

Show a little Respect

Ian Lamming discovers how Fiat's MPV brings the best and the worst out of people

IF YOU are going to crash into someone's car and clear off without so much as a by your leave then you really shouldn't have a personal plate, should you Alex?

You might not have left an apologetic note and your insurance details on the windscreen of the Fiat 500L, which was parked properly in Northallerton High Street, but a very kind passer-by did with your registration number and a brief description of what occurred – so expect a call.

It's a shame really because the people carrier version of the ubiquitous Fiat 500 didn't deserve such undignified behaviour, nor the great scuff on its back end, or the streak of red paint from the culprit car.

The 500L is the biggest of the family – but not so big as to spill out of its parking bay, by the way – and the MPW tags on even more length to accommodate extra seats.

This is a true seven-seater, as my boy will testify as he sat in everyone – though he didn't actually drive.

If he had it would have been child's play as the 500 is a very easy to pilot – and park; am I labouring the point now?

It is also a very pleasant receptacle in which to ride thanks to greenhouse degrees of glazing, with large windscreen, deep windows and a massive glass sunroof. If I was a plant I would have ended up in full bloom.

The view is improved further by the extra ride height of the 500L and it is easy to see over hedges, walls and into gardens.

MPW gets the 500 funky interior, which is well equipped with all the latest ports and connectivity, a touch screen that doubles as a reverse camera – I'm watching you – and easy to use steering wheel-mounted controls.

It's a home from home, yes, but it's also a decent drive. The 1.6 litre diesel is swift and economical, ride and steering boast plenty of feel and the six-speed gearbox is sweet enough.

MPW's strength is its sheer practicality. It swallows people and cargo with aplomb and is quirky and stylish, which is very much the Fiat way.

L deserves lots of praise and plenty of respect, whether you see it on the road or parked in the high street – eh, Alex?

Fact File

- Fiat 500L MPW
- Engine: 1.6 diesel
- Power: 120hp
- 0-62mph: 11.1 secs
- Top speed: 117mph
- Combined MPG: 61.4
- Transmission: six-speed manual
- CO2 g/km: 120

