

FEATURES

BEST	WORST
Spacious and versatile interior Entry level pricing Pleasant and easy to drive	Spacesaver spare wheel Poor security rating Interior noise at highway speeds

For nearly 30 years the Honda Civic has been the Japanese manufacturer's mainstay in the small car class. Originally starting out as quite a cheap and compact vehicle, the Civic has evolved over the years into a physically larger vehicle that not only offers more room, but is also more expensive. The growth of the Civic has opened the way for Honda to introduce a new entry-level model. That model is the Jazz, an all-new compact five door hatchback.

There are three variants of the Jazz available – a 1.3 litre GLi, and two 1.5 litre VTEC models, the VTi, and the VTi-S. All models are available with either a five speed manual or a continuously variable (CVT) automatic transmission. Power output for the 1.3 litre engine is a fairly conservative 61 kW, while the 1.5 litre VTEC engine delivers 81 kW and thereby provides significantly better performance.

Honda anticipates the Jazz will create demand in a new class that overlaps the light and small car market segments. With contemporary styling, good standard features and entry-level pricing, the Jazz should appeal to both young and older buyers in need of a city runabout. The recent release of similar sized models such as the Mazda2 ensures that there is some stiff competition in the new compact car market.

Entry-level pricing is one of the most attractive features of the new Jazz. Prices start at \$16,990 for the manual Jazz GLi. Optioning the GLi with either air conditioning (VTi and VTi-S fitted standard with air conditioning) or the CVT automatic will add \$2000 each to the purchase price. The VTi and VTi-S in manual form retail for \$19,990 and \$22,490 respectively, with the CVT automatic a \$2300 option on these models.

For an entry-level model, the Honda Jazz is equipped with a fairly good array of standard safety and comfort features across all three variants. The base GLi receives electric power steering, driver and front passenger airbags, central locking, power windows and mirrors, engine immobiliser, anti-lock brakes (ABS) and a 60/40 split folding rear seat. The Jazz VTi is fitted with a few extra items in addition to those listed above for the GLi, including the larger 1.5 litre engine, air conditioning, keyless entry and sports interior trim. The VTi-S receives the full treatment, gaining front and rear spoilers, side skirts, 15-inch alloy wheels (spacesaver spare), fog lamps and a leather trimmed steering wheel on top of the VTi's equipment list.

The new Jazz is a functional vehicle with a short nose design that makes efficient use of its compact dimensions. The styling is pleasantly modern, and not dissimilar to other high roof offerings from other manufacturers in recent times. However, some clever design features do set the Jazz apart from most other rivals. Removing the fuel tank from the rear of the vehicle and locating it beneath the front floor has allowed the Jazz to have quite a low and flat floor, thereby maximising passenger and load space. To take full advantage of the space available, the rear seating offers a particularly flexible arrangement that can be folded into three distinct positions with a minimum of fuss.

With quite wide opening front and rear doors, access into and out of the Jazz is a simple affair. The seats are well shaped, comfortable and offer an adequate level of support. The reasonably upright seating position and short bonnet give an excellent view of the road ahead which assists in making the Jazz an easy vehicle to drive.

The interior of the new Jazz is modern and sporty. The VTi-S has a leather bound steering wheel, bold seat fabric and white-faced instruments with aluminium coloured bezels. A combination of rotary and pushbutton controls are located in the centre of the dashboard, and are clear and easy to use.

The Jazz is particularly well suited to negotiating typical urban traffic conditions as all the controls are very light and positive in their operation. For a small car that weighs a little over a tonne, the 1.5 litre engine provides ample performance when mated to the manual gearbox and returns good fuel consumption. At highway speeds the cabin tends to suffer from some resonance that could be suppressed with some additional sound insulation.

The Jazz is one of a number of Honda models to use an electric power steering set-up. The system is speed sensitive and gives good road feel and marginally reduces fuel consumption. Anti-lock brakes are a real bonus in an entry-level vehicle and work well to provide excellent stopping power in an emergency.

SUMMARY:

The Jazz is a new entry-level model from Honda that is a high roof, compact, five door hatchback. Some clever design features have given the Jazz a versatile seating arrangement and good interior space. The Jazz is available in three variants with either a 1.3 or a 1.5 litre engine. Light and positive controls make the Jazz a pleasant and easy vehicle to drive.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

Type Four cylinder, SOHC, 16 valves
Capacity 1.497
Induction Multipoint fuel injection
Fuel recommendation ULP
Claimed max. power 81 kW at 6000 rpm
Claimed max. torque . 143 Nm at 4800 rpm
Specific power output 54.1 kW/litre

TRANSMISSION

Type Five speed manual
Driving wheels Front
Speed per 1000 rpm in top gear. 33.3 km/h

WHEELS

Alloy 6.0JJ x 15
Tyres 185/55 R15
Spare Spacesaver

STEERING

Type Power assisted rack and pinion
Turns lock to lock 3.5
Turning circle (measured) 10.6 metres

DIMENSIONS

Mass 1040 kg
Length 3830 mm
Width 1675 mm (incl. mirrors) 1940 mm)
Height 1525 mm
Ground clearance (measured) 147 mm
Seating capacity 5
Fuel tank capacity 42 litres

TOWING

Max. towed mass (trailer plus load) 1000 kg
Max. towball download (laden trailer) 70 kg

NRMA THEFT RATING

Points on 0-110 scale (high score best) ... 32.5

WARRANTY

..... Three years, 100 000 km

MANUFACTURED IN

..... Japan

TEST RESULTS

ACCELERATION

50 - 80 km/h (in Drive) 5.5 sec
60 - 100 km/h (in Drive) 7.6 sec
0 - 80 km/h 7.0 sec
0 - 100 km/h 10.7 sec
0 - 400 metres 17.5 sec

FUEL CONSUMPTION (litres/100 km)

Best recorded during testing 5.3
Worst recorded during testing 8.7
Average on test 6.9

BRAKING

Distance to stop from 80 km/h 27.9 metres

NOISE

Interior at constant 80 km/h 69 dB(A)

Test vehicle supplied by
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