

WhatGreenCar.com – Press Release

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WhatGreenCar? Car of the Year 2008 awarded to the Ford Focus 1.6 TDCi ECONetic

WhatGreenCar? has awarded its first Green Car of the Year Award 2008 to the Ford Focus 1.6 TDCi ECONetic. The Focus has CO₂ emissions of only 115g/km (65.6mpg on a combined test cycle) and, with a diesel particulate filter fitted as standard on the 110PS engine, a WGC? rating of only 33 – the lowest in its class and lower even than the bench-mark Prius hybrid (rated at 35).

The Focus is the first model in the diesel ECONetic range, the name Ford has given to its new range of low CO₂ models – due to be rolled out to the Mondeo in July this year, and the Fiesta in 2009. The engineering behind ECONetic includes a recalibrated engine management system, and an improved aero-profile (the car is almost 1 cm closer to the ground compared with a regular Focus). Together with a lower grille and new front bumper skirt, a rear spoiler and slimmer low rolling resistance tyres, the aerodynamic drag coefficient is reduced to 0.31. Interestingly the emissions improvements are achieved without fitting longer gear ratios, as adopted by the competing VW BlueMotion and BMW EfficientDynamics models.

The Ford Focus ECONetic was chosen by an independent panel of six judges representing leading UK green transport and environmental organisations who agreed to select and judge the latest green cars on the UK market. From an initial list of 26 cars pre-selected using WhatGreenCar?'s own environmental ratings, the Focus was selected as the winner of the 2008 Award from a short-list of 10 cars, which also included the new NICE Mega City electric car, VW Polo BlueMotion, MINI Cooper D, Fiat Bravo ECO, VW Golf BlueMotion, Toyota Prius hybrid, and the BMW 118d and 318d saloons.

The panel were unanimous that the Focus ECONetic was this year's winning combination of a car that provided class-leading low emissions and high fuel economy, together with the vehicle performance, size and comfort required (and expected) by the majority of drivers in the UK. The judges also recognised the importance of the Focus as the UK's most popular car, and wanted to formally recognise Ford's achievement in developing one of the greenest family-sized models on the market. In the words of Dr Ben Lane, one of the judges for the Award: "With the greener, fuel-efficient Focus ECONetic now available in the UK, all new car buyers now have the opportunity to buy a more environmentally friendly car, one that meets the needs of the average motorist."

In considering the other short-listed cars, the judges were very impressed by the ultra-low emissions of the VW Polo BlueMotion 1 (with a WGC? rating of only 29, and CO₂ emissions of 99 g/km), and highly commended this model. However, they were of the opinion that the no-frills offerings of the 1.4 litre Polo was unlikely to tempt the average motorist to buy a greener car. Similarly, while recognising the unbeatable green credentials of the Mega City, the panel considered that the market for electric cars would remain limited to the ultra-serious green consumer for some time to come.

The judges also highly commended the BMW 118d with its EfficientDynamics stop-start and regenerative braking technology (with a WGC? rating of 34, and CO₂ emissions of 119 g/km), and were very positive about the driving experience offered by this car. However, they considered that its 143 bhp engine would encourage driving which would make achieving the test cycle CO₂ emissions less likely than in the Focus ECONetic and some of the other models in the short-list line-up.

Indeed, the contrast between BMW's high-tech green box of tricks (also employed by the MINI Cooper D), versus the pared down approach adopted by the ECONetic and BlueMotion models was the focus of a great deal of debate among the judges during the day of test-drives. After much discussion, the panel concluded that the cleanest conventional diesels (such as the Focus ECONetic and Golf BlueMotion) were currently likely to appeal to more motorists than the high-tech (and higher-cost) solutions employed by BMW. However, with news that the future BlueMotion range may include a stop-start system, consumers will soon have a wider range of technology packages to choose from.

In conjunction with EcoBoost that combines petrol direct injection and turbo-charging technology to improve vehicle fuel economy, the ECONetic range is part of Ford's response to growing demand for more fuel efficient models; sales for Ford's existing fuel efficient Focus, Fiesta and Fusion models with CO₂ emissions under 120 g/km have risen by a third in the last year. Roelant de Waard, Ford of Britain chairman and managing director, said: "Drivers want to be green but without giving up comfort and performance or paying a high price. ECONetic answers that demand. Ford ECONetics... deliver style with a green conscience."

