DRIVING

We've tested the Megane in Iconic top-spec trim. That means 20in wheels and all the driver assistance. Only the base car has 18s.

The motor is magnet-free, using coils for the rotor and stator – technically known as an electrically excited synchronous machine. It's the most efficient kind in most sorts of driving and doesn't use rare-earth metals. Renault has lots of experience, having also used this advanced motor in the Zoe. By the way, BMW has now started using EESMs too, for much the same reasons.

There are no glitches in the way the Megane pulls, with a neat-liquid-smooth departure from rest and clean acceleration all the way to motorway speed. If you mash the throttle (0-62mph takes 7.5 seconds) you can introduce a bit of torque steer. Get around the problem by not doing that.

ANY REGEN?

Plus and minus wheel paddles determine the regeneration strength, level 1 being 'sailing' when you lift off, level 4 offering enough deceleration that you'll seldom use the brake pedal at all.

We settled on level 4 for towns, but the milder 2 setting suits twisty roads, because otherwise the car keeps slowing down even when you've come off the brake pedal at the turn-in to a corner. And that feels odd. This of course isn't unique to the Megane – it applies to any car with a strong 'one-foot driving' setup.

The pedal is a bit spongy, but fully blended: in other words it uses the discs only once you've reached max regeneration. It also ensures the car still slows consistently if the battery is at 100 per cent and there's nowhere for regeneration to go.

Anyway, despite all this complex sleight-of-foot, it feels natural at most road speeds. Not something other EVs manage. It's a bit light and over-keen at low speed, mind.

OK, SO THE GOING AND STOPPING ARE GOOD. WHAT ABOUT THE TURNING AND BOUNCING?

With bags of instant torque at the wheels, a wet road will get the traction control working busily, but that slows you up surprisingly little. FWD or not, it's free of torque steer and goes down

bumpy roads without being knocked off course. The damping is first-rate, so this never feels like a heavy EV. And it isn't: 1,700kg is lighter than most.

So it corners precisely, there's little delay or roll, giving the impression of good agility at play. But the steering isn't as involving as the best petrol hatches, though it does begin to give you some feel at higher speeds.

On a cruise it's all good. Wind and tyre noise are muted into the background, save for a bit of disturbance around the A-pillar. The driver-assist tech works smoothly and has a nifty, easily understood interface.

The ride is fairly firm, but does a great job of quietly rounding off any harshness. Also, because it doesn't rely on stiff anti-roll bars to stop cornering lean (the low centre of gravity does that naturally) there's little lateral rocking on straight uneven surfaces. So overall it's lively yet somehow serene.

NOW THE INEVITABLE RANGE AND CHARGING QUESTION...

We got 3.9mi/kWh in a mix of fun country driving, town and motorway. That's 230-ish miles. It does about 3.3 mi/kWh at a steady 70. That's about the same as we'd get from the Korean mid-size EVs (think Niro EV and Hyundai Ioniq 5) in those circumstances, and better than an ID.3. That consumption equates to around 200 miles of motorway range, but you never do go that far without traffic or road works.

Winter range doesn't fall off a cliff, because there's an intelligent system to shuffle thermal energy between the battery, the cabin, the motors and electronics and (via the mid-spec-and-up heat pump) the outside air. That said, we've seen range drop to 180 miles in the depths of winter, and that *might* be a pain if you want to get from A to B and back without stopping. Good thing the heat pump's standard now.

The onboard AC charger can take three-phase, which means up to 22kW, or 11kW if it's a single-phase wallbox. That's useful for public chargers if DC can't be had. The battery pre-cools itself before a charge stop so it can hit 130kW on an ultra-rapid charger, giving you a real-world 120 miles (155 WLTP) in 25 minutes, topping it off to near-full in another half hour.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RANGE

THE FASTEST

EV60 160kW Iconic Comfort Range 60kWh 5dr Auto

0-62	7.5s
CO2	0

BHP	214.6
MPG	
Price	£37,940

View all specs

THE GREENEST

EV60 160kW Evolution Comfort Range 60kWh 5dr Auto

0-62	7.5s
CO2	0
BHP	214.6
MPG	
Price	£33,940

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THE GREENEST

EV60 160kW Iconic Comfort Range 60kWh 5dr Auto

0-62	7.5s
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