

Prepare to be Astounded



Ian Lamming drives the new Kia Rio

Fact File

- Renault Captur
- Engine: 1.5 turbo diesel
- Power: 90BHP
- 0-62mph: 13.1 secs
- Top speed: 106mph
- Combined miles per gallon: 76.4
- Transmission: five speed manual
- Insurance: 12
- CO2 g/km: 95

**Motor
Madness**

PREPARE to be astounded – I know I was. One glance at the Kia Rio tells you little of what lurks beneath. It's a neat, well-proportioned hatchback that is wider at the bottom than it is at the top, like all good styling should be. This makes it look squat, purposeful, appealing.

Inside is equally impressive with a very well laid out dashboard that is beautifully made and has a quality feel way beyond expectations. All good so far but not astounding as yet.

Once under way the Rio pulls strongly and is very refined. It sprints off the mark and has bags of oomph for hill climbing and overtakes. It is a very easy car to live with thanks to low noise but high comfort levels. Good but not yet astounding.

It's as the Rio plies its trade, taking you from A to B in a fuss-free manner, that you suddenly wonder what is under the bonnet.

CRD indicates that it is a diesel but it is so very refined that you would be pushed to tell. Performance lends itself to a 1.6 litre, perhaps a 1.7 or even a 1.9 capacity. Roll of the drums please; this is the bit that will leave you astounded.

Rio CRD is in fact a diminutive 1.1.

Yes, you heard it right, a 1.1 litre divided among four diddy cylinders. Pistons that small are always going to be smooth and vibration-free, which explains the high degree of refinement.

They also explain why this little oil burner slurps modestly at the fuel.

Official combined economy figures suggest an incredible 85.6 miles per gallon.

Of course none of us live on test tracks, on windless days, with feathers for right feet but in real terms high 60s are achievable, in fact the Rio is so economical I stop trying, turn the trip-computer off MPG and just enjoy myself, which is unusual in these days of swap-your-first-born for a tank of fuel.

Everything else about the car is delightful too. The throttle, clutch and gearbox are light and easy to use making even the clunkiest of drivers look proficient.

The controls are perfectly placed, the seats and driving position spot on and the cabin and boot are roomy and accommodating. It really is a cracking car.

It is fun on country roads, sprightly in town and easy on the motorway. It looks great, is built to last and with that stunning little diesel engine really is astounding.