



Honda Accord

Great expectations

Car review | Look at the face of any Honda Accord driver. Chances are there's a big smirk on it. That is because when the Accord was first introduced in 2003 the car was so innovative, it was the best in its segment in many ways. Now it is time for a completely new Accord. Will it exceed expectations again?

It all starts out well. The new Accord looks even more modern than the previous generation. On the other hand: the first Accord concept cars were so radical and promising that many people postponed buying a new car and waited for the new Accord. Compared to the prototype this actual production model is still beautiful, but very conservative.

New media

The cockpit imposes with an overwhelming number of buttons, levers and displays. On the dash, the doors, the ceiling and the centre console: buttons are everywhere. The cockpit of an airplane doesn't compare! And it is not only for show, the tested "GT"-version is fitted with all common luxury, and then some. Those who feel at ease surrounded by advanced technology will feel right at home in the new Accord.



Of course Honda concentrated on new media. The CD-changer plays MP3 files from home made CD-ROM's. Between the front seats there is an AUX-input for an external MP3-player. Next to it a USB-connector to play MP3-files directly from a memory stick. Honda didn't even forget a conventional FM/AM radio! The sound quality of the audio system is fair.

Central on the dashboard is a large colour display showing all information from the sound system. This

display is also used for the navigation system, but both cannot be operated at the same time. When information from the MP3-player is displayed the sat-nav is unavailable. This may seem like a far fetched problem, but other cars can operate both at the same time and in every day use this limitation can be annoying.



The suspension is very firm, which suggests that this is very sporty sedan. Every bump and ripple in the road can be felt by the driver, who therefore thinks this alert Accord must be very capable. However, when going to extremes (try a slalom at 50 km/h) the Accord shakes and wobbles hopelessly like a ship on the waves! The springs may be firm, but they are long making the car tilt over in corners.

Room to move

The Accord offers ample space in the front, although the optional sun roof does take up valuable head room. The front seats are nice and firm. Even the lower back is supported very well (Japanese manufacturers sometimes tend to build seats for little Asian people, not for big Europeans).

The head and leg room on the back seat is poor for a car this size. Adults only fit in the rear when the front seats are moved forward a bit. The luggage compartment is no more than average.

Sporty

A sharp, sporty design suggests equally sporty handling. That starts with nice, heavy power steering with a certain resistance around the centre. This makes it easy to keep the Accord straight, which is very pleasant during high way driving. On smaller roads the steering is direct and precise.



Safety

It is because of this that the Accord is fitted with safety features that were not available in this segment before. Of course the Accord has the usual electronic stability programme (ESP) to prevent over and understeer. This is completed by the Trailer Stability Assist (TSA), which prevents a caravan from fishtailing.

In addition the (optional) Advanced Safety Pack offers three systems to prevent accidents. Lane Keeping

Assist System (LKAS) warns the driver when crossing a continuous white line on the road. Active Cruise Control (ACC) automatically keeps a safe distance to the car in front. The Collision Mitigation Brake System (CMBS) warns, tenses the seatbelts and prepares the brakes for an emergency stop when an accident is likely.

The brakes deserve special mentioning: they are capable of safely stopping the Accord in a remarkably short distance.



