Peugeot 3008 1.2 PureTech SUV – Road Test

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Peugeot 3008 SUV – Big on space, with a small capacity engine.

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Sales of new cars overall in the UK this year have stalled by 2.5% over the same period last year, with only the SUV/4×4 sector showing growth. Sales of all diesel powered passenger cars have fallen by 11.5% following the ‘dieselgate scandal’.

During the uncertain economic climate the logical conclusion for those thinking of buying a new car is to go for an SUV with a petrol engine. I did just that with the latest generation award-winning Peugeot 3008 powered by the award winning 1.2 litre PureTech 130 hp

turbocharged petrol engine.

Deliveries to UK customers of the latest generation Peugeot 3008 started in January this year, replacing the original generation models introduced in 2009. Whereas the original design was more MPV cum SUV/Crossover, this generation is definitely more SUV in style even though a 4WD drivetrain is not available, but the firm's Advanced Grip Control 2WD system is available as an option for all levels of specification.

Priced from £22,495 up to £33,695 the Peugeot 3008 range offers Active, the best-selling Allure, GT Line and GT levels of specification, with a choice, depending on the spec level chosen, of two petrol and four diesel engines. These are the 1.2 litre three cylinder 130 hp PureTech turbo petrol with six speed manual and automatic gearbox choices, the 1.6 THP four cylinder turbo petrol with 165 hp with an automatic gearbox, and a family of 1.6 BlueHDi turbodiesels with 100 hp manual, 120 hp manual and auto, 150 hp manual and the 180 hp automatic. All units have Stop&Start as standard for lower CO2 emissions, with petrol units rated from 117 g/km and diesels from 104 g/km.

Peugeot is currently offering a Scrappage Scheme initiative where petrol or diesel powered cars of any make registered before December 2010 can be traded in against a new 3008. A new petrol 3008 can be bought with a £2,000 discount and £2,500 for a diesel version.

All new 3008s are essentially front wheel drive despite their SUV looks, but all spec levels and engine options can be ordered with Peugeot's Advanced Grip Control system. Basically this system uses a clever electronically controlled differential which offers various driving modes such as Normal, Snow, Mud, Sand and ESP Off and costs an extra £260 to £770. The amount of the price increase depends on the style of 18 inch alloy wheels chosen, which are all shod with grippier Mud & Snow tyres.

The latest 3008 is larger in all areas than before as it uses a version of the Peugeot 308 SW estate platform. It is 4,447 mm (14.59 ft) in length, an increase of 80 mm (3.15 in) which allows for a 62 mm (2.44 in) longer wheelbase. The width has increased as well to 1,840 mm

(6.04 ft) which combines with the longer wheelbase to give 24 mm (0.94 in) more rear seat legroom, 17 mm (0.67 in) more front elbow room, 4 mm (0.16 in) more rear elbow room. In addition, with an overall height of 1,624 mm (5.33 ft) there is 36 mm (1.42 in) more headroom as long as the sunroof option is not taken. The boot capacity has increased too, from 432 to 520 litres (15.26 to 18.36 cu.ft) and the total load capacity with the rear seat backs folded is 1,670 litres (58.98 cu.ft). The 60/40 rear seat backs fold completely flat and there is an adjustable height load bed floor so it is easy to load heavy items. There is also the option of a hands-free opening/closing tailgate.

Whereas the previous 3008 had a rounded exterior design and looked quite dumpy as was the fashion at the time, the new 3008 looks much sharper and more athletic. At the front is an imposing upright front grille with the central Lion badge flanked by sleek projector headlights, and a robust bumper houses air vents, LED daytime driving lights and a tough looking skid plate. Topping off the front is a classy looking clamshell bonnet. To the side there is a high waistline which rises slightly towards the rear with a rising kink below the hidden C-pillar. The roof line lowers slightly towards the rear, giving a mild coupé look. At the rear is a wide tailgate, strongly styled bumper, skid plate and signature Lion's claw design rear lights.

If the exterior gives that wow that's different factor, the first impression of the interior front design has an even larger wow factor. The twin front i-Cockpit is very futuristic with a dramatic dashboard, high level instrument binnacle viewed over the smaller diameter steering wheel which now has flattened top and bottom sections of the rim. Centrally positioned in the dashboard, but canted towards the driver, is a high-level 8-inch tablet style touchscreen containing all the latest communication functions. Below that is a series of seven piano key style toggle switches providing direct access to main driving functions such as entertainment, hazard warning lights, air conditioning, vehicle settings, phone connection and mobile applications. It is still annoying that the air distribution and temperature controls still have to be operated via the touchscreen rather than simple controls, so the driver's eyes are taken away from road.

