

Proceed with



enjoyment

by Ian Lamming

CARS have to be all things to all men, women and children nowadays and the result, generally, is compromise.

We are not allowed to be overtly sporty any more, it's just not PC, and we shouldn't do anything that could be construed as fun, that's against the international laws on depression.

GTs don't have to follow this line of thinking of course – that's an unwritten law – and Kia's latest full-blooded variant, the Pro_Cee'd certainly doesn't and is all the better for it.

Cop a look at those lines and stance. Revel in the sexy cuboid running lights. Pay deference to the snarling grille. Nod with respect at the massive alloys. And get used to the tailpipes as they are the last thing you'll see as it passes by.

This three door Kia is unashamedly sporty and more than deserves the GT notation. As said it looks the part, no question, and it feels every bit the thoroughbred.

Under that sleek bonnet lies a turbo-charged 1.6 litre four cylinder. Sounds modest? It's not. It has been well tuned and hurls out 201PS, that's a lot by the way.

That makes it rapid on the track but usefully powerful in the real world. The best way to test a car's acceleration is pulling onto a motorway and you'll find the legal limit arrives quickly, while you are just slotting home third. Come to think of it you can easily go straight to sixth and the tractable motor pulls without any protestations.

The engine is amazingly refined too and the spread of

power is broad and smooth. Given this is a real performer the combined mpg figure of 38 isn't bad at all – but that only works if you resist temptation.

The Dales were always going to love this car and guess what, this car loves the Dales; climbs, curves, surfaces, all great thank you. The GT is extremely composed. It is accurate through the bends and poised but the sports suspension never approaches harsh or spine shattering.

Recaro sports seats help no end taking you in an orthopedically correct embrace. Seats don't come much better than this and the embossed Recaro name has oodles of cred among motorsports fans.

They are a welcome touch in a delightful cabin. It is all top quality with leather and red stitching, neat dash and touch screen satnav. There are controls on the steering wheel including one that reads GT. Press that and the traditional speedo switches to digital and is flanked by a torque meter one side and a turbo boost read out the other. Very trick; so is the heated steering wheel.

In town, when you come to park up, you can't fail to enjoy the reverse camera which projects what is behind on to the touch screen.

Every aspect if the GT is designed to make you feel better about yourself and the day you are about to start or finish. So if you don't mind being unPC and you still want to have a bit of fun then get behind the wheel of the new Pro_Cee'd.

Fact File:

Kia Pro_Cee'd
 Engine: 1.6 litre turbo petrol
 Power: 201PS
 0-62mph: 7.4 secs
 Top speed: 143mph
 Combined miles per gallon: 38.2
 Transmission: six speed manual
 Insurance: 30
 CO2 g/km: 171