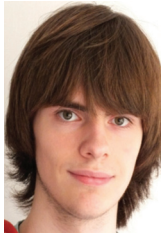


# Review of the Alpine A290



**By Fraser Lucas**

## LOOKS

Remember that Renault 5 from not long ago? It may have a different name and badge, but, for all intents and purposes, this is its hot hatch alter ego. Alpine has

festooned it with various new bits, such as the X-shaped lights and gashes in the sides for that extra garnish of aggression. It winds up doing the job of making the rather plucky 5 into something a tad feistier and more eager.

## HANDLING AND PERFORMANCE

Most importantly, the A290 has far more going on under the body than on the surface. Some fettling with the chassis and suspension means it's taught and agile. Surprisingly, it remains very composed for refinement, showing little sacrifice in comfort was made in the pursuit of speed.

There is a slight lack of directness from the steering, and it does feel a bit heavy for something of its stature, but it does the job in feeling livelier than the 5. As for power, you get an electric motor with either 178 BHP or 217 BHP. The faster GTS model can get you to 60 mph in 6.4 seconds, which is swift, if not as swift as you'd expect from an electric car.

## PRACTICALITY

Body hugging seats and a racier steering wheel are the standout differences the A290 has over its Renault brother. It also feels high-end in cabin design, not stripped out and scratchy. For a performance variant, it's actually very plush. For some added fun, Alpine has built in various challenges to complete on the infotainment system, like battery efficiency and acceleration times. As for space, the A290 tells the same story as the 5, with enough room to spare for a car this size, though the rear may seem a little snug.

## COST

Prices start at £32,000 for the 178-horsepower variant. The spicier 217 horsepower will cost from £34,500 to £36,000. It's a big jump from the 5 and even sits above some competitor cars in price, but Alpine has thrown in plenty of the essentials. Adaptive cruise control, a heat pump and heated front seats, among many other features, are onboard all cars.

## VERDICT

While not as extreme a hot hatch as expected, the A290 remains a fun ride. True, it's not as extreme as the RenaultSport hot hatches of yesteryear, but it does build on the 5's already well figured handling and takes this in an even more joyful direction.