

A spectacular



Saloon

Ian Lamming drives the exquisitely styled Mazda 6

I DON'T know why I am surprised but I am, in fact I am taken aback.

Since Mazda invented the 6 it has been one of the best looking cars on the road and that is going back donkeys.

But the latest is stunning, beautiful, captivating. It is sleek and sexy in the same way concept cars are when the dustsheets are removed and the dry ice clears at foreign and glamorous motorshows.

But this spectacular saloon is here and for the now. It is in the drive, it plies the country roads of Yorkshire and the motorways of County Durham and while it looks resplendent from any angle it is in reach of most motorists' spending powers.

Mazda's designers really have got it right. The front is dominated by a bold grille and sleek lights. Haunches are flared and sporty, the alloys large and impressive and the stance mean and moody. Even the rear, so often neglected by designers, is picture perfect with contemporary form and function.

The interior is stupendous too. Designers have had a field day equipping Mazda6 to the maximum, injecting levels of

quality way above its pay grade and retaining the functionality demanded by the modern driver. It is spacious, comfortable and opulent in the extreme. It feels handcrafted, polished, honed and the amount of space in the cabin and the boot is remarkable.

Aesthetically and practicality the Mazda is off the chart but equal care has gone into dynamics – what a tremendous drive.

The 2.2 litre diesel is immense offering superb performance but 50+ economy. The automatic box is seamless, the steering positive. Ride is inspiring giving the driver confidence and comfort in equal measure. It is a big car yet its taut handling makes it feel smaller and sportier.

When you have finished with the 6 for the day and you walk towards your home, as it locks up and tucks itself in the for the night, you can't fail to pause at the door, look back and smile at what is an exquisitely styled saloon.

Fact File

Mazda6 2.2D
175PS Sport Nav
Auto Saloon
Engine: 2.2 turbo
diesel
Power: 175PS
0-62mph: 8.4 secs
Top speed: 134mph
Combined miles per
gallon: 58.9
Transmission: six-
speed auto
CO2 g/km: 127
Insurance: 23E