Peugeot 3008 SUV/Crossover Road Test

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Stylish New Peugeot 3008 SUV Crossover now on Sale, plus New 3008 DKR Raid Rally models finish 1-2-3 in the 2017 Dakar Rally.

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

UK deliveries of the all-new Peugeot 3008 have just started in January. The new model is described as a Crossover cum SUV rather than the previous generation, introduced in 2009, which was more MPV cum Crossover. But they are both mid-sized C-segment five door, five seater models.

In a timely manner raid rally versions of the Peugeot 3008 finished in the first three podium places in the 2017 Dakar Rally which ended at the weekend in South America, after 5,625-

miles of torturous cross-country competition.

Not only does the all-new Peugeot 3008 look more of a chunky but very stylish SUV, it is roomier, with a very classy interior and with more specification. And there is a good choice of petrol and diesel engines which in the main are used in other models throughout the Peugeot, Citroën and DS ranges.

The previous generation 3008 achieved almost one million global sales, over 75,000 of them in the UK. Such is the growth in the SUV/Crossover market that the latest version is bound to better those figures, although now there are far more models to choose from in this

market sector; virtually every major manufacturer has come up with new small, medium and large SUVs to capitalise on the growing global demand.

In the UK there is no shortage of established new competitors of the C-segment size such as the new SEAT Ateca, the Renault Kadjar, the top sector selling British built Nissan Qashqai, Ford's Kuga, VW Tiguan, the popular Kia Sportage, Hyundai's Tucson, the Honda CR-V, Toyota RAV4 and now their very new C-HR, the new 2017 Mitsubishi ASX plus the Suzuki S-Cross/Vitara and onwards the list continues to grow in line with customer demand. On top of these models, but of a similar size, are the premium brand Audi Q3, BMW X3, Mercedes GLA, Jaguar F-Pace, Range Rover Evoque and the Land Rover Discovery Sport

Priced from £21,795 up to £32,995 the new Peugeot 3008 range offers Active, the expected 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 115 g/km and diesels from 100 g/km.

All new 3008s are essentially front wheel drive despite their SUV looks, but Allure, GT Line and GT spec levels can be ordered with Peugeot's Advanced Grip Control system, basically a clever differential which offers various driving modes such as Normal, Snow, Mud, Sand and ESP Off. This costs an extra £260 to £770 depending on the style of 18-inch alloy wheel chosen – which are all shod with grippier Mud & Snow tyres.

The new 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 (14.69 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 and

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. In addition the boot capacity has increased from 432 litres (15.26 cu.ft) to 520 litres (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 life 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 drive, 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 done 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 to

be 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. The best selling Allure spec level of my test car had additions such as 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 that customers seem happy to pay extra for.

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. 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. Just a very short initial drive and there was another “Wow” from me. This was for the comfortable and compliant ride. Not too soft to detract from the sharp handling, which would initiate too much body-roll during cornering, but a first class balance between comfort and handling. It is not the most agile 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 and only the coarser treaded tyres set up a ‘hum’ on some road surfaces.

As for the engine performance my test car had the 1.6 litre BlueHDi 120 hp turbodiesel unit, which is expected to be the most popular. The vehicle also had the six-speed electronically controlled CVT type automatic gearbox which has received further updates to the software to smooth out its gearchanges and responses for a better match with the characteristics of the engine. Generally the changes were smooth but sometimes the unit held onto gears for too long, especially third gear – when there was enough torque of 300 Nm (221 lb.ft) from 1,750 rpm so that when driving in commuter traffic at 30 mph I would have expected fourth or even fifth gear ratios to be used. The same for 50 mph open road cruising, when the

system elected fifth gear but sixth gear could be selected manually by using the gearshift paddles, for a more relaxed drive.

Officially this engine with the auto gearbox will return 64.2 mpg in the Combined Cycle and the overall average during my week's motoring was 51.7 mpg. Warmer weather should improve that figure.

The CO2 emissions are a low 108 g/km which for an SUV of this size is impressive. This means currently VED road tax is £0 for the First Year rate and then £20 for Year Two onwards. However after 1 April this year new VED bands come into force and the costs change to £140 every year, but remember this only applies to new cars bought after 1 April so if you want one buy it now or at least soon… Company car drivers currently will pay 21% Benefit-in-Kind tax which goes up to 23% from April this year. Insurance is Group 16E.

On the subject of costs my Allure spec 1.6 BlueHDi turbodiesel 120 hp auto version costs £26,845 plus £470 for that all-important – I think – Advanced Grip Control option. You could select a manual gearbox version with the same spec and engine and it will cost £25,445 plus £470 if the Grip Control option is taken. These prices look a bit steep especially if options are added, but they are not out-of-line with the competition and we know after the initial rush to buy, in the longer term it will be market forces that actually dictate the real-life transaction price. However, delay the decision to buy and taxation costs are increasing – and who knows if the value of the Pound will go up or down.

Currently PCP style finance monthly lease plans are popular with retail buyers of new cars. According to Peugeot's website the 3008 1.2-litre petrol Active range starter version using their Passport scheme costs £273 a month for 36 months. The 1.6 diesel with Allure spec is £326 a month, but offers vary all the time in this competitive market sector.

VERDICT

Impressive!

For: Vastly improved kerb appeal exterior styling, chic interior, good specification, refined engine and transmission, very comfortable ride, roomier than before, low running costs.

Against: Very little except, limited rear/rear quarter visibility, auto gearbox sluggish to change up a gear at times, watch the cost of adding those personalisation options.

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

All-new Peugeot 3008 Allure SUV, 1.6 BlueHDi 120 auto with the

Grip Control option.

Price: £26,845 + £470.

Engine/transmission: 1.6 litre, four cylinder, BlueHDi turbodiesel with Stop&Start, six speed electronic automatic, 120 hp, 300 Nm (221lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm. Performance:

0-62 mph: 11.6 seconds.

Top speed: 115.mph.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 64.2 mpg (51.7 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 108 g/km, VED road tax £0/£20, BIK company car tax 21%. Insurance Group: 16E.

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 58.97 cu.ft), braked trailer towing weight 1,300 kg or 2,866 lb) (1,500 kg or 3,307 lb for manual), five doors/five seats.