



Super sleek and Stylish

Ian Lamming ups the style stakes in the Jeep Cherokee

Fact File

Jeep Cherokee

Engine: 2.0 diesel

Power: 140BHP

0-62mph: 12 secs

Top speed: 117

Combined miles per gallon: 50.4

Transmission: six-speed manual

CO2 g/km: 147

If you want high-end fashion then you don't normally look west to the States; sorry but you just don't.

There's only one country really synonymous with design flair and that has to be Italy. Whether it's clothes, cars or motorbikes there's just something special about this country of origin.

Is it any coincidence then that Jeep's new Cherokee has been completely transformed since the American stalwart came under the ownership of Fiat – who also own Ferrari and Maserati of course.

Cherokee has been a sturdy all-American tin box for generations, endearing perhaps, but a child's drawing of a car nonetheless.

Not any more. Just look at the latest incarnation – fantastico! Somewhere in that super-sleek front end lies the traditional Jeep slotted grille but it has never looked so attractive, so modern, so eye-catching.

And the back end? Well, those lights could quite easily grace the most aesthetic of Alfa Romeos – bellissimo. I don't think there is another SUV on the market blessed with such good looks, proportions and lines. It just looks fabulous. Not

sure where the design studio resides but whether that is Europe or across the pond the influence is clear to see.

The interior is another transformation. There is a Jeep badge but that's about it. No longer does it have that iffy American feel. New Cherokee is completely European with high quality fixtures and fittings, tactile trim and superb dials and controls. It is an interior that should be the envy of the competition.

The remake isn't confined to how it looks, dynamics are also off the scale compared to previous Cherokee.

This Jeep is a driver's car with incredible dynamics. The diesel, which is from Fiat, is strong and economical, the ride, plush and controlled. The six-speed box is top quality and the whole experience second to none. It is just plain lovely to drive as well as look at.

There is all manner of hi-tech wizardry including collision avoidance radar, an induction pad that could charge your phone without having to plug in and automatic parking.

If the old Jeep helped the allies protect Europe from harm the new one deserves to conquer it in automotive terms.