

New hatch makes



rapid progress

Fact File:

Skoda Rapid Spaceback 1.6 TDI CR

Engine: 1.6 turbo diesel

Power: 90PS

0-62mph: 12.1 secs

Top speed: 113mph

Combined miles per gallon: 62.8

Transmission: seven speed auto DSG

CO2 g/km: 118

by Ian Lamming

IT'S not often that you are wowed by a car the second you turn the key, even without the engine actually starting. Ignition on and the first thing that appears on the trip computer is distance to empty: read 710.

That is difficult to compute. This car will actually travel 710 miles without having to refuel? What is it, an oil tanker?

Flicking through the computer it is easy to see why. The gadget claims that the Skoda Rapid Spaceback will average 67 miles per gallon. I love this car and I haven't even left my drive.

The other little thing that brings joy to my heart is that this new Skoda is an automatic and not just any automatic but the best money can buy – the legendary DSG. Glorious.

This thing will shift quicker than a thought process. It has seven speeds but forget trying to count them as you won't be able to keep up. It's simply stunning.

And if you have any doubts, drive it then look at the spec sheet. That won't compute either. This Skoda is truly rapid, hence the name. It flies but when you check the technical stuff, miraculously it is powered by the most modest of motors, a 1.6 litre diesel that only turns out 90PS. Now how

can that be, it's crazy.

Pulling on to the motorway it scorches up to the legal limit in spectacular fashion and when you need to pass the slow stuff safely along country roads it is happy to oblige, the wonderful DSG ensuring you are always right in the turbo boosted power band.

The combination makes it a pleasure to drive and the on-the-soft-side suspension makes it comfortable too as it plies the bumps of Dales roads and a battle-scarred ring-roads.

To look at Rapid is clean and simple. If you want frilly and fancy you need to specify the trendy glass roof.

Inside is practical, well equipped and functional. There's Bluetooth for the phone, optional touch screen satnav and radio and telephone controls on the leather steering wheel.

There is also cruise control, tinted rear windows, a six speaker stereo and a parking sensors, so it wants for nothing.

It's a crazy blend really; ordinary looks, spirited performance and amazing economy, all enhanced with a sprinkling of DSG magic. Mad but marvellous and it really works very well indeed.