Peugeot 3008 GT Line PureTech 130 Road Test

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Chris Adamson gives his views on the European Car of the Year 2017, and assesses whether the car lives up to this accolade.

(Words and Photos by Chris)

‘European Car of the Year 2017’ is a pretty tough title to live up to, but that’s the challenge facing the new Peugeot 3008, having beaten off some stiff opposition to claim the crown earlier this year.

Visually it is hard to really concentrate on any one aspect of the new 3008 when you first get acquainted, there are so many angles and curves it is as if the designer has been allowed to run riot with only one stipulation – no straight lines or panels.

Oddly this has resulted in a silhouette that is slightly out of proportion, emphasised by the

extended bonnet, so for me it isn't the most handsome of metal work out there.

The defining feature of the new model has to be the brutal upright, chrome edged front grille and piercing LED lighting that shouts purpose and dynamics, giving the 3008 an aggressive character that it didn't previously have.



In the GT Line grade, as specified in this case, you get lots of chrome trim, black door mirrors and a black roof to add an air of sophistication, while the large plastic wheel arch extensions, sporting bumpers and a chequered radiator grille give it the off-road stance of a proper SUV.

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Peugeot trumpets the new cockpit style of the interior in its promotional material (most notably the TV advertising) and that is very much in evidence with the wrap-around dashboard and central console that surround the front seat occupants.

Drivers will feel very much in control here while passengers might feel more confined – this isn’t helped by a very black roof lining that brings the ceiling down.

The busy nature of the exterior continues in the cabin with a myriad of materials from cloth door panels to stitched effect plastic, brushed aluminium trim and hard black plastic – it’s as if the designers couldn’t quite make up their minds and tried out everything.



This is all part of the GT Line package that also features contrasting stitching on the armrest, gear lever gaiter and dashboard, floor mats with contrasting stitching, perforated grain leather steering wheel and leather effect and cloth seat trim.

Peugeot was one of the first to give their cars the modern tech feel with digital iPad style screens for controlling many of the vehicle's subsidiary features (air-conditioning, navigation, radio, audio and telephone), and this continues in the 3008 where the raised, eight-inch, central screen rises out of the dashboard.

As is becoming the norm, most of this is touch-activated and, while at first it looks daunting, it turns out to be clear and precise and quite easy to navigate around so you can quickly get

your correct entertainment and climate conditions installed.

To interrogate any part of the system needs the use of a series of clearly marked chrome toggle switches which control the infotainment, air conditioning, satellite navigation, parking assist, Bluetooth, automatic headlamps, parking distance, lane changing blind spot warning and traction control.



Placing the main digital vehicle read-out information (speed, revs, fuel and temperatures plus operational graphics) high up and straight ahead of the driver means there is no need for the person in control to take their eyes far from the road at any time.

Further back the rear seat occupants are well looked after with loads of leg and shoulder room and all the seats are at a convenient hip height to allow easy access.

Behind this, the tailgate hatch, which can be operated by a smart electric tailgate mechanism, opens up a large 591 litre (20.87 cu.ft) storage space accessed over a flat bumper to the load compartment surface.



The luggage area can be enlarged by dropping down flat the rear seats (60/40 split) to extend this to a maximum of 1,670 litres (58.97 cu.ft), and there is more storage space under the boot floor around the space saver spare wheel.

On the Road

For such a relatively bulky vehicle it is a surprise to find that in this case the 3008 is powered by a 1199cc three-cylinder petrol engine fitted with automatic stop-start – this is the starter power unit in a full line-up that includes 1.6 litre turbocharged petrol engines and 1.6 litre and 2 litre HDI diesels.

The advantage of the Pure Tech three-cylinder (the reigning International Engine of the year) is lots of power and torque at low revs – the main benefit is on fuel economy – Peugeot claiming in excess of 55 miles to the gallon, although on a mixed route journey the best I could see was 38 mpg. It also does well on emissions at under 120 g/km.

The down side is that the odd number of cylinders means that it isn't as balanced as a four-cylinder unit and there is some excessive noise on start up – at first I though Peugeot has substituted a diesel. But it soon settles down and you are back in comfortable territory.



With an eye very much on economy, this 3008 doesn't boast startling performance figures and that is not what this is really about, but in traffic it will hold its own and feels gutsy enough to get overtaking done with the minimum of fuss.

A six-speed manual transmission helps to spread the torque and dishes out the power in even chunks although it does need a careful hand as the gearing is stiffly sprung and the clutch can snatch on first acquaintance.

Manoeuvering both on the open road and in tight spaces is no hardship thanks to the well-weighted electric assisted steering operated through the flat bottomed steering wheel. It gives the 3008 a neat 10.67 metre (35.07 ft) metre turning circle and puts the vehicle just

exactly where you point it.

For me, one of the best aspects of the latest 3008 is the ride quality, the amount of damping is just enough to take out the nasty pot-holes that plague our roads without getting overly excited as some SUVs can.

There is great body control (helped by nice grippy 18in wheels and low profile tyres) and good sound insulation.

Although billed as an SUV, these days that doesn't mean four-wheel drive as it once did. Instead the 3008 offers an optional Advanced Grip Control with Hill Assist Descent Control, with five driving modes which control the brakes on each wheel – and should be sufficient for most needs

VERDICT

Does the 3008 deserve the Car of the Year title?.. Well for me the jury is still out.

It's hard to pinpoint any one aspect that makes the 3008 a stand-out vehicle. It does a lot of things very well, is nicely finished, has plenty of passenger and luggage space and on paper is economical to run.

However I suspect that it's a lot of the technology on board, from the touch screen and cockpit cabin to the award winning three-cylinder engine that really makes you sit-up and take notice of the 3008.

Years to come will tell if these aspects can stand the test of time.



Wheels-Alive Tech Spec. in Brief:

Vehicle: Peugeot 3008 GT Line PureTech 130

Engine: 1199cc (three-cylinder) petrol

Transmission: Six-speed manual

Power: 130 PS @ 5500 rpm

Torque: 230 Nm (170 lb.ft) @ 1,750 rpm

Performance:

0-62 mph: 10.8 seconds

Top Speed: 117 mph

Fuel Consumption (Official Figures):

Urban: 47.1 mpg

Extra-Urban: 62.8 mpg

Combined: 55.4 mpg

Fuel consumption achieved on test: 38 mpg

CO2 Emissions: 117 g/km

Price (On the Road), from: £25,655