

NISSAN NOTE 1.5dci

By Jim Mc Cauley

While it may look like a safe evolution of the outgoing model, the new Nissan Note is all-new and a key element in the company's €147.5 million investment in their Sunderland production facility.



Despite being only a few millimetres lower than its predecessor, the new corporate front end, lower windscreen angle and gently falling roof line give the car a more elegant and dynamic look and bring it closer in family relationship to the Qashqai and Juke.

Designed to contest the crowded 'B' segment of the market, the Note has to compete against the likes of the Ford Fiesta and B-Max which are equally matched by offerings from every other volume manufacturer.

The model range features two 1.2 litre petrol engines and a 1.5 turbodiesel which is the subject of the test. This 90PS unit majors on its emissions at 92 gms/km and fuel economy, given as 78.5 mpg (3.6 l/100km) on the official

combined cycle.

Performance-wise, this engine option returns a 0-62 mph time of 11.9 seconds with a potential top speed of 111 mph. On-road, and the vehicle delivers acceptable performance, driving through its standard 5-speed manual gearbox. Suspension was specifically tuned for UK roads and errs on the firm side, offering excellent cornering support with less roll than expected. But there is an intruding coarseness detectable through the steering as well as increased tyre noise on poorer surfaces.

For drivers wishing to make the most of their fuel consumption, there is the option of an 'Eco' button which helps to monitor driver input to obtain the best possible mpg. The instrument binnacle features an ambient flowing blue strip as well as a green LED indicator that confirms the level of efficiency and provides feedback at the end of a journey.

The cabin is cavernous with excellent rear room, obtained mainly by the forward moving of the engine and ancillaries to free up the additional space. On the test vehicle in Acenta Premium trim, the rear bench seat slides fore and aft to



balance boot volume with required leg room. This allows the boot volume to vary from a minimum of 325 litres to a generous 411 litres.

While the driving position offers a commanding view of the road, the steering column lacks reach adjustment although seat height adjustment offers some compromise. Back-lit instruments offer

clear information and for those crossing to Continental Europe or the Republic of Ireland, metric values are also easy to read.

There is a practicality to the cabin in terms of finish which may appeal to some but fall short of expectations for others depending on trim level and therefore purchase price. Cabin plastics are firm and lack the current trend of sort-touch finish and choice of highlighted inlays, while grab handles are fixed solid grips as opposed to retracting units.

However, on the plus side are the wide opening rear doors, clearing a full 90 degrees for easy access and the option of a dual floor in the luggage bay as well as the sliding rear seat. Although luggage has to be lifted over a stepped

sill, the rear seats fold easily to an almost flat level to accommodate larger loads with excellent access through the wide opening tailgate.

But the main area of the market that Nissan has cornered with the new Note is the introduction of affordable technology to the sector. Nissan Safety Shield makes its European debut in the Note and consists of Blind Spot Warning, Lane Departure Warning and an advanced Moving Object Detection system. All three systems take data from a single wide view camera mounted on the back of the car. With all three Safety Shield technologies relying on the tailgate mounted camera, maintaining a clear view from this device is paramount and the system features a built in camera wash and blow dry system which uses a jet of compressed air to dry the lens. Another sector first technology appearing on the new Note is Around View Monitor. This multi-camera helicopter view parking aid provides a clear display of the area around the car and makes parking manoeuvres easier – further minimising the risk of accidental damage.

Overall, the new Nissan Note extends the appeal of the original model in a vehicle that has appropriately updated looks, but the interior finish may not appeal to those paying out for the top trim levels where a more luxurious cabin environment may be expected. However, the volume seller will be down the ranks and as such the package should deliver with its no-nonsense practicality and available technologies at affordable costs.



The Nissan Note 1.5dci in Acenta Premium trim is listed at £16,150 while metallic paint on the test vehicle added £500 and the Safety Pack £400.