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Honda HR-V Compact SUV/Crossover Road Test

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Author: Robin Roberts

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Honda's latest HR-V – Driven by Robin Roberts (Miles Better News Agency).

SUV-drivers are very style conscious so I was pleased as punch when a few I know quite well praised the Honda HR-V.

One asked what it was while another said they loved the sweeping lines, and both said they would certainly think of buying one next time around.



Honda's compact SUV was deliberately styled to give it a coupé character but blend it with the versatility of a multi-purpose vehicle - and I like the proportions better than the larger CR-V.

In a way it is not too dissimilar to the best selling Evoque, but at a lower cost, and it looks more svelte than some rivals.



Open it up and you have a very good normal bootspace which more than triples once the back "magic" seats fold away, while the passenger compartment is very roomy.

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The Honda HR-V series runs to 11 models based on 1.5 petrol or 1.6 diesel engines with manual or CVT boxes, and all are two wheel drive. There are three trim levels in the range from under £18,700 to just over £27,100.

Our test drive 1.6 diesel EX comes towards the top of the range and you get a lot for your money with the emphasis on luxury including full length sunroof, leather trim, privacy glass, LED headlights and reversing camera added to Garmin satnav, dual zone climate control, seven-inch touchscreen infotainment with CD player.

Honda engineers love performance cars but took off their racing boots for more practical shoes and the HR-V is no road-burner but a road-churner, covering the miles easily, effortlessly and very economically, as our overall fuel figure shows.

From standstill to over 60 mph it is a brisk though not quick car, but it will overtake quickly so long as you match power to gear and the light clutch and very direct 'click-click' gearchange is delightful. It fairly gobbles up the motorway miles and on twisting country roads it holds on well with good steering responses and feelsome brakes underfoot. The electric parking brake held well on our regular test slope but instantly released when needed.

The suspension does a very good job at absorbing the worst roads without being too soft or wallowing in nature or jerking you down with a strong damper setting. You can, however, hear the suspension working and the bumps passing beneath the car.

The ride comfort and roominess make this an attractive family car, unless you need a lot of oddments space and then you'd struggle with too small bins and trays in front, though there's a decent glovebox and your back-seat passengers have big seat-pockets.

In the boot area there is a dual level floor and the back offset split seats quickly fold down and offer a variety of configurations, hence their "magic" description.

With a very low rear sill access it's easy for heavy or bulky items to be loaded and the side



doors open wide. The seats are leather-covered in the EX, very well shaped and supporting with good adjustment range on the front pair.

For the driver, everything is well-placed with clear instruments, effective wipers front and back, bright headlights and useful sensors and cameras. Climate control is precise, quick and plentiful, backed by powered windows all round, including the full-length sunroof.

It's bursting with equipment but I would have welcomed some highlights from the oppressively dark interior throughout, and which easily showed up scuff marks.

The HR-V is eye-catching nevertheless, mostly for the right reasons, it is sufficiently different to stand out in a super-market car park and it will not break the bank with bills.

VERDICT

Smart, stylish, effective, family-friendly.

For: Economy, room, practicality, dynamics, ride, comprehensive specification.

Against: Oppressive interior trim, small oddments spaces, some road noise, modest performance.



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Mini Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Honda HR-V 1.6 diesel EX.

Price: £27,205 *as tested*.



Mechanical: 120 PS four cylinder 1.6 turbo-diesel engine, six speed manual, 2WD.

Performance: 119 mph, 0-62 mph 10.5-seconds.

Fuel consumption: Official Combined figure, 68.9 mpg (54 mpg achieved on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions 108 g/km, VED road tax £140 each year, BiK rating 20%.

Insurance Group: 20E.

Warranty: Three years/90,000 miles.

Sizes: L 4.30 m (14.11 ft), W 2.02 m (6.63 ft), H 1.61 m (5.28 ft), Kerb weight 1,324 kg (2,919 lb), bootspace: 470-1,533 litres (16.60-54.14 cu.ft).