

# KING OF THE ROAD



If you need a new car, or you're simply a petrolhead, the next few pages will sort you out. Read on to see what our motoring editor, Tim Barnes-Clay, has been driving since *Sorted's* last issue.

## FAST FACTS

**Peugeot 508 SW GT Line 1.5 BlueHDI 130 EAT8**

**Max. speed:**  
129mph  
**0-62mph:**  
10.1 secs  
**Combined mpg:**  
51.4mpg  
**Engine layout:**  
1.5-litre 4-cylinder diesel  
**Max. power (PS):**  
130  
**CO<sub>2</sub>:** 104g/km  
**£31,495**

## NEW PEUGEOT 508 SW

The new Peugeot 508 SW is a sexy estate car. Does it sound weird, me writing 'sexy' and 'estate car' in the same sentence? Well, maybe. But, as this type of motor goes, it's a looker.

Now, guys, we all know beauty is only skin deep, so is there any depth to the French company's fresh 508 SW? Well, yes, because you can get lots into the car's boot due to the broad tailgate and lengthy wheelbase.

Room in the rear seats is ample, with loads of leg and headroom for adults. It's comfy, too, with an archetypally French suppleness to the ride.

Better still, the swish ride doesn't impact handling. Its delicate balance means it's relaxed to drive. It's also hushed at motorway speeds, with the smooth eight-speed automatic gearbox proving an excellent companion on all roads.



When it comes to running costs, the 508 SW is efficient and affordable, with my test car releasing just 104g/km of CO<sub>2</sub> and managing around 50mpg on average.

With a build quality to match German premium brands and a modern cabin, this is a car you'll be proud to see parked outside your house.



**FAST FACTS**

**Mazda3**  
**SkyActiv-G 2.0**  
**122PS Sport Lux**

**Max. speed:**  
 122mph  
**0-62mph:**  
 10.4 secs  
**Combined mpg:**  
 44.8mpg  
**Engine layout:**  
 2.0-litre  
 4-cylinder petrol  
**Max. power (PS):**  
 122  
**CO<sub>2</sub>:** 119g/km  
**£22,795**

**“Rest assured, the all-new Mazda3 is a terrific car to drive.”**



**ALL-NEW MAZDA3**

The all-new Mazda3 is possibly the most striking family hatchback to arrive in Britain for years.

Just two powerplants are available. There's the SkyActiv-G petrol, driven by yours truly, and the SkyActiv-D diesel engine.

The petrol version is sophisticated, and the transmission and platform are decent. So, rest assured, the all-new Mazda3 is a terrific car to drive.

You need to move through the gears to keep the pace going, but the six-speed gearbox is a pleasure to use, with a meticulous, concise throw. Sometimes the steering feels like it could be more dynamic, but by family car standards, it's respectable.

I drove the mid-spec Mazda3 Sport Lux model, and although

you'll need to spend more on a GT Sport for leather-swathed seats, the materials in the cabin are of a good standard.

The sporty shape means room in the rear isn't vast, and at 351 litres, the boot isn't among the most

capacious in the class, either.

But, mostly, the all-new Mazda3 is a striking, finely made machine that's worth taking into consideration if you want a family car that stands out from other more vanilla hatchbacks.

**FAST FACTS**

**Alfa Romeo**  
**Stelvio 2.0 280**  
**Speciale**

**Max. speed:**  
 134mph  
**0-62mph:**  
 5.7 secs  
**Combined mpg:**  
 40.4  
**Engine layout:**  
 1995cc petrol  
 turbo  
**Max. power (PS):**  
 280  
**CO<sub>2</sub>:** 175g/km  
**£45,615**



**ALFA ROMEO STELVIO 2.0 280 SPECIALE**

Alfa's foray into the SUV market has produced the Stelvio. And what a gorgeous car it is.

It's now been given the Speciale treatment, meaning the Italian beauty is further leaving the conventional Euro-boxes behind.

Indeed, the Speciale is one of the poshest incarnations of Alfa Romeo's SUV. And with a 280ps turbo-petrol pump, it's also one of the fastest. The

powerful engine will propel you from 0-62mph in just 5.7 seconds, and it'll top out at 134mph.

Of course, with more performance comes a higher price; to get one, you'll have to part with £45,615.

But, apart from extra clout, what does your cash get you? Broadly, it's a decent helping of equipment, such as 19-inch alloys, leather seats,

a leather sports steering wheel and an infotainment system with navigation and DAB radio.

Alfas don't enjoy the reputation of their German adversaries for build quality, but the Stelvio drives as well as any of them. What's more, it's a practical car, with 525 litres of boot space, extending to 1,600 litres with the seats down. →



**“This Audi is a superior choice over some of its more hardcore challengers.”**



**FAST FACTS**

**Audi TTS Coupe Quattro S tronic**

Max. speed: 155mph  
 0-62mph: 4.5 secs  
 Combined mpg: 39.8  
 Engine layout: 1984cc petrol turbo  
 Max. power (PS): 306  
 CO2: 161g/km  
**£44,610**



**AUDI TTS**

Audi's TTS has always been a great road car. It has a suppleness about it, coupled with good looks and power. What's more, with a 0-62mph sprint of 4.5 seconds and a cabin that makes Porsche's 718 Cayman look dull, the revised TTS is a good buy at around £44,000. It's also efficient, with tailpipe emissions on the S tronic version, as tested here, of 161g/km.

