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## New Ford Mondeo – Road Test

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Latest Ford Mondeo Vignale 2.0 Powershift auto 4WD.

Assessed by Robin Roberts (Miles Better News Agency).

When a giant moves it may not be often but everyone takes notice.

Ford held onto the Vignale coach-building name for 42 years before applying it to a hand-finished Mondeo which appeared in 2016, and now it's picking up momentum and will be appearing on more bespoke cars.

Ford acquired the Vignale name along with Ghia in the early 1970s, and while it quickly



introduced the latter, it parked the former until 2015 and it was developed for the latest D-sector medium to large car range for the following year.

Now sceptics may think this would not work, but in fairness Ford has done a good job with its “coachbuilt” Mondeo. It is brimming with the latest technology and high quality fittings and finish normally seen in far more expensive executive cars. There are eight models in the range of saloon and estate styles, including a hybrid derivative with two and four wheel drive, petrol or two diesel engines, manual and two types of automatic transmission.

You would expect a sophisticated info-tainment system, cutting edge driving aids and luxurious leather and bright trim, but sound-cancelling technology including acoustic glass is a surprise. Best of all, it works very well and brings higher refinement to the Mondeo.

But Ford has cut corners and to keep down the list price it makes you pay more for things like privacy glass, heated steering wheel, active park assist and city stop, which may be expected on an executive car, but which you may not want in any case.

Nevertheless you do get a lot for your money, including 18-inch alloys and skinny spare tyre, parking sensors and reversing camera, lane assistance and fully powered driver’s seat, 8-inch touchscreen as the face of the advanced info-tainment system, premium leather seats and wrapped nacelle.

Our 2.0 turbo-diesel was not the most powerful for its size but it had a wide spread of delivery with reasonable acceleration, utterly composed motorway cruising ability and it returned over 40 mpg without trying.

The test car came with the six-speed sequential automatic transmission which produced very smooth changes up or down and was quiet and easy to use, with a sporting setting as well as normal mode. The 4WD system is completely automatic too and needs no driver input.





I liked the steering and brakes feedback, the secondary controls were sensibly laid out although the column stalks and gearbox paddles were hidden by the wide steering wheel spokes, but they all operated with a reassuring firmness.

A large central console carried the upper screen and there were lower push-buttons for heating and ventilation to back up what was on the screen, in a sort of belt-and-braces approach - which I liked as it meant you're not distracted too much when driving and using them. I did notice the satnav was in need of updating with several incorrect speed limits being displayed and a number of false speed-camera warnings were given.

The climate control was straightforward and worked well throughout the car, with powered windows but no sunroof.



Oddments provision was very good in front and back and there were plenty of power points to run ancillaries. Access was easy with keyless entry, the doors opened wide and the apertures were big and you could easily fit a child seat if necessary. Room in the back was particularly generous both for legs and shoulders, and the front seats had a good adjustment range as well as providing good location, and they were all luxuriously leather trimmed.



The big boot held a lot behind a low sill and its capacity could be raised when the seatbacks were dropped, so it's a really good family car or business carry-all.

When laden you notice a drop off in the performance as it's a big car for the 2.0 TD engine anyway but otherwise it covers ground easily and economically, with predictable and safe handling, excellent grip and a generally smooth ride even if you hear how hard the



suspension is working.

Other mechanical and wind noises are very low, or sound that way thanks to the layered side windows. Visibility is generally good with very bright wide beam and long range headlights, big wipers and deep windows. It had “intelligent” headlights which autonomously switched between high and low beam but the system was like so many others tested - sometimes slow to react when you really needed it on country roads.

The rear quarter C-pillar is a big chunk of metal and does create a blindspot when pulling out or reversing and you need to exercise care, but otherwise the car is easy to manoeuvre and helped by the park assist system if you want to use it.

## VERDICT

It has only just been introduced and it's going to be difficult to say how it will hold onto its higher value in the years ahead compared to more familiar executive models, but the Ford Mondeo Vignale is without doubt good value in this sector.

It's certainly a giant step up for Ford.

For: Very roomy, large boot space, excellent seats, economical, pleasant to drive.

Against: Some road rumbles, too much plastic lower trim inside, some spec for a Vignale version should be standard and not extra cost.





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

Ford Mondeo Vignale Saloon, 2.0 turbodiesel, auto 4WD.

Price: £34,195.

Engine/transmission: 2.0 litre, 180 hp, four cylinder turbodiesel, six speed Powershift automatic with 4WD.

Performance: 140 mph, 0-62 mph: 9.3 seconds.



Fuel consumption: 41 mpg on test.

Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions 138 g/km, VED road tax £200 First Year rate then £140 BiK company car tax 29%.

Insurance Group: 31E.

Warranty: Three years/ 60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.88 m (16.01 ft), W 1.86 m (6.10 ft), H 1.49 m (4.89 ft), boot space 516-1,437 litres (18.22-50.75 cu.ft), four doors/five seats.