



New Chrysler 300C

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The new Chrysler 300C is outlandish in every respect. Quite simply, it's too big for the UK's minor roads - but does that make it a bad motor? Not at all. Certainly, it's expensive at nearly £40,000, and it's no match for German expresses like the Audi A6 and BMW 5 Series, however it does have a brash stateside charm.

Indeed, the model has a unique position in the executive sector. Unlike many rivals which offer a bewildering range of engine sizes and trim levels, the Chrysler comes in just two versions: Limited or Executive guise. Both are powered by a 3.0-litre V6 turbo diesel which provides a good compromise between effortless pull and fuel-saving efficiency. 0-62mph comes in 7.4 seconds and the top speed is 144mph. A whisker off 40mpg can also be achieved on an average run.

The car features a tried and tested, but somewhat outdated five-speed automatic transmission. As with a traditional auto, once 'Drive' has been selected the gearbox can be left to do its own thing. Nevertheless, if you want more involvement, you can change up or down using steering wheel mounted paddles.

The 300C is well equipped. I drove the top Executive model, which comes with a blind spot monitoring system, cruise control and a panoramic sunroof, as well as collision monitoring technology and colossal 20-inch alloy wheels. The cabin also has high grade materials throughout, from leather seats to real wood on the dashboard.

It's a very comfortable motor to sit in for long periods of time. The only downer is the ridiculous parking brake. It's operated

via a foot pedal which you have to depress to release and then press in again to set. Great idea - except it's positioned exactly where your left foot needs to rest. The result? A grazed ankle - if you forget the clunky contraption is there.

As mentioned, the 300C's continental USA roots show when travelling around our tiny island, but it is a pleasurable motorway commuting tool. On the straights it glides along and it's as quiet as a morgue. This is thanks to a windscreen especially designed for exceptional acoustic performance, as well as triple seals around the doors.

Furthermore, the Chrysler is one of the safest motors around, with a host of standard equipment that ensures you travel in maximum security. To guarantee this, the 300C was tested in a variety

of accidents. Different impact speeds, assorted obstacles and the diverse physical characteristics of passengers were also taken into account. The result is a car that combines the latest in active and passive protection devices with one of the strongest structures on the road.

PROS 'N' CONS

- Powerful ✓
- Comfortable ✓
- Well-appointed ✓
- Expensive X
- Size X
- Weight X

FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 144 mph
- 0-62 mph: 7.4 secs
- Combined mpg: 39.2
- Engine: 2987 cc V6 turbo diesel
- Max. power (bhp): 236 at 4000 rpm
- Max. torque (lb/ft): 399 at 1600-2800 rpm
- CO2: 191 g/km
- Price: £39,995 on the road

