



Peugeot 3008 SUV GT Diesel

Let's take this for a spin!

It's the attention to small details that tells the story of innovative car design. And for the Peugeot 3008 it comes in the unusual shape and size of the steering wheel.

"I love this steering wheel! Why can't they all be like this? I said, taking control of the 2017 European Car of the Year – the Peugeot 3008. "This is brilliant!"

Laughing out loud as I drove away from the Tauranga Peugeot dealers, the brilliant thinking behind the new shaped wheel made for a new tactile driver experience because it removed driver over-reliance on the old, traditional bulky steering wheel.

This was, in a sense, a new driving experience. It felt 'freer' than usual. While it may be a small detail, it sums up the design themes behind the Peugeot 3008

that took it to its 2017 European Car of the Year status.

The innovative and daring design of the 3008 steering wheel confirms something that all driving enthusiasts know: driving should be more than merely getting from A to B.

Cockpit class

The unusual wheel shape opens up the cockpit and places the driver in a viewing position where the vista in view over the bonnet is more open and therefore safer than before, as the steering wheel simply gets out of the way.

Drivers will feel 'air' in the cabin. It provides a happy balance between all the controls and the immediacy of the environment. It is a very clever piece of Euro design that I suspect will become the norm in future with other marques.

At its best, driving is a sensory experience that combines the skills of the driver with the design ideals of the manufacturer. And this is what Peugeot has got so right with its new SUV.

And it is this sense of 'this feels right' in the cockpit that makes the 3008 such an exceptional drive. Among the many features is a front eight-inch screen display that, at last, is easy to use and logical in its layout and interface.

Of particular interest is having the on-screen radio tuning and selection interface, but with a normal tactile volume pot below it. It's the best of old and new! The on-screen rear view and parking-assist graphics are welcome and easy to follow

and use.

The punch tab buttons below the screen make sense immediately and the Tom-Tom navigation is ready to go with a click of a button.

Much of the setting allows for customisation, including separate air conditioning and other controls. I prefer the tactile button push here than fiddling with sometimes under-responsive in-car screens. Peugeot has got this just right.

The small details in the cockpit add up to some innovative thinking that is extended elsewhere in the design and extends to a hands-free tailgate opening for drivers with keys stuck in the pocket while both hands are full of groceries or golf clubs.

One area that took a little getting used to was the gear selector interface. Once the click back and forward motion was sorted we were away and it was simply a matter of getting used to the functionality of another space-saving design feature.

Full customisation of the on-screen display is also standard which allows drivers to have all the car functions and detail exactly as they prefer.

A nifty trick the Peugeot 3008 offers is the lane departure warning/correction. I put it to the test by slightly drifting over the white line and heading towards the barrier on Takitimu Drive. The Peugeot brought me back inside the white line as it took control to ensure the SUV was always inside the white line safety zone. It is a very welcome addition which can be turned off for those who don't want to use this safety feature.

Under the hood

Under the hood the engine is a two-litre, four-cylinder diesel linked to a six-speed automatic transmission. Here too, Peugeot has got the mechanics right, just as it has



with the ergonomics in the cabin. There is smooth power delivery with enough muscle to move when needed without being overly aggressive.

There is a very smooth, almost transparent shift between gears which provides just the right sense of driver awareness that the shift has occurred without the extra clunk of harder gear changes.

In short, it starts and stops with good control and while it may not have the fastest time to 100 kmph, it simply doesn't need it, Peugeot's design hallmark is not blistering speed around the Nurburgring, rather good speed and control on city streets is the performance envelope the Peugeot 3008 is designed for.

It shows both in the numbers and in the attitude taken by the car as it navigates city streets. The 3008 is not a light car, but this also has the benefit of making drivers feel safe (with minimal engine and road noise) and allows them to feel the car is hugging the road while they are more engaged with their surroundings.

Innovation and class

As a European brand Peugeot will appeal to many who value the prestige that comes with all things from the Northern Hemisphere.

But the appeal for the Peugeot 3008 should extend further than to purist drivers and enthusiasts.

There are enough features (not found in other drives) and critically designed elements that enhance the driving experience that should place the Peugeot 3008 on the pre-purchase drive test for anyone in the market for an SUV.

Frankly, the Peugeot 3008 had me from the steering wheel!

By Max Christoffersen

SPECS

Engine: 4-cylinder Turbo BlueHDi
Diesel Engine
Safety: 6 airbags, Active Lane
Departure Warning
Transmission: 6-speed
Power: 133kw (180@3750)
Torque: 400@2000
Top Speed: 207 kmph
Price: \$54,990 (GST incl)
plus on-road costs
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