In giving the Green Car of the Year Award 2008 to the Ford Focus 1.6 TDCi ECONetic (110PS), WhatGreenCar? recommends this model to UK motorists in recognition of its best-in-class greener credentials. Priced from £16,050 (about £250 above the Style model with the same engine), the Focus ECONetic slots into the Focus range between Studio/Style and top-end Zetec/Titanium models. [Potential buyers should note that, while the lower power (90PS) ECONetic engine has slightly reduced CO₂ emissions (114 g/km), the WGC? rating is worse at 39 as no diesel particulate filter (DPF) is fitted on this model.]

For motorists who want the full trim level options offered by the Ford Focus range, Ford have made life easy in finding a close second to the Focus ECONetic, and need look no further than the standard 1.6 TDCi Duratorq 110PS (with DPF) that has a WGC? rating of 35, and CO₂ emissions of 119 g/km.

ENDS...

Notes for editors

WhatGreenCar? Green Car of The Year 2008 Awards Overview:

- The purpose of the "WhatGreenCar? Car of The Year" awards is to recognise the environmental efforts being made by the car industry;
- For the 2008 awards there was no requirement for manufacturers to submit formal awards entries. As WhatGreenCar.com already rate every car commercially available in the UK, a shortlist of 10 cars was drawn up from this rating system. Judges were invited to approve the long-list and select a short-list of 10 cars based on environmental and other factors;
- Final round judging was held in London on 13th June; the short listed cars were made available for test-drives by the judges. Judges were asked to agree by consensus (or majority) which car should be awarded the WhatGreenCar Car Of The Year 2008.

In drawing up this initial long-list, the following approach was adopted:

- All cars must be commercially available to private and fleet consumers in the UK during 2008;
- After-market conversions are not eligible – all cars must be as sold by the OEM;
- Flex-fuel cars are not eligible as the UK network of E85 fuelling stations numbers only 22;
- Quadricycles are eligible for the WGC? COTY award;
- Cars from six vehicle classes form the initial selection (city-cars, super-minis, small family, large family, MPV, executive).

The Green Car of the Year 2008 judges included:

- Jessica Aldred, Deputy Editor (Jan-May 2008), guardian.co.uk/environment;
- Andrew Davis, Director, Environmental Transport Association;
- Johnny Goldstone Co-founder, Greentomatocars;
- Nigel Underdown, Head of Advice for Transport, Energy Saving Trust;
- Neil Wallis, Head of Communications, Low carbon Vehicle Partnership;
- Dr Ben Lane, Managing Editor, WhatGreenCar.com.

About WhatGreenCar.com:

- WhatGreenCar.com provides expert independent information & analysis on the UK's most environmentally friendly cars;
- Our editors are at the heart of the UK's green transport community and provide passionate, expert & unbiased opinion on all the latest green car news, trends & models;
- Key content includes green car ratings, green car news & reviews & our green car buyers guide;
- WhatGreenCar.com originated as an ebook "The Green Car Guide" first published by our editor Dr Ben Lane in 2002. All of this original content is now kept fully up to date & is completely free to access on WhatGreenCar.com.

About WhatGreenCar.com ratings:

- WhatGreenCar.com provides full life cycle environmental ratings scored out of 100 for all 18,000 cars commercially available in the UK since 2001;
- Our rating system is unique in assessing the emissions impacts associated with a vehicle's use and manufacture. This means that we can compare all fuel and engine types whether they are conventional petrol or diesel cars, with petrol hybrids, biofuels, LPG fuel and even battery electric vehicles.

Ford Focus 1.6 TDCi (5dr) range – technical specifications

Model	Max speed	0-62 Acceln	Urban economy	Extra urban	Combined economy	Combined CO ₂ (g/km)*	WGC? rating
Units	mph	secs	(mpg)	(mpg)	(mpg)	(g/km)	0 to 100
EONetic 110PS (+DPF)	119	10.9	50.4	78.3	65.6	115	33
EONetic 90PS (noDPF)	112	12.6	51.3	78.3	65.6	114	39
Duratorq 110PS (+DPF)	117	10.9	48.6	74.2	62.7	119	35

*Average CO₂ emissions of lower medium segment in UK (eg Ford Focus) = 158.6 g/km (SMMT, 2008)

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