

THE NEW BREED OF PEOPLE CARRIERS

It might not appear to be the most glamorous of market sectors, but people carriers have come on in leaps and bounds of late and, when you need more room, there's little on the market to compare with these beauties...



Ford Galaxy

First up has to be our recently tested Ford Galaxy which has been deliberately designed to offer the best of both worlds; it can be an upmarket family holdall or a spacious and refined mode of transport for business duties. Indeed, it has always been a vehicle designed around the needs of seven.

Launched to the media in June, it enriches comfort for rear seat passengers with a dedicated climate system and optimised space supported by thin seat technology and seat contouring. Interior noise levels are further reduced with an enhanced body structure and acoustic glass.

The all-new Ford Galaxy increases flexibility with a segment-first feature that



raises third-row seats at the push of a button. It also supports you in town and on the motorway with advanced technologies, including: Intelligent Speed Limiter, Pre-Collision Assist with Pedestrian Detection, and Front Split

View Camera.

Sophisticated engine tech, including Ford's box fresh 210PS bi-turbo 2.0-litre TDCi diesel, reduces CO2 emissions up to 24 per cent. Ford Intelligent All-Wheel Drive (iAWD) is also offered for first time

BMW 2 Series Gran Tourer



on the 2015 Galaxy, delivering enhanced traction and road-holding with a seamless transition between front-wheel drive and all-wheel drive performance.

Another executive people carrier is the all-new BMW 2 Series Gran Tourer. As you would expect from a BMW, the car does what it is meant

to do brilliantly. You have rear seats for three-up and, behind these, you can erect two extra chairs.

The great thing about a BMW is that once all your business colleagues have left the car, you can actually have a little light fun behind the wheel of the 2 Series Gran Tourer. The 218i 1499cc petrol version, driven here, has great poise and its accurate steering means you can carve through corners fast. Indeed, the 218i's



engine works hard and, allied to a decent manual gearbox, pulls you along the straights smoothly, too.

This 'ultimate driving machine', or maybe it should be renamed the 'ultimate people carrying machine', is an economical motor, to boot. Official figures on our BMW test car said we would achieve 53.3 mpg on an average run. Well, even though we drove with a heavy right foot all week, we still

averaged high 40s. That is a great result for a petrol powered car filled with journalists and media executives.

Meanwhile, the Volvo XC90 has always been a special model for the Swedish auto maker. The original motor was launched in 2002 and offered a unique blend of attractive styling and

seven-seat versatility that saw it become an overnight sensation.

13 years on, the new XC90 is even sharper for business. Inside, there is a tablet-like touch screen control console, which forms the heart of the in-car control system. It is virtually button free and allows you to access Internet-based services. It also helps create an interior

Volvo XC90



that is contemporary, airy and neat.

Amongst the soft leather, wood and clean metal finishes, the genuine seven-seater features chairs that free up interior space, both in the second and third seat rows. The unfussy practicality is perfectly in tune with what you might expect from the Scandinavians.

Behind the wheel, the XC90 boasts all the virtues that made the initial model one of Volvo's most profitable cars ever. The D5 top of the tree 'Inscription' twin turbo diesel we drove, combines brilliant handling and comfort with superior get-you-there ability and flexibility. The XC90



D5 is quiet too – with only the slightest wind-noise noticeable around the wing mirrors. And since the XC90 carries the Volvo badge, world-class safety is standard.

Indeed, the all-new XC90 offers the most comprehensive and technologically sophisticated standard safety package

available in the automotive industry. It is the first car in the world with tech that features automatic braking if you turn in front of an oncoming vehicle. This is a common scenario at busy city crossings as well as on A roads, where speed limits are higher.

The XC90 does it all really; it looks good for business and it is just the thing for anyone needing a safe, grippy, refined form of select transport for all seasons.

Whichever of these cars you drive or ride in, you can be sure there will be executive levels of room and panache galore.