



Citroën C4 Grand Picasso

Creatively Child Friendly

Car review | Children are nice. They are open-minded, have new ideas and usually have a pretty original outlook on things. That is exactly the character of this new family car from Citroen: the Grand C4 Picasso. With this newest of MPV's from the willful manufacturer, everything has been thought about in a brand new way. As a result, here is a completely unique and also a particularly clever, spacious car.

Sometimes, "Childishly Simple " has a negative connotation. But some things are just so simple that adults never even consider them. It's children that are always asking "why" with regard to apparently self-evident issues, and then they come up with the perfect solution. With the Grand Citroen C4 Picasso, everything starts on the rear seat, where the kids hang out.

Rear seat

The Grand C4 Picasso is designed as a seven seater vehicle with space in the front for two adults, three children on the first rear seat, and another two on the second rear seat. There is no explicit differentiation between adults and children. Citroen has another seven seater in the same class, the C8. This, on the other hand, is designed for five adults and two children.

The C4 is a slightly smaller than the C8. It's noticeable in the reduced legroom in the first rear seat area. The space in the second rear seat area is in the case of

every MPV solely meant for children. It's no different with the C4.



But it is on the second rear seat that there are a lot of fresh ideas that make the Grand C4 Picasso unique. Entry to the second rear seat has always demanded that you be either a climbing expert or as skinny as a rake. Now to get onto the second rear seat, the seats of the first rear seats slide not only forward but they

also fold up so that they can move them even further forward.

One of the criticisms from the "test children" was that the side windows in the back didn't open. Nearly all the windows are equipped with retractable sunshades. In this brand new model some of the spring mechanisms were already broken, which meant that the rolling up of these blinds turned into a great challenge in itself.

In the middle

The two seats in the rear are generally used as "emergency seats". The first back seat is occupied more often, and consequently more attention has been paid to its comfort. Why is it that adults just have ventilators? Why don't the kids have storage space for their things? And if a car has so much space, why can't the back seat become a playground?

The Grand C4 Picasso offers an answer to all of the above. In the window jambs, the ventilators have been placed with their own regulators. In the floor of the back seat, there are storage spaces which fit smallish toys. In the backs of the front seats, there are illuminated flip tables, like on airplanes. Unfortunately Citroen hasn't installed a 12 volt plug in the back; the games computer is reliant on its own battery.



For the adults there is a second rear view mirror to keep an eye on the brood in the back. In reality, this proves to be a great relief.

And there's more!

All the individual rear seats are fold down easily to create even more luggage space. The two furthest seats disappear into the floor, literally at the flick of a switch. A flat, spacious loading floor is created. There is sufficient luggage space to fit eleven small children into the back of the car. When the middle seats (the first row of rear seats) are fold down, some twenty small children can fit into the car. Whoever said the Grand C4 Picasso is a seven seater!?



The luggage space is bursting with innovative design ideas. The lights are removable and can even be used as hand torches. The loading room can be compartmentalized to keep small fragile items safe from larger objects. The lid of the boot, depending on the model, can be opened in two parts; the loading of smaller objects only requires the rear window to be opened.



Freedom = happiness

It is now an old trick: put the engine under the dashboard, let the windscreen run right to the front of the car, and there you have it an overwhelming sense of space. Citroen has gone one step further. The windscreen now goes right the way back into the roof. The effect is staggering. The Grand C4 Picasso has an unsurpassable feeling of openness and freedom. The sunshades are on rails to reduce the screen surface when confronted with the blinding sun. They've thought about it all!



The Citroen C4 Coupe which was previously tested was described as a UFO. No other interior is as daring, with every piece of design beyond its time. The same is also true for the C4 Picasso. The dashboard is not the usual collage of sober plastic, but a wonder of space and ergonomics. It's a visual treat. Especially in the darkness, the interior is a work of art. It is after all a "Picasso". Due to the ambiance lighting behind the

panels, a really special atmosphere is created.

Citroen doesn't actually like ostentation. In the models with the electric gearbox system, there is a large refrigerator in the middle of the dashboard. Moreover every Grand C4 Picasso has a dashboard compartment, two storage boxes on the dashboard and spacious door pockets. The radio (with mp3 compatibility!) is hidden behind a little cover.

