

Growing up



Gracefully

Ian Lamming test drives the Peugeot 108

Fact File

Peugeot 108
Engine: 1.0 litre
turbo petrol
Power: 69BHP
0-62mph: 14.3 secs
Top speed: 98mph
Combined miles per
gallon: 68.9
Transmission: five-
speed manual
CO2 g/km: 95

If not beautiful, babies tend to be cute, well most do anyway.

But as they get older our blessed offspring go through some pretty gangly phases. Their heads grow quicker than their bodies giving them the look of Scrappy Doo; their ears dominate in elephantine fashion; their feet sprout like a circus clown's. We love them but sometimes they aren't pretty.

Believe it or not it can be the same with small cars. They often look out of proportion with myxomatosis headlamps and ridiculously deep windows. They look all out of kilter; too tall, too narrow, too high. They don't look stable and neither do they feel it on the road.

How refreshing then to welcome the new Peugeot 108, which looks like a big car that's been shrunk in the drier.

The baby Pug doesn't suffer from the irregularities that plague its kind. The proportions are spot on from any angle.

It shares the characteristic Peugeot look that stretches across the range at the moment. The windows and wheels look the right size for the tin bits and what looks good also feels right on the road.

The 1.0 petrol has just three cylinders and is all the better

for it because not only does it make it torquey and sprightly it sound characterful too.

It picks up speed nicely and will cruise well at the legal limit only being affected by long gradients that have you dropping down the slick gearbox.

The 108 is lively and fun to drive, very go-kart, and should be enjoyed by young and old. Being diminutive it loves car parks and tight slots in the street; you can leave it virtually anywhere which actually takes the stress out of your day, especially if you are running late or have a lot to get through.

There is a wonderful stripped back feel to the car as well. Sometimes you just want the basics not something that started life at Cape Canaveral. It means you can just jump in and go, get there with a smile on your face knowing that the drive has been fun and it hasn't cost much in fuel – 62mpg is achievable without even trying.

There has always been a market for tiny tot transport but the new 108 gives the sector a much more grown up feel which can only appeal to the adults.