

The future's



Bright

Ian Lamming gets funky in the new Captur

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

IF YOU are going to go funky then it is important to go the whole hog; no backtracking, no bottling, just go for it.

So if you like the new Renault Captur, then you have to have it in burnt orange, with migraine roof graphics and bling-de-bling wheels, otherwise what's the point? You might as well have bought a Golf.

I do like the new Renault Captur – a lot – complete with zany paintwork and drug dealer alloys; oh yes.

Then I see one in charcoal and think, what's that car over there? It just doesn't look the same. Nothing wrong with it but it has been de-funked.

Little SUVs are as prolific as cluster flies on a Georgian window in winter – or is that just my house – and yet not all of them hit the mark. I won't name names but there is one that looks groovy and is about as much fun to drive as a mid-sized hatchback. There's another with equal appeal but where the seats are so uncomfortable I develop sciatica within three miles of leaving home. Then there are others where you just wouldn't.

But the new Renault, which looks like an inflated Clio, you definitely should because I think it is the best in class.

Even before the drive starts I've completely fallen for the Captur. It looks fantastic, especially from the three quarter front view. It is so incredibly contemporary, fresh, unique. Proportions are perfect and it is so interesting and stimulating to the eye.

If that's a great starting point just wait until you open the doors; the interior is fabulous too. The dash, the clocks the styling details are magnificent. The technology is TomTom-tastic, all touchy feely screeny, all tablet and smart phone orientated; it's a car of its day.

The seats look dandy and feel even better and the clutch, the gearbox, the throttle are terrific.

So it is with great anticipation that the Captur takes me out on the open road and equal delight that I've not even reached the bottom the track before I start smiling.

It looks great inside and out and it drives equally splendidly. The 1.5 litre diesel is smooth, powerful and refined. The 62mpg on the trip computer brings joy to heart and wallet. Ride, steering and overall handling are sharp and fun and the brakes are keen and confidence-inspiring. What more could you ask for?

Road repairers have been hard at work on the local dual carriageways and they are approaching billiard table smooth. Yorkshire Dales roads should sort the men from the boys and the Captur shows its mettle attacking the crests and troughs, the hairpins, the cambers. Joy.

Hard turns, dodgy surfaces, double apexes and open bends that tighten to catch out car and driver leave the smiling face broader still.

By the time Captur is back on the main roads I am glad of a rest as I have expended a lot of energy having a good time. What makes Captur sharp in the countryside allows it to eat urban streets for breakfast, actually it is lunchtime, but you know what I mean. It will dart and dance among the traffic and parking is a breeze.

The final push, along fast and friendly A roads, only reaffirms what I recognized as Captur stood in the drive; this car sets the new benchmark for SUVs in every aspect and the opposition has a fair bit of catching up to do. Nothing is quite as much fun, frugal and funky as this designer delight from Renault. The future is orange.