

MOTORING MATTERS *by Sandie Goodwin*

STYLISH, PRACTICAL AND COMFORTABLE – CITROEN'S C CROSSER

The best word I can use to describe the Citroën C-Crosser is versatile. It has four-wheel drive and is a large roomy vehicle. Powered by an advanced, fuel efficient HDi diesel engine equipped with environmentally-friendly Diesel Particulate Filter System, this is an eye catching SUV. When our test model was delivered, it made an immediate impact for its good looks and when the collection day dawned, we did not want to give it back to the nice team at Citroën's press office.

The C-Crosser's robust good looks are fronted by the dominant chevrons that stretch across the bonnet into the streamlined front headlamps, ensuring that it is instantly recognisable as a Citroën. A multiple-ribbed bonnet, chunky wheel arches, plenty of chrome detailing and the sleek window lines enhance the C-Crosser's dynamic styling. The C-Crosser has Citroën's impressive, new generation 156bhp 2.2HDi engine mated to a six-speed manual gearbox. This engine also runs on 30% biodiesel and its Particulate Filter System reduces particle emissions to virtually immeasurable levels.

When driving the C-Crosser, apart from the comfort of the vehicle, you have a choice of three settings, dependent on road conditions and driving style: two-wheel drive, four-wheel drive and a lock setting designed for low-grip conditions. The 18-inch Michelin tyres make for added grip on or off road. It is not just the driver who will enjoy high levels of comfort in this vehicle;

Passengers are also carried in comfort. There is an easily reconfigured second and third row of seats, which can be folded away quickly and effortlessly to provide a flat floor and vast load space. The rear two seats can be completely hidden away under the floor, while the second row of seating, which slides to offer greater leg room or boot space, features a 60:40 split/fold function that is operated via electric controls in the boot.

Making it easier to load bulky objects, the tailgate opens in two sections. The lower part is able to support up to 200kg, allowing it to double up as an al fresco seat. During our test period we took the Crosser into London several

times and found it was easy to manoeuvre and park. The high driving position gave the car good all round visibility and one of the extras we particularly liked was the on board reversing camera which shows exactly your position on the road and what is behind you when reversing. The sat nav was easy to programme and it also gave lots of other information such as traffic jams ahead, allowing time to calculate a new route. We also tested the vehicle on A roads, B roads and in the wilds of Norfolk and wherever we went it just ate up the miles and arrived looking good.

Citroën UK's managing director Xavier Duchemin commented on the vehicle. "The C-Crosser will add a new dimension to the already diverse Citroën range and ensures that we have a vehicle to suit all our customer needs, whether it be an SUV, an executive saloon, a compact MPV or a supermini." From our test drive, we agree that this is a versatile, comfortable car.

Our test model was the Exclusive model. There is also a VTR+ model. Both models feature automatic air conditioning, six airbags, alarm, a 5+2 seating configuration, cruise control, automatic headlamps, ABS and ESP with traction control as standard, while the Exclusive adds leather upholstery, rear parking sensors, 18" alloys and a 6 CD autochanger. Recommended retail prices are £22,790 for the VTR+ and £25,490 for the Exclusive, with 12,500 mile service intervals and a 3 year 60,000 miles warranty. It falls into insurance group 13E and does a combined cycle of over 38 miles per gallon.



OLDER TAXIS

During our test drive period, we took the Crosser to Wisbech. This area is flat fenland and whilst driving across a particularly flat road we spotted one solitary house, close to the roadside. Outside this house was an old London style taxi. Obviously no longer a working cab, it was parked on the grass verge. Did it once belong to you, do you know any of its history? The occupier of the house was not at home, but in his front garden was another old taxi. Across the road in his yard, there was a variety of old cars in various states of repair and yet another taxi. It seems there is a great affection for the London style taxi, even when it is past its prime working life.



INTRODUCING THE TOYOTA PARTNER ROBOT FAMILY

Two new robots, a "Mobility Robot" and a "Violin-playing Robot", have been unveiled by Toyota. The Mobility Robot provides transport in places where conventional wheeled vehicles would fail, including steps. It can move at speeds of up to 4mph – human walking pace – and travel up to a distance of 13 miles on one hour of battery charge. In addition to being able to transport its owner, it can also follow people and avoid obstacles.



The Violin-playing Robot is capable of performing a variety of tasks with its hands and arms. Its delicacy of movement is best demonstrated by the fact it can play the violin. The 1.5-metre tall Violin-playing Robot, equipped with a total of 17 joints in each of its hands and arms, uses precise control and coordination to achieve human-like agility. It could also be used to assist with domestic duties or nursing and medical care.

These newest additions to the Toyota Partner Robot family are being developed to support people's everyday life. Toyota hopes to have these and other Toyota Partner Robots on sale in the early 2010s. Toyota Robots are envisioned to assist people in four main fields; domestic duties, nursing and healthcare, manufacturing and short-distance personal transport.