

## Peugeot 205 1.6 Automatic



THERE'S NO DOUBT that its good looks have done the 205 no harm at all – look how closely the latest Fiesta has followed its styling and general size. But the 205 has also charmed the small-car motorist with its winning ways; it feels like a bigger car on the road, thanks to Peugeot's special skills in suspension design.

This Automatic, with a beefy 1.6-litre engine from the GTi (in detuned form) plus the convenience of five doors, makes a bid to meet the everyday needs of the automatic-only devotee. On the road it largely succeeds, although there are minor irritations.

Starting is usually fine from hot, but like some other French cars it invariably stalls the first time you engage Drive from cold; it's best to wait a while. Thereafter, no problems, except that the shift selector positions are not always clear.

The latest ZF transmission sticks to the traditional torque converter, but greater throttle sensitivity and mechanical lock-up arrangements in the quite long-legged top (fourth) ratio, are all inspired to minimise power losses. The test results show that the 'box manages better than this type of transmission did a few years ago, but the stepless CVT offered by Ford and Fiat nowadays is still well ahead in mechanical efficiency.

Our comparison table shows that it's no quicker than a 55bhp 1.1GL manual and a previous test of a

309 manual with this automatic's 80bhp engine proved 2½ seconds swifter from 30 to 70mph. There's a significant fuel consumption penalty, too. Nevertheless, it pleases with its eager and willing response to the accelerator – there's a lot of part-throttle downshifting in traffic and the high top ratio (that cuts out the torque converter slip) doesn't engage at all below 40mph. Unfortunately it disengages again with a jerk on full power, and on hill ascents it tends to 'hunt' between third and top unless you prevent it with the manual override. However, it behaves impeccably in the lower gears and trickles along admirably in jams or around the lanes. Full throttle, on the other hand, produces fireworks – the engine revving in real GTi fashion and the transmission managing a downshift into second, for instance, at 60mph.

Setting aside such esoteric considerations, the 205 is a pleasing automatic car because of its smooth, civilised manners. The power steering option is in character with the 'low-input' philosophy of this version; it certainly enhances both the car's handling response and parking effortlessness. It's not vital, however, as the normal set-up isn't too cumbersome.

The model runs quietly at any legal speed, with no boom periods of unpleasant tyre rumble. It benefits from recent changes to control switchgear, and seating is now very comfortable unless you are

# Living with the 205 . . .

tall. The heating and ventilating deal better with extremes than the times in-between, and although the 205 feels classy and comfortable on the road, its equipment levels and interior trim are not as lavish as some nowadays.

We like this 205 in spite of its shortcomings. It has an unobtrusive proficiency on the road that can't be reduced to statistics, but which nevertheless wins the appreciation of its users.

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## At the Wheel

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### Driving position

Slightly unusual and characteristically Peugeot with well-spaced pedals and a highish wheel, this layout feels fine with familiarity. The seats have better lumbar support than previously and only the lanky will feel restricted by the limited range of adjustments on offer.

### Controls and displays

The Automatic gets the 'lower-range' sparser displays and dials, with no tacho but lots of warning lamps. The fuel lamp proved very accurate, in fact – on permanently when only five litres are left – and the speedo read just 2½mph fast at 70. It's a pity that the hard plastic binnacle creaks a lot. The rotary heater controls and 'wine-gum' minor push-buttons are successful – the latter are helpfully back-lit to help compensate for their being a long stretch down. The auto's selector moves cleanly, but its position marks are hard to see on the wrong side of the lever and its button has to be pressed to get back into neutral – silly.

### Vision

It couldn't be easier to reverse and the mirrors give a good view, too – but why do they have to be so tetchy to adjust? The rear wash and wipe system has no intermittent action, the front blades smear a bit and the washer fluid dribbles back up the screen just as you've

got the glass nice and clear. The headlamps have easy beam trimmers – once you've raised the bonnet. The twin column stalks for lights, indicators and wipers work well.

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## Space & Comfort

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### Seating

If you're tall, you could be in difficulties with the 205 – rear headroom and legroom (though not kneeroom) are its ultimate limitations. However, for the rest, it's a lovely comfortable ride that puts most rivals in the shade. The 50/50 split back seat gives good support on either side, and even the lumpy protrusions under the front seats are no longer a problem for rear passengers' shoes.

### Getting in and out

This was one of the first five-door superminis and it works well for the less agile: there's no three-door automatic at present, in fact. Pity there are no rear door courtesy lamp switches.