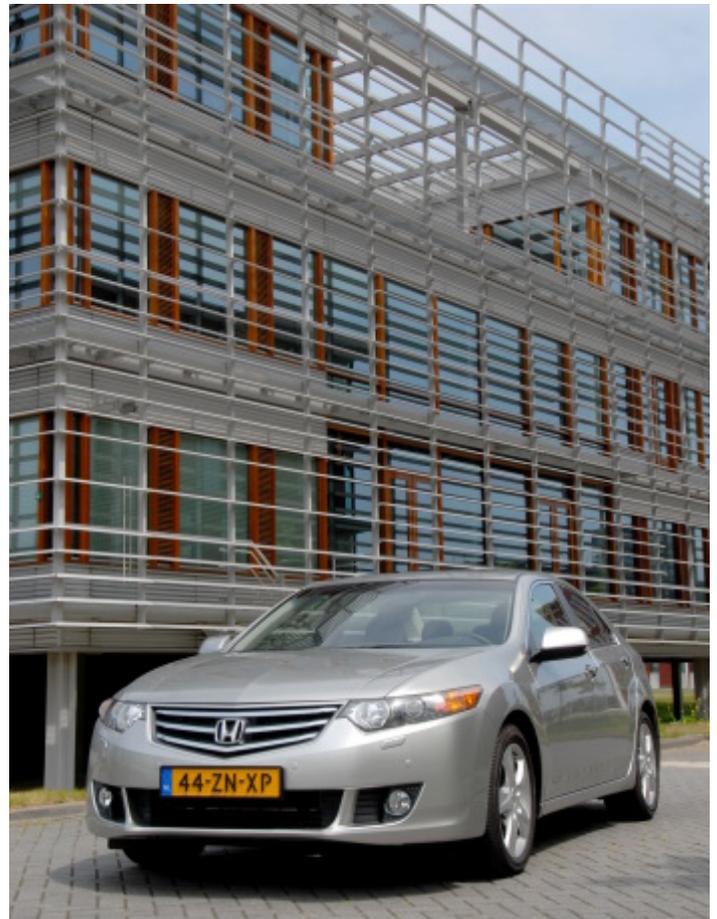
Engines

It is almost a cliché, but Honda is a real engine specialist and it shows. The tested 2.0 litre petrol engine utilises the latest version of Honda's famous "iVTEC"-technology. This changes the engine characteristics depending on the situation.

When the driver is in a hurry, the engine is eager to perform. From the 2.0 litre engine Honda gets more power than most other manufacturers (156 hp / 192 Nm). Therefore it feels like there's a larger engine under the bonnet and that gives a good feeling about the entire car. The performance of this base engine is good. A (very) sporty driving style costs about 11 litres of petrol per 100 km.

When the driver takes it slow, the engine will too and the fuel economy improves greatly. With a calm driving style a gas mileage of 6.5 litres per 100 km can be achieved. Many diesels cannot even match that! Even better: that figure has been realized using a (5

speed) automatic, which in theory should affect fuel economy. In other words: the Accord is even more economic than expected!



Conclusion

Does the new Honda Accord exceed expectations? Is the car even better than its predecessor and as exciting as the prototypes led to believe? Unfortunately the answer is no. The new Accord has no unacceptable flaws, but is not so good that it parallels all competitors like the previous model did.

The strongest point is the 2.0 litre petrol engine which thanks to "iVTEC"-technology performs very well and still manages excellent fuel economy. Thanks to innovative electronics accidents are prevented, although better road handling would have been more useful. The standard equipment is modern and complete. Finally the new Accord looks good. ■

Specifications

Honda Accord 2.0i EX GT

Size and weight



| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Length x width x height | 473 x 184 x 144 cm |
| Wheelbase | 271 cm |
| Kerb weight | 1.384 kg |
| Trailer | 500 kg |
| Trailer - braked | 1.500 kg |
| Fuel capacity | unknown |
| Luggage space | unknown |
| Tyre size | 205/55R16 |

Engine and performance



| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Capacity | 1997 cc |
| Cylinders / valves | 4/4 |
| Max power | 156 PS @ 6300 rpm |
| Max torque | 192 Nm @ 4100 rpm |
| Drive | front wheels |
| Acceleration 0 - 62 mph | 9.4 secs |
| Top speed | 215 km/h |
| Average mileage | 7.3 l / 100 km |
| Mileage urban | 9.4 l / 100 km |
| Mileage extra urban | 5.9 l / 100 km |
| CO2 emissions | 173 gr / km |

Price

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Price | Â£ 24,910 |
| Price base model | Â£ 19,260 |