

# MAZDA3 120PS

By Jim Mc Cauley



The Mazda3 is the company's challenger in the family hatchback sector claiming its customers in the industry battlefield that includes the Volkswagen Golf, Ford Focus and Vauxhall Astra among a host of other Japanese and Korean imports. The car's parentage is immediately recognisable with the distinctive grille extending up into the slim headlight units, and the distinctive light line that adds volume over the wheelarches and dips mid-way between to form a waist.

While many of the sector competitors are paring engine capacities to 1.0 or 1.2 litres

annexing a cylinder in the process, Mazda are staying with larger capacity four-cylinder engines, which they have developed under the 'SKYACTIV' programme. These high compression engines which feature modified airflow and injection pressures, provide increases in power as well as improvements in fuel efficiency.

Powering the test vehicle was the 120PS, 2.0 litre engine which returns a 0-62mph time of 8.9 seconds and has a potential maximum speed of 121mph. On road, and the engine is extremely refined driving through its 6-speed manual gearbox. Steering is light and responsive while suspension provides confident response over particularly undulating roads.

Instrumentation is presented in the established Mazda fashion with a digital speed read-out set within the analogue rev counter. A full colour head-up display duplicates the speed reading as well as traffic sign recognition. A central 7-inch colour screen caters for infotainment and satellite navigation requirements with convenient central control on the rotary knob set in the central console.



Accommodation-wise, the front seat occupants are well catered for with height adjustment on both seats while rear seat room is relatively tight on leg room accommodating the wide range of slide adjustment on the front seats – some 260mm. However the rear seat provides good shoulder room for three occupants.

In this ranger topping 'SportNav' specification supporting safety technologies include Dynamic



Stability Control, Traction Control System, and Hill Hold Assist, while 'Advanced Smart City Brake Support' will initially alert the driver if there is a danger of a collision, and failing a response will automatically apply the brakes.

The optional 'Safety Pack' fitted to the test vehicle adds Lane-Keep Assist, Blind Spot Monitoring and Driver Attention Alert. This supplements the standard equipment at this level of 18-inch alloys, front and rear reversing sensors with reversing camera, and LED headlights with adaptive lighting.

In terms of running costs, this 120PS 2.0 litre model in top 'SportNav' specification has an official combined fuel consumption of 55.4mpg and a CO2 emissions of 119gms/km. A switchable stop/start system contributes to fuel economy while the model is in Group 17E for insurance purposes.

The car tested is listed at £21,045 with the addition of the following extras: metallic paint from £550, light stone leather interior £1,200 and safety pack, £800. Like all Mazda models, the Mazda3 is covered by the company's comprehensive 3-year / 60,000 mile warranty.

(Driven November 2017)