

## MOTORING MATTERS *by Sandie Goodwin*

### VOLKSWAGEN'S TIGUAN A "BABY OFF ROADER"

This is Volkswagen's first compact SUV - full of technology to enhance your driving experience. Taxi Globe's test model was the Tiguan SE 2.0 litre TDI 4MOTION 140 PS with a 6 speed manual gearbox. The Tiguan has many options available and you could customise your Tiguan to your preferences with goodies such as an electronic self-parking system, a rear parking camera, a panoramic sunroof and a sat nav and stereo system that can store 30 gigabytes worth of music. Every Tiguan come equipped with permanent four-wheel drive – called 4Motion. This system divides power equally between all four wheels, ensuring maximum traction from rest whatever the weather. Then once you are driving it sends 90% of the engine's energy to the front wheels if conditions are clement which makes for more economy.

Our 2 litre direct injection turbodiesel test model Tiguan had all the standard features you would expect from a VW, including ABS, EBD, ESP, EDL and ASR traction control. The alloy wheels

have anti theft wheel nuts and the power steering is speed sensitive. The test Tiguan also had an optional pop-out tow hook fitted, which can tow up to 2.5 tons. Although not many drivers use this type of vehicle off road, the optional DVD touch screen navigation/radio and rear view camera on our vehicle could even work out where you are if you are off road. For anyone looking for a more serious off road vehicle, there is the Escape version, which is built with unasphalted topography in mind. I tried out the Tiguan on an off road course at the launch and all the electronic off road aids made for a great experience. These include hill-descent control and a hill-holder that operates in conjunction with the electronic handbrake so you don't roll backwards.

Testing this Tiguan proved a comfortable drive, with a high seating position. Everything in the cabin was positioned to make it easy to use, including the auto hold feature which automatically engages the handbrake at traffic lights etc. The electronic handbrake means there is even more storage space



between the comfortable front seats. The six speed gearbox makes the car more economical. The sat nav is in a good position for viewing when driving along and all the instruments are easy to understand. Generous legroom in the back, with seats that split 60:40 mean the Tiguan is very practical as well. There is little roll to make even little ones feel queasy in the back. There is up to 1,510 litres of load space once the rear seats have been folded flat. The rear seats split, slide and recline.

On the road price: £19,370 - £23,400. Our test model was £21,795 including delivery, number plates, VAT, £170 VED and £55 registration fee. There is a finance offer available on Tiguan models until 30th September 2008 – further details from Volkswagen Finance or your local dealership.

### SPEEDING TICKETS ON THE INCREASE

Revenue from speeding tickets has quadrupled since 1997. Home Office figures show that 1.8 million tickets are being issued each year, which is 4,850 every day, compared to 713,000 in 1997. This means a rise in the revenue collected in fines from £28.5 million in 1997 to £106.4 million in 2006. In 2000, there were 1,935 roadside speed cameras and 173 mobile speed traps. By 2008, Home Office figures show there are 5,562 roadside speed cameras and 2,373 mobile speed traps.

Many drivers have said that they believe speed cameras are just cash cows, raising more and more revenue and the rise in this revenue does coincide with a big expansion in the speed camera network. The Conservative spokesman for police reform, David Ruffley, said: "The number of tickets issued for speeding has increased 150% under Labour. Coupled with an increase in the basic speeding fine from £40 to £60 in 2000, speeding tickets are now raising over £100 million a year for the government. Ministers need to tell us what they are doing with this £100 million a year taken from motorists. How much is actually put back into practical road safety that does not involve speed cameras?"

### PARKER'S EXPOSES INCOMPETENCE AT THE DVLA

An undercover Parker's investigation shows the DVLA is giving misleading and inaccurate information to three-in-four motorists. Following a tip-off from a reader about mistakes by the Government agency, Parker's made 100 enquiries by telephone and email to the DVLA's Swansea-based call centre, posing as members of the public. Parker's picked 100 of the cars that are worst affected by upcoming VED rules changes, those registered between March 2001 and March 2006 that produce more than 225g/km CO<sub>2</sub>, to test whether the DVLA knew that the cars would temporarily move into Band K next year (£300 in road tax) before being liable for a £430 or £455 charge in 2010.

76 of the 100 cars were given wrong road tax figures for at least one of the three years enquired about; only one-in-ten was answered with correct information. The biggest area of concern, and confusion among DVLA call centre staff, surrounds what is happening in 2009. Cars that emit more than 186 g/km CO<sub>2</sub>, but registered between March 2001 and March 2006, will move from Band F to Band K – a rise of £90. Most of the call centre staff that Parker's spoke to were

unaware of this, mistakenly placing the cars into bands L or M – the bands they will be in from 2010. We were advised that the cost of road tax will be £415 or £440 – depending on emissions – rather than the £300 it actually is.

After the 100 enquiries, the DVLA had made mistakes that averaged £104.44 per enquiry. When presented with Parker's findings, the DVLA initially maintained that the information provided by their call centre staff was correct. It was only when Parker's sent evidence in the form of a Parliamentary Written Answer, to prove that Band F cars registered before March 2006 would only pay £300 next year that the DVLA admitted to its mistake: "Thank you for bringing this issue to DVLA's attention. The Agency apologises for the confusion caused in our responses to both you and to any callers to DVLA regarding the VED rates in 2009. DVLA has taken appropriate steps to ensure that we are now giving out correct and consistent information."

Parker's was established 35 years ago and Parker's Car Price Guide is Britain's biggest and best selling car price guide. The Parker's website, [www.parkers.co.uk](http://www.parkers.co.uk) was set up in January 1999.