



# TIM BARNES-CLAY

## Motoring

# TIM TESTS IT

### Pros 'n' Cons

- Good Looks ✓
- Great Cabin ✓
- Power ✓
- Diesel Din ✗
- Rear Seats ✗

### Fast Facts

- Max speed:**  
153mph
- 0-62mph:**  
6.7 secs
- Combined mpg:**  
67.3
- Engine layout:**  
2143cc  
4-cylinder twin  
turbo diesel
- Max. power (PS):**  
204
- CO2:** 112g/km
- Price:** £37,615



### New Mercedes C-Class Coupe C250d AMG Line

The Mercedes-Benz C-Class Coupe is a two-door version of the German manufacturer's admired C-Class saloon. Ushered in during 2016, the Merc's engines range from diesels to the potent AMG C63S. I got to drive the C250d AMG Line version, and my passengers soon discovered rear legroom isn't as liberal as in, say, the BMW 4-series – and headroom is also constricted for anyone who's tall.

That said, there are no worries in the front, where there's plenty of space for the driver and passenger. The seats are very supportive, too, making the journey, for those upfront, very comfortable.

The boot isn't as big as in the saloon, but it's OK for a coupe, and it has a wide aperture, so you can load up a couple of flight cases without issue.

The C-Class Coupe might not

have as much room as its saloon sibling, but it's far more fun to look at. It's not bad on the road, either, soaking up lumps and bumps well, and munching motorway miles effortlessly.

The car's nine-speed automatic gearbox changes cogs seamlessly and helps the car deliver a smooth drive. It's not all perfect, though the diesel, on test here, is a tad noisy under hard acceleration, but it soon calms when cruising.

The C250d variant has a 2.1-litre diesel unit under the bonnet, pushing out an impressive 204PS. That helps give the car a 0-62mph time of 6.7 seconds and a top speed of 153mph. The great thing is that all this clout doesn't ruin fuel economy – an average of 67.3mpg is possible from this C-Class Coupe.

The car isn't cheap at £37,615 in AMG-Line trim. But, as well as the comfort, efficiency, looks and power, this trim level gets you sportier than usual alloy wheels, sports suspension and electric seats. This is on top of the C-Class Coupe's standard leather seats, DAB radio, reversing camera and satnav. →

### No new car is cheap. Not really.

Monthly motoring payments will come second only to your mortgage or rent. Daft or sensible? Well, it depends. If you like cars, and they make you happy, why not treat yourself and lease or buy a nice one? And even if you don't care much for motors – you'll know that newer cars are safer to transport your family around in than older ones. Bearing all that in mind, *Sorted's* motoring editor, Tim Barnes-Clay, has been test driving a selection of the latest cars. You never know, one or two of them might float your boat.



**Pros 'n' Cons**

- Good Looks ✓
- Comfy ✓
- Equipment ✓
- Roomy ✓
- Loud Engine ✗

**Fast Facts**

(New Ford Kuga ST-Line 1.5T Eco 182PS AWD Auto – as tested)

**Max speed:**  
124mph

**0-62mph:**  
10.1 secs

**Combined mpg:**  
38.2

**Engine layout:**  
1498cc  
4-cylinder turbo petrol

**Max. power (PS):**  
182

**CO<sub>2</sub>:** 171g/km

**Price:** £30,180

**New Ford Kuga**

The fresh Ford Kuga is a lovely car to drive. I'm qualified to say that, after driving from Poland to Lithuania in one. And, to be fair, Eastern Europe's highways and byways are not as nice to cars as the UK's are – which is saying something!

The new Kuga made easy work of Poland's potholes, and Lithuania's lumpy lanes, due to its good suspension and well-cushioned seats.

