Toyota C-HR 1.2 Dynamic Auto – Road Test

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Robin Roberts (Miles Better News Agency) assesses Toyota's C-HR 1.2T Dynamic auto...

Few test cars turn heads like the Toyota C-HR. Its dramatic styling hints at something special and it is, for most parts.

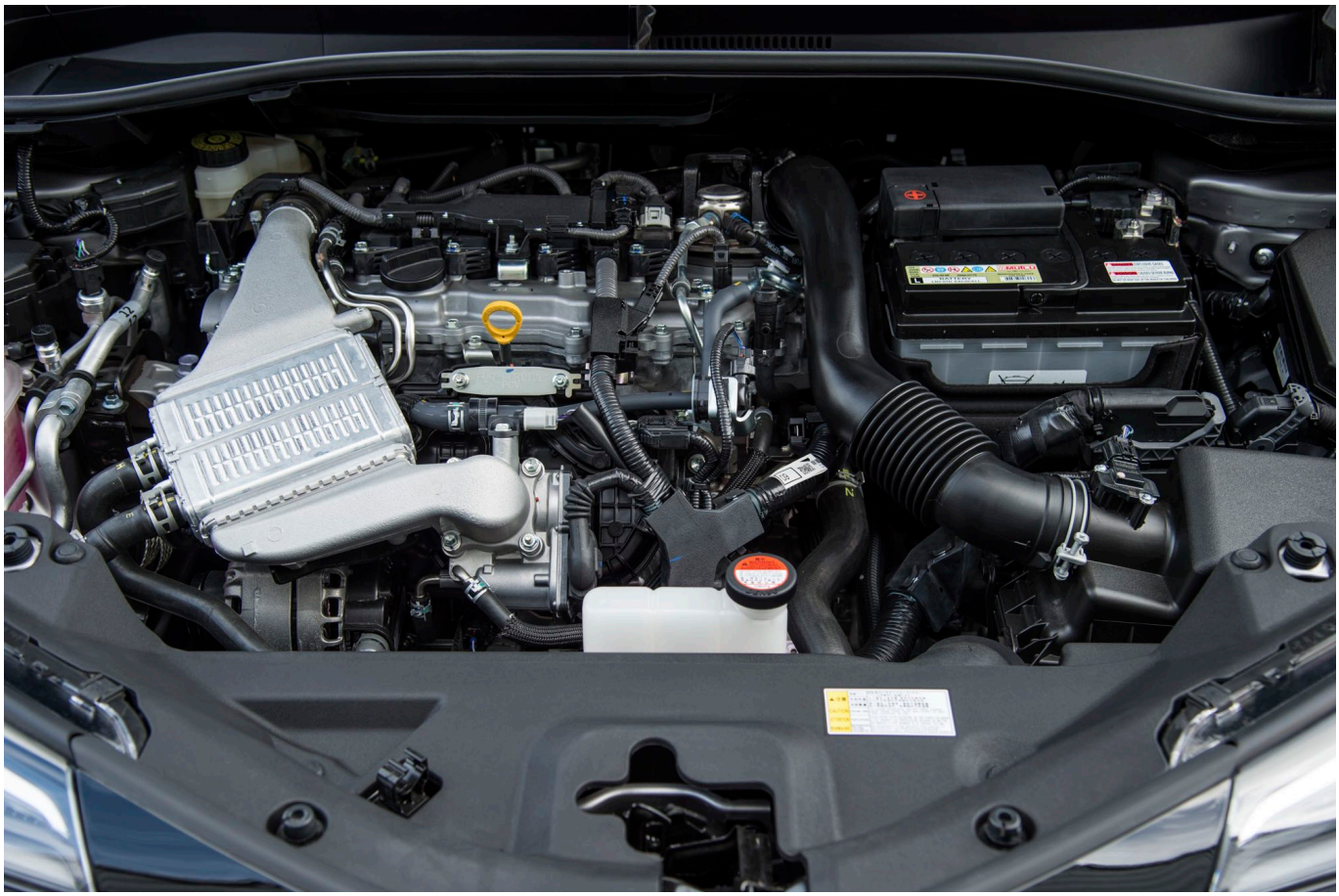
The latest Toyota offering in the compact SUV sector – where it was solely represented with the RAV4 – could not be more different to its stablemate.

