



Making ordinary extraordinary

Fact File

Hyundai i30 3DR
Engine: 1.6 litre turbo diesel
Power: 110BHP
0-62mph: 11.5 secs
Top speed: 115mph
Combined miles per gallon: 74.3
Transmission: six speed manual
Insurance: 11
CO2 g/km: 100

Ian Lamming enjoys premium performance with an affordable price tag

SOMETIMES life just isn't fair – or is it? Hand over one key and collect another with little or no chance to cleanse your automotive palate; what are you supposed to do?

How can a cheap car compete with an expensive one, particularly as the car going back costs just £18,000 while the new one is closer to £40,000. Fair fight? You would think not, but the world is full of surprises.

I knew the Hyundai i30 was capable but didn't realise how excellent it was until it was replaced by another car twice the price that was half as good; really.

Where to start? Well the three door looks terrific will ultra-modern lines and a swish interior that is second to none. It looks the part and there's a sheen of quality that belies the affordable price.

Inside works and fits. It is extremely comfortable and the relationship between pedals, controls, gear stick and steering wheel is absolutely perfect. This means the driver always feels relaxed whether bowling along the A1 or romping through the Dales. Throttle, clutch and gearbox are a delight so passengers are going to think you are a great driver.

Ride is a perfect play off between comfort and control.

It eats the bumpy Dales roads and handling, grip and accuracy are peerless.

The 1.6 litre diesel is also amazingly refined; really smooth and powerful and has plenty of punch. Yet the emissions are a breath of fresh air, well virtually, and the economy is superb.

Round the streets of town and city, the diesel is happy to chug along and parking is eased by beepy parking sensors and decent all round visibility. The excellent gearbox again comes into its own as does the silky smooth throttle.

It is hard to believe that a mid-sized hatchback can be this good but the i30 excels in every way. It's just a lovely lovely drive.

Being a three door poses few problems either as the base cushion glides easily forward when you tilt the back and the gap is large and clutter free.

The i30 sits in an ordinary class of vehicles and therefore should be ordinary itself but it isn't. It is so much more and is completely enjoyable to drive. It embarrasses the more expensive car in every way, which does make you wonder why anyone needs to buy a car with a premium badge and a huge price tag to match.