

"Apart from track days where do you get as much fun?" That's kind of what my brain kept repeating each time I got behind the wheel of this fun supermini.



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PEUGEOT 208 FELINE 1.6 THP 3DR

Everything about the new Peugeot 208 is so exciting - right from the tiny, sporty steering wheel to the grip the car has around corners. I really feel Peugeot is back on track with its contribution to the hot-hatch market. Way back in the 205 GTI days the French car maker had that particular market sewn up - and the 205 was, and still is, an icon in the motoring world.

The 208 will become a legend too; no doubt about it. It has the looks, feel and performance of a true supermini as well as all the safety gadgetry you need for modern day motoring.

My test car looked superb cloaked in a Spirit Grey paintjob combined with a black and grey leather effect interior trim. Its 17 inch alloys looked fat against its diminutive but muscular body and its rear spoiler and double chrome tailpipes looked 'the dog's'.

On starting the engine, the 1598 cc engine sounds promising, and once you engage first gear and take off, you know this car is not your usual little motor. For a start, the gearshifts feel precise and sporty and the car is eager - it's like a dog straining at its leash until it can find an open stretch. Then, when you do find a suitable uncluttered bit of road, you can set the 208 free. That's when it sits back on its haunches for a moment before launching into a blistering attack on the asphalt. The 156 bhp is certainly apparent and the 0-62 mph comes in 8.1 seconds, climbing where legal, (German autobahns calling?) to 134 mph.

Available in both three and five door body style variants, the 208 is certainly the embodiment of an exciting new direction for Peugeot. No surprise then that there has been an incredible and positive response to the new 208, illustrated by over 7,500 orders so far. It really has been a tremendous start for the car, as it was also named 'Best Supermini' at the Auto Express Awards during the first week of launch.

The 208 also obtained five stars from Euro NCAP, certifying its safety credentials, and was the first car in its segment to achieve this following the introduction of more demanding review criteria.

So, if you still want hatchback practicality but you are also after a uniquely intuitive and pleasurable driving experience, stop off at your local Peugeot dealer and take a test drive. You won't be disappointed.

FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 134 mph
- 0-62 mph: 8.1 secs
- Combined mpg: 48.7
- Engine: 1598cc 4 cylinder 16 valve petrol
- Max. power (bhp): 156 at 6000 rpm
- Max. torque (lb/ft): 192 at 1750-4000 rpm
- CO₂: 135 g/km
- Price: £16,895 on the road

PROS 'N' CONS

- Rapid ✓
- Good looking ✓
- Fun ✓
- Safe ✓
- The UK has a 70 mph limit X