



DRIVEN - Renault Megane GT Line

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Renault adds the Megane GT Line range to South Africa, bridging the gap between RenaultSport and Renault

After a long wait, Renault South Africa has bridged the gap between its entry level models and the range-topping, highly desirable RenaultSport models. The GT Line range takes elements of the RS models such as suspension and chassis tweaks as well as some visual upgrades to enhance the current Megane lineup.

Visually the GT Line looks fantastic. Look, the coupe and five-door hatchback aren't ugly at all but the bigger wheels and body kit, along with the subtle badging, has made a vast improvement. Think of these two new GT Line models as RenaultSport-lite editions. You can have a rewarding driving experience in something that has the show to match the go.

Nothing has changed under the bonnet of the two, with the 96kW 1.4 TCe engine doing duty in both. This engine is a vast improvement over the lacklustre naturally aspirated 1.6-litre. It feels, and sounds, great but the only drawback is that fuel economy is not as impressive as you would expect from an engine in this class.

The main focus point here are the suspension and chassis upgrades which give the GT Line great handling, which was proven on the launch route. The ride height has been dropped, the sway bars adjusted for reduced body roll and, with the addition of special shock absorbers, both the coupe and hatchback feel very sporty.

It looks good too, with two new in your face paint jobs (Malta Blue and Dyna Red) and 17-inch alloy wheels fitted. The front is distinguished by a bold new bumper design that features a reshaped central air intake, with an RS-style gloss black centre section supporting the number plate.

There is subtle, 'GT Line' badging on the grille and the tailgate which are in exactly the same position as the RenaultSport badges on the performance models. A clever touch!

The sporty theme carries on once you open the door and climb in. First thing you will notice are the sporty seats and the drilled pedals. A RenaultSport-inspired rev counter with shift indicators is a great touch too. GT Line badges adorn the dashboard trim strip, head rests and front door sills. The TomTom satellite navigation now also features the HD Live system which sends live traffic information to you as you drive as well as knowing where all the fixed speed cameras are.

Renault South Africa had chosen the annual Knysna Hillclimb at Simola to launch the Megane GT Line as well as the Clio Gordini RenaultSport. So, after a crack of dawn flight to Port Elizabeth, the plan was simple. Pair up and get the cars to the Knysna Yacht Club in time for lunch. A quick glimpse at the route guide showed that we were taking the winding roads which would give us plenty of time to sample the revised handling.

And sample the revised handling we did, as the convoy of coupes and hatchbacks blasted their way through the coastal forest region of Tsitsikamma. The car feels very taut and responsive with very little body roll. Turn in is direct and the car feels sporty regardless of the type of road. A few bends that were tighter than expected almost caught out a few of the guys and the ABS-equipped slowed the cars down nicely.

Speaking of safety, the Renault Megane GT Line comes well equipped. There are six airbags, innovative twin side-impact sensors, dual seatbelt pre-tensioners with load limiters, as well as new-generation head restraints. Electronic Stability Control (ESC) with understeer control is available as an option.

After a refreshment stop in Hankey, I swapped out of a coupe and into a hatchback, expecting a less exciting ride. Boy, was I in for a surprise. The hatchback too has been given the full suspension and chassis work over and it too feels pleasantly sporty through the twists and turns.

I had previously experienced the 1.4TCe engine in the non-GT Line coupe and I had enjoyed it as it had a sporting edge. Now, with the revised suspension, both cars feels great and many of my colleagues were emerging out of the cars with huge grins on their faces.

All models come standard with Renault Confiance, which provides the ultimate level of ownership satisfaction and peace-of-mind motoring. Included in the purchase price are a five-year/150 000 km mechanical warranty, a five-year/100 000 km service plan and six-year anti-corrosion warranty.

The pricing is very good so if you can't afford the RenaultSport derivative, then the coupe GT Line is the one for you. A non-RS Renault that feels sporty and gives the driver some thrills sounds like a bit of a myth. Believe it, because it's true.

-David Taylor

Pricing

Mégane GT Line Hatch R 249 900

Mégane GT Line Coupé R 259 900