Peugeot 2008

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by Chris Adamson

Crossovers started life as slightly shrunken 4x4s with the option not to have four-wheel drive – now there is a new sub-compact class that comes from the opposite direction by pumping up standard hatchbacks and among the newest is the Peugeot 2008.

Based on the latest 208 the extra zero sees the body grow by 197mm (7.75in) in length and 92mm (3.62in) in height while retaining the same 2538mm (99.92in) wheelbase but, unlike some, it isn't as aggressive or bloated and appears more as a high standing hatchback than an off-roader.

While carrying many of the character lines from its 208 sibling, the 2008 is easily identified by the raised ride height, deep upright floating front grille, front skid plate, kick-up in the roofline, roof rails, LED day running lamps, distinctive two-stage headlights, high rear end and a roofline with curves that have been inspired by the RCZ sports coupe.

EASY ACCESS

The raised body means the 2008 is easier to access with the seating at a convenient hip height while the enlarged body boosts the luggage space under the hatch to 360 litres, up 75 litres on the 208, which means it challenges most other small crossovers in its class.

Pop the 60/40 split rear seats down and this swells to 1194 litres (including 22 litres under floor) thanks to the seat bases cantilevering partly into the floor to leave a perfectly flat load deck. The slight downside is that to achieve this the rear bench is a little thin and some passengers may find it a tad uncomfortable on a long journey.

Peugeot fits a solid folding parcel shelf rather than a tonneau cover which is a handicap when loading taller items unless you remove it completely.

Elsewhere the generously appointed cabin is familiar 208 family territory with the smart looking dashboard in soft plastics and bright trim, only disturbed by the central display screen which is designed for the iPad generation and can be rather fiddly to operate on the move until you get used to it.

There is good passenger space front and rear – especially headroom – while the driver is faced by a comprehensive range of logical controls.









ENGINES AND HANDLING

The original choice of five engine options has been quickly expanded to seven, with the addition of two power outputs (110 and 130bhp) from Peugeot's latest 1.2 litre three-cylinder supercharged turbo-charged THP engine. This unit is notable for its high torque characteristics – up 45 per cent on standard versions of the motor.

It also claims a fuel consumption improvement of between 15 and 20 per cent and sub 110g/km emissions. Stop-start technology across the range means that the 2008 does well in terms of both fuel consumption and emissions.

The other engines are a VTi version of the 82bhp 1.2 petrol, a larger capacity 120bhp 1.6 litre VTi petrol, a 1.4 litre HDI diesel producing 68bhp and two outputs from Peugeot's highly efficient 1.6 litre eco turbo diesel.

In its lower 92bhp output form, using a six-speed EGC gearbox with automatic stop-start, this is rated at 98g/km which means it is zero rated for road tax.

The alternative 115bhp version delivers 270 Nm of torque from low down. It isn't among the quietest of oil burners but it is quicker off the mark than most of its rivals, using a slightly notchy but flexible six-speed manual transmission.

Where it really scores is on fuel consumption and emissions. Peugeot claims a combined figure of 70mpg thanks to automatic stop start and a gear shift indicator. Without really trying I saw a figure of 56.4mpg and over 60mpg seems eminently possible with a little concentration.

One thing you don't have to influence is the emissions which at 106g/km mean free VED in year one and only £20 in year two.

With the original short chassis having been expanded, there was always going to be some compromise on ride quality and the 2008 does have a slightly soft feel, which can upset the balance and handling. However, at 10 metres is has one of the best turning circles in its class through the light, urban-geared steering.

Although devoid of a conventional four-wheel drive mechanism, the 2008 does have a Grip Control select button which allows the choice between standard, snow, off-road, sand and ESP off settings. For example in off-road mode it acts as a limited slip differential, braking a spinning wheel and transferring more torque to the wheel with the most grip.

SPECIFICATION

Prices for the 2008 start at £12,995 for the 1.2 VTi in Access trim level which comes with features such as colour coded door mirrors and door handles, roof bars, remote central locking, cruise control with speed limiter, electrically operated and heated door mirrors, radio and CD audio with steering wheel controls and air conditioning.

Next up is Active which adds in items such as front fog lights, 16inch alloy wheels, multi-function colour touchscreen, Bluetooth and USB connection plus a DAB radio.

Above this is the Allure grade fitted with rear parking sensors, tinted rear windows, automatic headlights and windscreen wipers, electrically heated and folding door mirrors and dual zone air conditioning,

If you want extras you can move all the way up to the range topping Feline model which comes in at £19,145 and features 17inch alloy wheels, dual zone climate control, panoramic glass sunroof with electric blind, part leather upholstery, satellite navigation, parking sensors and the large seven-inch touch screen that operates a multitude of functions, from the navigation to the sound system, traffic reports and Bluetooth.

VERDICT – CLASS LEADING PRACTICALITY

Although it has some mild off-roading abilities, in my mind the 2008 should be viewed as a more accessible and versatile hatchback – and on this level it works very well.
In an increasingly popular sector of the market that is taking away sales from conventional hatchbacks, the 2008 scores highly for both passenger and luggage accommodation, and it is all wrapped-up in a contemporary cabin.

More spacious than its rivals and more practical, it sets the benchmark against which others will have to be judged in the future.





WHEELS-ALIVE TECH. SPEC. IN BRIEF

Peugeot 2008 Feline 1.6 e-HDi 115

Engine: 1560cc four-cylinder, turbocharged diesel, six-speed manual transmission, front-wheel drive
Power: 115bhp @ 3,600rpm
Torque: 270 Nm @ 1,750rpm
Top Speed: 117mph
0-62mph: 10.4 seconds
Fuel Consumption:

Urban – 60.1mpg
Extra Urban – 78.5mpg
Combined – 70.6mpg
CO2 Emissions: 106 g/km (VED Band B)

On the road price: £19,145