



TIM BARNES-CLAY

Motoring

HEAD OUT ON THE HIGHWAY

If you like cars, you're on the right page. Check out what our busy motoring editor, Tim Barnes-Clay, has been driving since the last issue.

New Jaguar I-Pace 2018

The slender A-pillars, big windows and panoramic glass roof fitted on the EV 400 First Edition model tested here, create an airiness and a feeling of room everywhere. Three adult passengers can fit in the rear comfortably.

The EV 400 First Edition's boot floor is flat with a cargo capacity of 559 litres. There's also 28 litres of room where you'd typically find an engine. The rear load space bloats to 1,445 litres when the rear seats are folded down.

In First Edition variants the cabin is a mass of wood, leather and aluminium. Despite the bunch of battery cells under the Jaguar's floor, the driving position is exceptional. There's a lot of adjustment in the steering wheel and seat, and the enormous dashboard gives an impression of being inside an old-school long-bonneted Jaguar.

There's decent equipment and tech on the First Edition model, too. The limited run flagship is on sale for one year only and encompasses four-zone climate control, a heated steering wheel and windscreen. The car is also fitted with full leather and sits on 20-inch alloys. The rest of the line-up is named S, SE and HSE spec.

The Jaguar is heavy (2.2 tons), yet it handles with real precision. This makes the I-Pace different to other electric vehicles – meaning it's a game changer for this sector of the automotive industry.

With 400PS and 696Nm of torque on hand from a standing start, the Jaguar I-Pace is fast, with 0-62mph taking 4.8 seconds.

Naturally, there'll always be a bit of 'range anxiety' with an all-electric car, but with a range of well over 200 miles, the I-Pace will easily sort out the needs of most buyers.



Fast Facts

I-Pace First Edition – as tested

Max. speed: 124mph
0-62mph: 4.8 secs
Range: 298 miles
Powertrain: 90 kW/h lithium-ion battery, dual electric motors
Max. power (PS): 400
CO2: 0g/km
Price: £81,495





Fast Facts

A-Class A250 – as tested

Max. speed:

155mph

0-62mph:

6.2 secs

Combined mpg:

45.6

Engine layout:

1991cc 4-cylinder petrol turbo

Max. power (PS):

224

CO₂: 141g/km

Price: £30,240

Mercedes-Benz A-Class 2018

The new A-Class is a classy hatch with one diesel option – the A180d. Then there are the A200 and A250 petrols. All are offered with a seven-speed dual-clutch auto.

The A250 I'm reviewing here gets your juices flowing tastefully. It's got some 'oomph' to it – as you'd expect from a car with a 224PS 2.0-litre lump.

Inside, you feel like a king, with a digital set-up that you'd expect to find in a chauffeur-driven limo. The brand's clever 'Hey Mercedes' voice control responds well to pretty much anything you ask of it.

On the move, the sound the new A-Class makes is gratifying, and it's always eager to please – especially in 'Sport' mode. But the hatchback delivers a calmer experience in 'Comfort' setting, soothing the parts that some other compact cars fail to reach.

The auto 'box can sound strained when you give the Merc the beans, but most of the time it's a smooth operator.

The car holds its own at 70mph, and there's fun to be had when you point it at twisty tarmac. The front-wheel-drive Merc hunkers down, relaxes and then pings you out of the bends accurately and pleasingly. All this makes it an easy hatchback to like. →



"Inside, you feel like a king, with a digital set-up that you'd expect to find in a chauffeur-driven limo."

Fast Facts**Wrangler
Rubicon –
as tested****Max. speed:**

99mph

0-62mph:

10.3 secs

Combined mpg:

35.8

Engine layout:

2.2-litre

4-cylinder diesel

Max. power (PS):

200

CO₂: 209g/km**Price:** £55,000

(est)

**New Jeep Wrangler
2018**

The withdrawing Wrangler's 2.8-litre oil-burner and 3.6-litre petrol unit have been dispensed with. To replace them, there's now a 200PS 2.2-litre diesel and a 272PS 2.0-litre turbo petrol. I tried the diesel in Rubicon semblance.

The engine accommodated in this car comes linked up to an eight-speed auto gearbox, and a 4x4 arrangement with a 4.0:1 low-range gear ratio. It also has heavy-duty



axles and axle lockers. This makes the Rubicon irrepresible when it comes to climbing up, wading through and crossing any kind of territory. It's not rapid on the road, though, with a 0-62mph time of 10.3 seconds. The maximum speed is a lowly 99mph.

Driving the Wrangler is comfortable; it's spacious enough for the driver and passenger, but there isn't a vast amount of legroom in the rear. People who aren't too tall will be contented enough, though, and boot capacity is a decent 533 litres.

