

A Real Head Turner

Ian Lamming has his head turned by the latest CX-5

WHO am I to say? It's merely my opinion. But when passers-by stop, stand, stare and point then confidence builds, perhaps I'm right?

Dad sees the Mazda first, does a double-take and nudges mum who, like any good partner, feigns interest with a simpering smirk. Then, when she notices the pale, silvery blue colour of the new Mazda, she does look and the warmth is genuine.

Junior is impressed too and why not? The new CX-5 is incredibly striking.

The success of the designer's tweaks are startling. It still looks like a CX-5 but with a bold new grille and relatively small but sleek headlights it is so much more attractive, in fact, it makes the out-going model a veritable plain Jane.

Rear lights have shrunk but the back of the car is beautifully shaped so they actually look better for being subtler. From the side, or front or rear three quarter angles the SUV is well proportioned and elegant, helped by over-sized alloys and the lustrous paint finish.

If you like the exterior, which, it has to be said, exudes quality, then the interior will not disappoint. Mazda has opted for the highest quality leather and trim materials, which extend over the dash, and all the controls and dials look and feel top notch.

The colour screen is smaller than many and functions are performed using an alloy knob on the centre console rather than by touch. It works fine, though the default setting which keeps the irritating head-up display on the windscreen every time you start up, is a minor flaw.

Bose hi-fi isn't, it is superb and offers the aural quality that the CX-5 offers in terms of feel, all complemented perfectly by super ride and a refined 2.2 diesel motor.

Performance is excellent thanks to the 175PS power plant yet economy is good too loitering in easy reach of 50mpg. It's just the ticket for all driving conditions being civilised around town, smooth and quiet on the motorway, but lusty cross country with deep reserves of mid-range grunt.

Tiny steering sits well in hand and sharp helm responses make for a confident, spirited and enjoyable drive. CX-5 is larger than you think, its sleek lines shrinking its overall magnitude, so it handles like a much sharper tool than an SUV of this size should.

In my opinion CX-5 is a great contender in the most fiercely contested automotive sector there currently is.

Just a thought, but not a bad one.

Fact File

- Engine: 2.2D 175PS 4WD Sport Nav
- Power: 175PS
- 0-62mph: 8.8 secs
- Top speed: 126mph
- Combined MPG: 54.3
- Transmission: Six-speed manual
- CO2 g/km: 142

