

Capable Crusader

Ian Lamming drives the new Isuzu D-Max like a stake through the heart

CARS inspire and it's with some trepidation that I await the first images to form in my motoring warped mind.

Here it comes; the nightmare begins. The backdrop is dark and dank, a derelict warehouse. I'm wearing cool shades, body armour and carrying a razor sharp Samurai sword. There's blood on the streets, vampires to be expunged and Blade down the side of the truck.

This isn't the cult vampire movie starring Wesley Snipes, it's Isuzu's top of the range pick-up, the new D-Max Blade and it is a truck that will scare the monsters away – and the opposition.

Old D-Max was always a severed head above the rest but as time progressed the competitors were suddenly snapping at its heels, breathing down its neck. Time to sharpen the weapons.

Replacement D-Max is sharper, smoother, more powerful and easier to drive than ever before.

The motor is brand new, shrinking to 1.9 litres from 2.5 yet turning out 1PS more than the old one and 360Nm of bruising torque.

Another key benefit is that the new engine

meets Euro 6 standards without the need for the addition of irritating AdBlue.

Six speed auto, there is a manual of course for the purists, is smooth and responsive. It even knows when you are going downhill and drops a cog or two for extra engine braking – spooky.

As per previous D-Max models, Shift-On-The-Fly 4x4 is a key feature. The rotary dial allows the driver to select four-wheel drive on the move and is also equipped with low range gears.

That combo of decent engine and fine handling make the Blade a great way to slice through the daily commute. Better still is the fact I saw 35mpg on the trip a one point.

For some time now pick-ups have been more SUV than old utility vehicle. Blade takes that to the next degree.

Centre place on the dash is a touch screen the size of a plasma TV; it's huge and makes for the best rear view ever when reverse is engaged, just in case someone is creeping up on you from the shadows. It's also an infotainment set up and satnav.

Equipment list also boasts LED daytime

running and rear lights, Hill Start Assist, Variable Hill Descent Control, power windows and automatic air conditioning, smart alloy wheels, body coloured bumpers, cruise control, rear load liner and a leather steering wheel.

There's keyless entry and push button start, Apple CarPlay™ and Android Auto™, decent leather upholstery with heated front seats, rear parking sensors, tinted windows, remote locking lower tailgate, Blade puddle lamps, and a colour-coded Aeroklas canopy or sports bar with roller cover.

Finally, the D-Max comes with a five-year / 125,000-mile warranty, becoming the first pick-up in the UK to be offered with such a comprehensive peace-of-mind package.

Running costs are kept down by 12,000-mile or 24-month service intervals, five years' roadside rescue and recovery including European cover, a three-year paint warranty, and a six-year anti-corrosion warranty. Say all that after battling the bad guys.

It's an exhaustive list for a capable crusader that will strike fear into the hearts of the competition.

Welcome to their nightmare.



Fact File

- Model: Isuzu D-Max Blade
- Engine: 1.9 litre diesel
- Power: 164PS
- Top speed: 112mph
- Max payload: 1.1+ tones
- Max towing capacity: 3,500kg
- Miles per gallon: 36.2 (combined)
- Transmission: Six speed auto
- CO2 (g/km): 205