### Luggage and oddments stowage

Cargo space is remarkably good. The non-intruding rear suspension is a big advantage and a lowish load sill and rear load deck lamp ease the way. The flat floor has the spare wheel underneath. The luggage is hard to pin down on the slippery floor mat, but the seats fold easily to produce a safe protective barrier between luggage and the front seat backs.

It's a pity that the hard plastic interior oddments spaces are not lined with something soft, though.

### Interior trim and equipment

Citroens are more keenly priced than their Peugeot cousins – this 205 is far from lavish in its equipment inventory and the plastic and paint on view inside give a Lego-like look to the car that contrasts with its sophisticated dynamic manners. The unusual sunroof (£233 extra) provides a big aperture when open, but it's noisy

and impinges on front headroom still further.

### Heating and ventilating

The revised controls are simple to work, but you don't get much airflow from the centre vents when the direction control is set elsewhere. Neither does it take much movement of the temperature knob to make the vents turn warm in sympathy. On the other hand, mid-summer delivery of fresh air is generous – once you've got to grips with the awkward direction vanes. In cold weather, floor heat is well spread, too – back seat passengers even feel the benefit.

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## Safety

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### Accident avoidance

The superb power steering system sharpens the 205's swervability and the final nose drift that sets in at the car's cornering limits is quelled simply by cutting the power. The brakes are a shade over-servoed, but our car seemed to like its Pirelli P2000 tyres, giving a better emergency stop than the 205 Diesel we tested. The brakes do get hot and bothered in perpetual heavy use, however.

### Injury prevention

There's still room for improvement here, with a vulnerable-looking exposed fuel cap outside and an absence of seatbelt height adjustment inside. The rear buckles flop about on the seat, but to their credit, they don't cause mayhem when the seat is folded or reinstated. There's no rear head support and the front head restraints don't lift high enough to provide proper whiplash protection. We're not convinced by wheel boss and facia padding, either.

### Security

Like most hatchbacks, cargo is vulnerable to theft once an intruder has got inside the car. The optional sunroof can easily be released fully, even if it's only initially cracked open, too. There are no interior

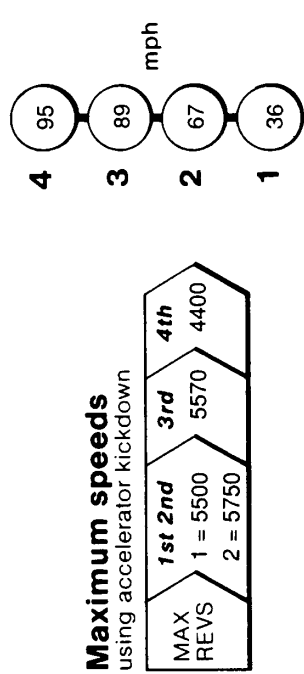
## PERFORMANCE

**Acceleration** in seconds - using kickdown

|                |         |         |        |
|----------------|---------|---------|--------|
| STANDING START | 0-30mph | 0-60mph | ¼ mile |
|                | 4.5     | 14.3    | 20.0   |

|               |    |     |     |     |      |
|---------------|----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| mph           | 30 | 40  | 50  | 60  | 70   |
| THROUGH GEARS |    | 2.4 | 5.5 | 9.6 | 15.1 |

|                       |    |     |     |     |     |
|-----------------------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 20 mph                | 30 | 40  | 50  | 60  | 70  |
| TOP GEAR SPEED RANGES |    | 4.3 | 7.3 | 5.6 | 9.6 |