However the latest i-Cockpit design also provides as standard a 12.3 inch screen behind the steering wheel, similar to Audi's Virtual Cockpit. This allows five different display modes accessed via a scroll roller button on the steering wheel. It can be used to change the display of the dials, decide what is displayed and most usefully show the sat-nav directions right in front of the driver. Auto Emergency Braking, Lane Keep Assist, Apple CarPlay and DAB radio are all standard fit items as are electrically operated windows and door mirrors, air-con and auto lights and wipers. My GT Line test car also had the Peugeot Connect SOS, 3D Connected Navigation, reversing camera and front and rear parking sensors. As always there is a long list of extra cost options to meet the personalisation requirements customers seem happy to pay extra for. My test car also had the extra cost £750 motorised tailgate which was very useful, the excellent FOCAL HiFi system at £590, the opening glass sunroof at £990, a Vis Pack at £450 and metallic paint costs another £525 so as you can see going down the options route can be costly.

Generally the trim and upholstery combinations of textures and colours look and feel very up-market and only the lower door sections of plastic trim feel less expensive. The driving position is first rate and the seats really comfortable. However, the limited height glass areas towards the rear quarters of the vehicle do restrict visibility at times.

So the new Peugeot 3008 looks good and feels good but how does it perform? My test car version this time had the award winning 1.2 litre PureTech 130 hp turbocharged, three cylinder petrol engine with a six speed manual gearbox and with the GT Line spec is priced at £26,195 but add in the options and it weighed in at a considerable cost of £29,500.

At the UK media launch earlier this year I tried the expected best-selling 1.6 BlueHDi 120 hp powered version which returned a real-life fuel economy figure of 51.7 mpg with CO2 emissions of 104 g/km. As a comparison with the GT Line spec this model is priced at £28,025, that's £1,830 more than the 1.2 petrol version although the VED First Year rate road tax is £20 cheaper for the diesel and both engines are the same £140 for the Standard Year Two onwards rate. For company car drivers the Benefit-in-Kind tax rate is 22% for both engines.

As for comparing performance the petrol unit is a shade faster with a top speed of 117 mph rather than 115 mph for the diesel and the zero to 62 mph acceleration time is 10.8 seconds for the petrol and 11.6 seconds for the diesel. So with the move by UK new car customers away from diesel to petrol powered models the 3008 with the 1.2 petrol engine makes better economic and performance sense. For the record my test drive with the petrol version recorded a real-life figure of 41.4 mpg over a 600 mile test driving period, well short of the official 55.4 mpg but the significantly lower purchase price will offset that extra cost for some considerable time.

Just as the styling, roominess and interior layout impressed me with the new 3008 so did the comfortable and compliant ride. It was not too soft to detract from the sharp handling, which would initiate too much body-roll during cornering, especially when fully loaded, but a first class balance between comfort and handling. It is not the speediest of mid-sized SUVS but it's no overweight roly-poly slouch either. The use of the smaller diameter steering wheel made the steering feel really sharp and responsive. The suspension shrugged off impacts from all but the severest of deep potholes.

VERDICT

There is no shortage of competitor models in the mid-sized SUV market, but the fact that the new 3008 has received so many awards including the International 2017 Car of the Year title, and the 1.2 litre PureTech petrol engine has been the Engine of the Year for the last three years in its 1.0 to 1.4 litre category, means it is a winning combination.

For: Considerable kerb appeal exterior styling, chic interior, good specification, refined engine and transmission, very comfortable ride, roomier than before, relatively low running costs, new Scrappage Scheme £2,000 discount.

Against: Limited rear/rear quarter visibility, real-life fuel economy fell well short of the official Combined Cycle figure, fully loaded going up long steep hills needed considerable gearchanges to maintain a reasonable speed, clunky gearchange, watch the cost of adding those extra personalisation options.

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

Peugeot 3008 GT Line SUV, 1.2 PureTech 130 hp manual.

Price: £26,195.

Engine/transmission: 1.2 litre, three cylinder turbo petrol with Stop&Start, six speed manual, 130 hp, 230 Nm (170 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm.

Performance: 117mph, 0–62mph 10.8 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 55.4 mpg (41.4 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 117 g/km, VED road tax £160/£140, BIK company car tax 22%.

Insurance Group: 13E.

Warranty: Three years/unlimited mileage.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,447 mm (14.59 ft), W 1,840 mm (6.04 ft), H 1,624 mm (5.33 ft), boot/load space 520 to 1,670 litres (18.36 to 58.98 cu.ft), braked trailer towing weight 1,400 kg (3,086 lb), five doors/five seats.