

# HERE 4 MOTORING

## Peugeot RCZ GT HDi 163

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'GT' STEMS from the Italian phrase gran turismo which pays homage to the custom of the grand tour. In other words the GT badge is meant to represent cars that are able to make fast, long-distance journeys in both comfort and style.

I'm not quite sure the Peugeot RCZ HDi is my idea of a grand tourer. I guess that's because I'm being snobbish. My image of a GT is an Aston Martin Vantage or a Maserati GranTurismo. But in its favour, the Pug is a tiny proportion of the cost of these cars and it does have the traditional GT two-door coupé with a two in the front, two in the back seating arrangement.

Grand tourers differ from typical two-seater sports cars in a few ways: they are typically engineered bigger, and emphasis is often put on luxury rather than unadulterated performance. The RCZ GT HDi 163 has some of these points but the diesel engine is the irregularity. Or is it? Porsche unveiled its big GT – the Panamera Diesel in 2011 and, predictably, it's the most economical Porsche in the entire vehicle range. So even though an oil-burner lump never seems right in a GT, it does actually make sense if you're planning lots of miles. This is where the head starts ruling the heart rather than the other way around.

With that in mind, the Peugeot RCZ GT begins to look like quite a good compromise. For a start, it's a looker, especially after its January 2013 face-lift. It also drives well. Its low body and stiff suspension mean it hunkers down through the bends and it will hit 0-62 in 8.7 seconds, spinning up to 137mph on the straights. Okay, the rigidity of the car does make travelling over pothole-ridden roads rather a filling loosening experience, but comfort is assured for the most part. On top of this, the motor returns over 50mpg. That's what you need if frequently filling up at the pumps isn't your idea of fun on a European road trip.



The athletic Peugeot costs £26,350 if you're determined to buy new. For your money you get beefy 19 inch alloy wheels and an interior sports kit, complete with a flat-bottomed steering

wheel and eye-catching leather seats. The manual six speed gearshift action is precise but the steering column, although adjustable for reach and rake, protrudes too much for my liking.

The cabin of the RCZ is a pleasant place to be for you and your front seat travelling companion. However, as with all 2+2's, you're only going to get the extremely vertically-challenged or, more likely, a pair of toddlers in the rear seats. The boot is a different story; it's gigantic and substantial enough to take



two full sized suitcases and maybe a couple of golf bags. Again, another reason to go for an RCZ if motoring holidays are your thing.

If diesel-power still doesn't float your boat but the rest of the RCZ package does, then there are a couple of petrol versions available – a 1.6 in 154bhp and 197bhp states of tune. But if I were you, and if you really are petrol purist, then go for Peugeot's most rampant RCZ yet – the 260bhp RCZ R. It was launched at the end of 2013 – and delivers thrills and spills like no Pug has done before.

### PROS AND CONS

- Looks ✓
- Performance ✓
- Economy ✓
- Boot ✓
- Steering column X

### FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 137 mph
- 0-62 mph: 8.7 secs
- Combined mpg: 54.3
- Engine: 1997 cc 16 valve 4 cylinder turbo diesel
- Max. power (bhp): 163 at 4000 rpm
- Max. torque (lb/ft): 236 at 2000 rpm
- CO2: 135 g/km
- Price: £26,350 on the road