

Daewoo Matiz

Featuring SE Plus



MATIZ COMPLETES DAEWOO'S modernised model range, weighing in (as usual) at a highly competitive price. Yet it still offers that comprehensive three-year after-sales package that's been especially appealing to private buyers who dislike nasty surprises in service. Indeed, this must be the main reason for considering any new car for £6500-£7000 (rather than a one- or two-year old for the same money), because their low price invariably results in a dearth of space or performance, or both.

The consensus seems to be that this baby Daewoo looks less incongruous than some taller built mini-city cars. Its clever packaging produces a remarkable amount of room for four full-sized occupants – in all directions. The 350 x 150cm length x width outside enables it to negotiate tight traffic and parking slots, as well, aided by an excellent turning circle and alert, effort-free standard power steering.

Where the compromises emerge is in the luggage area. Admittedly, the (unprotected) load sill is low and the tailgate lifts high, with a sturdy, flat deck and a full-size spare wheel beneath. There's no courtesy lamp, however (nor any switches on the rear passenger doors, come to that), and we wish the rear seatbacks weren't just painted

metal and that the load cover rose with the tailgate. The dearth of luggage space is resolved if only two passengers come for the ride, because both the rear seat cushion and backrest are split 60/40, so opening up a really useful flat, L-shaped load area.

The extra pair of rear doors also adds to the convenience, while the higher-than-usual rear cushion is appreciated not only as you get in and out, but because you get a decent view forward, as well. Only limited rear foot entry space complicates things, because once you're installed, legroom is remarkable.

The driving position is surprisingly uncramped, too, with straight-ahead pedals and a well positioned gear lever, although the non-adjustable wheel is set a little high for shorter drivers (to help out the lankier ones?) The level pedals result in too-easy contact with the accelerator when applying the brake, but all are well weighted – the clutch effort is particularly low; the downchange into first and second is a bit notchy, however. There are plans to introduce a clutchless version, but no fully automatic model is on the cards.

Some small cars with strictly limited performance cry out for more cc's under the bonnet; the Matiz isn't like that. It's totally devoid of the poise and agility that make

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PERFORMANCE

Acceleration time in seconds

mph	30	40	50	60	70
THROUGH THE GEARS		2.8	6.9	12.2	21.8
IN 5TH GEAR		8.6	17.8	28†	45†
IN 4TH GEAR		6.0	12.2	19†	29†

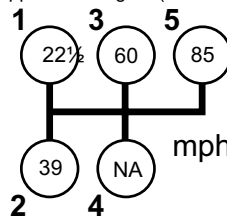
20 mph	30	40	50	60	70
5TH/4TH SPEED RANGES		16.8/12.0		19†/13.4	
			17.8/12.2		27†/17

†approximate figure (see text)

Maximum speeds

REVS PER MINUTE	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
		6300*		NA	5225

* for best acceleration



FUEL CONSUMPTION

Type of use - air conditioning not fitted*	mpg
Urban (17mph average/heavy traffic)	32
Suburban (27mph average/6.4 miles from cold start)	40
Motorway - 70mph cruising	37
Cross-country (brisk driving/20 miles from cold start)	47
Rural (gentle driving/20 miles from cold start)	55
Typical mpg overall	44½

*with air conditioning switched on, consumption will increase by 2–4% in winter and 4–8% in summer

FOR THE TECHNICAL

ENGINE

Type transverse three in line with iron block and alloy head; four main bearings

Size 68.5 x 72.0mm = 796cc

Power 50bhp at 5900rpm

Torque 51 lb ft at 4600rpm

Valves belt-driven single overhead camshaft actuating two valves per cylinder

Fuel/ignition electronic multi-point petrol injection integrated with programmed spark timing. Exhaust catalyser and 35-litre tank, with low-level warning lamp

TRANSMISSION

Type five-speed manual, front-wheel drive

Mph per 1000rpm 16.3 in 5th; 13.3 in 4th

CHASSIS

Suspension front: independent MacPherson damper/struts with integral coil springs; anti-roll bar. Rear: independent trailing links with coil springs. Telescopic dampers all round

Steering rack and pinion with hydraulic power assistance; 3.2 turns between full locks. Turning circles average 9.3m between kerbs, with 14.65m circle for one turn of the wheel

Wheels 4in alloy with 165/65R 13T tyres on test car (steel wheels on SE). Full-size spare

Brakes ventilated discs front, drums rear with vacuum servo; electronic anti-lock control (ABS) optional extra (not fitted to test car)

SAFETY AND SECURITY FEATURES

Assessed on their effectiveness and convenience (the more black blobs the better)

Seatbelts

front ●●○○○ rear ●●○○○

Door locking

central locking? ☒

remote control? ☒

auto window closure? ☒

deadlocks? ☒

Head restraints

front ●●○○○ rear ☒

Interior

safety padding ●●●○○

driver's airbag? ☒

other airbags? ☒

side impact protection ●●●○○

Luggage

secure from interior/hidden from view ●●○○○

Alarm

engine immobilised? ☒

Fuel anti-spillage

●●●○○

☒ standard on test car ☐ factory fitted option ☒ not available

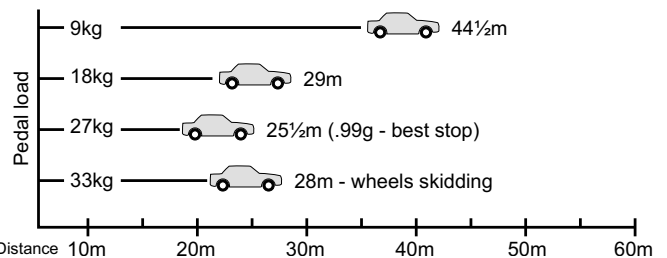
Euro NCAP crash test results - not available

