

# Stupendous



## Ian Lamming rages about the latest Peugeot 208GTI

**H**OW ironic is this? I'm in a self-confessed, unashamed boy racer's favourite but the digital speedo reads just 18mph.

Around the blind bend on the single carriageway road, with high over grown hedges impeding what is poor visibility even on a good day, blatts a tourist in a big 4x4.

The car is travelling so fast that the panic braking employed by the aged driver throws it badly out of control and I wonder two things; is he going to hit me or the hedge?

So lacking in confidence am I in his ability to regain control that the speedo reads now 0mph, then 4mph – in reverse!

Near catastrophe over I wave the errant driver down only to hear that he speaks with a funny accent and is unapologetic in manner.

"Is it a good idea to drive that fast down such a narrow country lane?" I enquire. "Come off it mate (mate? I think not) if you live locally then you'll know this road is hardly used."

Losing control, I point out that it is in fact a flipping bus route. Yes, I'm sure I used flipping. To which he suggests I go and do something unseemly. Oh dear and he looked ever such a nice Brexit voter.

Strange how he knew so much about my particular country road. Minutes later, as I travelled the same route with equal care, a huge farm digger, complete with trailer came around the same blind bend. Now if he'd met him instead of me then my new 'mate' would have ended up in the bucket,

though the farmer would not have noticed the difference as he is used to shovelling manure.

All quite pointless really though it does show you should never judge a book by its cover. It's the same with the GTI by Peugeot Sport. Yes, it's black, with tinted windows and black alloys. Yes, it's mean and moody. Yes, it has the performance of a rally car.

Yes, it's an absolutely stunning vehicle in every way. But you don't have to be a boy racer (or mid-life crisis merchant) to buy one and you don't have to drive like a loon, or a tourist.

With way over 200hp under the bonnet and the bodyweight of your average ballerina, GTI is eminently capable of scorching the asphalt. It is incredibly fast from the minute you fire up the turbocharged motor. It will sprint with the very best and has a mid-range punch that will knock you for six.

The best way to try it out in a responsible manner is to floor it from a standing start, say from a junction onto the A66, and see just how quickly it hits the legal limit of 70mph – it's staggering.

It's just as good if you need to get past slow moving traffic as the mid-range is so muscular.

But even with all that power, things never get jittery thanks to equally stunning handling. The 208 sticks to the road in a spectacular way, made even more fun by a tiny steering wheel that transmits all the feel you could possibly need to the happy driver.

Bucket sports seats are stupendously supportive and the interior is excellent and well equipped.

Incredibly, despite its amazing performance, it will return easily 45mpg.

GTI is a stupendous car in every way, one of the best I have driven this year, and so good that even an inconsiderate voter, sorry motorist, can't spoil any time in its company.

## Fact File

- Peugeot 208 GTI
- Engine: 1.6 turbo
- Power: 208hp
- 0-62mph 6.5 secs
- Top speed: 143mph
- Combined MPG: 52.3
- Transmission: six speed manual
- CO2 g/km: 125