

# Happiness...



## Ian Lamming finds himself more than happy with the new Kia Picanto

**D**RIVING along the motorway, I'm happy; driving along the fast A roads, I'm happy; driving along narrow country lanes, I'm happy; being able to park outside my favourite Mexican restaurant, I'm happy.

Kia's new Picanto is most definitely a car that makes you happy and here is why.

This third generation city car is all the car you ever need. Firstly, it looks great, which is what happens when you tempt a top designer away from Germany and get him scribing your Korean range.

Picanto is beautifully proportioned, avoiding the myxomatosis-look of many small cars. It looks very much like a larger car that has come under the bathing light of a shrink ray and from any angle looks spot on.

The GT gets the best aesthetics of excellent grille, LED lights, deep air dams and scoops and, with smart arch-filling 16in alloys, looks proper sporty. Very soon it will get the turbo charge three-cylinder motor to match the looks – can't wait.

The new model is no larger than the previous, except for being a bit taller. But the wheel base has changed and it has become even cleverer at swallowing five people and luggage in its double decker boot. It doesn't feel small at all to me and there's even plenty of room for my increasingly leggy nine-year-old in the back.

As well as feeling like a bigger car inside, it is large-car equipped too, brilliantly so in fact. Faux leather sport seats are large and comfortable, ergonomics are great and clocks and switches easy to use with a high quality feel.

How about this for small car specification? Decent infotainment/speakers set up; touch screen for satnav, trip computer, Bluetooth connectivity that links with the iPhone to talk and listen to your store of music; cruise control; climate control; electrically operated heated door mirror; steering wheel mounted controls; a wireless phone charger; electric sunroof; heated front seats and steering wheel; a smart key and push-button engine start/stop.

In the safety department there is Electronic Stability Control (ESC), Vehicle Stability Management (VSM), Hill-start Assist Control (HAC) and six airbags.

So when I'm driving home on cruise, the inside temperature perfect to the half degree, listening to my music because I'm in a radio blackspot, steering down pleasantly twisty roads safe in the knowledge the chassis is well within its capabilities and the trip computer is reading 52mpg, you can see why I'm happy.

When I arrive at the Mexican knowing it will be difficult to park close by, how thrilled am I when, using the excellent rearview camera, I'm

able to slot neatly into the tiniest slot most drivers would scoff at, you can see why I'm am happy.

Nowadays, of course, it doesn't take much to make me feel happy, I tend to be irritatingly chipper most of the time. But the Picanto has so many strengths that I could find myself being positively euphoric.

## Fact File

- Kia Picanto GT-Line S 1.25
- Engine: 1.25 petrol
- Power: 83BHP
- 0-60mph: 11.6 secs
- Top speed: 107mph
- Combined MPG: 61.2
- Transmission: five speed manual
- CO2 g/km: 106