



Peugeot 108

Charmed

Review | The more expensive the car, the better. More budget means more luxury, more space, more safety and more technology. That's why it is hard to make the best economic car. All small cars cost about the same and therefore offer about the same. Yet, Peugeot found a way to distinguish itself...

A large part of the cost of a car is in its development. That's why Peugeot worked together with Citroen and Toyota on engineering the 108. The three brands developed one car, but each gives the car a unique signature and sells it under its own name.

Looks

To distinguish itself from its business partners as well as from other small cars, Peugeot spared no effort to make the 108 look attractive. That's because producing a beautiful car doesn't have to be more expensive, and many customers choose a car primarily on its looks.

With the 108, Peugeot mainly focusses on female customers. That's why the lines aren't tough (like on the Toyota Aygo) but instead elegant. It gives the 108 an unmistakable French charm that combines beauty with refinement. Do notice stunning details like the tail lights that light up in the shape of a lion's claw (referring to the lion in the Peugeot logo).



To make the package even more irresistible, the car can be customised in many ways. Peugeot offers bespoke sticker sets for the bonnet and bumpers. The wing mirrors can be executed in a contrasting colour and there's a vast array of alloy wheels available. The cabin, and even the keys, can be personalised to suit the driver's taste.

To make sure all this choice doesn't result in chaos, Peugeot offers ready-made packages. For example, the test car has a "Diamond" theme on the outside, while the inside is executed in "Porcelaine". Do bear in mind that this off-white dashboard might look beautiful, but it does cause disturbing reflections in the mirrors.



Trim levels

While focus was on good looks, Peugeot didn't forget

about ergonomics or usability. The space in the front is fine, even for tall drivers. The space in the rear is poor, but that goes for most cars of this size. The boot is small and narrow, yet sufficient for two large shopping bags or one suitcase.

Safety hasn't been forgotten either. Every 108 comes with six airbags, an anti-skid system, ABS brakes (keeps the car controllable during an emergency stop) and a "hill holder" (prevents the car from rolling backwards when driving off on a slope) as standard.



Depending on the trim level items like air conditioning, a light sensor (automatically activates the headlights in the dark), a speed limiter and central locking are available.

The more luxurious versions feature a large touch screen. It is used to control the stereo, reverse camera and mobile phone. Playing music from a USB-stick, iPhone or iPod works flawlessly. Integration with a mobile phone also works well, as long as this is limited to making phone calls.



Mirror Link

However, by using "Mirror Link" the possibilities are supposed to be endless. The output (picture and sound) of an Android phone can be diverted to the screen of the car using Mirror Link. In that way all apps (including satellite navigation) on the phone are supposed to be available in the car. While the idea behind Mirror Link" is good, the reality is that the system is not nearly ready for production at the moment of writing.



For example, it is not possible to listen to the radio while using Mirror Link. On an incoming phone call, all apps are suspended. When the engine stalls, the connection with the phone is lost. If there's no GPS signal, the navigation app crashes. If there's no Internet connection, the navigation app freezes.



Every single time the connection with the phone has to be re-established, the legal terms have to be accepted, the destination has to be entered and the user has to pray that the app won't crash this time. In short: the current version of Mirror Link is absolutely worthless.

Driving

The 108 is available with two different petrol engines: a 1.0- and a 1.2-litre engine. The first has been designed by Toyota, the second by Peugeot. Because of the small difference in performance but the big difference in price, the 1.0-litre engine is expected to become the more popular choice.

The 1.0-litre engine has just three cylinders, while four is more usual. Toyota opted for this technology because it is more efficient to run and build. The downside is that a three-cylinder engine is more noisy

and less refined.



The gearbox ratios have been chosen so that the little engine is lively in city traffic, but also audible. The top gear is long, so that the engine speed on the open road is low. This results in less noise and lower fuel consumption. To encourage the driver to drive economically, an arrow next to the speedometer shows the ideal moment to shift either up or down. An idle stop system reduces fuel consumption in city traffic even further.

According to Peugeot, the 108 consumes an average of 4.5 litres per 100 km in the city and 3.5 litres per 100 km on the open road. When anticipating traffic and driving calmly, these figures can actually be realized. However, in the city the fuel consumption will eventually increase when the idle stop system runs out of energy and the engine is running all the time. Therefore, expect about 5 litres per 100 km in real life.



Handling

The 108 seduces the customer with its good looks, yet during a test drive in Paris it also managed to charm the driver with its nippy handling! It is in a busy city that the 108 can really shine. Visibility is great and the big wing mirrors make it easy to manoeuvre. Steering is direct, which means just a slight turn of the steering wheel suffices to make a sharp corner. This makes the 108 feel even more nimble than it actually is.

The refined underpinning makes the 108 distinguish itself even more. Some small cars have a tendency to "jump" on bad surfaces because of their simple suspension. The 108 keeps its wheels safely on the ground and handles bumps in the roads surprisingly well. At the same time, the suspension is so stable that the 108 feels just as much at home on the open road and easily covers long distances.



Conclusion

When developing a new, small and economic car all manufacturers have to deal with the same limitation: the price. That's why most compact cars in the lowest price segment offer about the same qualities. The Peugeot 108 is no exception: it doesn't handle any worse or better than similar cars from other brands.

Yet, the 108 is more desirable. By splitting development costs with Toyota and Citroen, the 108 can offer a higher spec level (luxury and safety) than average at the same price. This is why the 108 never feels like a cheap or simple car. Instead, the 108 charms with its elegant looks and the ability to customise itself to the customer's taste. ■



Specifications

Peugeot 108

Size and weight



Length x width x height	348 x 162 x 146 cm
Wheelbase	234 cm
Kerb weight	815 kg
Trailer	unknown
Trailer - braked	unknown
Fuel capacity	35 l
Luggage space	196/780 l
Tyre size	165/60R15

Engine and performance



Capacity	998 cc
Cylinders / valves	3/4
Max power	69 PS @ 6000 rpm
Max torque	95 Nm @ 4800 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	14.6 secs
Top speed	157 km/h
Average mileage	3.8 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	4.5 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	3.5 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	88 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 11,095
Price base model	Â£ 8,345