The only real moan came from the Kuga's petrol unit. My Ford Kuga was equipped with the 1.5-litre Ecoboost powerplant, in four-wheel-drive 182PS semblance. It returns an average of 38.2mpg and emits 171g/km of CO<sub>2</sub>, and it's quite raucous when you put your right foot down – especially when overtaking. However, the drama is soon over, and the Kuga is content to relax when facing an open road

**“The new Kuga made easy work of Poland's potholes, and Lithuania's lumpy lanes, due to its good suspension and well-cushioned seats.”**

with cruise control turned on.

Although Ford is promoting the Kuga as 'new', it's more of a renovation, with the design taking its stimulus from the Ford Edge. The Kuga now has a more extreme bonnet. This gives it a ruggedly attractive look. The bonnet has also been shaped to offer enhanced pedestrian protection in the event of a car vs. human impact.

Inside, the Kuga's cabin has been decluttered. There aren't as many switches, and an electronic parking brake replaces the manual one. Ford's Sync 3 system is why there are less buttons. Its large touchscreen, with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto functionality, allows you to govern functions with your voice. For instance, by saying “I need to find WHSmith's”, the satnav will find the nearest one for you so you can buy *Sorted!*

All-wheel-drive Ford Kugas, such as the one I tested, are fitted with part-autonomous Perpendicular Parking technology. This assists you to park, without having your hands

on the wheel, in constricted spaces alongside other cars.

The updated Ford Kuga is an affordable car, especially if leased or purchased at the lower end of its range. It comes well-furnished and has enough room for a family of four. The car is comfy and makes mincemeat out of lengthy trips. The 24 hours I spent in Eastern Europe would be punishing for any car, but the newest Kuga managed well.

Everything in the car is uncomplicated to use, and there are lots of helpful storage compartments for things such as coins for toll booths and cupholders for drinks. The boot is also a decent, rectangular size, and you can load luggage or shopping in easily, thanks to the car's low load lip.

The up-to-date Ford Kuga is worth going for if you need a car that isn't too large, yet is big enough to deal with a family. In four-wheel-drive form it also turns into a useful instrument for the winter – something many motorists will find priceless.



## All-New Kia Optima Sportswagon Review

Kia's new Optima Sportswagon is a car to take notice of.

That's because Kia has never made a family estate car this big before. It takes the fight to hardcore rivals such as the Vauxhall Insignia estate and the Ford Mondeo estate. What's more, the Optima is better looking than both.

Practically speaking, the Kia Optima Sportswagon will accommodate five-up, and the car will seat three children's booster seats across the rear. Headroom is first class, due to the Sportswagon's elevated stance, and legroom is excellent. The Kia's load space amounts to a large 552 litres, and this balloons to 1,686 litres with the seats folded down.

Behind the wheel, things are comfy. The Optima's clutch is light and the gearshifts smooth, while the steering wheel is chunky and pleasing to hold. The Kia Optima Sportswagon is only offered with a 1.7-litre diesel unit in the UK. It's effective enough, though, with 0-60mph achievable in 9.8 seconds. Top speed is 124mph. The Kia has lots of low-down propulsion for overtaking, and the ride is silky. The steering is accurate, too, making the Optima Sportswagon a quick responder in corners.

Fuel economy is a key factor for motorists looking to lease or buy a family-sized car – and the

### Pros 'n' Cons

Appearance ✓

Performance ✓

Practicality ✓

Kit ✓

Languid Auto ✗

### Fast Facts

(Kia Optima Sportswagon 1.7 CRDi 3 manual – as tested)

**Max speed:**  
124mph

**0-60mph:** 9.8  
secs

**Combined mpg:**  
64.2

**Engine layout:**  
1685cc 4-  
cylinder 16 valve  
turbo diesel

**Max. power (PS):**  
141

**CO<sub>2</sub>:** 113g/km

**Price:** £24,495



Optima Sportswagon, as reviewed here in high specification '3' trim with the manual gearbox, doesn't dissatisfy. 64.2mpg is realisable, and the car emits 113g/km CO<sub>2</sub>. An automatic DCT transmission is also available on the Optima. This manages 61.4mpg and produces 120g/km of CO<sub>2</sub>. It's more languid, though – with 0-60mph taking 10.7 seconds. The maximum speed stays the same.

