



TOW
TEST

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Honda CR-V 2.2 i-CTDi 4x4

NEW LONG-TERM TEST



We have a new long-term test car here at *Caravan & Outdoor Life* magazine – a shiny new Honda CR-V turbodiesel. We kicked off the extended stint with our standard tow test – the one that each new tow vehicle that crosses our path has to endure.

Many good things have been said about the new Honda CRV diesel recently, and during the next six months or so our plan is to experience this vehicle in its entirety and make up our own minds as to how well suited it is to the caravan and camping lifestyle. That means a lot of towing, sneaking away for weekends up the coast, zipping off for office errands, and of course the daily commute between work and home. This will

give us, and thus you, some valuable insight into the practicality of this dynamic-looking SUV. So keep a keen eye on this space to see how the CR-V is getting by.

First impressions

Few things are more satisfying than climbing into a car that improves your morning ritual of rolling out of bed, getting dressed and then heading to work. For the past few weeks settling into the CR-V in the morning has almost been as comfortable as snuggling back

into bed, with the only downside being the traffic I then have to endure.

I've quickly grown accustomed to the CR-V's handy features, particularly the fold-down centre armrests on the driver's and front passenger's seat. Our test model features all-leather upholstery, and extremely comfortable seating all round. The driver's seat is electronically controlled, including a button that adjusts the lower lumbar support.

One of the CR-V's best

attributes is its abundant interior space; rear legroom is ample even when the driver's seat is adjusted to fit my 1.91 metre frame. Boot space is also generous at 513 litres with the rear seats up. The dash-mounted position of the gear lever adds to the openness of the front. There's a gap between the front of the centre console and the dashboard in which you can store a small cooler bag on longer trips.

The automatic air conditioner keeps the ambient heat (or cold) easily at bay; electric side

mirrors and windows (which are automatically controlled from the driver's door) up the convenience factor.

The steering wheel and dashboard styling exude a sophisticated feel; the radio/CD and cruise control buttons on the steering wheel are adjusted with a simple flick of your thumbs. The only detraction to the stylish dashboard design is the inordinately large emergency hazard warning button in the middle, that isn't too dissimilar to Rudolf's nose. Although it's necessary to be able to locate the button in an emergency, it could have been a little more subtle.

Dual glove compartments (one above and the other below it) and a large centre console bin provide for ample storage for odds and ends.

Dynamic diesel engine

Aside from all the useful features, what has impressed me most about this vehicle so far is Honda's advanced turbo-diesel engine. It's exceptionally quiet and smooth – so much so that I've caught myself second-guessing whether to fill with petrol or diesel at the fuel station. Fortunately I haven't made that mistake yet!

Honda's engineers have designed a cutting-edge turbo-diesel engine that develops class-leading torque figures while offering outstanding fuel economy. To date I've achieved fuel consumption figures (predominantly around town) of 7.2 l/100 km (not towing), which is excellent for a mid-sized SUV, and 10 l/100 km with the Sprite Sprint in tow over our standard test route.

Peak torque is developed at a docile 2000 rpm, which is what every avid caravan tower is looking for in a competent towcar. Maximum power output of 103 kW is achieved at 4000 rpm.

CO₂ emissions, which seem to be at the top of most manufacturers' priority lists these days, are kept to a lowly 173 g/km, a figure that more

than adheres to the current Euro IV requirements.

How did it tow?

We paired the CR-V up with the Sprite Sprint, as this was the same caravan we used in both the recent Nissan X-trail and VW Tiguan tow tests – all of which are similar sized SUVs. For the CR-V's engine size we feel the Sprint is well suited, however according to Honda's recommendation the CR-V is capable of towing a considerably heavier caravan.

The combination was particularly stable, most notably on the fast cornering during our hill climb. Steering was responsive, but not overly so, and at high speeds no caravan sway was evident. This can be attributed to the Trailer Stability Assist (TSA) which, together with the Vehicle Stability Assist (VSA), automatically corrects trailer swing by adjusting power and braking force to the wheels independently. Although this all happens without the driver being aware, this is an exceptional system that greatly enhances towing safety.

During the hill climb third and forth gear were used, however revs began to drop off in the latter. Our 100-0 km/h emergency braking manoeuvre yielded a satisfactory time, but caution had to be exercised as it felt as though the wheels were on the brink of locking, in spite of the ABS.

Honda's Real Time 4WD system enhances the CR-V's towing capabilities. Control unit sensors automatically engage the system when required, rapidly transferring torque to the rear wheels when additional tyre traction is required. This, together with the large 17-inch wheels, translates into an SUV that will easily swallow up the kilometres on gravel roads, which means a whole lot more exploring potential for avid travellers.

Sixth gear wasn't needed while towing, but substantial pulling power was nevertheless

achieved in fifth gear at higher speeds.

Verdict, so far

We've still got many kilometres to travel with the CR-V during our long-term stint, and thus a lot of feedback still to impart to you, but to date we're suitably impressed.

Except for the front bumper, which to me resembles a sulky protruding bottom lip, the external lines are eye-catching. Interior styling is comfortable and convenient, and spaciousness is one of its best attributes. Families will have more than enough space for all their luggage on extended holidays.

The CR-V 2.2 i-CTDi handled our standard tow test with aplomb, yielding impressive performance figures during all manoeuvres. This is definitely one turbo-diesel SUV that I'd be happy towing a caravan around the country with. It's light on fuel, easy to drive, offers technology that assists with caravan towing stability, and features a dynamic four-wheel-drive system for when the terrain gets a little slippery.



Towing performance

Model tested	Honda CR-V 2.2 i-CTDi
Engine	4-cylinder turbo-diesel
Displacement	2204 cc
Gearbox	6-speed manual
Max power	103 kW @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	340 Nm @ 2000 rpm
Drive	Real Time 4WD
Fuel supply	High pressure common rail
Tank size	58 litres
Tare	1608 kg
GVM	2160 kg
GCM	4160 kg
Rec. towing capacity (unbraked)	600 kg
Rec. towing capacity (braked)	2000 kg

Caravan towed	Sprite Sprint
Licence weight	895 kg
GVM	1090 kg

Performance

Acceleration	
0-60 km/h	6.68 sec
0-80 km/h	10.98 sec
0-100 km/h	19.93 sec

Overtaking ability

60-80 km/h	4.75 sec
80-100 km/h	6.00 sec

Top towing speed	140 km/h
Braking (100-0 km/h)	3.18 sec
Hill climb	1 min 34.37 sec

Speed in gears

1st	36 km/h
2nd	70 km/h
3rd	120 km/h
4th	140 km/h
5th	140 km/h

Fuel consumption

At steady 100 km/h	10.0 l/100 km
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Towball drop	30 mm
Towball height (with caravan)	430 mm

Warranty	3 year/100 000 km
Service plan	5 year/90 000 km
Service intervals	10 000 km
Price	From R352 500
Web	www.honda.co.za

Key features

Auto air-conditioner; RDS radio/CD player with 6 speakers; leather/chrome steering wheel with integrated controls; cruise control; electric windows & side mirrors; 12 V socket in centre console & boot; ABS; EBD; VSA; TSA; acoustic parking system; side impact protection beams; dual front airbags; dual side SRS airbags; dual curtain SRS airbags – front and rear; remote central locking; rolling code immobiliser; cup holders; 60:40 split fold-down & sliding rear seats.