



# Naked Motoring

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**Sussex, England:** The Mazda 2 has been around for a while, but has never really been all that 'hot', that is until now. This is the ultimate version of the recently updated Mazda 2, equipped with an 85kW version of the 1.5 litre petrol engine and a six speed gearbox, which are exclusive to this model.

Admittedly that is not a vast amount of power for a car carrying both GT and Sport badges, but on the other hand, the 2 is light, weighing a lean 1 045kg in this guise. GT Sport identifiers include LED headlights and running lights, 16 inch alloy wheels, a black tailgate spoiler and, inside, brown leather inserts to the dashboard and door panels, although the highlight, almost literally, is a head-up display.

Little cars like this are an important inclusion in the overall world of motoring because, although they are generally not very exciting and sometimes even complete rubbish they are what large majorities of populations drive, if for no reason other than affordability.

Further to this the updates to the 2 itself include more soundproofing, reworked dampers and anti-roll bar bushes, lower suspension arms aimed at improving the ride and recalibrated electric power steering to heighten feel. The steering is also said to be improved by Mazda's G-Vectoring Control system, which finely modulates the engine's torque output in corners to eliminate torque effects. Having nothing against which to compare all of these

'improvements' we will just have to take their word for it.

There are new interior fabrics and a new steering wheel design, too. Hardly the stuff of dreams, but these are important improvements for Mazda 2 owners.

Now here is an interesting twist on things - the GT Sport's specification conjures a hot hatch feeling from the previous century. Okay, maybe not a 1.5 litre engine, but 85kW, distantly peaking torque, a twist beam axle and a 0 to 100km/h time of 8.7 seconds certainly feel that way. Modernity emerges from the middle of the dashboard, where you'll find a 7 inch infotainment touchscreen and, more surprisingly, from the top of the instrument binnacle, where you'll spot the head-up display's projection screen.



Supportively walled seats and a leather-bound steering wheel hint at the potential driving pleasure, as does a gearlever that snicks home with unusual precision. Within metres you'll be feeling quite a firm ride, too.

The 2 is not exactly what I would call a hot hatch, especially considering it is sub 100kW, but for something so small it has a fair amount of buzz about it. There isn't a huge amount of torque either, but its lightness makes it a fun car to drive.

You can throw it hard into corners, and brake very late for them, too, and it just zips around with effortless precision.

The upshot is of course that it is very economical - the 85kW engine being a perfect fit for the one-ton body. The average return over a week of driving was a very impressive 6.8 litres per 100km.

The ride is decently comfortable, and admittedly it is hard to fault.

In bigger cars you expect more, so as a result there is more to criticise, but in this car you don't expect anything, so whatever you get over and above that is a bonus. And in this car you actually get a hell of a lot. So it's a big bonus.

If you are looking for something different from the norm, please give this car a serious look because for what it is you will be pleasantly surprised. I was.

