

Hyundai i30 1.6 CRDi

Road Test
by Ian Lamming

THE best view of most cars is from the front three quarters. So you get the grille, the lights and an emerging side view. It's a classic.

Next best is generally rear three quarters; that rump in the air, wedge profile that generally looks sporty and aggressive.

With Hyundai's new i30 it's the other way around.

And the bottoms-eye view is the best for a cheeky reason – it looks rather familiar.

To give you a clue the chief designer of this Korean-for-Europe hatchback is a certain Thomas Birkle, a defector from BMW.

I wasn't the only person to think that the back view of the i30 offers more than a passing resemblance to the 1 Series, albeit with bigger, bolder lights. And it really works.

The only slight disappointment is the front which looks a bit too anonymous and definitely needs a bigger, more macho grille. From the front, particularly in grey, you could be forgiven for passing i30 by – which would be a shame because it's an excellent car.

Overall the Hyundai impresses with its levels of refinement and quality, build and specification. Lines and panel fit are exemplary, the sheen from the thick lustrous paint impressive. It's neat, well proportioned and oozes a touch of class. Inside the initial impressions are hardened further, particularly in the top of the range Premium. A chunky leather steering wheel is just the right size and nicely stitched; the seats are swathed in good quality leather too and the dash is well laid out and attractive.

Cubbyholes open with the soft damped feel of a hi-fi and all the controls are tactile and well made. There is blue back lighting too and the cabin has an upmarket feel that goes way beyond the modest price tag.

On the road things are better still with the high levels of refinement translating right through engine, drive train and chassis. The 1.6 litre diesel is exceptionally quiet, smooth and powerful. It turns out an impressive 113bhp and 255Nm of torque. That offers the driver choices; plenty of shove in the back for overtaking, bags of cruising prowess and oodles of economy.

On the motorway it is a relaxed mile-eater extraordinaire; time and distance simply fly by and you are at journey's end before you know it. But the i30 also loves rural forays. The ride is firm and controlled, the steering sharp and accurate giving the Hyundai a genuinely sporty feel.

Rear seat passengers are accommodated in comfort and the boot is large with a useful storage net to stop loads sliding about and getting bashed.

Specification is high with decent CD hi-fi, reverse parking sensors, climate control, heated front seats, windscreen wiper de-icers, electric windows, remote control central locking, trip computer and 17ins alloys.

Hyundai's i30 is a very impressive car on virtually all fronts and with a rear like that it is going to be a car you are going to be glad to see the back of.



Vital Statistics

Model: Hyundai i30 1.6
CRDi Premium Auto

Engine: 1.6 litre diesel

Drive train: automatic

Power: 113.4bhp

Top speed: 114mph

0-62mph: 12.8secs

Insurance group: 6

Miles per gallon combined:
47.9

CO2 (g/km): 155

Price: from £16,795