As always, the Quattro four-wheel drive is a highpoint, and you can tweak it using different settings. In auto mode, optimal traction and composed driving dynamics are given precedence. In dynamic setting, torque is allocated to the rear axle more quickly, and in efficiency mode, the system can turn off the Quattro tech – if

conditions are appropriate. The Audi TTS isn't a motor that auto aficionados have always taken seriously. 'Fast, but a bit lifeless' was often the conclusion in the past. This enhanced TTS won't change the views of the cynics, but for many drivers, a lot of the time, this Audi is a superior choice over some of its more hardcore challengers.



**“£18,000 for a top-of-the-range Suzuki Jimny SZ5, as driven here, is inexpensive, considering it's an out-and-out 4x4.”**

**FAST FACTS**

**Suzuki Jimny SZ5**  
 Max. speed: 90mph  
 0-62mph: 13.0 secs  
 Combined mpg: 41.5  
 Engine layout: 1462cc petrol  
 Max. power (PS): 101  
 CO2: 154g/km  
**£17,999**

**SUZUKI JIMNY**

Suzuki's latest Jimny has a particular strength that contradicts its miniscule frame. In many ways, it's like a featherweight wrestler. The Suzuki's low-range gearing means you're not going to get wedged in the wild. It confronts tough terrain with enthusiasm, going where many other SUVs wouldn't have the

audacity to tread. The Jimny's off-the-beaten-track's abilities are due to good ground clearance and the superb traction provided by its four-wheel drive arrangement. On the road, the Jimny's 1.5-litre petrol power unit produces 101ps. This means the 40+mpg SUV will do 0-60mph in 13.0 seconds, and its

top speed is 90mph. The tall driving position gives you a great view of the road – and the car's small, square shape and big windows means visibility is top-notch. Overall, £18,000 for a top-of-the-range Suzuki Jimny SZ5, as driven here, is inexpensive, considering it's an out-and-out 4x4.

**FAST FACTS**

**Hyundai Tucson Premium SE 1.6 T-GDI 177PS 2WD Manual**

**Max. speed:** 126mph  
**0-62mph:** 9.2 secs  
**Combined mpg:** 37.7  
**Engine layout:** 1591cc petrol turbo  
**Max. power (PS):** 177  
**CO<sub>2</sub>:** 173g/km  
**£29,970**



**"It's an easy family car to spend a lot of time travelling in."**

**HYUNDAI TUCSON**

Opening the doors of the Tucson takes you into a cabin that doesn't quite tally with the superior-looking body. The leather seating is smart, but other interior materials are short of top quality, and the general design seems faintly dated.

Being a family-focused car, the Tucson is spacious enough for three children in their booster seats across

the rear bench. And the Hyundai has a notable boot-loading volume of 513 litres – enough for a buggy or two, and the weekly shopping.

The 1.6-litre petrol turbo, under review here, produces 177ps. Acceleration is good with this clout under the bonnet – the car achieves 0-62mph in 9.2 seconds. That's impressive for a reasonably heavy SUV.

Fuel efficiency doesn't exactly set the world ablaze, though. Anticipate in the vicinity of 37mpg for this version of the Tucson.

SUVs are some of the most comfortable vehicles on the road these days. The Tucson is no different, riding very well on our patchy British roads. Indeed, it's an easy family car to spend a lot of time travelling in.



**FAST FACTS**

**Vauxhall Combo Life XL 7-Seater 1.2 110**

**Max. speed:** 109mph  
**0-62mph:** 11.8 secs  
**Combined mpg:** 51.4  
**Engine layout:** 1199cc petrol turbo  
**Max. power (PS):** 110  
**CO<sub>2</sub>:** 125g/km  
**£22,235**



**VAUXHALL COMBO LIFE XL**

Vauxhall's Combo Life looks like a van, but it's actually based on the Grandland X SUV.

So, while it has boxy commercial vehicle looks, this is a car aimed at providing families with loads of room. And that room has been increased with the XL, giving this Vauxhall the ability to transport seven adults comfortably.

Sliding doors mean accessing the middle tier of seats is easy. And if



you fold them down, as well as the rear row, you get 2,693 litres of cargo space. That really is van-like. But even if you need to use all the seats, the boot is still massive at 912 litres.

The Combo Life XL is also pleasing to drive. It soaks up lumps and bumps, and you sit high, meaning you get a good view of the road. 62mph arrives in 11.8 seconds, and you can expect to get around 50mpg from the 1.2 110ps petrol version I tried. **S**



**TIM BARNES-CLAY**

Tim Barnes-Clay trained in broadcast journalism and has worked in radio and at ITV. He is now a freelance automotive writer, focusing on car reviews and features. He has media accreditation with motor manufacturers' press offices, and this enables him to test drive the latest cars. He also regularly attends new vehicle press launches around the world.

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