

Renault Clio R.S. 18 F1

 By [Ilse van den Berg](#)

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We recently had the opportunity to test Renault's new collector's edition, the Clio R.S. 18 F1, at Zwartkops Raceway in Gauteng.



The Clio is by no means a new kid on the block. The first model was launched in 1990 and has since kept its popularity among consumers.

The new limited edition (only 65 units will be available in South Africa) R.S. 18 F1 model was created in commemoration of Renault's 40-year involvement in F1. The vision was to take F1 from the track to the road.

Even though some may argue that Renault won't necessarily sell a lot of these black and yellow R.S. 18 beauties, it must be considered that the Clio is actually the B-segment leader in Europe. It's also Renault's best-selling car worldwide. In addition, the car brand is ranked fifth in South Africa with a market share of 6%.

What's it like?

Compared to the Ford Fiesta ST and the Polo GTI, the Clio R.S. 18 comes out on top in terms of engine output, claimed acceleration times, and standard specifications.



Once warmed up a bit, the hot hatch cruises comfortably around tight corners, and thanks to the sharp chassis and performance tyres in the form of Michelin Pilot Super Sports, driving is a pleasure and grip is great.

How about engine and safety stuff?

The Clio actually ranks as one of the five safest cars in South Africa: it achieved five stars in the EuroNCAP crash test, with onboard safety and protection features and equipment such as ESP, ABS, EBD + Brake Assist and D+P+S airbags as standard across the entire range.

It comes with a 1.6l turbocharged engine, sending 162kW and 280Nm to the front wheels via a six-speed dual-clutch transmission.



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This engine benefits from ground-breaking technology modelled on the DLC (Diamond-like carbon) derived from Formula 1 and the manufacturer claims a tightly controlled fuel consumption of *5.9L/100km. "F1 technology = less friction = more performance = less fuel", says senior brand and product manager, Wayne van der Merwe.



It has an impressive range of track-oriented features that demonstrate the prowess of the direct F1 technology transfer to this exclusive model. The R.S. Drive button gives you access to three modes: Normal, Sport and Race. According to the mode, R.S. Drive alters the mapping of the gearbox, ESC behaviour, steering and the sensitivity of the accelerator pedal.

What else?

The new hot hatch looks like a three-door vehicle but is actually a five-door. Space a little bit tight for the rear passengers, however, I doubt the owner of this car will be driving their kids to school and back.

I appreciated the focus on comfort and driving pleasure - a lot of attention to detail can be found throughout the cabin, from high-quality finishes (especially on the steering wheel) to plush materials and ergonomics. There is little feel of plastic throughout the cabin as well as practical smart technologies, so you can easily feel like you're in a higher segment car.



The F1 styling is reflected in the Renault Sport decals added to the door panels and the roof. It sports a blacked out badging and rear diffuser contrasted by the yellow details on the side strips, front blade and wheel caps. The doorsills also reveal a unique number for that added acclaim.

It comes with standard cruise control and speed limiter, onboard navigation via the seven-inch touchscreen, with a range of other easy-to-use one-touch functionalities - multimedia, radio and telephone systems with Bluetooth connectivity.

How many bucks?

The new Clio R.S. 18 F1 (Incl. metallic paint) will retail for R449,900. All Clio models come standard with a five-year/150,000km mechanical warranty and a six-year anti-corrosion warranty. The Clio R.S. 18 offers a standard three-year/30,000km service plan with service intervals set at 10,000km.

Conclusion

The Clio R.S. 18 F1 is certainly going to appeal to a very niche market - which is expected since it's especially intended for motorsport enthusiasts. Perhaps it's a little pricey when you compare it to its competitors - it is rumoured that the new Polo GTI will cost under R400k - but even so, it's a limited edition, comes with great standard specs, and is a hell of a fun drive on track and off.

ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work here and here. Contact Ilse through her website here.

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