

Take it to the



Maxx

Ian Lamming tries getting down with the kids

Fact File

Kia Soul Maxx

Engine: 1.6 litre turbo diesel

Power: 126BHP

0-62mph: 10.8 secs

Top speed: 112mph

Combined miles per gallon: 56.5

Transmission: six-speed manual

CO2 g/km: 132

AS my partner just pointed out there's nothing quite as sad as an old bloke trying to get down with the kids... fair enough.

But the latest Kia Soul is a car that looks like it wants to be taken to the max – or is that Maxx?

The Maxx is the top of the range version of the popular SUV; the blingiest of the bunch and closest to Kia's concept car the Trackster.

And while you may never see a 'kid' at the wheel, it definitely appeals to drivers who are young at heart with its fun, funky, fresh and flash design.

It's square but not in the fashion sense – in fact with 18in alloys and protruding wheel-arches it looks all dragster and ZZ-Top, different from the other SUVs on the road which ape vehicles that are supposed to go off the road.

The front gets trick and trendy LED running lights, the rear high intensity clusters. The proximity key triggers fold out wing mirrors to welcome your approach.

Inside designers have concentrated on quality and the cabin oozes nice touches including leather and top-grade trim and trappings.

The dash incorporates standup speakers and a huge

sub-woofer, complete with mood lighting.

The hi-fi is Infinity – nice – and the glass sunroof runs the full length of the lid.

A large touch screen dominates the fascia and is superb to use, especially when operating the satnav and hi-fi. It also doubles up as a rear camera when reverse is engaged.

The steering wheel and gearlever are tactile stitched leather, the dashboard sports attractive instruments, climate control and trip computer; it's a masterpiece of design.

But the quality goes beyond skin deep. It's also a great car to drive. The CRD comes with a torquey 1.6 litre diesel that is refined and economical.

Steering is sharp, handling tenacious, ride comfortable and controlled. Those 18in alloys are more than just for show, they also boost handling and confidence in the Maxx's ability to round bends.

Back in 2008 Soul was penned in California to appeal to the surfer dudes and coolest of discerning motorists. No surprise then that sales in the US have been the highest, followed by China.

Today it continues to revel in being different, diverse, down with the kids...even if I'm not.