

CAR REVIEWS

Is Small Beautiful?

By Tim Barnes-Clay, Motoring Journalist www.carwriteups.co.uk [Twitter@carwriteups](https://twitter.com/carwriteups)



ŠKODA Citigo Elegance 1.0 MPI GreenTech

The all-new ŠKODA Citigo marks the start of a new era in the Czech based motor manufacturer's 117-year history.

The company, a subsidiary of Volkswagen and positioned as the entry brand to the group, is very proud of the Citigo because it's ŠKODA's first ever city car and is set to expand the brand's value-for-money appeal to a new type of customer.

The newcomer is aimed at younger drivers, families who need a second car and older motorists with an active lifestyle. As a parent of two small children, I can vouch for the 'young family' market. I found it great for whizzing from home to the shops and, being big enough to fit my kids in the back, it's an ideal school-run vehicle.

My wife, who's a lot smaller than me, enjoyed driving the ŠKODA far more than I did; the driving position was just too compact for my stocky frame. So how on earth the tiny car's boot swallowed a family of four's weekly shop as well as a toddler's buggy I'll never know. What really sells this car is its outstanding around-town manoeuvrability. It also sets high standards in environmental considerations and technical sophistication.

The Citigo can reach 100 mph, albeit not very quickly. Its 0-62 mph time is a very slow 14.4 seconds and this makes it feel sluggish on motorways stretches. However, the GreenTech fuel-saving technologies mean that the tiny hatchback sips, rather than swigs petrol and can return up to 68.9 mpg.

Prices for the Citigo line-up begin at just £7,630 for the entry level 'S' trim three-door model, with five-door cars only another £350.

PROS 'N' CONS

Ideal school-run car ✓ Spacious boot ✓
Robust interior ✓ Economical ✓
Compact driving position ✗

Mercedes-Benz B 200 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY SPORT

Things are changing in the world of motoring with premium brand car manufacturers are offering smaller models. Mercedes are keeping up to speed with these changes with the B-Class.

It's a typical Mercedes sports tourer, offering bags of room, combined with the dynamic performance of a hatchback saloon. The character lines of the exterior point to both of these qualities: the front and rear demonstrate width-emphasising design, with a prominent grille and headlamps extending along the sides at the front while the rear end has a broad rear window, two-piece tail lights and a big tailgate with low loading sill. Sophisticated details, inside and out, confirm the marque's distinctive first-rate credentials. Interestingly, in response to requests from many customers, the sitting position is now more upright in the reborn B-Class. This makes for great visibility and leads to a degree of legroom which even surpasses that of the Mercedes-Benz S and E-Class.

On the move the B 200 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY SPORT is incredibly nimble but in 'Sport' guise the car's suspension is far too harsh. Mind you, if you don't mind having your fillings rattled out of your molars then the car is great fun to throw around corners. It's also fantastic for motorway mile munching. That's when the car magically decides to ignore any road imperfections and comfort levels resume to what you might expect from Mercedes-Benz.

Let's face it; once you've battled the morning rush hour, and the only parking bay left is the awkward one in the corner, you're going to be thanking yourself you didn't think bigger was better when you walked into that Mercedes-Benz showroom.

PROS 'N' CONS

Agile ✓ Well designed ✓
Safe ✓ Good legroom ✓ Harsh ride ✗

