



auto BIOGRAPHIES

Honda Accord Saloon 2.2 I-DTEC ES GT

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FORGET GERMAN executive cars - this Japanese saloon will meet most of your motoring needs.

Within the last decade the Honda Accord has blossomed. It has turned from a bland, albeit dependable, car into a handsome, solid beast with real road presence. It looks business-like, it's a proven, economical, motorway mile-muncher and it's a very safe, tough family motor too.

The latest Accord saloon, especially in GT guise, as tested here, is a car you'll be proud to have as your company car. It is the perfect BMW or Audi alternative and projects a successful but unpretentious image.

Behind the wheel, the Honda has well damped switchgear and an incredibly comfortable driving position. The seats are very supportive and the half-leather upholstery is sporty, yet elegant. The easy-to-operate central sat-nav unit is a boon for business trips into the unknown, and the thick leather rimmed steering wheel is a pleasure to grasp on those expeditions.

The drive is smooth, with lots of grunt from the 2199cc diesel engine. The car will accelerate from 0-62mph in an unruffled 9.4 seconds, but it will plough onwards and upwards to 131 mph. The four-door saloon takes corners well, soaks up potholes, and generally feels well planted to the black stuff at all times.

The 258 lb/ft of torque and 148 horses under the lid make the Accord a very capable towing tool too. It has a maximum braked

towing weight of 1,700 kg, so you'll be able to haul a decent-sized caravan away for your weekend getaways or, if you're into the equine world, you'll be in the right vehicle to tow a light horse trailer.

It's not quite as engaging to drive as a rear-wheel drive BMW and it doesn't have the flashy 'string-of-pearl' lights first introduced by Audi, but it's a Honda — a firm with a long-standing reputation for good reliability. Of course, German brands have this status as well, but according to the highly regarded J.D. Power and Associates survey, the 2011 Accord was the highest ranked mid-size car in initial quality.

So, if you like refinement, dependability, good looks and high levels of safety then get your place of work to add the Honda Accord to its list of company car choices. Either that, or head to your local Honda dealership. You won't be disappointed.



FAST FACTS

Max speed: 131 mph
 0-62 mph: 9.4 secs
 Combined mpg: 53.3
 Max. power (bhp): 148 at 4000
 Max. torque (lb/ft): 258 at 2000 - 2750 rpm
 CO2: 138 g/km
 Price: £25,850 (as tested)

PROS 'N' CONS

Handsome ✓

Solid ✓

Refined ✓

Pulling power ✓

0-62mph could be quicker x