



Hyundai i40 Tourer Object of desire?

Review | Hyundai is very successful as a manufacturer of compact cars. Although the brand has been building larger cars for many years, sales figures have always been disappointing. That isn't because of the price or technology but because of their looks and image; a large Hyundai car simply isn't an object of desire. This should now change thanks to the coming of the i40. We couldn't test its image, but we did test drive it as objectively as possible.

An experiment: A tells a story to B. B tells it to C and C brings the message to D. Chances are that the story has changed dramatically by the time it gets to the last party. This is exactly what went wrong with the previous large cars from Hyundai. They were built by Koreans who had to find out what the people from far away Europe wanted in a car.

This time all extra steps have been eliminated: the "i40 CW" ("Cross Wagon") has been designed by Europeans, in Europe. The result is clear at the first glance. This time the design does appeal to the European taste. The designers cannot be accused of any originality though; the i40 has "borrowed" design elements from just about every other car in its segment.

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Yet, the i40 does have its own unique face. That is thanks to the "hexagonal" grille, which has the shape of a diamond. The shape of the headlights has been inspired by the eyes of a bird of prey; so that you know.

Space

Because the i40 is aimed at the European market, it is first launched as an estate. The i40 CW certainly isn't

the largest car in its segment, but it doesn't want to be. Some estate cars are now so vast that they become impractical to drive in narrow streets. Instead, Hyundai opted for a very long wheelbase, thereby still offering maximum cabin space. Thanks to this, the legroom in the rear is especially good.



The boot measures 553 litres and can be expanded to 1,719 by folding the back seat. The boot has a regular shape, making it easy to utilise every nook and cranny. An adjustable barrier can be used to fix smaller luggage, so it doesn't damage or move around while cornering. The boot lid has the option to be operated electrically. Because of the shape of the rear window, and the huge spoiler above it, visibility in the rear mirror is poor.

The i40 offers ample space in the front, just like all other cars in this segment. Even with the optional glass panoramic roof, headroom is still fine. The front seats are too flat and don't offer any side support. Because of this the driver will get tired and aimlessly moves about in the seat after several hours.

When the i40 is fitted with electrically adjustable front seats, they move to the back automatically when getting into the car. This is meant to making getting in and out of the car easier, but it doesn't. Most drivers have learned to press the clutch while starting the car, to prevent it from moving if first gear is accidentally engaged. The i40 offers so much space in the front, that even tall drivers cannot reach the clutch with the seat moved all the way to the back!



Quality

The materials used and build quality are good. Yet, the i40 doesn't give the "premium" feel that Hyundai promises. "Premium" means to excel in every possible way. The standard in this segment is already at such a high level that it takes something very special to top that.

When it comes to standard equipment, Hyundai does aim for the top. Especially for a brand that never before entered the company car segment, it is remarkable that it offers all the advanced technology others took years to develop. For example, the front seats don't just have a heating function but also a cooling function.



When the markers on the roads are crossed, the i40 gently pushes the steering wheel to get back in line. To make reversing easy, a rear-view camera is present. Optionally, the i40 can park itself: the driver operates the accelerator and brakes, while the computer takes over the steering wheel.

Invisible but very handy: an automatic defogger activates the climate control to ensure perfect visibility in damp conditions.



Hyundai fits the i40 with satnav, an audio system and Bluetooth connectivity in one unit. The GPS works very well and even knows its way around on the back roads of Norway, where the test drives were done.

Optionally, the i40 can be fitted with a "premium" audio system by Infinity. At first its sound quality is very good, but at higher volume it distorts terribly.

Every i40 has an AUX and USB connection, including space for an "Apple".



Petrol

Norway was chosen for this test drive, because around this time of year there's 20 hours of sunlight per day. This meant all different versions of the i40 could be tried.

The i40 CW is available with two petrol engines: the 1.6 litre develops 135 PS / 165 Nm. The 2.0 litre petrol engine has 177 PS / 213 Nm, but it feels like some of those 177 horsepower are still in their stables. When pressing the throttle the engine makes a bit more noise, but acceleration is always disappointing.

Thankfully, low performance also means low fuel consumption. Because the "2.0 GDI" almost forces the driver to go slowly, the test car did 7.6 litres per 100 km (37.1 mpg). That's almost as frugal as Hyundai promises (7.2 litres per 100 km or 39.2 mpg).



Diesel

The i40 CW is available with one diesel engine, which delivers 116, 136 or even 160 PS depending on the version. For now, only the 136 PS version is available and it is highly recommendable! Although the diesel engine has less horsepower than the petrol one, it is more torque strong. That translates into a bigger punch and better acceleration at high speeds.

Just like the petrol engine, the diesel is exceptionally quiet. Therefore, the shift indicator is very useful; when not paying attention one can easily drive for miles in fourth gear, while sixth gear could already be engaged. The diesel engine is also as economic as Hyundai says it is. A calm test drive took 4.8 litres per 100 km (50.8 mpg) while Hyundai promises it will use 4.5 litres (62.7 mpg).

Handling

The best it kept for last. If Hyundai appeals to the European taste on one point, it must be handling. The i40 offers more than enough comfort on bad surfaces, something Norway has plenty of.



At the same time roadholding is sublime. Even when cornering at high speeds or when suddenly changing direction, the suspension doesn't budge. Also on wet roads the i40 follows its direction safely and confidently.

Conclusion

Since Hyundai has been successful at building small cars, it now wants to offer a highly desirable luxury car. Because the average company car driver is both demanding and conservative, the new vehicle has been designed especially for the European market. And it works: the i40 offers the looks and handling the European driver is looking for. Regrettably, the engines are less convincing: they are frugal, yet lack power and character.

So, is the i40 CW an object of desire? Yes and no. The i40 CW doesn't offer "premium" quality and isn't any better than the powers that be. On the plus side: the i40 doesn't have any flaws either. Therefore, it is a car that will be chosen because the numbers add up, rather than by emotion. That certainly doesn't mean Hyundai failed; although the i40 CW isn't at the top of its segment, it is the best car Hyundai has built so far. ■



Specifications

Hyundai i40 Tourer 1.7 CDRI (136 hp) Premium

Size and weight



Length x width x height	477 x 182 x 147 cm
Wheelbase	277 cm
weight	1.470 kg
Trailer	700 kg
Trailer - braked	1.800 kg
Fuel capacity	70 l
Luggage space	553/1719 l
Tyre size	225/45R18

Engine and performance



Capacity	1685 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	136 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	330 Nm @ 2000 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	10.6 secs
topspeed	200 km/h
Average mileage	5.1 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	5.9 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	4.6 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	134 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 24,395
Price base model	Â£ 18,395