

DRIVING

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO DRIVE?

While plenty of us cling to memories of the Peugeot's fabled ride, handling and commitment to affordable high performance, the 308 instead majors on qualities that are probably more relevant nowadays: refinement and efficiency. It uses an updated version of the EMP2 platform that underpinned the previous model, with McPherson struts upfront and a torsion beam rear, so on paper it's off the pace compared to the [Ford Focus](#) and pricier versions of the [Mercedes A-Class](#).

WHAT ARE MY ENGINE OPTIONS?

We'll get the 1.2-litre three-pot out the way first: it offers 130bhp and 170lb ft of torque, good for 0-62mph in 9.7 seconds, with the eight-speed auto doing its thing unobtrusively. It's surprisingly charismatic (aka a bit vocal), but otherwise a respectable all-rounder.

Up against Peugeot's claimed 43.5-52.1mpg and with some fairly spirited driving, we managed 40mpg. Expect around 50mpg in the real world.

Onto the hybrids: while we're yet to try out the mild hybrid, we've spent plenty of time in the 180 PHEV, powered by a 148bhp 1.6-litre petrol engine coupled with 109bhp electric motor and 12.4kWh battery, which lightly stokes the embers while failing to set your trousers aflame.

On a near 40-mile loop, we stayed in electric mode for about half of it, resulting in fuel economy of about 80mpg. You can forget about pie-in-the-sky claims of 213.7-281.1mpg.

The 225, with its slightly more powerful 178bhp petrol engine (and, *sigh*, claimed 213.8-266.2mpg) is obviously a bit punchier, maybe even nibbling into quasi warm hatch territory. But it's still some way short of [full GTI status](#).

The diesel, meanwhile, is best left to high mileage motorway drivers, an otherwise gruff reminder of where we've been rather than where we're going.

WHAT'S RIDE COMFORT LIKE?

It's wonderfully quiet at motorway speeds, suppressing all but the most intrusive of surface bumps and undulations. Generous soundproofing helps – the windows are thicker and laminated side glass is available – and only a modest amount of kerfuffle around the A-pillars and door

mirrors upsets the sense of calm. Especially so in full electric mode, in which the claimed range of up to 37 miles seems realistic. But even the arrival of the combustion engine is seamless.

Peel off onto more challenging back roads, and the sparkle comes off a bit, especially with the hybrid’s extra mass (315kg more than the petrol 130). But it steers briskly, turns in nicely, and has decent body control. Ultimately, there’s more fun to be had in other quarters, but the 308 strikes a well-judged compromise between ride, handling and overall entertainment.

ANYTHING ELSE TO NOTE?

A little panel and raised controller on the driver’s side takes the place of the gearstick, allowing you to flick smoothly and swiftly between drive, park and reverse. In addition, there’s a ‘drive mode’ selector that allows you to switch between various modes. On the plug-in hybrids this allows you to switch between electric, hybrid, or sport, which offers firmer power steering, optimised torque delivery, and shorter gearshift time. You’ll likely stick to hybrid.

As ever, it’s also fitted with the full suite of driver aids and as usual, the lane keep assist was the first thing we turned off. Peugeot also offers a £200 Drive Assist Plus pack which includes such innovations as semi-automatic lane change, anticipated speed recommendation, and curve speed adaptation, the latter ‘optimising the car’s speed according to the severity of the bend’. Semi-autonomous tech, in other words.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RANGE

THE FASTEST

1.6 Hybrid 225 GT 5dr e-EAT8

0-62	8s
CO2	
BHP	221.3
MPG	
Price	£37,145

View all specs

THE CHEAPEST

1.2 PureTech Allure 5dr EAT8

0-62	9.7s
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CO2	
BHP	128.7
MPG	
Price	£25,615

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