

Peugeot 3008 2.0 HDi HYbrid4 104g

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I HAVE NEVER been one to sip lentil soup and I've never had the desire to own a 'green' hybrid car either.

But, I have to take my hat off to Peugeot for producing the 3008 HYbrid4. You see, it reminds me more of a hearty steak and kidney pudding than a bowl of lentil soup - and it drives on the exciting side of average, unlike some other pure electric or hybrid vehicles on the market.

There's a reason for this - it's the world's first diesel full hybrid vehicle and under its skin a little wedding ceremony has taken place.

Functioning in harmony with one another is a macho 2.0 litre 163 bhp HDi diesel engine and a rather sweet 37 bhp electric motor. They're good together because unlike previous hybrid vehicles, which have chosen to use a less fuel efficient petrol engine, the Peugeot, on test here, provides a combined drive cycle fuel consumption of 70.5 mpg and CO2 emissions of 104 g/km.

Behind the wheel, the HYbrid4 benefits from the collective power of the HDi diesel lump and electric motor during acceleration and when an immediate surge of power is required. To manage all the available performance, a control selector mounted on the centre console enables you to choose between

four different operating modes: 'Auto' mode, where the entire system is automatically controlled; 'ZEV' mode (Zero Emission Vehicle), which provides access to an extensive all-electric mode; 'Four-wheel drive' mode (4WD), which instructs both power trains to operate together as far as possible (the rear wheels are driven by the electric motor and the front wheels by the HDi diesel engine); and 'Sport' mode which favours quicker gear changes at higher engine speeds.

Changeover from the HDi diesel engine to the electric motor occurs automatically, due to a stop and start system which places the HDi diesel engine in standby and restarts it if you depress the accelerator pedal or if there's a low battery charge level.

The two power sources also complement each other in certain driving conditions. There's a 'boost' effect during hard acceleration, or when overtaking another vehicle, for example.

The performance of the HYbrid4 is therefore directly comparable to that obtained with a single HDi diesel engine of a much higher capacity, with good levels of responsiveness. The oil-burner is mated to an electronically-controlled manual six-speed sequential gearbox. In automatic mode its electronic control helps provide significant savings in fuel consumption, compared to a traditional

automatic or manual gearbox. It also offers real driving satisfaction derived from the possibility of choosing the gear change mode at any time - manual or automatic - with either the gear lever or via controls behind the steering wheel.

When it comes to practicality, the split lower tailgate opens to reveal a boot with a convenient flat floor big enough to take a child's pushchair as well as the weekly shop. But there's more; if you fold the rear seats and the front passenger seat, the 3008 HYbrid4 offers a gigantic 1501 litres of space.

The car is perfect for the family and it's easy to drive. Gadgets such as a head-up display system, which projects essential driving information in front of you, ensures that you never need to take your eyes off the road ahead. Another item of equipment that helps to ensure maximum driving convenience is the parallel park assist.

This system assesses the size of a space during parking manoeuvres and determines the possibility of parking in it. Similarly, the electric handbrake coupled with a hill assist function, helps you during manoeuvres but also optimises the interior space within the vehicle.

The Peugeot 3008 HYbrid4 is indeed a car with exceptional technological

content offering unique versatility and safety, driving enjoyment and CO2 emissions of a very low level.

PROS 'N' CONS

- Economical ✓
- Different ✓
- Equipment ✓
- Load area ✓
- Divisive looks X

FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 118 mph
- 0-62 mph: 8.5 secs
- Combined mpg: 70.5
- Engine: 1997 cc 4 cylinder 16 valve turbo diesel + electric motor
- Max. power (bhp): 163 at 3750 rpm + (37 bhp elec motor)
- Max. torque (lb/ft): 221 at 2000 rpm (148 elec motor)
- Max. towing weight (braked) 500 kg
- CO2: 104 g/km
- Price: £28,495 on the road