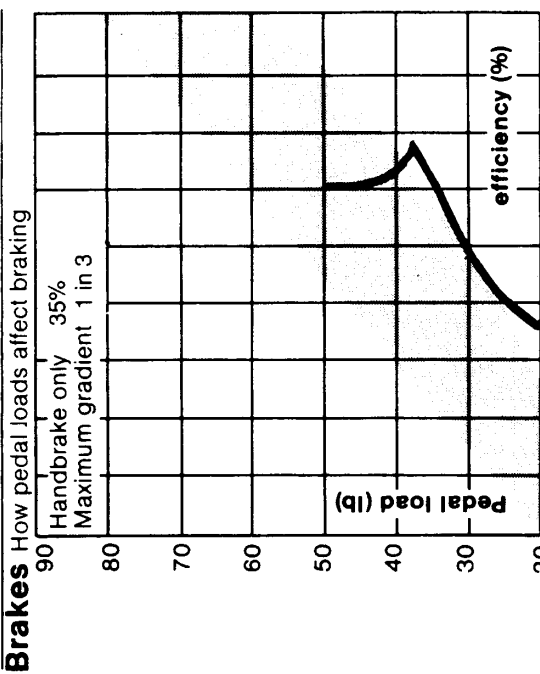
## FUEL CONSUMPTION

Grade for tests: 4 star/97 octane leaded

|                               |                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Normal range</b>           | mpg                 |
| hard driving, heavy traffic   | 28 1/2              |
| short journeys in the suburbs | 25 1/2              |
| motorway - 70mph cruising     | 34 1/2              |
| brisk driving, mixed roads    | 33 1/2              |
| gentle driving - rural roads  | 37                  |
| <b>Typical mpg overall</b>    | <b>33</b>           |
| Realistic tank range*         | 46 litres/335 miles |

\*based on gauge/warning lamp and filling station experience

## SAFETY



### Fade test

How hard use or water affects braking. (Ideal brakes show no change)

**Pedal load needed for 75% stop (lb)**

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| At start of test           | 33 |
| After constant use         | 32 |
| After severe use           | 46 |
| After watersplash          | NA |
| Number of stops to recover | NA |

### Check list

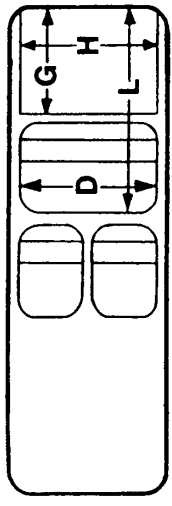
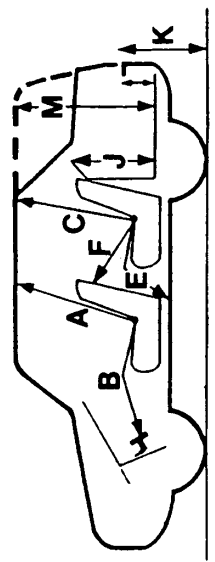
|                        |                        |                                     |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Steering</b>        | true 'feel' of road?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Brakes</b>          | powerful?              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | sensible effort?       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | fade resistant?        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Belts</b>           | front - effective?     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | convenient?            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | two rears - effective? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | convenient?            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Head restraints</b> | front - effective?     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | rear - effective?      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Interior</b>        | thoroughly padded?     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Fuel</b>            | shielded filler?       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | protected tank?        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

## WEIGHTS and MEASURES

**Outside** (ft and in)

|               |              |                |             |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| Kerb weight   | 17 1/2cwt    | Overall length | 12ft 2in    |
| Overall width | 5ft 7 1/2in* | Overall height | 4ft 5 1/4in |
| Wheelbase     | 7ft 11 1/4in |                |             |

\* with mirrors folded



### Inside

|   |            |  |        |
|---|------------|--|--------|
| <b>A</b> Front headroom                     | 36 1/2-38† | <b>G</b> Load length                     | 25     |
| <b>B</b> Front legroom (min - max)          | 34-41      | <b>H</b> Load floor width (min - max)    | 43-50  |
| <b>C</b> Rear headroom                      | 33 1/2     | <b>J</b> Load height                     | 15 1/2 |
| <b>D</b> Rear seat width (between armrests) | 46         | <b>K</b> Sill height (inner/outer)       | 5/24   |
| <b>E</b> Typical rear legroom*              | 36 1/2     | <b>L</b> Load length                     | 49 1/2 |
| <b>F</b> Typical rear kneeroom*             | 27         | <b>M</b> Load height (to tailgate hinge) | 31 3/4 |

† with/without sunroof

\*Typical\* represents the mean measurement behind the driver's seat set at 39in legroom and the passenger's seat set at 41in

releases for the fuel filler or tailgate and you have to check the latter to ensure that it's locked – you can't tell by looking.

## Money Matters

### Value for money

The Peugeot 205 five-door is currently about £500 dearer than its Citroen AX equivalent in the mid-range models. Likewise, the Vauxhall Nova is cheaper, but the Ford Fiesta is even more expensive. Residual values have remained healthy on the 205 and a three-year-old Automatic is worth £550 more than a 1.4GR manual that cost £900 less when new.

### Servicing

Because the engine fills the under-bonnet area it creates some accessibility problems. Dealer maintenance occurs at 15,000-mile intervals for major checks, with an oil change at half-time. An elegant-looking alternator drive belt adjustment is provided and 205 wheel changing is well organised, in the event of a puncture. Pity the tyre valves are so hard to get at though. The warning lamps for brake pad wear and low coolant are reassuring, however.

