Peugeot Traveller Road Test

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Chris Adamson test drives a Peugeot EV bearing a name many will remember from the days of Morris

I am of an age where the name Traveller, in the automotive context, is one I automatically associate with those wood-clad wonders that were the stretched versions of the Morris Minor and Mini back when Britain was among the world's leading car producers.



So it is a bit of a throwback to find Peugeot using Traveller as the identifier for its van-like MPV but, at least, it is one vehicle that really does live up to the tag Multi-Purpose Vehicle.

Visually the ‘all-new’ Traveller hasn’t come very far from a light commercial with its blunt pug nose, boxy upright sides, flat roof and vertical rear end – this model is never going to win any beauty prizes.



But then again it is purpose-over-presence that is important here and, in this case, the version I have been trying is very much designed for a purpose – as an eight seat VIP shuttle bus (there are also five, six and seven seat alternatives based on the Standard 4.95 metre (16.24 ft) and Compact 4.6 metre (15.09 ft) long bases.

Large families might also consider it as an option but the high specification level might just make it a touch on the expensive side for budget-conscious parents.

Targeted very much at the hotel and business sector, the eight seat configuration (there is also a nine seat option on the 5.3 metre long version) is designed to offer passengers the

maximum of comfort in the most economical of layouts.

The individual leather seating throughout (which comes included in the basic price) is bolstered by automatic triple zone air conditioning with rear control vents.

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Traveller is structured with lots of glass all-round (privacy glass in the rear for those of a shy disposition), including a massive panoramic glass roof so no one should suffer from claustrophobia even with all eight seats in occupation.

The middle row of three individual seats slide backwards and forwards and fold down flat – the generous amount of travel is needed to allow access to the rear row of three seats which also slide and recline to offer either occupant or luggage space.

The seats have another trick up their sleeve – they can be detached to offer even more stowage capacity – up to a massive 4,900 litres (173.04 cu.ft) on the long version with the second and third row seats removed.

For the person with lots of luggage this latter function might be vital as, with all seats occupied, there isn't much load space left in the Standard version I was driving, although Peugeot promises 1,500 litres (52.97 cu.ft) can be found on the Long length examples.

Heaving bulky objects in and out won't be a chore thanks to the low sill and high top-hinge for the rear hatch.

Access for passengers is via two electrically-operated side doors, which will open and close easily and effortlessly if you let them do their own hands-free thing (on Allure trim versions). However, the process is a bit complex and slow, which can feel frustrating at times.

In an alternative configuration Peugeot offers the Traveller with four face-to-face seats for those who need to conduct their business on the move.

For the one person on board who isn't supposed to be enjoying the ride, the driver, the view ahead is big and broad thanks to the huge windscreen, while the upright, van-like dashboard isn't the most decorative but is clearly very functional with many of the supplementary functions operated from a large seven inch touch screen.



The are also plenty of drive aids such as a rear camera – an essential for reversing into any size space due to the near five metre (16.40 ft) long bulk of the Traveller – this is supplemented by optional front and rear parking sensors (£480) and connect satellite navigation (another £240) while a Driver Assist package (£250) throws in active cruise control, collision alert and active safety braking.

There is even a heads-up display (a feature I never really appreciated until it was fitted to my own vehicle – which just happens to be a Peugeot MPV) and, just to make the driver feel really at home, the front seats are heated and have a welcoming massaging function – a blessing during long journeys.

On the Road

With business operators very much in mind the motive power for the Traveller on test is an efficient if surprisingly small capacity two litre, four cylinder diesel engine (one of five efficient diesels on offer in the Traveller range).



Badged as a Blue HDi power unit, Peugeot claims it is installed with the most efficient pollution control technology available in the market, with a Selective Catalytic Reduction system upstream of the Diesel Particulate Filter – hence the makers can boast of a CO2 figure of 139 g/km, which is best in class.

The modest 110 bhp on tap is managed through a six-speed manual transmission which is conveniently operated from a dash-mounted column that falls easily to hand and which slides gently though the cogs.

Brisk rather than startling performance is the order of the day, and it will at least top 110 miles an hour where permitted, but don't expect too much away from the traffic lights or on overtaking.

Electro-hydraulic power assisted steering, plus an 11.3 metre (37.07 ft) turning circle will help with parking and city manoeuvring.

Traveller sits on a new platform which has reduced weight and bulk (Peugeot claiming up to 400 kg or 882 lb less than rivals) and uses a Pseudo MacPherson strut front suspension and an oblique wishbone rear suspension to support payloads of up to 1,400 kg (3,086 lb).

Variable stiffness springs and shock absorbers provide a nice balance between comfort of the occupants and a confident handling ability, even with unoccupied.

There is no getting away from the fact that it rides like a van on its 17 inch alloy wheels, with some body roll, but this is not excessive, and the light steering takes away the sensation of the bulk of the Traveller.

Verdict

The Peugeot Traveller isn't there to attract admiring glances or to reward the driver with scintillating performance – it is there to do a job of work and from this view it fits the brief perfectly.

Busy business executives or holidaymakers can arrive at their destination in a degree of comfort not normally available in anything less than a coach without feeling that that are being confined to a mini-bus.

This is definitely a new-age Traveller.



Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Vehicle: Peugeot Traveller Allure STD Blue HDi 150

Engine: 1997 cc diesel

Transmission: Six speed manual

Power: 110 bhp @ 4,000 rpm

Torque: 370 Nm (273 lb.ft) @ 2,000 rpm

Performance:

0-62 mph: 11 seconds

Top Speed: 106 mph

Fuel Consumption (Official Figures):

Urban: 47.9 mpg

Extra-Urban: 57.6 mpg

Combined: 53.3 mpg

CO2 Emissions: 139 g/km

Price (On the Road): £36,985