



Hyundai Trajet



AT A GLANCE

considering size, price and rivals

Controls/displays	★★★★○
Handling/steering	★★○○○
Comfort	★★○○○
Space/practicality	★★★○○

THE TRAJET RANGE

type and size upper-medium (budget priced) MPV - 7 seater
trim levels GSi only
engines petrol: 4 cylinder/2.0litre/133bhp, V6/2.7/167 due January 2001
 diesel: 2.0 turbo-diesel due April 2001
drive front-wheel drive, 5-speed manual (4-speed adaptive automatic optional)
notable features ABS with EBD, air conditioning, multitude of seating permutations, swivelling front seats, 5 seatback tables, aircraft-style tables, 3 power sockets, numerous storage areas and courtesy-cum-reading lights, RDS stereo with CD player, group 10 insurance rating, 3-year warranty

LIKES AND GRIPES

near accuracy of speedo and tacho
 easy-to-brush-out floors
 tilt-adjustable front head restraints
 rear storage net for oddments
 damped-action handles, trays, drawers

lugging the 23kg seats in and out
 unprotected sills likely to be scuffed
 centre mid seatbelt lap-type only
 obscure switch for rear wash/wipe
 fiddly radio/CD player controls

VITAL STATISTICS (cm)

length x width (inc mirrors)	470 x 218
front - legroom	93-105
- headroom (no sunroof)	99-103
centre - typical legroom	104/92
rear* - typical kneeroom	78/64
- headroom	96/91
- hiproom	143/122
load space (min-max) (litres/cu ft)	300/10.6 - 1845/65.1
load length (seats up/removed)	38/200
load width	122/142
load sill height (inside/outside)	0/60
boot/load aperture height	65/104
*with centre seats fully back	

HYUNDAI RUNS THE GAMUT OF models from Atoz ... and this is the big one. It's the Korean company's first stab at a full-size MPV and rather than innovate, it's chosen to emulate its big-brother relatives.

So it's a conventional seven seater with five of the heavy and cumbersome individual seats folding to form table-tops or lifting out in familiar fashion. Alas, there's no clever Zafira-style back seat folding here. The front "captain's chairs" swivel to face the rear, however, and all three centre seats slide fore and aft. The result is generous kneeroom (though foot space is tight) and it also ekes out space for the two occupants at the back - who are never too cramped, anyway.

There's only one engine at present - an always audible and none too sweet sounding two-litre that's good for about 30mpg overall, but is embarrassingly lacking in acceleration below 3000rpm. Keep the revs well up with plenty of use of the reasonably slick gearchange and progress is more acceptable; and thanks to tallish gearing, it cruises with more decorum. If you regularly travel with a full load, however, consider the (costlier) 2.7 V6 automatic due next January.

On main roads the ride is comfortably cushioned. It's only at lower speeds on patchy B-roads that the suspension feels over-firm, resulting in thumps and jiggles

that can excite a few body vibes. The Trajet's weight and bulk don't encourage exuberant bend-swinging, yet this portly people-carrier has sensibly geared steering and corners with composure if not agility.

With the rear head restraints removed (or seats folded) all-round vision is excellent from the height-adjustable driving seat. Tall drivers will wish for more rearward seat travel, however, and the steering is only adjustable for rake. The instruments and major controls are well sited.

Although the Trajet lacks the quality fit and finish of its costlier competitors, it makes amends with the quantity of its surprise and delight features, many of them listed in our "notable features" section.

With all the seats in place there's only boot space for a couple of squashy bags, but risk a rupture by taking out all the back chairs and you've got yourself a two-seater warehouse on wheels.

VERDICT

Not surprisingly the Trajet lacks the poise and polish of its more expensive rivals, but it also needs improved luggage space adaptability and a sweeter engine with improved low-down pulling power. That said, it offers an awful lot for relatively little and could prove a bargain buy for big families on a budget if, say, a used Galaxy/Sharan doesn't appeal.