

CLASSIC DRIVER

Breaking new ground with the McLaren 570GT in Tenerife

Lead

McLaren has ventured onto new ground with the 570GT, building its most road-biased car to date. But is it worthy of the 'Grand Touring' nomenclature? We headed to the island of Tenerife to find out...

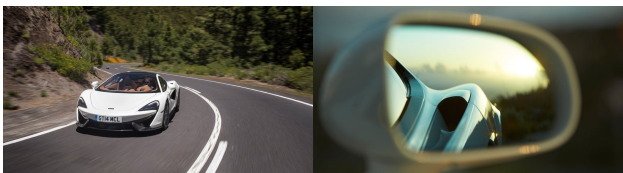
We're in Tenerife to drive the McLaren 570GT, the third model in the Woking-based company's lower-tier 'Sports Series' range, joining the [570S](#) and the 540C. The 'most road-biased McLaren yet', the 570GT is a touch heavier, slower and quieter than the S, with emphasis on refinement and comfort on the road rather than shaving tenths on the racetrack. But that's not to say it's lost any of the inherent sports car characteristics that define it as a McLaren - this is still one *seriously* fast car.

Life on Earth



It's difficult to concentrate on the road while traversing Tenerife, such is the astonishing geographical diversity and staggering beauty of the rugged volcanic island. The trouble is that you *really* need to concentrate on the road while driving the 570GT. Our four-hour route takes us on a stretch of motorway along the east coast of the island, before turning inland to snake up and around Mount Teide, Spain's highest peak that dominates the skyline of the Canarian archipelago. The stunning roads comprise a succession of never-ending hairpins and switchbacks, ascending through forests and vast craters that resemble the Lunar surface, and descending through desert-like plains and canyons and quaint, quintessentially Spanish terracotta-roofed villages. As the McLaren's distinct turbo whoosh envelops the air, so the flowers - blooming in numerous vibrant colours across the island - shudder in your wake.

Honest engagement



It's on these roads that the 570GT's impressive sports-car credentials come to the fore. From the helm, the car feels tight, agile and nimble, its electrohydraulic steering weighting up deliciously mid-corner and delivering honest feedback. The immediacy of turn-in is remarkable - particularly with the Handling and Powertrain settings set to Sport - and, coupled with the quick and responsive seven-speed gearbox and the progressive, relentless surge of the high-revving 570PS twin-turbocharged V8, makes for an engaging and seriously fun drive. Our 'Pearl White' car has the optional carbon-ceramic brakes, and while pedal feel was lacking, the stopping power was brilliant - much needed when you can reach 62mph from a standstill in 3.4sec (0.3sec slower than the 570S) and 124mph in just 8.9. Though weight is up by 37kg over the 570S, at 1,350kg the 570GT is still 250kg lighter than the Porsche 911 Turbo thanks to the extensive use of carbon-fibre and aluminium.

A docile cruiser



Perhaps the most remarkable characteristic of the 570GT is its ride. Whether we're on the silky smooth dual carriageways or blistered bumpy mountain roads high above the clouds, the car is compliant and comfortable – particularly commendable given the car's lack of innovative electronic Proactive Chassis Control, as found on the 650S. The stiffness of the spring rates has been reduced from that on the 570S – 15% at the front and 10% at the rear – and the result is profound. In addition to the low ambient volume achieved with the specially designed noise-cancelling Pirelli tyres, a slightly quieter exhaust system and a sound-absorbing film on the panoramic roof, the 570GT is a relaxing and docile cruiser. As relaxing as the comparatively heavyweight Porsche 911 Turbo, though? Well, that's another question altogether.

Sitting pretty



It's the interior where the 570GT really shines, however. The ubiquitous leather is supple, and almost every box on the 570S's option list has been ticked as standard, going some way to explain the 15,000-euro price hike – that's 195,000 euros all-in. It definitely feels like a sports car that's been adapted to be more luxurious, rather than, say, an all-out Grand Tourer such as the Mercedes-AMG GT. Take the carbon-backed seats, for example, which don't offer as much lumbar support as we would like over long journeys. That said, it's a lovely place to sit, particularly with the panoramic roof that makes the snug cabin feel light, airy and that little bit bigger.



The electronically adjustable wheel and all the essential controls are in easy reach, and the low windscreen and slightly taller side windows than those on the 570S aid visibility, making changing lanes and manoeuvring effortless tasks. The sills of the 75kg Monocell 2 carbon tub are lower and narrower than the 650S, and make getting in and out much easier. This is handy when seemingly every other road forces you to stop to admire the view and snap away furiously on your iPhone. Yet once inside with the doors pulled shut, you still feel cocooned within the tub, inspiring confidence at the wheel. Issues with the IRIS infotainment system seem to have been ironed out, and the Bowers & Wilkins stereo is a triumph – particularly in 'Stage' mode. Glare from the sun on the screen was an issue, however.

Party piece



Aesthetically, the GT is differentiated from its Sports Series brethren by its fastback roofline that accommodates the new 220-litre, leather-lined Touring Deck, accessible by a side-opening carbon-fibre hatch (which side depends on your market). We suspect a weekend bag is about all you're going to realistically stow, though the space was more than enough for our lunch hamper. Don't forget there's still the 150-litre front boot for storage, too – that's an impressive 350-litres overall. To these eyes, the cleverly packaged design is more cohesive and svelte than the 570S, particularly with the addition of the subtle spoiler lip at the rear. It's a pretty car, which looks more modern than the 650S – the overwhelmingly positive response to it from the people of Tenerife, as though an alien ship had landed, only bolsters our sentiments. Who doesn't love dihedral doors?

Continent crusher?



The McLaren 570GT is not the most refined Grand Tourer in the segment, rather a fine sports car that, with a host of thoughtful tweaks, is more than capable over long distances. If anything, we think the GT adheres to the 'fun and engaging, yet useable' principle of the Sports Series McLarens more so than the 570S. Its inherent characteristics don't necessarily lend themselves to continent crushing, but its competence when the motorway gets boring and the going gets twisty more than makes up for a slightly achey back.

Photos: McLaren Automotive

Gallery

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