinement is improved, partly due to new door seals. Wind noise is reduced and it cruises quietly at 70mph. The driving position is first rate.

The safety kit includes a driver's knee airbag and 'active' front head restraints. Electronic stability control is standard. An optional 'Park Assist' system helps with parallel-parking – the car steers itself into a space while you control the brake and throttle. Our initial tests reveal this isn't always spot-on.

Initially, there'll be four petrol and two diesel engines, with others

to follow. We drove two 1.4 TSI petrol seven-speed automatic (DSG) Golfs, with 121bhp and 158bhp. The former performed acceptably, but needed lots of revs and was noisy at times. The latter has an impressive spread of torque, making for effortless progress. Both of the cars' seven-speed DSG gearboxes shifted seamlessly.

We also tried a 138bhp 2.0 TDI Golf diesel, with a six-speed DSG 'box. Cruising is relaxed, with the engine turning over at just 2,000rpm at 70mph.

**VERDICT:** The MarkVI Golf is quiet, refined and well-built, but it needs to compete with its rivals on price and warranty to have a chance of succeeding.

## This month

For our latest first drive reviews, visit [www.which.co.uk/cars](http://www.which.co.uk/cars) throughout the month. You can view video test drives for several of the most important new models – look out for these

### Ford Mondeo Econetic

This is Ford's answer to the credit crunch and global warming or, perhaps, high fuel prices. The economy-tuned 1.8 diesel engine claims to return 53mpg on the combined cycle, but we weren't so convinced by its real-life benefits.



### Honda Jazz

You may have read our brief review of the all-new Honda Jazz last month (*First look, Which?* October 2008, p10) – if so, you'll know it made a great first impression. The new Jazz has a tough job living up to its predecessor, a car almost universally praised by Which? members. For a closer look, check out our exclusive video review.

### VW Scirocco

We can't think of a car we've tested this year that's turned as many heads as the first new Scirocco for 15 years. The stylish modern coupé proves that VW's traditionally staid designers should be let off the leash more often. Does substance live up to style? Watch the video to find out.



### Paris Motor Show

From Ford's new Ka to Honda's new Prius-rivalling Insight hybrid, October's Paris Motor Show was awash with important new car launches. We were there to give our thoughts on the best of the show – go to [www.which.co.uk/parismotorshow](http://www.which.co.uk/parismotorshow) to watch our exclusive video highlights.