

Capturing the *Motor Madness* market

Ian Lamming gets in a spin with the new Renault Captur

IS IT pronounced 'capter' or 'capcher', that is the question on everybody's lips.

No it's not, not really. The real question is whether the new Renault Captur is as good as the model it replaces?

When Renault first launched the two-wheel-drive SUV it really stood out from the crowd for its modern looks, tidy interior and fun-to-drive dynamics.

Problem is, everyone thought it was such a neat idea that the automotive world decided to follow suit and now every manufacturer has at least one, if not several, such vehicles.

The issue for smarty-pants Renault designers was that the vehicle they penned was so good it was difficult to improve on perfection; that probably explains why the latest Captur appears more than just a bit familiar.

Thing is, it still looks the part, fresh and modern, with curvaceous lines and delightful proportions. It's just plain pretty, particularly with the 17in alloys with black inserts.

The interior is excellent too, pleasing on the eye, well equipped and intuitive to use. The seats are comfortable and the optional extra Bose Premium sound system is worth the extra wonga.

The 1.5 litre diesel is 55mpg+ economical and, if you knock it out of 'eco' mode, a muscular little powerplant that sprints, climbs and cruises with aplomb. The six speed box is slick and blessed with useful ratios, clutch is light and the brakes powerful.

Ride is excellent too and while it's soft enough to shrug off the mounting number of cavernous potholes that are appearing on our roads, it is sufficiently controlled to keep responses fun and nice and sharp. Captur is a great car to drive whatever the weather.

Now here is an issue with SUVs. Most of them are bog standard front wheel drivers. They may ape off-roaders but they are cars. That said, remember the flurry of snow, ice and slush that, according to the news, caused chaos to these

shores, well, it was dispensed with impressively by Captur.

The problem with many cars is the anti-skid electronics will actually stop the car moving at all on the slippery stuff. But somehow Renault manages to spin a wheel. So on one slope near home the car is registering 15mph in second gear but not moving forward an inch.

Drop to first and the speedo reads 8mph and by turning the wheel side to side a quarter lock it manages to gain enough traction to get up the hill – genius and very reassuring. Who needs four-wheel-drive. The Continental tyres helped, I'm sure.

New Captur is every bit as good as the first, in fact the new subtle style changes and interior make it even better. Never has the SUV market been so packed with so many good models but the Renault has everything it needs to capture the market.



Fact File

- Renault Captur Dynamique S dCi110
- Engine: 1.5 turbo diesel
- Power: 110HP
- 0-62mph: 11.4 secs
- Top speed: 112mph
- Combined MPG: 76.4
- Transmission: six-speed manual
- CO2 g/km: 98
- Price: £23,735.00 including extras