



Hyundai Veloster

Come fly with me

Review | Many people want a coupé. Few people actually buy a coupé. That is because such a special car is expensive and offers little space for the family. Now Hyundai comes to the rescue by introducing the Veloster. Despite its exciting design, the coupé is supposed to be spacious and affordable. Autozine took the first chance to drive this fresh new model.

A coupé has another disadvantage: when a car looks too muscular or too aggressive, it provokes negative reactions. Although the Veloster is downright flashy, it did attract attention at just about every (photo) stop, yet this was always positive. Outsiders want to know what car this is and are pleasantly surprised when it turns out to be an affordable Hyundai instead of some exotic brand.

While the competition certainly isn't boring, the Veloster has an even more daring shape thanks to its European designers. The vehicle is available in bright, shiny colours, which make the extravagant lines come to life. The colour of the car is even reflected in the rims. The front looks streamlined, while the rear is butch.

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The rear window consists of a small vertical piece of glass and a larger horizontal one. Both halves are separated by a metal beam. The latter affects visibility in the rear-view mirror, while the lower window distorts all images. This isn't a unique problem of the

Veloster, but it is something to keep in mind.

Space

The most special element of the Veloster is its third door. When seen from the right-hand side, the Veloster is a pure coupé with one big door. On the left (near the pavement), the Veloster has two doors, so passengers don't have to crawl to go to the rear seat (the images shown are not to UK specification).



Despite the easy access, the room in the back of the Veloster is no better than in the average coupé. Headroom is minimal, legroom is poor. Adults can only sit here on short drives, kids up to 1.5 metres fit comfortably on the back seat.

Space in the front is fair, but tall drivers will be annoyed by the sunroof (which hits the side of their head). Although the sunroof certainly does bring a lot of light to the cabin, it reduces the cocoon-like feeling, which makes a coupé attractive for many buyers.

Equipment levels

The design of the dash roughly equals that of the recently introduced Hyundai i40. The lines are a bit more playful and the cabin has been designed so that it almost hugs the driver and front passenger.



The test car is a top-spec model, featuring 18 inch rims and all other eye candy shown on the photos. Electrically adjustable, heated and leather seats also come as standard. The same goes for satnav, climate control, a parking camera, keyless entry and a "high end" audio system with USB connector. The latter owes its high sound quality to smart positioning of the speakers, and not so much to the quality of the parts.

The centrally placed colour display can be disabled with the push of a button. The radio and GPS will still function, but the driver isn't blinded by the bright light from the display while driving in the dark.



Performance

The Hyundai Veloster beats its competition by its equipment levels and looks. Coupés from competing brands have relatively poor standard trim, and only by ordering lots of extras will those cars look special. Instead those manufacturers spend their money on

horsepower. For example, a turbo engine developing as much as 200 PS is not unusual in this price range.



The Veloster, on the other hand, features a modest 1.6 litre four-cylinder petrol engine which develops 140 PS / 167 Nm and powers the front wheels.

The maximum power is only available at high engine speeds. When driving normally, the Veloster can even be called "slow". This certainly isn't a pushy or aggressive sports coupé, but a car that really has to be provoked to perform. Only at 4,000 rpm (near the red zone of the dial!) is full power available.

The name "Veloster" is derived from the word "Velocity", but this car is only speedy by name. The Veloster is quick enough, but certainly not exciting. To put it in numbers: the sprint from 0 to 62 mph takes 9.8 seconds, while the top speed is 201 km/h (125 mph).

Fuel economy

Because the Veloster isn't meant to be a sports car, emphasis was on fuel economy instead of performance. This is why both a shift indicator and stop/start system come as standard. While stopped, a timer shows how long the engine has been cut off. In that way the driver will appreciate how much the computer contributes to better fuel economy.



Because the Veloster draws so much attention to itself, the test drive was done at a higher speed than usual. Despite this, average fuel consumption was 71.8 mpg (factory figure: 81.3 mpg).

Handling

As to handling, the Veloster is again not half as exciting as its looks will lead one to believe. For now there's no sports suspension available. Instead, the Veloster is based on the underpinnings of the upcoming generation of the Hyundai i30, which is still under development. Thanks to huge rims and almost flat tyres, the Veloster does have a firm ride, so the driver has the feeling of driving a sports car.



This causes mixed signals to the driver: the Veloster seems to handle like a sports car, but when it comes down to it, handling is no better than with an ordinary family hatchback. Luckily an "electronic stability programme" (ESP) comes to the rescue, so when the driver does overestimate the car all is not lost.

This dual character is a drawback for one driver, but a big plus for others. The philosophy behind the Veloster is to combine the usability of an everyday car with the attractive looks of a coupé. According to Hyundai, a thoroughbred sports car is too demanding

on the driver and therefore unsuitable for daily use. Instead, Hyundai choose to have the extraordinary-looking Veloster drive like an ordinary car.



Conclusion

For some time now, Hyundai has had the slogan "New thinking, new possibilities". The new Veloster is the best example of this idea. The Hyundai Veloster has a daring design and an evenly daring character. This is because the aim wasn't to create the ultimate sports car, for that Hyundai offers the "Genesis". Instead, the objective was to combine exciting looks with the low price and usability of the normal Hyundai cars.

For the most part, Hyundai succeeded in reaching this goal. Some of the problems of coupés have not been solved. The Veloster has poor all-round visibility and the room in the back is poor. Thanks to the original third door, accessibility is better than with other coupés. When taking the price into consideration, equipment levels are just fine. Despite its special looks, the Veloster does indeed handle like a familiar everyday car. ■