There is a good 11 model line-up in the C-HR (Coupé High Rider) range utilising three trim levels, front or all wheel drive and 1.2 petrol or 1.8 petrol and electric motors. That makes it a very modern motor car for the family which wants to look different but desires familiarity of powertrain and low running costs.

Toyota expects to sell over 100,000 C-HR sales in Europe over 12 months but just 25% will be the 1.2 versions. For the UK market Toyota GB is looking at 16,000 C-HRs in a full year, making it their third best selling range behind the Yaris and Aygo models.

We previously tested the 120 hp 1.8 hybrid C-HR which was slower but more economical thanks to its advanced powertrain, so we opted for the companion 1.2 turbo-petrol for this test, although they both used continuously variable transmission and had front wheel drive only.

The 1.2 litre petrol engine is typical of today's units and has been optimised for performance with parsimonious petrol consumption, and we returned a regular figure over 40 mpg without any particular effort.



It pulled well for such a small engine in a car weighing about 1.4 tonnes, but the combination of the continuously variable transmission and the limited capacity available meant it had to work hard if there were a couple of passengers, and this was reflected in the economy overall.

At higher revolutions under load it also became noisier but hardly any rougher than at modest engine speed, and it’s a good engine with naturally seamless gearchanges, which will endear it to many.

The steering did not have a sharp feel to its action but it was always smooth, needed little effort and displayed a good turning circle and no vibration at speed. I liked the progressive footbrake and the effective electric parking brake a well.

The secondary controls are familiar and well laid out for ease of use with stylish and clear instruments matched to a cutting edge infotainment display to utilise mobile phone apps and systems.

Access is good to the front, slightly more restricted into the back due to the roofline, but once seated the comfort is adequate for four so long as they are not too long legged in the back and are not put off by the small side windows which combine with that downward sweeping roofline to give little visibility.

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Heating and ventilation is good throughout and the oddments room is a bit challenging but reasonable, which is what might also be written of the bootspace, which seems a bit too small in this family runabout.

For a family car it’s well equipped to keep occupants safe and reduce likely accidents from parking incidents or nose to tail touches in queues.

You have quite good vision to front and sides, big wipers and very good headlights but you

do need to be careful reversing as the high tail and wide C-pillars can hide pedestrians and obstacles, and you cannot rely on any technology to be entirely fool-proof.

On the open road it performs well, responding to accelerator, brakes and steering with precision and power so you're never left wondering if something will work.

Ride comfort is good even over bad bumps which you can clearly hear being disposed of.

VERDICT

Perhaps the1.2 T automatic C-HR will not be the best seller in the series, but it's a good performer on the road and possibly what a lot of drivers want. The looks you don't have to pay more for.

For: Striking looks outside and in, well-equipped, smooth, low running costs.

Against: Some rear vision issues, limited rear legroom and modest boot, engine noise under load.



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

Toyota C-HR 1.2T Dynamic auto.

Price: £28,835 as tested with metallic paint and premium pack.

Engine/transmission: 114 hp four cylinder 1.2 litre petrol engine, CVT automatic, front wheel drive.

Performance: 114 mph, 0–62mph 11.1 seconds, 41 mpg.

Emissions and taxation: CO2 135g/km, VED road tax £200 First Year rate then £140 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 26%.

Insurance Group: 16E.

Warranty: Five years/100,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.36 m (14.30 ft), W 1.80 m (5.91 ft), H 1.57 m (5.15 ft), boot space 377 litres (13.31 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.