

When pain becomes

Living motors



A pleasure

Ian Lamming finds a willing companion for a foray through the dales

Fact File

Hyundai ix35 SE
Nav CRDi 4WD
Engine: 2.0 litre
turbo diesel
Power: 136PS
0-62mph: 11.3 secs
Top speed: 112mph
Combined miles per
gallon: 51.4
Transmission: six
speed manual
CO2 g/km: 145

AVERAGE speed cameras, roadworks and hostile traffic; it's all in a day's work.

After a 200 mile round trip of pretty much abject horribleness, you would imagine that would be enough for any driver.

But a beautiful autumn afternoon draws me to the Yorkshire Dales, that and curiosity as to what the Hyundai ix35 is like as a pleasurable drive.

Hyundai's mid-sized SUV has looked after me well, all the way from Darlington to Doncaster in fact.

The cruise control has stopped me falling foul of the stealth-tax, revenue generating 'safety cameras' which measure your average speed along the A1 and punish punitively those who stray above 50mph.

It has proved a supreme cruiser along tedious roads that can bore you to oblivion. The sound system distracts, the satnav offers progress, the low levels of noise, harshness and vibration prevent tiredness and the frugal diesel stops any wincing at the fuel pumps.

But heading back north the Hyundai proves a more than willing companion encouraging driver to abandon the A1 at Leeming for a cross country foray through the dales.

As Bedale opens its gates to Wensleydale, like a thoroughbred the Hyundai gathers speed with the smell of moorland it its nostrils, more impressive still for having less power than the model it replaces (down to 136PS from 181 for cleaner and more economical running). It even sounds good and it pulls like a stallion, its power and height making it an ideal overtaking tool.

All of a sudden the motor that was happy to whisper reveals a more interesting side and an ability to charge. The suspension that was supreme at cossetting now offers peerless control and the steering, barely noticed until now, offers new found precision and feel, especially if you use the sports driving mode.

The direct route would have taken me east to Catterick but the car and the weather are performing too well so Leyburn becomes the next destination. Only then does the SUV take a homeward setting, along Swaledale, across the back roads to Marske and Dalton, every mile since the Great North Road a pleasure, an unwinding and unexpected treat on a work day.