

The Mazda3 a Pleasant Driving Experience

by Ian Lynas



Dare I say it, living in Northern Ireland it is quite rare to find myself behind the wheel of a petrol powered car, normally it is a diesel or more often a hybrid.

So it was refreshing in a sense to get behind the wheel of a Mazda3, my test example was in the hatchback style, one which is important in our market as people switch away from traditional saloons and move in the direction of hatchbacks and in ever increasing numbers to the SUV.

For 2017 the Mazda3 benefits from a number of enhancements in the styling department, new tech and a revised cabin.

Choice for the buyer is more than

adequate as there are four trim levels and to the all important pricing, £17,795 - £24,395. Really it is all down to just how much you want onboard.

Two body styles give further choice, Fastback or Hatchback, my test car was in the latter style and before I forget, the latest cars benefit from G-Vectoring Control and SKYACTIV-VEHICLE DYNAMICS technology.

Already noted that my test car featured petrol power, diesel fans do not worry, Mazda continues to offer choice with their award winning range of engines.

In this age of fashion and style we quite rightly demand that our cars should look just right and for 2017 the latest Mazda3 is marked out by a revised grille with a stronger three-dimensional look and a new front fog light bezel.

Across both body styles, revised door mirrors feature wraparound turn indicators, while hatchback versions feature a redesigned rear bumper.

Furthermore you will not be disappointed with colour choice, eight to select from and there is the striking Machine Grey Metallic. Other new shades include, Eternal Blue Mica and





on the SE and SE-L Nav models Sonic Silver Metallic can be ordered.

Trim level for my test car was SE-L Nav and it was finished off with a set of tasty alloys. I have always said a nice set of wheels is the crowning glory for any car. Down the years I have always enjoyed the interior layout of the Mazda product. Always with the driver in mind and well executed.

Just like the exterior there are a number of updates and with the adoption of an electronic parking brake this permits space for a more practical centre

console. The steering wheel design is pleasing and as a first for Mazda, if combined with leather seats, hey presto they are heated; what a joy on a chilly morning or evening comes to that.

Enough perhaps of the fancy frills, how did I find time behind the wheel with the Mazda3?

In keeping with colours and trim levels etc; you get a reasonable engine choice. To keep diesel followers happy, a 105PS 1.5-litre or 150PS 2.2-litre SKYACTIV-D while the petrol range includes a 120PS and a 165PS of the two litre SKYACTIV-G.

With a very smooth manual transmission, power from the two litre petrol was adequate for most tastes, perhaps not as lively as I expected. However all the other plus points of the Mazda3 made up for my disappointment in performance.

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