The Rubicon four-door 2.2-litre diesel will do a claimed 35.8mpg, but in the real world, I accomplished high 20s mpg. Mind you, this did incorporate off-roading up a steep and muddy Austrian trail, as well as some 'normal' on-road motoring.

The new Wrangler is strongly assembled, and the amended cabin looks like it will survive years of use. But whichever way you cut the cake, the Wrangler isn't meant to be a polished road car – it's an off-roader that just so happens to handle blacktop too.

**Fast Facts****Musso 4x4 auto -
as tested****Max. speed:**

115mph

0-62mph: 12.2

secs

Combined mpg:

32.8

Engine layout:

2.2-litre

4-cylinder diesel

Max. power (PS):

182

CO₂: 226g/km**Price:** £26,245

(exc. VAT)

**New SsangYong
Musso 2018**

Towing is something that the new SsangYong Musso is brilliant at. It's the only pick-up in its segment that can haul a 3.5-ton trailer while carrying up to a ton in the load bed.

Behind the wheel, whether towing or not, the pick-up feels OK – in a straight line at least. The only

fly in the ointment for the Musso is its rear springs. They bounce pugnaciously over ruts, while the soft damping battles to keep the pick-up's frame in check. Things do recover, however, when the vehicle is fully loaded.

The price of the SsangYong makes you forgive its so-so handling. It's cheaper than Mitsubishi's L200 for starters. There are four trim levels

to select, too. What's more, there's plenty of space upfront. And when it comes to rear passenger room, the Musso beats its rivals, with only Nissan's Navara coming close.

Standard on the Musso is a segment-leading seven-year, 150,000-mile warranty. That, more than anything, demonstrates how much faith SsangYong has in its new model.



New Toyota Aygo 2018

All new Aygos come with a fresh choice of alloy wheels and colour schemes. The supermini now also flaunts LED tail lights and LED daytime running lights.

Inside, the instrument cluster has been subtly redesigned, and tweaks have been made to the seat materials. The most noticeable difference, compared with the pre-facelift model, is the new infotainment system. The slick operating seven-inch screen boasts smartphone app integration, giving the cabin a funky character.

Space for the front passenger and driver is good, but the rear seat is poky compared with rivals, such as the Hyundai i10. A minuscule 168-litre cargo capacity also means the Toyota falls behind competitors – notably the VW up! and the Škoda Citigo. These two superminis have 251-litre boots.

So, the Aygo has had a makeover,

Fast Facts

Aygo x-clusive – as tested

Max. speed:
99mph

0-62mph:
13.8 secs

Combined mpg:
68.9

Engine layout:
1.0-litre

3-cylinder petrol

Max. power (PS):
72

CO₂: 93g/km

Price: £13,895

“The slick operating seven-inch screen boasts smartphone app integration, giving the cabin a funky character.”

but it's also had a few changes beneath the metal. Its three-cylinder 1.0-litre non-turbo petrol engine has been updated to conform to the latest Euro 6.2 emissions benchmark. The car also has a little additional clout – up to 72PS.

On the move, the new Aygo is in its element around town. Its featherlight controls and comfortable ride make

it a pleasing car to drive. Away from the urban sprawl, the Japanese supermini is still capable – you just need to work it hard to get up to motorway speeds.

2018's Aygo looks as funky as can be – and that alone will tempt many buyers. The excellent level of factory-fitted kit on all but the basic model is enticing, too.

Suzuki Ignis

Despite its all-wheel-drive styling, the Ignis is only 3,693mm long, yet it does seem roomy enough inside. It's truly comfortable in the rear for two adults, but the front has the best leg and headroom.

I tested the Ignis in 1.2 SZ5 SHVS 4x4 guise. This hybrid version makes use of a belt-driven starter and generator, as well as a second lithium-ion battery. This boosts the car's petrol engine during acceleration. Producing only 90PS, this variant of the Suzuki is no sports car but, because it's so minuscule, everything feels faster than it is.

The Ignis is agile, and with four-wheel-drive added, the Japanese car turns very mountain goat-like, clambering up inclines and muddy trails like said beast in season. The Suzuki's talent for traction transfers to the tarmac, too, with heaps of grip in corners.

With an average fuel consumption of 60.1mpg, and CO₂ emissions of only 106g/km, the 4x4 hybrid version of the Ignis will be cheap to run. →



Fast Facts

Ignis SZ5 SHVS 4x4 – as tested

Max. speed:
103mph

0-62mph:
11.5 secs

Combined mpg:
60.1

Engine layout:
1.242cc 4-cylinder

petrol/electric

Max. power (PS):
90

CO₂: 106g/km

Price: £15,499



Volvo S60

The Volvo S60 offers some of the most accommodating and sumptuous seats on the motoring market.

