



**33-VR-02**

**#153**  
**Ford**  
**Fiesta Ghia (Mk I)**  
**(1978)**

**Solido**  
**1854**

**Period:** 1976-1983  
**Built:** 1.75 million

**Engine:** 1.1-litre 4-cyl.  
**Power:** 53 PS  
**Top speed:** 142 km/h  
**Price:** fl. 14,449 / £ 3,321

**Predecessor:**  
none  
**Successor:**  
Ford Fiesta Mk II

**Date acquisition:**  
20/10/2004



Approx. first plate    Approx. last plate  
**91·MJ·32**    **KF·36·XS**



Ford was fashionably late to the party but made quite an entrance when it eventually did. The Fiesta was a rather late addition to the fashionable supermini hatchback class where pioneering cars such as the Renault 5 and Fiat 127 had been trailblazers. Ford's take on the supermini class was the Fiesta, a name allegedly hand-picked by Henry Ford II to signal that the car was built in Valencia, Spain (the Fiesta was also built in the UK and Germany).

Although the car mimicked the basic shape and proportions of its rivals, the Fiesta stood out for plenty of good reasons. On its first full road test, *Autocar* (23/10/1976) concluded that "much as it looks the same as the competition, this new small Ford brings a touch of flair, driver enjoyment and all-round efficiency to the small-car market." The Fiesta's flair can be attributed not only to its jolly name but also the Italian design origins. As *Autocar* explained when celebrating the Fiesta's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary (25/06/2016), the Fiesta had been penned at design house Ghia: "A prolific American-Dutch designer called Tom Tjaarda, who normally deployed his talents creating bigger-note cars such as the De Tomaso Pantera, had built an influential concept in Italy in 1972, which Ford's production engineers had faithfully turned it into a baby hatchback that anyone could afford to own without spoiling its purity or simplicity." Tjaarda gave the Fiesta a simple and crisp body, and thoughtful detailing such as the cutesy small headlights with indicator lamps underneath them and the vertically mounted rear-light clusters. The large glass surfaces made the car look particularly spacious inside. All in all, the Fiesta had rather more design appeal than the rather insipid Volkswagen Polo and Opel Kadett City. The design was rather practical too: space-efficient packaging meant the Fiesta's interior space was closer to the Golf's in the class above than to the Polo's. "Delightfully controllable" driving dynamics meant the Fiesta quickly became a favourite among motor journalists and the car buying public alike. Although later-generations of the Fiesta – specifically the Mk4 and Mk5 – lost some of design flair and feel-the-difference driving dynamics of the original, Ford rediscovered these design principles for the 6<sup>th</sup> (2008) and 7<sup>th</sup> generations (2017) of the Fiesta.

This Fiesta model car made by Solido is a 1978 model in top-of-the-range Ghia trim designated by the alloy wheels. The black vinyl roof was optional, but I don't recall seeing many Fiesta's equipped with it; by the early 1980s vinyl roofs were going out of fashion. The model emulates the proportions rather well but is let down by the detailing. It is particularly disappointing that the rear-light clusters are reproduced in red only, not showing orange indicators and white reversing lights such as on the original.



The Fiesta retained the same basic shape over four generations and over 25 years.



Ford was late to the market for superminis. The Fiat 127 (1971) Renault 5 (1972), VW Polo (1975) and Opel Kadett City all preceded the Fiesta (1976).