European Car of the Year 2017; Peugeot 3008 Road Test

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Peugeot 3008 announced as the 2017 European Car of the Year, at the Geneva Motor Show…

By Robin Roberts (Miles Better News Agency).

The all-new Peugeot 3008 SUV has been named the 2017 European 'Car of the Year' at the Geneva Motor Show by a judging panel comprising 58 European journalists. The 3008, Alfa Romeo Giulia and the Mercedes-Benz E-Class took the top three places.

The all-new 3008 SUV impressed the judging panel with its combination of style, interior design and performance. This prestigious trophy joins the 20 other awards the 3008 SUV has already won since its launch at the start of 2017.

The previous Peugeot 3008 rightly carved out a niche for itself in the SUV sector. Building on the strength of the smaller 2008, the larger car in the SUV family was an instant success when launched a few years ago and has now been extensively updated.

Not only does it have the latest Euro6 engines and sophisticated powertrains but it's pulling in the latest in-car sat-nav technology. The improvements are not cheap and are reflected in a substantial price hike even before you select from an extensive and expensive list of options. These have effectively lifted the Peugeot 3008 into an executive car range.

It's a good range running to 17 models in four trim levels, utilising petrol and diesel engines from 99 to 181 hp and 1.2 to 2.0 litres. This ensures the range spans the most popular

choices in the SUV sector. My colleague road tested the new 3008 soon after its UK on-sale date in December, same engine but with the automatic transmission and Grip Control options and in a lower equipment spec level. This time we tested the 3008 GT Line with very popular 120 hp 1.6 litre diesel and manual six speed gearbox.

With Peugeot's diesel experience and expertise, the four cylinder turbocharged engine is a very good performer and at times we saw over 50 mpg returned on longer journeys, but it settled to an overall figure just below. Used one or two-up the engine was adequate for the car but put a few in the back or load it and the economy dipped along with the speed.

It is a big car and you get this impression with the performance at the upper end when it struggles in the higher ratios and its fuel consumption increases. Used with greater restraint, the powertrain is smooth and refined once you get used to the long-travel clutch, with neat gearchange action under hand. Steering gave reasonable feedback, the turning circle was good and it was vibration-free while the brakes needed only light pressure to affect rapid deceleration in a very controlled and effective manner. The parking brake held well.

Secondary controls on and around the steering wheel were convenient to use, with a touch-screen system for some and a “master switch” on the transmission console for others. Familiarity bred contentment but I am not a great fan of the touch-screen access as you have to go through menus which can be as distracting as using a mobile phone and that’s outlawed on the move.

Instruments in front of the driver can be altered to display settings from a menu as well so you can personalise what you want to see and use. It’s simple and very clear with big, bold clarity thanks to some clever colour-choices. Heating and ventilation controlled from the touch-screen was comprehensive yet simple and effective in the big cabin, backed up by powered windows and a very large opening glass roof, and electric windows all round.

Oddments space was very good, what you would want in a family car, and the bootspace

behind a low sill was generous even when all seats were used. Gradually increasing the capacity with the offset split back seats down, almost tripled loadspace. Access to the load space was good, and for the rear seat passengers it was easy too, and even simpler for those in front, with big wide opening doors and just a slightly higher riding position than a conventional saloon.

The seats are big and comfortable with good adjustment on the front pair but foot-space is cramped in them and better for those in the back three. Headroom is reasonable throughout but the very wide console dominates the interior and compromises space in what is a big interior. It’s a family car for an average-sized family, not taller people.

Visibility is good to the front and sides with deep windows and a low waistline combined with high seating, but look over the shoulder to pull out and the roof pillars create blindspots demanding extra care. A reversing camera is good but you are aware of the high tail and small back window when parking.

On the move, the 3008 120 is a respectable performer, covers ground without effort but it did not feel agile like the sibling 2008. You can hear the suspension working away and sometimes feel it too over bad roads as its not as soft-riding as you might expect for its wheelbase and track width, but that’s down to the large wheels and tyres picking up bumps and potholes.

There is a degree of body roll on bends but not too much and it hardly dipped or pitched under acceleration or braking. Unless you really put your foot down in the lower gears, the engine noise is low, there are modest transmission sounds and wind and the road rumbles are probably the most noticeable – but they are not intrusive to any degree.

VERDICT

The Peugeot 3008 120 1.6 is a highly refined family car with strong appeal because it does so much so well, but it’s not cheap – and add on some desirable options you will be paying a lot for its sophistication. It’s now a notable award winner which will lead to it being a sales winner as well despite its price hike.

For: Economical, refined powertrain, big boot, good seats, equipment, quality interior & trim, Car of the Year title.

Against: Interior height restriction, some blindspots, expensive options £3,305 on test car, road noise intrusion.

Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Peugeot 3008 GT Line BlueHDi 120 turbodiesel.

Price: £27,345 (inc options £30,650).

Engine/transmission: 1.6 litre, four cyl, 120 turbodiesel, six speed manual.
Performance: 117 mph, 0-62mph: 11.2 seconds.

Fuel consumption on test: 48.6 mpg

Emissions and Taxation: CO2 emissions 104 g/km, VED road tax now £0 First Year rate then £20 after that – but bought after 1 April the new rates will be £140 every year.
Bik company car tax rating 22%.

Insurance Group: 18E.

Warranty: Three years/unlimited mileage.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.45m (14ft 7in), W 2.10m (6ft 11in), H 1.63 m (5ft 4in), boot/load space 591–1,670 litres (20.87–58.98 cu.ft).

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