

Living motors



Infiniti and beyond

Ian Lamming spills the beans on a best kept secret

IT'S not easy you know, living off a trunk road. You do tend to take your life in your hands crossing and joining the A66 as the world moves swiftly from East to West and back.

So when I dived with a 38 tonner which bore down quicker than I had expected my thoughts turned to oblivion – or at least 'Infiniti'.

Thankfully the smart unobtrusive saloon had a secret weapon up its sleeve; a 3.5 litre V6 engine supported amicably by an electric motor.

The result? The juggernaut became a speck in the rear view mirror as the M35H catapulted forward like an F1 car Sebastian Vettel would be proud of; in fact he probably is as the Infiniti name sits proudly on his rear wing.

But then Infinities are full of surprises including why aren't there more of them on the roads and why don't more dealers sell them?

Years down the line they remain a best kept secret, yet when you have one in your care for a week you find yourself constantly approached by people asking what it is or saying 'here, that's one of them Infinities, isn't it?'

Yes, it's a posh Nissan but it isn't sold alongside them in Nissan garages. Instead they get posh soleus dealerships which are as scarce as hen's teeth. In fact Infiniti is the ultimate tease because as cars they are truly brilliant.

Firstly, they have the performance to save you from certain death as you mix it with the big boys on the Trans-Pennine road to the afterlife. After shooting off to safety towards Barnard Castle the M has the stopping power to scrub off the speed as you almost miss the sharp left turn over the Stang.

The combined power output of 364PS also helps

propel the large limo over the steeply inclined road to Arkengarthdale, including the notorious hairpin bends and you don't have to worry about the dearth of petrol stations in Swaledale as the hybrid will top the 40 mile per gallon mark, which is astounding given its stunning performance.

There aren't many roads as beautiful as the one from there to Richmond but there are few as demanding on the suspension. The road is slipping into dire straits thanks to historic mining activity, the action of ice and water and a public sector maintenance programme starved of cash.

Normally a foray in anything vaguely sporty will have you phoning for an appointment with the chiropractor. Not so the M35H which manages the ripples, bumps and hideous cambers in its stride; in fact it seems to revel in it remaining composed and controlled at all times thanks to multi-link suspension and hydraulic power steering.

Waft down the A1 and A66M to Darlington and you wouldn't expect the Infiniti to be anything other than superb, and it is. It takes the stress out of motorway cruising allowing the driver to enjoy its many luxuries, such as the Bose surround sound, the 3D satnav, the wood and leather, double glazing, powered seats and a rear blind; it's all incredibly upmarket and chic.

M35H is equally at home through towns and Darlington's traffic is dispensed with quiet ease as the electric motor comes into its own, before it takes to the open road for a final blast to Barnard Castle.

A final dice with death takes in the A66 east to Dalton, across the central reservation and the sanctity of country life, on the whole free from heart-stopping moments with artics.

Fact File:

Model: Infiniti M35H
Engine: 3.5 litre V6/
electric
Drivetrain: seven
speed auto
Power: 364PS
Top speed: 155mph
0-62mph: 5.5 secs
Insurance group: 45
Miles per gallon 40.9
(combined):
CO2 (g/km): 159