In the middle of the dashboard, there is a large display. Speed, fuel consumption and other essential information is displayed in a distinguished manner. Some letters are too small to read easily from the driver's seat. The separate left/right climate control system which is available from the "Prestige" level has at the far end of the dashboard its own individual controls and display.



Steering

Nearly all the functions are controlled from the steering wheel. This is a special steering wheel, with its fixed hub. The idea is childishly simple: if it is safer to keep one's hands on the steering wheel; why not have as many of the switches and knobs placed around or on the steering wheel?

The number of pedals is so extensive that they have been divided up into two layers each with their own set of dials. In its totality it seems pretty complex and even after several days driving some functions still remained unclear.

The models with an "Electronic Gear System", as Citroen calls it, doesn't have neither a gear stick nor a clutch. Instead there is a small handle on the steering column where one chooses between reverse, neutral, automatic or manual.



With paddles behind the steering wheel, it is possible to choose the previous or next gear. Unfortunately the paddles don't turn with the steering wheel, which was a poor decision on Citroen's part. This system which originated from the sports model was designed to allow gear changes whilst moving through turns. The hands would remain safely on the steering wheel.

The "Electronic Gear System" can also be used automatically, however this is not as smooth. In queues or in slow moving city traffic, it is however a very pleasant feature.

Engine

The Grand C4 Picasso is available with two petrol and two diesel engines. The test car had the most powerful diesel engine on the price list; a 138 hp strong 2-litre 4-cylinder engine with soot filter. This is quick, efficient, and relatively quiet. It makes the C4 Picasso as comfortable as any people car from the same price bracket.

The road handling is however not comparable with a people carrier. The Grand C4 Picasso does not go unnoticed as it is quite noticeably large, heavy and high. With its large size, the Grand C4 Picasso does

need a pretty spacious parking space, with parking aids no longer being classifiable as a luxury. The parking mirrors are too small, which doesn't give much of an overview of what is going on in the back. In spite of the height the C4 Picasso is not overly sensitive to side winds.



The height and the considerable weight of the car ensure that the Grand C4 Picasso inclines in bends when they are taken with any speed. It also dips when braking too hard. The wheels remain firmly on the ground even in random slaloms but it does feel as though the chassis and bodywork are not actually fixed to each other. Together with the steering which is too light, the necessary driving pleasure is missing in this car. However this car is not made just for this. The Grand C4 Picasso has been designed as the ultimate family car with a lot of room and practical possibilities. The Citroen has achieved this perfectly.

Conclusion

The Citroen Grand C4 Picasso unites all the ergonomic tricks and space saving innovations which have ever been considered in a family car. They have combined them all into one art form. Moreover, the Grand C4 Picasso offers all the luxury, comfort and modern electric features which are in all fairness available in a MPV.

The disadvantage of this is that the Grand C4 Picasso is noticeably large and heavy, which means that this MPV doesn't drive as a people carrier. Moreover the steering is too light, resulting in a reduced

communication between driver and car. This consequently reduces the driving fun. On the other side of this, the Citroen C4 Picasso is one of the most practical, comfortable and above all child friendly cars that there is around at the moment. ■



Specifications

Citroën C4 Grand Picasso 2.0HDi 16V 138hp EGS Exclusive

Size and weight



| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Length x width x height | 459 x 183 x 171 cm |
| Wheelbase | 273 cm |
| Kerb weight | 1.595 kg |
| Trailer | 750 kg |
| Trailer - braked | 1.500 kg |
| Fuel capacity | 60 l |
| Luggage space | 208/1951 l |
| Tyre size | 215/50R17 |

Engine and performance



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|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Capacity | 1997 cc |
| Cylinders / valves | 4/4 |
| Max power | 138 PS @ 4000 rpm |
| Max torque | 270 Nm @ 2000 rpm |
| Drive | front wheels |
| Acceleration 0 - 62 mph | 13.7 secs |
| Top speed | 195 km/h |
| Average mileage | 6.1 l / 100 km |
| Mileage urban | 7.9 l / 100 km |
| Mileage extra urban | 5.1 l / 100 km |
| CO2 emissions | 159 gr / km |

Price

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|------------------|-----------|
| Price | Â£ 21,700 |
| Price base model | Â£ 15,010 |