

Ford B-Max 1.0 litre

By Jim Mc Cauley

Wide open space can be appreciated by a young family, but now Ford has brought the opportunity to them before moving off in the family car. Built around the floorpan and running gear of the Fiesta, the company's latest people carrier provides 1.5 metres of side access, making loading and unloading baby seats and accessories easier than ever imagined. The wide side access is courtesy of a hinged front door and sliding

rear door, with no fixed 'B' post between them. Instead, this essential structural element is integrated into the front door providing unchallenged access.



While the range is available in a choice of petrol and diesel power units, the test vehicle featured Ford's 'Engine of the Year', a 1.0 litre turbocharged petrol engine that produces 100PS and takes the car to a potential top speed of 109 mph. But more importantly its sprightly 0-62 mph time is an astonishing 13.2 seconds, bearing in mind its small

capacity and heavy bodyshell compared to that of the standard Fiesta. CO2 emissions is 119 gms/km putting the vehicle in Band C for annual car tax of £30, while its official combined fuel consumption is given as 55.4 mpg. However, in real life use with a bias towards open road driving, the best I could record was an average of 37.3 mpg, a disappointing 57% achievement on the official figure. And while the practice may be some distance from the theory, it should not distract from the ability of the 1.0 litre powerplant and its ever-ready willingness to respond to the least dab of the throttle. Despite the higher bodywork, cornering stance is excellent with little roll and authoritative positioning through bends. Overall construction is sound with little noise intrusion from the engine or road surfaces while the dash layout, built around a mobile phone-type keypad is attractive and easy to use, providing radio and phone selection as well as operation of auxiliary inputs.

Equipment-wise, the Zetec trim comes with heated windscreen, all-round electric windows with one-touch operation, ambient cabin lighting, and front, side and curtain airbags as well as Electronic Stability Program with electronic Brake-force Distribution.



Aside from the vehicle, Ford is also using its launch to introduce the availability of 'MyKey'. The Ford-exclusive MyKey enables owners to programme a key – usually for younger drivers – that restricts the top speed of the car, reduces the maximum volume of the audio system, and even disables the audio system altogether if driver and passengers are not using safety belts. It can also prevent the driver from deactivating safety technologies such as Electronic Stability Control and Active City Stop, which can help mitigate or prevent low-speed collisions.

MyKey works by recognising different keys for the same car and then adjusting the vehicle settings according to the owner's requirements. It also enables owners to programme chimes to sound at set points between 40-80mph, prevents seatbelt reminders from being disabled and delivers an earlier low-fuel warning.

The B-Max with its 1.0 litre EcoBoost engine is priced at £16,195 and among the available extras are 'City Pack' comprising of rear parking sensors and electrically

folding door mirrors at £200 and privacy glass at the same price. Like all Ford vehicles, the B-Max is covered by a 3-year / 60,000 mile warranty with 12-year anti-perforation cover.