

Daihatsu Applause

Featuring 16GXi



WHILE IT WAS DOING VERY NICELY with its supermini Charade and chunky Fourtrak and Sportrak off-roaders, Daihatsu needed a medium-sized, five-door family hatchback to fill a significant gap in its range. Enter the Applause – aimed squarely at the likes of the Ford Escort/Orion, Peugeot 309 and Rover 200-Series.

There are three mechanically similar versions on offer: 16L, 16Xi and 16GXi. All are powered by a 1.6-litre, 16-valve, overhead-cam engine, driving the front wheels through a five-speed gearbox.

At just under 14ft long (although it scarcely looks it at the kerbside), the Applause offers not only neat, well-appointed accommodation for four to five occupants, but also provides a spacious boot, 50/50 split-fold back seats and hatchback versatility – even though the car is a prestigious looking saloon.

On the road

Fuelled by a twin-choke carburettor, the 16L produces

a respectable 91bhp at 6000rpm, while electronic multi-point fuel injection boosts power on the Xi and GXi to 105bhp at the same revs. The injected engine develops 99 lb ft of torque – 3 lb ft more than the 16L – although this occurs at what appears to be a rather peaky 4800rpm compared with 3500rpm for the carburettored car.

With the fuel injection comes a lambda sensor and a three-way catalytic converter as standard. As with all cars so equipped, this dictates a strict diet of unleaded fuel only. The 16L accepts either leaded or unleaded without adjustment.

Up to 4000rpm the Applause is a willing and generally refined performer, but although the engine remains sweet-sounding and silky, it becomes noticeably more audible when worked hard or when revved to the red-line.

Daihatsu doesn't make any great claims for the Applause, seeing the 16GXi as more of an Orion Ghia than an XR3i, for example. We agree, but it *is*

impressive in both performance and economy – as our comparison chart shows. True, it's no hot-hatch tear-away, but then it doesn't have the rock-hard ride that tends to go with that sort of sporty machine, either.

In fact, we were rather taken with the Applause's blend of ride and handling, with all but the worst bumps well-cushioned without any undue crashing or wallowy float. It's a car that will suit a lot of drivers well, but not the enthusiast. The steering assistance is rather overdone, so there's a lack of useful feel of the road, and the car rolls a fair bit when it's pressed – despite there being anti-roll bars front and rear. The effects of sidewinds are felt quite markedly, too.

Like a good many Japanese cars, the Applause has a neat fascia and instrument display, light and easy controls, and a driving position that feels spot-on, right from the word go. We wish that the steering wheel wasn't quite so thin and hard, though.

Driving is made all the easier by a smooth, light clutch and a slick gearchange, but unfortunately the responsive throttle and taut driveline can cause jerkiness in stop/start town traffic.

Inside story

Inside, the Applause makes a good first impression. Surprisingly, even our well-built 6ft 3in driver was happy with both headroom and seat travel, although most of our team agreed that the tweed-covered seats could do with either adjustable lumbar support or better backrest shaping. Also, a longer seat cushion or a tilt facility, to improve thigh support for taller drivers, would be welcome.

Although not quite as roomy, the back seat is no less comfortable, with headroom and kneeroom both just sufficient for a pair of six-footers – three at a pinch. There's no centre armrest, but there are individual, height-adjustable rear head restraints and, as a bonus, the rear seat backrests have individual click-stop recline adjustment, too – a rare but useful feature.

The GXi is well equipped with items such as central locking, alloy wheels, two-tone paintwork, electric windows (front and rear) and door mirrors. Power steering with a tilt-adjustable steering wheel is also standard, as are height-adjustable upper seatbelt mounts and a stereo radio/cassette player. The only options listed are an electrically operated tilt-and-slide sunroof and automatic transmission (Xi and GXi only).

Height under its self-lifting load cover is somewhat restricted, but the boot appears to be far roomier than the quoted 11.8cu ft suggests. According to Daihatsu, the wide, flat load area behind the back seats is capable of swallowing no less than four sets of golf clubs – we've yet to put that particular claim to the test.

VERDICT

The Applause is a welcome addition to Daihatsu's expanding range. It's a worthy contender in the high-volume (and highly competitive) sector of the market and, while it doesn't break new ground in any particular area, it proves an impressive all-rounder. We especially like its combination of saloon car looks and and five-door hatchback practicality, not to mention its decent-sized boot.

The name? Well, that's another matter.



