



Practicality with premium appeal

by Ian Lamming

VW TOURAN

- VW Touran
- Engine: 1.6 turbo diesel
- Power: 105PS
- 0-62mph: 12.8 secs
- Top speed: 116mph
- Combined miles per gallon: 61.4
- Transmission: six speed manual
- Insurance: 14
- CO2 g/km: 121

BUSY, busy, busy; so little time, so much to do and nowhere to park – or is there?

The side street in Darlington has one space left and it does look a bit tight. In fact it is so snug that I wouldn't normally have attempted it, especially in a fairly big car like the new Touran.

But this particular VW is fitted with a contraption called park assist. No guessing what that does then. Press one button and crawl by the gap while it scans, then press another

button with a picture of a steering wheel on it and magically, spookily, the electronic gubbins take over.

You operate the clutch and throttle but the car's poltergeist grabs the wheel which turns in automatically, then back again to straighten you up. As the Touran creeps into the space I can't believe how close we are to the BMW's back end. Yet it slots home safely; it really is incredible.

The park assist sums up the Touran; it's a vehicle for when you can't be bothered. So if you can't be

bothered to parallel park, it does it for you and if you are not fussed about driving then it takes the strain.

Test route can be a bit of a chew if you are not in the mood, but Touran sorts out its complexities beautifully. The supremely comfortable ride masks the dire Dales road surfaces. Its torquy 1.6 litre diesel engine handles the climbs of the Stang and Arkengarthdale and the sweet gearbox relieves the burden of the countless cog-swapping required to round myriad bends down

Swaledale to Richmond.

A66 and A1 dual carriageways become second homes to the Touran which sits their with the comfort of your house, albeit on wheels.

And the greatest chore of all – visiting the fuel station – is negated because the Touran has a 600+ tank range thanks to easily achieved 60+ miles per gallon.

The new MPV gets the VW corporate look, which is as anonymous and inoffensive as a look can be. Inside is typically Teutonic with hardwearing

surfaces and quality dials and switchgear; it's not flash but it is functional.

Play around with the seats and the VW becomes a van when they are all lowered making it the ideal carrying companion.

New Touran is a genuine seven seater and, to use footballing vernacular, boasts a 2-3-2 formation leaving some room in the boot for bags.

So if friends and family can't be bothered to drive either then Touran should be the vehicle of choice.