

Better by Miles

Ian Lamming flies around the country in the latest Suzuki Swift

FIVE hundred miles in two days; now that's a lot.

All points north, south, east and west covered, between the borders and Yorkshire, on mixed roads, from tedious motorways to twisty single carriageway.

Now you would think that would be enough to prompt and provoke aches and pains, knotted ligaments and cramped muscles, a DVT perhaps or surely a mild migraine.

But no, here I am, in one piece, relaxed and refreshed, pain free and ready for more; that's testament to the car I have been driving.

So what are you thinking? It must have been something big and plush, expensive and cossetting, big engine, limo ride, full of toys. Well? Yes and no.

Test car was a humble Suzuki Swift, the new one, just out, paint still wet. So it was small and modest, cheap and cossetting, tiny engine, cracking ride and surprisingly full of toys.

The miraculous engine sports just 998cc and, oddly, three cylinders (see what I did there?).

The lovely off-beat growl and turbo-charged willingness make the K10C DITC, as we nerds like to call it down the juice bar, astonishingly good. This little power-plant romps away from rest, flies up hills, whizzes past traffic and cruises at the motorway legal limit with consummate ease. All that and it is paired with a brilliant automatic gearbox and returns very close to the on-paper combined fuel figure of 56.5mpg – I managed 55.7 on the trip computer.

Larger than you would credit seats are fabulously comfortable and supportive and the ride is long travel, controlled and big-car-like.

Speaking of big car like, this affordable motor boasts the same features as many upmarket bourgeois mobiles; so there is lane assist, to

stop you drifting, ABS, ESP, individual and curtain airbags, cruise control, hill hold and high beam assist.

There is also touchscreen satnav and infotainment centre, Bluetooth, steering wheel mounted controls, decent alloys, rear privacy glass, trip computer and climate control. That is quite a list.

New Suzuki hatchback is recognisably Swift-like but freshened for the next generation with subtle changes to grille, lines and rump. Looks good.

I have a friend – I know, who would have thought it? – who travels long distances in her old Swift. The new one is so much better in every way, in fact I'm picking up my phone now to recommend it to her and she lives north and travels south, east and west, so it must be in with a shout and certainly deserves to be.

Fact File

- Suzuki Swift 1.0 Boosterjet SZ5
- Engine: 1.0 three cylinder
- Power: 111PS
- 0-62mph: 10.0secs
- Top speed: 118mph
- Combined MPG: 56.5
- Transmission: automatic
- CO2 g/km: 114

