

SUZUKI CELERIO

By Jim Mc Cauley



Suzuki has maintained its compact mini range with the introduction of the Celerio to replace the long serving Alto. Featuring the latest corporate wide grille front end, the car relieves its neat 3.6 metre length with pleasant contours folded into its otherwise square-cut but practical bodywork.

Test choice was in the higher SZ4 trim of the two options available which adds body coloured door mirrors and door handles, chrome grill accents, 14-inch alloys and front fog lights to its exterior distinguishing features. The car is also available with a choice of 1.0 litre petrol

engines, and the test car was the K10B version, its 3-cylinder 998cc engine producing 68 hp at 6,000 rpm. This engine also powers the automatic version, badged AGS which offers the same mpg and has the same emissions as the manual version. The other engine option is the K10C which maintains the same performance but lowers the CO2 emissions to 84 gms/km and stretches the official mpg to 78.4 mpg on the combined cycle.

Starting from cold, the engine displays its immediate enthusiasm and very soon the pace of the car surprises as you progress through the 5-speed gearbox with a not unpleasant growl accompanying the higher revs.

A long wheelbase of 2.4 metres provides a more settled ride than usually associated with small cars while confident road manners allow you to maintain excellent pace and gain confidence in its performance potential. This is supported by high quality brakes, and at night, superb forward lighting. Steering is nicely weighted for both open road and town use, while a turning circle of just 9.4 metres is ideal for tight city manoeuvring.

Inside, and the accommodation is immediately apparent with good all-round room for both



front and rear occupants with three rear seatbelts fitted to give the car a marked advantage over the many 4-seater models in this market niche. Instrumentation consists of a mix of clear analogue presentation for the main instruments and a small digital screen for fuel, clock and computer read-out.

Cabin storage is plentiful with large glove box, door pockets on all four doors and a range of oddment storage in the central console. A 254 litre boot adds to the appeal and this can be extended by the split folding rear seats.



Luxury items include electric mirrors and all-round electric windows as well as a DAB radio, CD player, USB connection and Bluetooth phone connectivity.

On the safety front, the Celerio features Electronic Stability Program with supporting electronic braking packages as well as six airbags and a pedal release mechanism which is designed to snap off to lessen the likelihood of foot injuries in a serious accident.

On the economy front, the new addition with the K10B engine has an official combined fuel consumption of 65.7 mpg with the test vehicle recording 56.1 over one week's high mileage

use. This is 85% of the given figure which is substantially above what is normally returned in real-world use compared to the official data.

In higher SZ4 trim, the new Celerio is priced at £8,999 with metallic paint adding £415. A CO2 emissions of 99 gms/km puts the model in Band A for zero annual car tax, and for business users, the model has a Benefit in Kind rating of 13%. The automatic version maintains the same manual gearbox, but has an automated change system fitted, and is one of the best available with minimal hesitation between gearchanges. The advantage of such a system is that it can maintain the fuel and emissions levels of the manual version and is also less expensive than a dedicated fully automatic transmission. In addition to its automatic operation, the driver can opt for manual use by tipping the gear select lever backwards or forwards to shift up and down the 'box. It also features a low speed 'creep' facility (5 mph) which is useful in slow moving town traffic with no need to depress the accelerator pedal. This automated AGS system brings the price of the model in SZ4 trim to £10,214. and all models are covered by the company's comprehensive 3-year / 60,000 mile warranty.