PERFORMANCE

Acceleration time in seconds

STANDING START	0-30mph	0-60mph	1/4 mile
	3.2	9.7	17.3

mph	30	40	50	60	70
THROUGH THE GEARS		1.8	3.8	6.5	9.9
IN 5TH GEAR		6.1	12.1	18.4	25.5
IN 4TH GEAR		4.5	8.8	13.3	18.6

20 mph	30	40	50	60	70
5TH/4TH SPEED RANGES		12.2/9.2		12.3/8.8	13.4/9.8
			12.1/8.8		

Maximum speeds

REVS PER MINUTE	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
	31	3350 *	6580	5430	5430
	111	78	56	110	111

* for best acceleration

FUEL CONSUMPTION

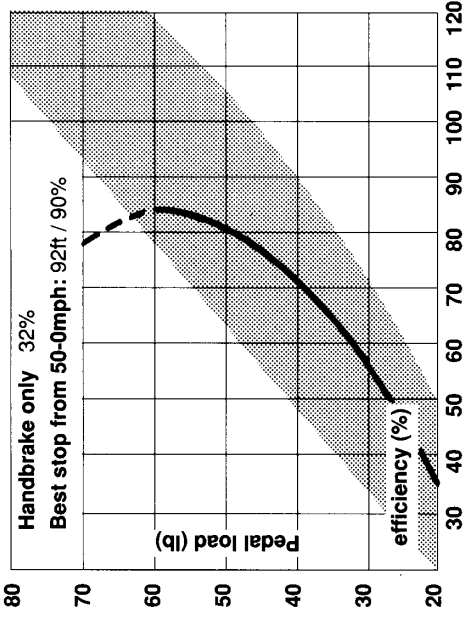
Fuel grade for tests: 95 octane, unleaded

Normal range	mpg
Hard driving, heavy traffic	29 1/2
Short journeys in the suburbs	32 1/2
Motorway – 70mph cruising	37
Brisk driving, mixed roads	37 1/2
Gentle driving – rural roads	44
Typical mpg overall	37 1/2
Realistic tank range *	38 litres/310 miles

* based on gauge/warning lamp and filling station experience

SAFETY

Brakes How pedal loads affect braking



Braking efficiency shown as a percentage of gravity (ie 100% = 1.0g)
Ideally the braking curve should fall within the shaded zone of this graph. If it's above, the brakes are too heavy; if it's below, they are too light – particularly on cars without ABS. When the curve becomes broken, the wheels are skidding.

Fade test

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

Pedal load needed for 75% stop (lb)

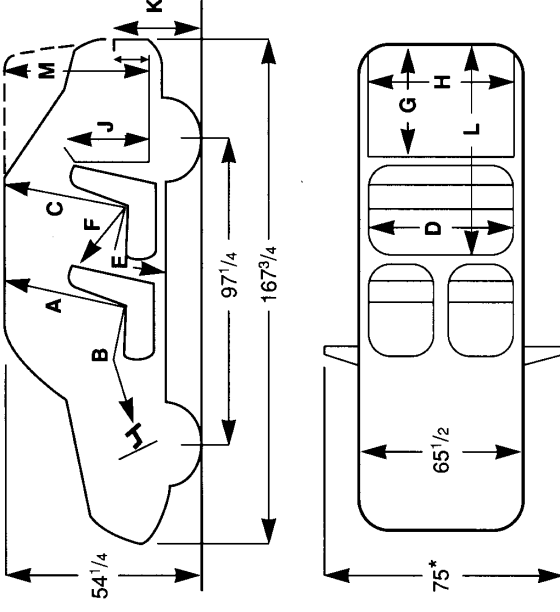
At start of test	38
After constant use	40
After severe use	47
After watersplash	NA
Number of stops to recover	NA

Safety check list

Steering true 'feel' of the road?	☒
Brakes powerful? sensible effort? fade resistant?	☒ ☒ ☒
Seatbelts front – effective? convenient? rears – effective? convenient?	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
Head restraints front – effective? rear – effective?	☒ ☒
Interior thoroughly padded?	☒
Fuel shielded filler? protected tank?	☒ ☒

MEASUREMENTS

Dimensions (inches)



* mirrors don't fold

Kerb weight in lb (full of fuel)

Inside (inches) A Front headroom	38	G Load length	36 3/4
B Front legroom (min - max)	34-42	H Load floor width (min - max)	39-52 3/4
C Rear headroom	34 1/4	J Load height	17 3/4
D Back seat width (between armrests)	48 1/4	K Sill height (inner/outer)	7 1/4/25 1/2
E Typical rear * legroom	39 3/4	L Load length	63
F Typical rear * kneeroom	28 1/2	M Load height (to tailgate hinge)	32 1/2

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

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

ENGINE

Type and size front-mounted, transverse 4 in line; water-cooled. 76.0mm bore x 87.6mm stroke = 1589cc. Aluminium alloy block and head; 5 main bearings

Compression ratio 9.5:1

Valve gear single belt-driven overhead camshaft actuating four valves per cylinder via rockers

Fuel system Nippon Denso (Bosch) electronic multi-point fuel injection with three-way closed-loop catalytic converter and lambda sensor. 50-litre (11-gallon) tank; no low-fuel level warning lamp. Fuel required: 90 octane minimum, unleaded only

Ignition system fully programmed electronic, integral with fuel injection, via coil and distributor

Maximum power (DIN-net) 105bhp at 6000rpm

Maximum torque (DIN-net) 99 lb ft at 4800rpm

TRANSMISSION

Clutch 7.1in diaphragm-spring, dry-plate; cable-operated. Pedal load/travel: 27 lb/5¹/₂in

Gearbox 5-speed manual (all synchromesh) and reverse.

