IAM RoadSmart Mature Driver Review – Well worth considering…

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Author:

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Nigel Hawkins, pictured at the wheel of his Nissan, recently underwent an IAM RoadSmart Mature Driver Review, and found it entirely beneficial.

IAM RoadSmart Mature Driver Review – What's it all about?

Kim Henson writes: Statistically, older drivers are among the safest of those behind the wheel, helped by years of experience on the road, plus, generally, a more cautious, considered approach. However, if you are an older driver, it is a good idea to consider having your skill levels assessed by an independent expert reviewer. IAM RoadSmart can help…

IAM RoadSmart (formerly called the Institute of Advanced Motorists) is a UK-based independent road safety charity, which aims to reduce the numbers of deaths and injuries on British roads, and operates a variety of initiatives/programmes to help in this goal. Notably these include 'Advanced Driver' and 'Advanced Rider' training courses, 'Young Driver Assessment', 'Mature Driver Review', 'Non-Member Driving Review' and 'Non-Member Rider Review'.

In this feature we are looking specifically at the 'Mature Driver Review', essentially a relaxed one hour session with an IAM RoadSmart expert travelling alongside the driver (in his or her own vehicle, and on familiar local roads), assessing the level of driving skills displayed and highlighting good and not-so-good aspects. There is no test involved and no pressure, and the session, which costs £65, can help the participant in terms of providing an honest, unbiased review of their driving.

In the words of IAM RoadSmart, it is 'Perfect for sharpening your skills and boosting your confidence'.

Nigel Hawkins from Bournemouth has just undertaken (in January 2023) a Mature Driver Review, and in his own words this is how he got on…

Having a birthday shortly after Christmas makes present ideas difficult, however, I had included the IAM RoadSmart (Institute of Advanced Motorists) Mature Driver Review as an idea and my wife decided to enrol me for this experience.

I was contacted by the IAM Assessor and was booked in for Friday the 13th January, a good job that I am not suspicious! In fact it was a lovely sunny day, having been raining all week.

Anyway, I turned up at the allocated time to meet the Assessor in Sainsbury's car park in Ferndown, Dorset, and duly found the Assessor holding a red board. He was a really nice guy who made you feel very relaxed. First, he checked my eye sight by asking me to read a car number plate, which I passed with flying colours. Then he checked the tyres on the car and my documentation and I had to sign a declaration that 'As the driver you are deemed to be in control of your vehicle at all times including responsibility for safety'

The Assessor explained that we would go for a drive and he would observe my driving skills and ask questions and provide guidance where appropriate. The last time I had been assessed was when I took my test in 1969! Bad habits had probably crept in and driving methods have changed, especially with modern technology in cars. We covered approximately 20 miles from dual carriageways to country roads and built up areas, and including the notorious Canford Bottom Roundabout near Wimborne which fortunately I know well.

A quote from Dorset Live: 'Dorset Live asked readers to name the county's worst junction, and the results overwhelmingly pointed to Canford Bottom roundabout. The roundabout is infamous for the road that cuts through it – as if the sheer number of lanes and laughable name weren't awful enough.'

I drove as I normally would with a passenger next to me. It is not like taking a driving test.

On returning to Sainsbury's car park the Assessor ran though the assessment grades:

1 Excellent 2 Competent 3 Needs Development 4 Safety Concern

The grades cover the following criteria:-

Starting Off Procedures	Hazard Perception
Clutch/Gears/Brake/Accelerator	Signalling and use of mirrors
Steering	Dealing with traffic and other road users
Positioning	Manoeuvring
Progress/Hesitation/Legality	Stopping
Observation and Planning	Concentration/consideration and courtesy

I am pleased to say that my result were: 6 x 1 and 6 x 2

You also get given additional comments such as ‘A safe and legal demonstration’, ‘This was a good standard’

VERDICT

All in all, a very worthwhile experience which I would recommend to anyone. I am now considering improving my skills further by undertaking an Advanced Driver course.

Details can be found on the IAM RoadSmart website https://www.iamroadsmart.com/

Kim adds: Grateful thanks to Nigel for relaying his experience of the IAM RoadSmart Mature Driver Review for Wheels-Alive.