BRAKES

Pedal feel ●●●●○ Behaviour in an emergency ●●●●○ Handbrake ●●●●○

Dry road stopping distance from 50mph (ABS not fitted)

(A good-to-average best stop is about 28m at 20-30kg pedal load)

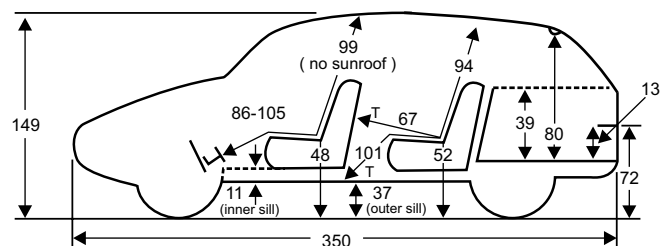


Fade test: pedal load required for a moderate (34m/.75g stop):

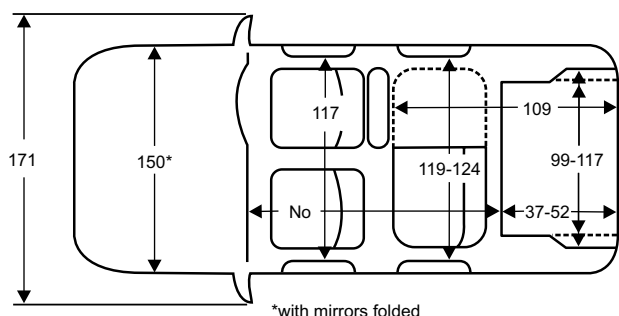
14kg at start of test, 14kg at end of test (Ideal brakes show no change)

MEASUREMENTS

Centimetres



T: typical back seat space behind medium-sized front occupants



*with mirrors folded

Ka or Seicento such fun to drive – indeed, crosswinds or bumpy roads make it feel quite dithery. Instead, Matiz’s soft suspension conspires with its surprisingly thickly padded, comfortable seats, to give passengers a really pleasing time.

Because it’s a three-pot engine, even dual-carriageway speeds seem less vociferous and Daewoo has done very well to keep lower-speed vibrations at bay – they’re often the bane of accelerating three-cylinder cars. In this one, you can pull away smoothly from 23mph in fourth and 30 in top – albeit in leisurely fashion. Certainly, “leisurely” best describes in-gear acceleration – even a modest head-on breeze upsets it.

Fuel economy isn’t totally convincing. The car does well if driven gently, even in suburbia, but higher speeds have dire effects, which is often the case with small engines with short-legged gearing.

One aspect of the Matiz’s dynamics that emerges with distinction is the brakes. They passed all our checks with flying colours and they’re so sensibly servoed that the ABS option isn’t as desirable.

Secondary safety features include twin airbags, but the seatbelts lack height adjusters; there are alternative top mounting holes on the centre door pillars, however. There are no rear head restraints and we reckon the front ones won’t be high enough to provide some tall

occupants with whiplash protection. The bumpers are designed to withstand a hefty parking wallop.

The “Cab-forward” design means Matiz’s underbonnet access is compromised somewhat – so it’s just as well that free servicing for three years or 60,000 miles is part of the very competitive deal. There’s nothing seriously deficient about the cheapest version’s equipment, either, except for central locking, perhaps. Carpet mats and side protection strips are worthwhile accessories for a further £100.

VERDICT

The Matiz SE is a commendably complete little car for a commendably modest price. But then, it has very modest performance and shows no great desire to be hustled round bends, either. It is, in fact, an ultra-compact, reasonably fuel-efficient domestic appliance (albeit a surprisingly commodious one) that’s designed to do the job rather than flatter your ego.

If the Matiz possessed the Seicento’s brio or the Ka’s driving aplomb, or either of these two cossetted passengers with this Daewoo’s roomy practicality, you would have the ideal small car. As things stand, you can only enjoy one set of virtues at the expense of the other – the choice is yours.

LIKES AND GRIPES

Good heating with cooler air to face-level vents	...	but they can’t be individually controlled
Sensible rear wash/wipe controlled by stalk	...	but no rear intermittent wipe
Good radio reception and sound	...	but infuriatingly small control buttons
Nudge-protection strips on painted bumpers	...	but rough paint finish on obscure parts of body
Accurate low-level fuel lamp	...	but no tachometer
Useful facia shelf area	...	but limited oddments space elsewhere

HOW THE MATIZ COMPARES	Engine	Revs at	30-70mph	30-70mph	Fuel	Brakes	Maximum	Typical leg/	Steering	Overall
	cyl/cap/ power (cyl/cc/bhp)	70mph (rpm)	through gears (sec)	in 5th/4th gears (sec)	economy (mpg)	best stop (m/kg)	Legroom - front (cm)	kneeroom - rear (cm)	turns/ (p) circle (m)	length (cm)
DAEWOO MATIZ	3/796/50	4300	21.8	45/29†	44½	25½/27	105	101/66	3.2/9.3(p)	350
Hyundai Atoz	4/999/55	4000	18.9	33.9/25.4	44½	28/18	99	101/62	3.0/9.6(p)	350
Peugeot 106 1.1	4/1124/60	3790	14.1	29.6/20.8	46½	29/27	106	89/64	4.1/9.7	368
Vauxhall Corsa 1.0 12v	3/973/55	3820	19.4	38.5/26.6	50	27/16	104	99/67	4.1/9.8	373
Seat Arosa 1.4	4/1390/60	3180	13.7	25.5/18.0	45	28½/18	105	93/62	2.9/10.1(p)	354
Daihatsu Sirion	3/989/54	3660	19.6	41.1/27.8	47	27½/18*	103	93/66	3.6/9.3(p)	368
					†approximately	*with ABS	(p)power assisted			