(Automatic transmission optional on 16Xi and 16GXi.) Ratios: first 3.09, second 1.75, third 1.25, fourth 0.92, fifth 0.75 and reverse 3.14:1

Final drive 4.27:1, to front wheels

Mph per 1000rpm 20.4 in top, 16.7 in 4th

Rpm at 70mph 3430 in top gear

CHASSIS

Suspension front: independent by MacPherson damper/struts, coil springs, lower wishbones and an anti-roll bar. Rear: independent by MacPherson damper/struts, coil springs, twin lower links and an anti-roll bar. Dampers: telescopic all round

Steering power-assisted rack and pinion with 3.8 turns between full locks. Turning circles average 31¹/₂ft between kerbs, with 56ft for one turn of the wheel

Wheels 6J x 14 cross-spoke alloy standard on GXi (steel spare), with 185/60R14 82H tyres (Dunlop SP Sport D87M on test car)

Brakes 7.4in ventilated discs front, 8.0in plain discs rear, with vacuum servo



HOW IT COMPARES

(all five-door models)

	Engine cap/power (cc/bhp)	Maximum speed (mph)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	Fuel economy (mpg)	Brakes best stop (%g/lb)	Maximum legroom – front (in)	Typical leg/kneeroom – rear (in)	Steering turns/ circle (ft)	Overall length (in)
Daihatsu Applause 16GXi	1589/103	111	9.9	25.5/18.6	37 ¹ / ₂	86/60	42	39 ³ / ₄ /28 ¹ / ₂	3.8/31 ¹ / ₂ (p)	167 ³ / ₄
Citroën BX 16TGS	1580/94	105	11.5	27.0/18.0	37 ¹ / ₂	83/35	43 ¹ / ₂	42/31	4.5/33 ¹ / ₂	166 ¹ / ₂
Honda Concerto 1.4GL	1396/88	103	12.7	32.4/23.2	34 ¹ / ₂	86/32	42 ¹ / ₂	38 ¹ / ₂ /27 ¹ / ₂	3.4/34 ¹ / ₂ (p)	168
Mitsubishi Lancer 1.5GLX	1468/74	96	15.9	33.7/24.2	35 ¹ / ₂	95/70	42	37 ³ / ₄ /29	3.0/33 ¹ / ₂ (p)	166 ³ / ₄
Peugeot 309 1.6GRi	1580/113	118	9.2	22.3/16.0	32	85/45	41 ¹ / ₂	38 ¹ / ₂ /27 ¹ / ₂	3.3/34 ¹ / ₄ (p)	159 ¹ / ₂
Rover 214Si	1396/95	106	12.1	31.1/21.1	35	90/38*	42	39/28	3.5/34 ¹ / ₂ (p)	166 ¹ / ₄
* with optional ABS									(p) = power assisted	



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

ENGINE

Type and size front-mounted, longitudinal 4 in line; water-cooled. 78.0mm bore x 83.6mm stroke = 1597cc. Iron block and aluminium alloy head; 5 main bearings

Compression ratio 9.4:1

Valve gear twin belt-driven overhead camshafts actuating four valves per cylinder via inverted bucket tappets with hydraulic lash adjusters

Fuel system Nippon Denso (Bosch) electronic multi-point fuel injection, three-way closed loop catalytic converter and lambda sensor. 45-litre (9.9-gallon) tank; no low-fuel warning lamp. Fuel required: 91 octane minimum, unleaded only

Ignition system distributorless, fully programmed electronic, integral with fuel injection

Maximum power (DIN-net) 114bhp at 6500rpm

Maximum torque (DIN-net) 100 lb ft at 5500rpm

TRANSMISSION

Clutch 7.9in diaphragm spring, dry plate; hydraulically operated. Pedal load/travel: 27 lb/5in

Gearbox 5-speed manual (all synchromesh) and reverse.

Ratios: first 3.14, second 1.89, third 1.33, fourth 1.00, fifth 0.82 and reverse 3.76:1

Final drive 4.30:1, to rear wheels

Mph per 1000rpm 18.72 in top, 15.22 in 4th

Rpm at 70mph 3740 in top gear

CHASSIS

Suspension front: independent by unequal length wishbones, concentric coil spring/dampers, anti-roll bar. Rear: unequal length wishbones, concentric coil spring/dampers, anti-roll bar. Dampers: gas-filled telescopic all round

Steering power assisted (engine speed-sensing) rack and pinion with 2.7 turns between full locks. Turning circles average 31ft between kerbs, with 39³/4ft for one turn of the wheel

Wheels 5JJ x 14 seven-spoke alloy with 185/60R14 82H tyres (Dunlop SP Sport D89 exclusive fitment). Spare: T115/70D14 88M (Bridgestone Tracomp-3) compact

Brakes 9.3in ventilated discs front, 9.1in solid discs rear, with vacuum servo