



Citroën Xsara/Xantia

Featuring 2.0HDi diesel engine



WE RECENTLY SAMPLED PEUGEOT'S new 110bhp diesel engine in the 406. Now, a 90bhp version (without charge air-cooling) has been launched for use in Peugeot-Citroën's smaller family cars, as well as the Xantia. We drove both Xsara and Xantia, the former in both hatchback and estate guise, to see how the engine felt and performed.

We commended this new, direct-injection unit with its "common rail" fuelling in terms of noise control, but in the 406, we noted some lower-speed vibrancy, below 1500rpm. We have to report that this characteristic is still evident in the Xsara, but it did seem better suppressed in the Xantia we tried.

Our brief drive precluded the establishment of independent acceleration times (or mpg results), but Citroën's figures for the Xsara indicate that performance is broadly similar to that of the old 90bhp indirect-injection engine, that in its day was hailed as the definitive diesel for medium-sized cars. However, fuel economy is said to be better and, consequently, toxic emissions are reduced, as well. In fact, these days, engine design is increasingly dictated by political rules as much as customer preference.

We reckon the owner of a ZX turbo-diesel is likely to be happy with the overall mechanical refinement of this replacement, except perhaps when trickling along in

fourth below 35mph in city or country-lane use; there's almost a case here for lowering the fourth gear ratio.

There will be no complaints about open-road cruising ability, however – it's very difficult to tell that this is a diesel at all, around 70mph, apart from the fact that the tacho is reading only 2500rpm.

There's a vigorous surge of acceleration if you press the loud pedal insistently well below this; but the turbo-boost on this engine is nicely linear – not "switched on" at any particular point. It revs to 4400rpm or so before an up-change is called for.

Perhaps most important is the low-to-mid-50s overall mpg that can be confidently expected when we have a car back to do our rigorous consumption tests later on – watch this space!

We suspect, however, that the Xsara's excellent bump suppression may be compromised a bit by this diesel installation, with a little more weight in the assisted steering, too. Of course, the Xantia's "gas-and-oil" suspension, with its inherent self-levelling characteristics, remains regally unperturbed by any weight variation.

We look forward to having a car for longer to evaluate it in more depth. Meanwhile, make the LX Xsara a prime candidate if you're looking for a good-value family hatchback or estate. You're unlikely to be disappointed.

FACTS AND FIGURES - 2.0 HDi 90 bhp

	Xsara	Xantia
Engine size	85mm bore x 88mm stroke = 1997cc	
Type	transverse four cylinder with iron block and alloy head	
Valves	belt-driven overhead camshaft actuating two valves per cylinder	
Fuel/ignition	direct-injection diesel with electronically controlled mechanical injection pump and high-pressure common-rail delivery; turbocharger but no-intercooler	
Maximum power	90bhp at 4000rpm	
Maximum torque	155lb ft at 1900rpm	
Mph per 1000 rpm in top	27.8	27.1

