

Second to

MotorMadness



Ian Lamming test drives the Suzuki Vitara SZ5

THE mark of a good car might not be as obvious as you think.

Some vehicles hide their light under a bushel of ordinariness but that doesn't make them any less impressive.

The acid test must surely be how the driver feels after working the model hard. So when considering the merits of Suzuki's new Vitara it is important to think as much about how one doesn't feel as well as how one does.

Consider this; 780 miles successfully completed in a week; some days driving south 88 miles to Doncaster before driving 140 miles north to Blyth and 66 miles back home to North Yorkshire. Add in a couple of journeys to the Lake District before posing these questions; have I had a migraine and do I need a chiropractor?

The fact that the answer to both is 'no' speaks volumes for the talents of this Japanese SUV. It is obviously a vehicle to be reckoned with.

Styling-wise the latest Vitara is smart enough and it does shimmer with an element of quality. It looks nicely made with tight panel gaps and lustrous paint, tidy alloys, appropriate bash-plates and modern LED running lights, so no complaints there.

It is practical too without being overly large. The boot is a decent size, height

and shape and interior space generous and well thought through.

Clocks and dashboard are nicely designed and placed; the touch screen indicating that this model is brand new and up to date.

The 1.6 litre petrol has a surprising amount of poke and refinement, hence its relaxing nature on the motorway. The low levels of noise, harshness and vibration also help no end, as does the excellent ride, which keeps the bumps at bay.

Add a pleasant gearbox, light clutch and throttle and tactile steering and there is little or nothing to find fault with.

More impressive still is the raft of modern safety devices including radar supported braking, which slams on the anchors if you haven't noticed that you should have done so.

The kids will also love the vehicle's connectivity, all that invisible Bluetooth wizardry and USB port plug-in practicality that allows no peace from Minecraft.

Lump together these various traits and it is easy to see just why the Vitara performs so well and is so easy to live with.

It may not leap loudest from the brochure as it is free of sale gimmicks and radical looks but as an authentic, thoroughly honest and reliable workhorse it remains second to none.

None

Fact File

- Suzuki Vitara SZ5
- Engine: 1.6 petrol
- Power: 120PS
- 0-62mph: 11.5 secs
- Top speed: 112mph
- Combined miles per gallon: 53.3
- Transmission: five-speed manual
- CO2 g/km: 123