The Kia Optima Sportswagon is a looker; it's comfortable, pragmatic, cost-effective and a sharp performer, too. In '3' guise, you get lots of kit. It sits on 18in alloys and, indoors, there's a high spec audio system, satnav and an electrically adaptable driver's seat. It makes a nice change from the ubiquitous Vauxhall Insignia and Ford Mondeo estates, so it's certainly worth test driving if you need a car of this size. →

**“The Kia Optima Sportswagon is a looker; it's comfortable, pragmatic, cost-effective and a sharp performer, too.”**



## All-new Peugeot 3008 SUV

The all-new Peugeot 3008 SUV is a significant advance in the SUV C segment – an expanding market in Britain. Whether it's through its innovative i-Cockpit, its good looks, or its high-tech kit, the latest 3008 clearly aims to establish itself as an important player. UK deliveries start this January, but I got to drive the all-new 3008 SUV early at its launch in Italy.

The elevated ride height and confident grille design give the new 3008 a fashionable look, with the only design failing being the miniscule rear indicators. Peugeot could have made these bigger within the otherwise attractive tail-light clusters.

The 3008 now has an interior that is on a level pegging with premium cars. It comes furnished with tons of tech and first-class materials, and this adds to that quality car ambience. Peugeot's i-Cockpit display, which comprises a small steering wheel with a 12.3in screen behind it, looks superb.

Rear space is praiseworthy. You'll get two adults in the back contentedly. Indeed, legroom and headroom is good in the front and rear – even for six-footers. And the 520-litre boot, with the lowest loading height in its class, will

### Pros 'n' Cons

- Good Looking ✓
- Comfortable ✓
- Tech ✓
- Load Space ✓
- Rear Indicators ✗

### Fast Facts

(1.6-litre BlueHDI Auto)

Max speed:  
115mph

0-62mph:  
11.6 secs

Combined mpg:  
67.3

Engine layout:  
1560cc 4-cylinder turbo diesel

Max. power (PS):  
120

CO<sub>2</sub>: 108g/km

Price: £25,000 (approx)

swallow two large flight cases, as well as a couple of smaller holdalls easily. The load capacity can be increased to 1670 litres with the seats folded.

Pretty much everything can be operated via the Peugeot 3008's i-Cockpit. Screens and selector switches allow you to govern connectivity, satnav, driving modes and the car's safety systems.

I drove the 1.6-litre BlueHDI diesel engine with 120PS and automatic transmission. Behind the wheel things feel dynamic, and the weighting of the steering is spot on. The car grips bitumen like a cat's claws cling on to flesh, and mid-range pulling power is particularly good, so you can pick up the pace easily. The six-speed Efficient Automatic Transmission is a slick shifting unit, but stamp your foot on the gas and you'll become all too aware of the 3008 SUV's diesel propulsion. That said, the car still delivers a hushed ride for an oil-burner, and the car's suspension sopped up some nasty potholes on our Italian test route without complaining.

The new 3008 comes in four levels of trim: Active, Allure, GT Line and

GT. Factory fitted safety kit on the Active includes automatic emergency braking and rear parking sensors. Choose the Allure and you get a Safety Plus pack, which comes with lane-keep assist, blind spot detection and a reversing camera. The GT Line hasn't got any extra safety equipment – just sportier looks, while the GT gets active cruise control. Peugeot expects 50% of British buyers to go for the Allure. It has all the safety kit you need, and as with all 3008s, it has a top five-star Euro NCAP safety score.

A car can look great and have all the equipment in the world crammed into it – but it's no good if it isn't economical and it doesn't drive decently. There are no concerns to be had in this area with the 3008 SUV. The 1.6-litre BlueHDI 120 is forecast to be the most popular engine in Britain. An average 67.3mpg and 108g/km of CO<sub>2</sub> means low running costs for the auto, combined with effective performance. 0-62mph is achieved in 11.6 seconds and the Pug's maximum speed is 115mph.

