

Lineup shakeup

by Joe Sage

When a top trim level of a vehicle is reviewed, some think that will skew impressions and not represent lower trims. A base model like this 2018 Volkswagen Tiguan S FWD could also skew perceptions, though it's impossible to conversely ignore the higher trims: as in the buying experience, you can't help thinking what you could get for a bit more money and whether it's worth it.

This is the base out of four trims (times two: each offers FWD or 4Motion AWD). Prices range from ours at about \$25 grand up to SEL Premium 4Motion at \$37,550, about a 50 percent climb. At this S level, you lack keyless entry and start, automatic climate control, heated seats, better audio (the top model has a 9-speaker Fender system), leatherette (SE and SEL) or leather (SEL Premium), and so on. Pricier models provide desirable differences; but it's nice to have an economical option.

VW has discontinued the big, premium 5-seat Touareg, while adding the 7-seat Atlas at a notably lower price (see chart). The Tiguan badge moves to the new SUV driven here, much closer in size to the departed Touareg, though for tow capacity, only the V6 Atlas now comes close to the old Touareg. Atlas has the power, with even its turbo-four out-putting more than the new Tiguan's, by virtue of lower compression. Seating for the new Tiguan is seven only with FWD, but with AWD just five. The prior-gen Tiguan carries over for now as a 2017 Tiguan Limited, one last chance to go for smaller size, with all prices still below the new Tiguan.

We were aware of our base model tester's limited features, but as the week went on, we grew to find it quite enjoyable. Depending upon your budget, seating or towing needs, VW's new range of SUVs covers bases well, though differently than before. One thing for certain: the brand with roots in small cars is going bigger with SUVs. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

SEATING	seven
ENGINE	2.0L TSI dir inj 16v DOHC turbo 4-cylinder
DRIVETRAIN	FWD (AWD avail)
HP/TORQUE	184 hp / 221 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	8-spd auto w Tiptronic®
SUSPENSION	F: strut-type, lower control arms, coils, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar; R: multi-link, coils, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar
STEERING	electric power assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	power, dual circuit, 13.4x1.2 vented front, 11.8x.5 solid rear discs
WHEELS/TIRES	17x7 alum alloy / 215/65 R17 H A/S
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	185.1 / 109.8 in
TURNING CIRCLE	37.7 ft
LEGROOM (F/R/3)	40.2 / 36.5 / 27.9 in
WEIGHT (FWD) / TOW	3777 lb / 1500 lb
FUEL / FUEL CAPACITY	regular unleaded / 15.3 gal
MPG	22/27/24 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE (TIGUAN S FWD) \$25,195

INCLUDES: ABS, anti-slip, engine brake assist, EBD, hydraulic brake assist, ESC, electronic differential lock, intelligent crash response system, auto halogen headlights, LED DRLs, heated-folding-power mirrors w turn signals, intermittent wipers, rear window washer-wiper, black roof rails, manual climate control, multi-function steering wheel, tilt-tele, cruise, 6-way manual adjust front seats, 40/20/40 second row seat, 50/50 third row seat, cloth seats, console w cupholders & armrest, reading lights & illum vanity mirrors, carpeted cargo area w tie-down hooks, rear camera, 6.5" color touchscreen, AM-FM radio, USB input, 6-speaker audio, Bluetooth, color multi-function display w trip computer, power locks, electric parking brake.

WARRANTY: 6-year 72,000-mile limited warranty.
BUILT: Engine/assembly Mexico; transmission Japan.
DESTINATION CHARGE 900

TOTAL \$26,095

EVOLUTIONARY COMPARISON	2017 Tiguan Ltd (DISC-HOLDOVER)	2018 Tiguan (NEW)	2017 Touareg (DISCONTINUED)	2018 Atlas (NEW)
Seats.....	5	7 or 5 w/AWD	5	7
Length (in).....	174.5	185.1	188.8	198.3
Wheelbase (in).....	102.5	109.8	113.9	117.3
Turning circle (ft).....	39.0	37.7	39.0	38.1
Cargo volume (cu.ft).....	23.8	12.0-73.5	32.1	20.6-55.5-96.8
Passenger volume (cu.ft).....	95.4	123.9 / 101.1 AWD	103.6	153.7
Engine.....	2.0T 4	2.0T 4	3.6 V6	2.0T 4 / 3.6 V6
Horsepower.....	200	184	280	235 / 276
Weight (lb).....	3448 / 3646 AWD	3777-3858 AWD	4696	4222 / 4502
Tow (lb).....	2200	1500	7716	2000 / 5000
MPG (comb).....	22 / 21 AWD	24 / 23 AWD	19	(4) 24 / (V6) 19
Base price.....	\$21,995 / \$23,970 AWD	\$24,595-37,550	\$49,495-60,195	\$30,750-39,410