### Warranty

Although there's a six-year anti-rust warranty, it takes four hours of labour time, charged to the customer, to keep it in force. Similarly, the 12 months' mechanical warranty terms tie the owner to dealer servicing to keep it valid.

### Fuel economy

You really need to compare like with like to spot the consumption (and performance) penalties of the automatic versus the manual

equivalent. This isn't so easy because the 205 doesn't use this state of engine tune in manual 1.6-litre form – only the potent GTi/CTi in 115bhp guise. However, the 309 has this lower-tune 1.6 engine and we obtained 37<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>mpg overall when we tested it in this 80bhp form. Despite all the features designed to minimise losses within the transmission, this 205 can't match the efficiency of the Fiesta or Uno's continuously variable transmissions' efficiency, as our comparison table shows.

Another 205 financial complication is that only 4 star or Super Unleaded fuel quells its tendency to pink quite prominently – we've detected this tendency, despite

handbook blandishments, on other Peugeots recently.

## Durability

The 205 is more devoted to light gauge panels and thinner glass than some of the latest newcomers, but it does have the advantage of subframes, compared with its even more lightweight Citroen cousin. The underbody protection is thorough, and there are also anti-chip coatings on the sills. The front wheelarches are still vulnerable to the accumulation of mud near the headlamps, however. Overall, we would rate its longevity (and reliability) as fair to middling.

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

### ENGINE

**Type and size** front-mounted, transverse 4 in line; water-cooled. 83mm bore x 73mm stroke = 1580cc. Aluminium block and head; 5 main bearings

**Compression ratio** 9.3:1

**Valve gear** belt-driven, single overhead camshaft, actuating two valves per cylinder via bucket tappets (shim adjusters)

**Fuel system** one Weber single-throat carburettor (with automatic cold-start enrichment) fed by mechanical pump from 50-litre (11-gallon) tank; low-level warning lamp. Fuel required: unleaded or leaded, 95 octane minimum (see text)

**Maximum power (DIN-net)** 80bhp at 5600rpm

**Maximum torque (DIN-net)** 97 lb ft at 2800rpm

### TRANSMISSION

**Type** epicyclic four-speed and reverse with hydrokinetic torque converter and lock-up facility in two highest gears

**Gearbox Ratios:** first 2.51, second 1.43, third 1.04, top 0.77 and reverse 2.94:1

**Final drive** 3.82:1 to front wheels

**Mph per 1000rpm** 21.59 in top, 15.97 in 3rd

**Rpm at 70mph** 3240 in top gear

### CHASSIS

**Suspension** front: independent MacPherson damper/struts with integral coil springs and anti-roll bar. Rear: independent trailing arms with transverse torsion bars and anti-roll bar. Dampers: telescopic all round

**Steering** unassisted rack and pinion standard. Power-assisted option on test car, with 3 turns between full locks. Turning circles average 33ft between kerbs, with 46<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>ft for one turn of the wheel

**Wheels** 5in steel with 165/70 R13T radial tyres (Pirelli P2000 on test car)

**Brakes** 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in plain discs front, 7in drums rear with vacuum servo and pad-wear facia lamp

## HOW IT COMPARES

|                             | Engine cap/power (cc/bhp) | Max speed (mph) | 30-70mph through gears (sec) | Fuel overall (mpg) | Brakes best stop (%g/lb) | Maximum legroom – front (in)   | Typical leg/kneeroom – rear (in)                               | Steering turns/ circle (ft)                                   | Overall length (ft/in)              |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Peugeot 205 1.6 Automatic   | 1580/80                   | 95              | 15.1                         | 33                 | 88/37                    | 41                             | 36 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> /27                             | 3/33(p)   | 12' 2"                              |
| Ford Fiesta 1.4LX Automatic | 1392/75                   | 98              | 13.0                         | 36                 | 97/40                    | 41                             | 37 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> /27 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> /33                             | 12' 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> " |
| Peugeot 205 1.1GL Manual    | 1124/55                   | 95              | 15.1                         | 43                 | 96/40                    | 41                             | 36 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> /27                             | 3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> /33 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 12' 2"                              |
| Renault 5 Automatic         | 1397/68                   | 95              | 16.5                         | 36                 | 95/45                    | 39 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 37 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> /25 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 4/33  | 12' 0"                              |

(p) = power-assisted