

Fresh, exciting & Fun

Ian Lamming takes the quirky new Twingo for a spin

ONE man's odd is another's quirky and the new Twingo proves to be a bit of both.

Over the years Renault has tended to specialize in weird and wonderful and the motoring world is all the better for it.

The first Twingo hit European roads in 1993 and was powered by a dinky motor housed in the back and powering the rear wheels.

Unless you drive big posh stuff there's a whole generation weaned on front wheel drive who are capable of freaking at the prospect of being pushed not pulled by the driving wheels.

Right from the off it does feel slightly quirky, different, and, if you are of a certain age, nostalgic. When I was a lad loads of cars were powered by the rear set of wheels; in fact front wheels drive was a rarity.

In those days you developed the skills of driving without anti-skid or electronic stability control. What it meant was that if you got it wrong – for instance putting too much power down in slippery conditions – the back end would step out and drift, while the front went light and vague.

Opposite lock and prudent use of the throttle were required to bring it back under control, but it could be fun and rewarding in the right conditions – and with the grace of God keeping you alive.

While the new Twingo definitely feels different, there should be no worries of losing control thanks to ESP and ABS brakes.

The TCe90 bolts a turbocharger to a rorty little 898cc three-cylinder petrol resulting in remarkable performance and decent MPG. The power boost makes you feel like a surfer catching a good wave. Hit it right and you ride high on a tide of torque that becomes addictive.

The motor is tilted at 49 degrees so it doesn't intrude on the boot space

and if there is a rear collision it is designed to go underneath the passengers.

There is no doubting just how clever the Twingo is and this can only have been helped thanks to a development agreement with Smart makers Daimler.

The new Twingo is shorter than the old model but has a longer wheelbase and much more room inside.

Being shorter makes it easy to park and I love being able to squeeze into the tightest of spaces both in town and in the countryside – brilliant. Its diminutive proportions also make it nimble and fun to drive.

Smartness extends inside with folding front and rear seats allowing you to load a double bass, should you play one of course.

Lots of nifty cubbyholes allow you to litter the interior with your daily detritus but stay neat and tidy and there's a very useful storage box in front of the gear lever for oddments, mobile phone paraphernalia or your sandwiches.

Attach your smart phone to a special carriage which slots in the dash, download an app and it transforms it into music deliverer, satnav or trip computer, thanks to what Renault call R&Go connectivity.

In bright yellow, with optional 16in alloys, go faster stripes and cuboid LED running lights, the Twingo is certainly eye-catching.

There are rear doors, cleverly hidden to make it look like a three door and an attractive glass tailgate.

It is most certainly different, but for me that means fresh and exciting, fun and friendly, and it makes the Twingo so much better than a car in this sector is expected to be.

Fact File

Renault Twingo

Dynamique Energy

TCe90

Engine: 898cc three cylinder turbo petrol

Power: 90BHP

0-62mph: 10.8secs

Top speed: 103mph

Combined miles per gallon: 65.7

Transmission: five speed manual

CO2 g/km: 99



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