

Fun and Funky

Ian Lamming drives the latest crossover from Toyota

WHEN two nine-year-old boys describe your test car as funky then the stylists have produced a great design. When the adults agree, then the job must surely be done.

That's the problem with the market at the moment; it's a great problem to have, but the choice is overwhelming.

SUVs have beaten the humble-by-comparison hatchback into submission and forecourts and showrooms are brimming with the good, the able and the better still.

Just how do you make one stand out from the other? Well, Toyota thinks you do so by making yours look like a glitzy auto-show concept vehicle. There is no guessing which badge sits on the C-HR, no need to wonder or stare. It is so obviously a Toyota and it comes with the most incredible angles, lines and design cues.

Just look at the shape of the rear light clusters and how the rear handles sit high in the doors.

Gawp at the bold wheel-arches and gape at the shapely nose and curved roofline. It really is stunning from any angle.

Inside is peerless too with groovy trim, brilliant dashboard and well conceived cabin. A large touch screen dominates the central area and there is a real feeling of pilot's cockpit about the C-HR.

The hybrid marries 1.8 petrol with electric motor joining forces cleverly to drive through the front wheels only via a CVT automatic gearbox. It is super smooth, ultra refined and very economical.

Electric Vehicle driving mode enables driver to flow sublimely in effortless and whisper-quiet comfort and when the demands of the road increase, the full hybrid powertrain reacts with smooth, linear power and quick responses. I suppose you could drive through deep floods with the petrol motor cut out so it doesn't suck in the mirk, though I'd be too scared to try.

Steering and ride are truly excellent and the C-HR is wonderfully relaxed on the varied commute, made all the better if you opt for the JBL premium audio system which offers best-in-class sound quality, thanks to a 576-watt, nine-speaker setup.

Safety remains at the forefront of the C-HR, which is equipped with advanced Toyota Safety Sense technologies as standard incorporating a range of active and preventative systems to keep driver and passengers well.

These include pre-collision system (with pedestrian detection), adaptive cruise control, lane departure alert with steering control, automatic high beam and road sign assist.

As the harshest of critics remark (the kids), C-HR really is a funky motor but it is one that transcends the age groups. It appeals to the young, yes, but the older generations, the ones brought up on sci-fi blockbusters, are proving to love it too – I know I do.



Fact File

- Toyota C-HR
- Engine: 1.8 petrol plus electric
- Power: 97+71BHP
- 0-62mph: 11secs
- Top speed: 105mph
- Combined: 72.4MPG
- Transmission: CVT
- CO2 g/km: 87
- Price: £29,995.00