

**TEST  
UPDATE**

# Daewoo Espero 1.8CDi



## What's new?

Our long-term test concludes with 20,000 miles covered in 14 months. Minor revisions to current version.

**O**UR MAIN REPORT DETAILED OUR experience over the first three months of living with an Espero. A year later, we have a more complete picture of both the model and how this Korean concern's novel approach to after-sales service work in practice.

Generally, the car has been reliable in all the fundamental areas – the engine, brakes and major mechanical components have all performed faultlessly. However, some trim and equipment items have played up. Below, we update the story.

## SERVICE LOG

### Faults and failures beyond 1400 miles

By 3500 miles apart from wipers that park “high” occasionally, no further problems experienced.

At 7000 miles the central locking relay started ticking, seven or eight times after the key was turned, although everything locked straight away.

At 10,000 miles the car had its service (collected and returned on time) and a new relay was fitted to the central locking.

By 14,000 miles this central locking problem had returned, with occasional unwillingness for one or another door sill button to respond to the key (this could leave the car unlocked overnight, if you couldn't see in the dark). Also, the gear lever surround was beginning to unfasten itself from the rear of its housing; it tends to creak less like this, however. Our car's heater direction control developed a momentary delay in opening the floor flaps, from about this time; as it never failed, we decided to live with it.

A potentially more serious fault that we spotted in time was that a weak spring clip almost allowed a coolant pipe (to the expansion jar) to come adrift. Simply replacing it with a jubilee clip proved a stitch in time – it could have been messy and more serious if it had popped off.

By 17,000 miles the continuing central locking problems (despite Daewoo's local attempts to remedy on two previous occasions) plus increasing radio interference resulted in a courtesy replacement car and a thorough investigation at the nearest fully-fledged (non-Halfords) service centre at Norwich, 70 miles

away. A week later, the car was returned cured – with modified, more-powerful door solenoids and a replacement radio/cassette player.

Around this time, we had trouble with the bonnet lock, however. What happens is that water and grit drain down to the latch, from the bonnet flanges and jam it up (it's sited at the lowest point), before dripping on to the road. It's easy to solve by greasing and is listed in the service schedule for attention every 10,000 miles – clearly, it shouldn't be missed.

As we part company with the Espero at 20,000 miles, we still live with gear lever and rear window rubber seal creaks, one of the wiper arms is shedding its paint, and we note that the boot lid has a tendency to make contact with the bumper's top edge. Otherwise, the car is going better than ever.

As far as we're concerned, Daewoo's after-sales care is limited only by the fact that more complicated, non-routine attentions may be beyond the scope of the local Halford's-based branch. Real Daewoo expertise can be thin-on-the-ground in some areas. However, the company has never proved other than courteous and willing to honour its advertised customer-care charter. It certainly takes the hassle out of any problems that do arise with the cars, although obviously it would be even better not to have run into these faults and failures in the first place.

When the car reaches three years of age (or 60,000 miles) you have to pay your own way, of course. Yet even here, the portents look reassuring – the biggest (every 40,000 miles) do, which includes a new camshaft belt, adds up to a reasonable £150 and Daewoo's parts'

prices are on a par with Ford at present; they don't come any cheaper than that, we can assure you. No wonder, then that the Espero 1.8CDi attracts a Group 6 insurance rating – four cheaper than a 1.8 Vectra.

#### VERDICT

The Espero 1.8CDi is never at its best around bumpier country roads, and it takes a hot muggy, day, the whole family aboard and a longer main road trip to see it in its most favourable light. With over 35mpg attainable, it offers unmatched creature comforts at the price, at such times. Cruising along at 70 in sublime hush, with all the windows up and those behind commenting that it's such a nice day, the owner-driver will begin to totally reappraise his motoring priorities.

PS: The car has now had its 20,000-mile service, and just as it leaves us, that gear lever squeak has been cured!

#### RECENT ESPERO REVISIONS

##### – 1996 models

- Twin washer jets replaced by four-shot ones
- Door mirrors now fold flush with body flanks
- Indicator repeaters on front wings revised
- Rear light housings in boot less vulnerable
- Gear lever surround modified
- Better RDS radio