The all-new Peugeot 3008 SUV's entry price is £21,795, but expect to fork out around £25,000 for the 1.6-litre BlueHDI automatic we drove.

**"It comes furnished with tons of tech and first-class materials, and this adds to that quality car ambience."**



**“Once known for being a low-budget marque, Kia has gone far beyond that and is contending with premium motors these days.”**

## New Kia Sorento

If you need a family car with multiple seats, then look no further than Kia's Sorento.

Once known for being a low-budget marque, Kia has gone far beyond that and is contending with premium motors these days. That's not hype – it's reality. Just get behind the wheel of the seven-seat Kia Sorento and the car speaks for itself.

The third-gen SUV is better kitted out, more sophisticated, and technologically superior than before. The car is longer, lower and broader, too, thanks to a reformed platform, while a longer wheelbase produces better space in all seven seats.

You will probably only be looking at this SUV if you have children, so, as a dad-of-three, I know safety will be at the front of your mind. Well, rest assured, because the Kia Sorento holds the top five-star Euro NCAP safety rating. Technologies to keep everyone as safe as possible include: Blind Spot Detection, Advanced Smart Cruise Control, Lane Departure Warning System, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Speed Limit Information and Around View Monitoring.

Kia's latest Sorento range is powered by a 2.2-litre turbodiesel engine, with either a six-speed

manual or automatic transmission. All models are equipped with all-wheel drive and trim levels are simply named KX-1, KX-2, KX-3 and KX-4. I drove the mid-range KX-2 with a slick-changing manual transmission.

The Kia Sorento has soft-to-the-touch surfaces all the way through the cabin; however, the 'elephant hide' appearance of the dashboard material needs to be played down. That said, the seats come in fetching, dark leather, creating a stylish appearance. The standard-fit instrument cluster contains flawless white-on-black graphics, which deliver all the necessary information at a glance.

Legroom has been boosted in all three rows of seats. The second-row slides forward, giving improved access to the two chairs in the back, which now offer enough room to take adults. Even better, the transmission tunnel has been totally removed, resulting in a flat floor for passengers' feet. The load area is lengthier, too, and packing the boot

is a cinch because of the Kia Sorento's low-slung sill.

On the road, the 200PS engine has stacks of pull, with excellent driveability on road and in the rough. The latest Kia Sorento is a hushed and hi-tech diesel powered machine with 0-62mph taking nine seconds with the manual gearbox. All versions of the Sorento have a respectable maximum speed of 124mph.

Significantly, for a family vehicle, the new Kia Sorento has better fuel consumption and emissions than the pre-2015 model. The manual example I drove can accomplish as much as 46.3mpg on average – and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are 161g/km.

To sum up, meticulously detailed body, cabin and chassis engineering work has resulted in a big SUV which is not only more appealing to drive, but also more pleasant to travel in. And with a seven-year or 100,000-mile warranty, the Kia Sorento will provide peace of mind, which is invaluable when it comes to family life on the road. ■



### Pros 'n' Cons

- Roomy ✓
- Hushed ✓
- Practical ✓
- 'Elephant skin' dash materials ✗

### Fast Facts

**Max speed:**  
124mph

**0-62mph:**  
9.0 secs

**Combined mpg:**  
46.3

**Engine:** 2199cc  
4-cylinder  
16-valve turbo  
diesel

**Max. power (PS):**  
200

**CO<sub>2</sub>:** 161g/km

**Price:** £32,000  
(KX-2)

### TIM BARNES-CLAY BIOGRAPHY

Tim is an experienced motoring writer with a background in radio and TV journalism. He puts his pedal to the metal each issue with his must-read car reviews. Visit [carwriteups.co.uk](http://carwriteups.co.uk).

 @carwriteups