

## The New KIA Soul 1.6 GDi Start

THE KIA Soul is quirky with very individual styling and now there is much improved second generation model.

The new version of the compact crossover which started the design-led revolution that has transformed perceptions of the company in the UK is fast gaining in popularity.



Offering dramatic SUV crossover styling, improved space in a revitalised and higher-quality cabin, enhanced safety and sharper driving dynamics thanks to a new chassis based on that of the Kia cee'd which is one of the most popular models from the South Korean car company.

Power choice, two efficient engines and a number of trim levels and all versions are front-wheel-drive in the five door style.

The engines are 1.6-litre capacity, a direct-injection petrol and a turbo diesel, both tuned for effortless driving

flexibility.

The diesel has CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as low as 132g/km and fuel economy as high as 56.5mpg. Later this year there will be a fully-electric version of the car, called Soul EV, the company's first global commercial EV with zero tailpipe emissions.

My recent test opportunity came behind the wheel of a petrol version and while the performance could not be described as sporty I feel that it is adequate for a lot of buyers.

Driving the 1.6 GDi Start, the entry level model to the range will enable economy motoring. The combined figure quoted by KIA is 41.8mpg, I managed to achieve 40.4mpg from the petrol engine which delivers 130bhp, a top speed of 115mph and rest to 62mph in 10.6 seconds.

Earlier I did state that this new model is very trendy, but apart from that it is also highly practical. The tailgate opening is 62mm wider and provides access to a four per cent larger boot, 354 litres with the rear seats upright, With the rears seats folded the luggage capacity is 994 litres to the cargo cover and a maximum of 1,367 litres up to the roof level.

The second generation model has hit the market at the right time to take advantage of the boom in the compact



crossover market. Annual sales of this type of car in Western Europe are forecast to rise from around 380,000 in 2013 to more than 600,000 by 2015. Just over a quarter of buyers are British. So we do like our cars to be different from the norm.

Kia research has shown while buyers desire the appearance, semi-elevated driving position and perceived safety advantages of a 4x4, they do not want the higher fuel consumption and taxation that four-wheel drive entails, so the new Soul will fill the bill for many.

All models throughout the range feature significant upgrades in equipment and technology compared with the previous model.

The new Soul is certainly fun to drive with a very practical element; if you would like to drive something different, this new KIA may just be the answer.

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