

MOTORING MATTERS CHRISTMAS EDITION

by Sandie Goodwin

Life has changed greatly over the past decade and this month saw confirmation that Father Christmas has decided to update his reindeer and sledge. It would appear that the demands for more and more have finally proved too much for Rudolph and his friends. Father Christmas now needs more space for the presents he distributes. But in true multi tasking style, the stretch limo Father Christmas is using is also doubling as his Grotto. Sadly this has resulted in some redundancies for the elves, as the limo only requires one driver/assistant.

As recently as five years ago, over in a more remote part of Cambridgeshire, where the land is very flat, Father Christmas had already resorted to using a snow mobile to get around. His snow mobile was pulling a large trailer, which also doubled up to collect crops from the fields, including carrots for



the reindeer. The reindeer of course were enjoying a more sedate pace of life as they did not have the heavy sleigh to pull around. However, his snow mobile looks like it needs some serious attention now. Let's hope the weather does not turn too snowy before the 25th December!

SUPERMINI PUT TO THE TEST

Toyota launched the Yaris range of superminis back in 1999. Sales have continued to rise year on year and the second generation Yaris is even more versatile. With its clever design rear seat passengers are comfortable as the exhaust has been re-routed, removing the central hump which leaves a flat floor. Rear seats can be folded down really easily too, meaning you can use an impressive load space for a supermini.



reach, alongside plenty of storage space and of course cup holders. On our test model, the steering column benefited from telescopic adjustment while the driver's seat had height and slide adjustment.

The Smart Entry system means that to get into your Yaris and start the engine you only need to have the key fob on your person.

Simply walk up to the vehicle and sensors pick up the signal from a transmitter inside the fob which automatically unlock the doors as you grasp the handle. On comes the interior light and then once in the Yaris, you simply push a button to start the engine. In case the battery runs low, simply hold the fob close to the start switch and press the button. This Smart Entry System is a great



feature and would be especially useful when approaching the car with your hands full, whether with shopping or a baby and toddler.

Once on your journey you can enjoy the audio system which can also play MP3 and Windows Media Audio files stored on a cd. It also features a new digital audio tuner. The design of the dashboard has a 3D digital display that is easy on the eye and clear to read. It has a multi display trip computer with an 24 hour clock, outside ambient temperature gauge and the drive monitor which will tell you your range, average and current fuel consumption, as well as average speed. Safety standards include ABS, Electronic Brakeforce Distribution and Brake Assist. A Seatbelt Warning buzzer and light is featured for both driver and front seat passenger and the Yaris has achieved Five Star NCAP rating for safety. The Yaris models have Whiplash Injury Lessening concept seats which provide extra protection in the event of an accident. The steering column is collapsible and the brake pedal is retractable, both of which happen automatically in the event of a front end impact.

Toyota Yaris models are in the best insurance classification for the 1.0 litre model, rated a 1E, the lowest possible. This is thanks in part to the measures engineers undertaken to use a bolt on bumper re-enforcement and a radiator slide structure which helps protect the radiator in the event of a low speed impact, while at the same time holding the bonnet lock in place. Even our test model was only a Group 4E. Anti theft measures such as the Smart Entry system also keep insurance costs low.

The Yaris starts at a competitive £8810 on the road, with the model we tested costing £11,095 and the top of the range SR 1.8 five door costing £13,575. Options include a full leather interior, sat nav, a Protection Pack of scuff plates, mud flaps, side and corner mouldings, a boot protector and carpet mats.

FORD KA GOES RETRO WITH TWO-TONE COLOURS

A retro two tone version of Britain's best-selling supermini, the Ford Ka, has gone on sale. Priced at £7,995, the Two-Tone is an exciting limited edition available as a Style Climate or Zetec Climate, with a choice of four body colours: panther black, ocean, sea grey and new blazer blue, to combine with the moon dust silver bumpers and mirror housings.

