

The cat that got



the cream

by Ian Lamming

STRONG design evokes strong reactions and that's just the case with this particular Peugeot.

The unkind claim the RCZ looks like it is going backwards (?), the discerning that it resembles a shark. The great thing is that detractors and fans alike feel the need to comment at all and better than a car that is ignored.

Me? I'm a big fan. I love those super-sleek lines and double bubble rear window. It is brave, bold, beautiful. People say it apes an Audi TT. Nah, it's much better, particularly the GT with its huge wheels.

It's longer too which gives it more stability and extra boot space – it's a useful and very tidy area for luggage, giving the GT a practical edge.

I think it is lovely from every direction. The front is supercar low and wide, purposeful and menacing. The side view is wind-tunnel perfect and the rear nice and neat. It's a belle. The interior is just as impressive with a sports car cockpit to be proud of. Lots of leather, fabulous instrumentation and cracking ergonomics make the RCZ as special to sit in as it is to look at. It is light, airy, comfortable and a real pleasure to be in.

Something this lovely has to be good to drive and there are no worries there thanks to a 200BHP turbo-charged engine.

As the numbers suggest this is a flier, no two ways about it. But the motor also offers a number of unexpected subtleties.

It is just so tractable that it is happy to trundle through town at 30mph in six if you are feeling lazy.

It is also amazingly economical for a sports car with 40mpg not too far away in the economy stakes.

The six speed box is wonderfully slick snapping home crisply in every ratio and the brakes are stunningly powerful.

The twin exhausts let rip a rasping note that is a joy on the ear, the razor sharp steering allows for rapid and accurate tracking, particularly through the Dales and the suspension manages to be controlled without being too harsh, which is just the right compromise.

There really is nothing to fault with the RCZ, which leaves me a little bemused as to why there aren't more on the road. In every way it is a quality coupe and it is certainly successful in getting people to comment.

Fact File

Peugeot RCZ GT
THP 200
Engine: 1.6 litre
turbo petrol
Power: 200BHP
0-62mph: 7.6 secs
Top speed:
146mph
Combined miles
per gallon: 42.1
Transmission: six
speed manual
Insurance: 34
CO2 g/km: 155