

Electrifying

Ian Lamming feels a charge of excitement thanks to the latest innovation from Hyundai

THE world has a downer on diesels, something to do with particulates; and we thought the ice-melter was carbon dioxide.

Once upon a time that would have bothered me. The red stuff running through these Yorkshire veins would have winced at the prospect of a market the preserve of petrol powered motors. But not any more.

When I thought about it, the two things I loved about diesels were the lofty miles per gallon figures and the push in the back from the accompanying turbo. If you ever had the misfortune of driving a blower-free diesel you would know that even extreme economy would struggle to win you over its gutless ways.

But things have moved on. Petrol engines now come not only with turbos, but the really clever ones are shackled to torquey electric motors.

The Ioniq is the latest hybrid from Hyundai and it's a doozy – apologies, there's an American film on the TV; it means good, very good. In fact, good doesn't sufficiently describe it. Ioniq marks a new era in design for Hyundai.

They have always been good cars but the Ioniq is better still leaving you thinking that there must have been a radical shake-up

somewhere in the heart of this Korean manufacturer.

In the words of the young, very friendly and efficient operative at our local tip, "wow cool car". And it is. It looks fabulous. I love its grille, its proportions, its split glass tailgate. It's a fine and splendid looking car from any angle.

The interior is a brilliant piece of design too being attractive, functional and superbly specified. Touch screen, Bluetooth, satnav, all the gadgetry you could dream of. It even has heated and cooled leather seats – astounding.

The older you get the more tiresome driving can become but Ioniq makes it both easy and enjoyable. The petrol/electric engine combo offers spirited and refined performance but the economy is also a boon and the trip computer never fell below 53mpg, even with a heavy foot.

Ride is excellent, as is handling and the automatic gearbox and sharp steering offer the driver true dynamism and enjoyment.

With petrol and electric engines working in sublime harmony, the Ioniq really does feel like the future pushing the humble diesel into the annals of history, along with coal fires and gas lamps.

Fact File

- Hyundai Ioniq
- Engine: 1.6 petrol/ electric
- Power: 141PS
- 0-62mph: 11.1 secs
- Top speed: 115mph
- Combined MPG: 70.6
- Transmission: automatic
- CO2 g/km: 92

