

Tried & Tested

Ian Lamming assesses the latest SUV to come out of the MG stables

AS AN adage it is true; you have to go where the work is. But if you think your commute is long, it pales by comparison when you look at the latest MG.

The emerging manufacturer has just clocked up three million miles and one millions hours of testing on its latest SUV before unleashing it on an avaricious public.

Brand new ZS has been pummeled and punished in this country's wet weather and Sweden's minus 35 degrees Celsius of cold to ensure it is going to survive the daily grind of modern motoring.

Throw in hot weather tests in Spain at 42 degrees Celsius, including driving the car at maximum speeds, and assessments in Austria where the car was thrashed at high altitude and you have a car that will undoubtedly stand the tests of time, the rigors of 21st century motoring.

Less exotic reviews took place in the typically sodden Welsh countryside, while the MG ZS was also tasked with completing real-life scenarios, such as the paper-shop test – driving 1.5 miles in less than five minutes through the clutter of life.

Water spray, river fording and hill climbing were undertaken at HORIBA MIRA in Warwickshire, proving the MG ZS is adept at handling any eventuality to come its way.

When it does pass you by you can't fail to notice its striking features. ZS sports a face with a compelling full-frame grille, which beams out, inspired by the famous brand's heritage, but with a more contemporary execution. It allows for a much bigger MG badge to take centre stage and showcase pride in the brand.

New-found styling confidence shows a distinct lack of flat surfaces making it look like it is about to spring into action. Nice design touches also include machined alloy wheels, atypical of this type of vehicle.

Inside there are soft materials and driver comfort is applied fully, with six-way adjustable seating in the Excite and Exclusive models. The use of 3D shapes, metallic and chrome finishes and carbon-esque textures all add to the appeal.

High level detailing on the air vents and contrasting materials on the dashboard enhance the quality feel, while a trend for full-on connectivity means eight inch

infotainment screens are a now a signature of MG. Designers haven't forgotten the practical elements either, with storage and stowage a key feature of the MG ZS – including a double cup holder, 1.5 litre bottle capacity in the doors and a split-level boot.

There are two engines to choose from, a 1.5 VTI or a 1.0, conversely the smaller being the most powerful thanks to a turbo.

In so many ways the ZS could not be further away from the Morris Garage motors that once plied our billiard table, uncongested roads – sorry wearing those rose-tinted specs again – though in many ways, perhaps it hasn't.

What it shares with its predecessors is a passion for design, character and charm, which made MG the chosen vehicle of discerning buyers of the past – and likely to woo those of the future.

Fact File

- Engine: MG ZS 1.5 or 1.0T
- Power: 106PS/111PS
- 0-60mph: 12.4/10.9secs
- Top speed: 109/112mph
- Combined MPG: 44.9/49.6
- Transmission: Six-speed manual/automatic
- CO2 g/km: 144/129

