

# RENAULT KADJAR 1.5 dCi

By Jim Mc Cauley



Nothing demonstrates the qualities of a test drive like challenging roads or horrendous weather conditions. In the case of my long term association with the Renault Kadjar it was the latter – 500 miles over three days in some of the most appalling weather conditions I have ever encountered. The circuit was from the North-West through Belfast and south through Dublin to Co Carlow, returning via Mullingar and Sligo. The drive offered an excellent mix of road types but the weather offered nothing but heavy rain and high winds – so much so that on one prolonged occasion motorway speeds were down to less than 30 mph.

It is in circumstances like these that a vehicle sinks or swims and for the Kadjar there was no shortage of water in which to make the decision. Test choice was the 1.5 litre diesel version of Renault's new SUV, the latest model in their most innovative and exciting model range yet. This features the new Clio, the rear engine Twingo built in conjunction with Mercedes-Benz and the innovative and beautifully driving Captur, all with youth appeal in their exterior design and interior finishes. The Kadjar on the other hand has a more mature appeal, as an imposing compact SUV with curvaceous bodywork adding an elegance that few larger vehicle can achieve.

This latest Euro 6 engine from Renault is available in two outputs with the test vehicle powered by the lower output 110 bhp unit. This takes the Kadjar from rest to 62 mph in 11.9 seconds with the potential to move comfortably into three figures with a given top speed of 113 mph. As diesel engines go, it is one of the best available seeing service in the Clio and Captur ranges as well.



Renault describe the Kadjar as a 'Crossover', a phrase coined to cover the changing nature of the family car from the once popular 5-door hatchback to the greater versatility of a larger vehicle. It is a sector that has grown in popularity over the past seven years and while the vehicle with which the Kadjar shares a substantial proportion of its engineering- the Nissan Qashqai – is the market's top seller, it may soon have to give way to the greater appeal of the Renault.



On road, and the Kadjar immediately impresses with its refinement and handling. Engine and road noise are so well suppressed that there is no tiring distraction and it is only the occasional tyre noise on very rough surfaces that reminds you just how quiet the vehicle is, bearing in mind that it is a diesel power unit up front.

Larger vehicles tend to ride softly for the benefit of passenger comfort but can have irritating body roll on tight corners, but not so the Kadjar which offers the magical balance of poise and comfort. Steering response is also more hatchback than larger vehicle, and its accuracy adds to the Kadjar's appeal.

While the models are available with 17-inch wheels, the 19 -inch wheels fitted to the test car fill the wheelarches better and add to its visual strength while the interior provides excellent room for both front and rear seat occupants as well as a generous 472 litre boot. Neatly sculptured interior detailing with soft-touch finishes and chrome border lines reinforce the quality image of the Kadjar as does the contrasting stitching on the upholstery. The test vehicle was finished in mid-range 'Dynamique Sat Nav' specification and this level carries a comprehensive range of safety features as well as a wide range of comfort and convenience items. These include automatic headlights with cornering function, electrically adjustable, heated and folding door mirrors, keyless entry and starting, front and rear parking sensors, automatic wipers, hill start assist, dual zone climate control, and 7-inch infotainment touch screen with satellite navigation supported by real time traffic and data services.

But the luxury and performance of the Kadjar are not at the expense of running costs. The official combined fuel consumption of the test vehicle on 19-inch wheels is 72.4 mpg while a CO2 emissions of 103 gms/km puts it in band B for annual car tax of £20. For business users the vehicle has a BIK rating of 18 per cent.

Overall, the Kadjar extends Renault's popularity as they expand their new model ranges with cars that offer increased appeal through their design and dynamics, while retaining value for money and extended ownership support.

The Kadjar dCi 110 in 'Dynamique Sat Nav' specification is listed at £22,395. Although it comes with a tyre pressure monitoring system and tyre inflation kit, an optional spare wheel adds £95 while a range of special paint finishes costs from £525. The model is in Group 14E for insurance purposes and benefits from Renault's 4+ warranty cover. This is comprehensive cover for 4 years / 100,000

miles with 4 years roadside assistance. This is supported by a 4 year finance package at 0% interest while for additional peace of mind a 4 year service package is also on offer.