This four-door saloon's simple-to-use switchgear contributes to an 'in-charge' motoring experience. The general effect is warm and serene, like being in a Swedish house on a chilly evening.

The Volvo's kerbside presence is strong, thanks to an expressive face, powerful horizontal lines at the front and rear, a wide grille, daylight

running lights and LED tail lights.

The S60 D4, mated to a manual six-speed transmission, has oodles of power, with 0-62mph arriving in 7.6 seconds. More importantly, though, the car has a fuel tank that keeps on giving. The official combined mpg is 72.4.

The S60 D4 R-Design, reviewed here, came in Lux Nav trim, so it's at the top of the Volvo S60 range – and the price tag of £34,295 reflects that.

Fast Facts

**S60 D4 R-Design
Lux Nav – as tested**

Max. speed:

143mph

0-62mph:

7.6 secs

Combined mpg:

72.4

Engine: 1969cc

4-cylinder

16-valve turbo diesel

Max. power (PS):

190

CO2: 102g/km

Price: £34,295



Volvo XC90

Staying with Volvo, the XC90 shows off all the qualities that made the original model one of the company's most lucrative cars ever.

On the road, the Inscription D5 PowerPulse I drove unites magnificent handling and luxury with high-class get-you-there competence.

Truly, the dynamic diesel-powered machine has the dexterity of a much lighter and lower car. Also, with a 0-62mph time of 7.8 seconds, it gives an adrenaline rush that's fundamental to driving pleasure.

The oil-burner is quiet, too – with only the slightest wind noise perceptible around the wing mirrors. Of course, if, like me, your home is full of kids, dolls and toy racing cars, then you won't be so concerned about vague blustery sounds. You'll be more absorbed in conveying your little ones in the safest vehicle you can afford. And since the XC90 carries the Volvo insignia, top-notch safety is guaranteed.

The XC90 does it all. It's textbook-perfect for a family; it looks great for business, and it's just the thing for anyone needing a secure, premium SUV for all seasons.



Fast Facts

**XC90 Inscription
D5 PowerPulse – as tested**

Max. speed:

137mph

0-62mph: 7.8

secs

Combined mpg:

48.7

Engine: 1969cc

4-cylinder 16 valve twin turbo diesel

Max. power (PS):

235

CO2: 158g/km

Price: £54,885

“The dynamic diesel-powered machine has the dexterity of a much lighter and lower car.”



Fast Facts

**2.0i SE
Lineartronic –
as tested**

Max. speed:

127mph

0-62mph:

9.8 secs

Combined mpg:

42.8

Engine layout:

1995cc 4-cylinder

'boxer' petrol

Max. power (PS):

156

CO₂: 152g/km

Price: £24,995

Subaru Impreza

The 2.0-litre petrol unit in the latest Impreza isn't the most powerful, but it does the job well enough. The continuously variable transmission (CVT) imitates an orthodox auto's ratios. It works acceptably when cruising but stamp on the gas and the engine whines unpleasantly.

Handling-wise, the Impreza corners with hardly any body lean. The steering is well-weighted, and the grip is extraordinary, due to the car's all-wheel-drive system.

You'll splash out for the Subaru's traction talents, though, when you fill it with fuel. The 2.0-litre variant only returns 42.8mpg. Still, if you want a family sized hatchback, then the Impreza is a safe bet – in more ways than one.

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"It works acceptably when cruising but stamp on the gas and the engine whines unpleasantly."

Renault Megane Sport Tourer

By adding a useful estate body style, Renault has widened the Megane's appeal.

The Dynamique S Nav dCi 110 model, as driven here, houses a 1.5 turbo diesel engine and has a six-speed manual transmission.

The Sport Tourer is more about comfort than out and out performance. 0-62mph is achieved in 11.3 seconds and the top speed is 116mph. It's not quick – but the car's pliable ride makes up for things.

Inside, the large touchscreen is the best toy. It's like an iPad, and you can control features by swiping and pinching the screen.

The Megane Sport Tourer is practical enough for a family of four – and it has good storage areas. What's more, the boot can swallow 580-litres of luggage, and that balloons to 1,695-litres with the rear seats folded down. ■



Fast Facts

**Megane
Sport Tourer
Dynamique S
Nav dCi 110 – as
tested**

Max. speed:

116mph

0-62mph: 11.3

secs

Combined mpg:

76.4

Engine layout:

1461cc 4-cylinder

diesel turbo

Max. power (PS):

110

CO₂: 96g/km

Price: £22,990

