



Independent Editorial Report

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FAMILY VIEW

Toyota Yaris

SPACE – THE FINAL FRONTIER

Toyota's new Yaris is a car that really gets people talking. June Neary finds out why...

A Family View - Will It Suit?

Like most people in the thirty plus age group, as a child I was fascinated by the sci-fi series Doctor Who. Thankfully, none of that scary stuff could break the force field that kept my big brother and I safe from harm behind Dad's armchair. Having said that, even the greatest amount of imagination couldn't make the corner of the living room spacious and comfortable like the Doctor's Tardis. As we grew, and viewing conditions became even more cramped, we admitted defeat and watched from the settee. After all, you just can't make something that's small on the outside and big on the inside.

Those were the days of black and white and it was probably then that car manufacturers first began working on making the 'Tardis' concept a reality. Today, Toyota has crossed the final frontier - enter the latest second generation Yaris.

For me, interior space is a top priority when choosing a car and that would probably be the case no matter what my lifestyle involved – it's not just important for mums with a couple of kids and a dog to find room for. In fact, it's a major issue whether you're a business woman with a load of kit to haul around, or simply run-of-the-mill like me. (A shopaholic, chocaholic married to a tall football playing bloke who can rarely find enough leg/headroom. We've also been blessed with the standard 4.2 feline companions to transport to the vet, etc.) Having said all that, most of us don't want to nip down to the chippy in something that resembles a small house, either.

If you're wondering if there's a point to all this rambling, the answer is yes; and you'll understand when you step inside the latest Toyota Yaris. This car offers all the advantages of a tiny Citycar – low fuel consumption, ease of parking, cheap insurance groupings and low purchase price – with all the benefits of a larger, faster modern Supermini. I probably don't have to tell you that a Yaris would definitely suit my needs.

The Practicalities

Give me a car for a week and within a couple of days the back seat will be lost under a sea of things that could just be useful – various tapes, CDs, food, drink (alcohol-free of course), spanners, sinks, things for recycling, etc. In fact, I like to think of a car's rear seating area as a handy extension of my handbag – but not in the Yaris. With tons of storage space, over 15 litres, lots of cubbies hidden around the cabin and a good-sized split-level glovebox, I turned into Mrs Tidy Car.

Despite the 11cm growth in overall length in its latest incarnation, the Yaris is still shorter than the latest generation of larger superminis such as the Fiat Grande Punto and the Renault Clio. Part of the reason why these cars are so large is compliance with pedestrian impact legislation which is adding a few centimetres to the nose of many cars. The Yaris gets round this one by arcing the bonnet high over the unyielding mechanicals to provide a deformable surface.

This means that despite being shorter on the outside, the Yaris is competitive in terms of interior space and easy to park at the same time. Fold the EasyFlat rear seats down and you're treated to the largest stowage area of any supermini. This system allows the rear bench to be split 60:40 and both sections to slide independently. Therefore it's possible to transport long, bulky items without impinging on a rear passenger's legroom allowance.

Behind the Wheel

On the road the car's 1.0-litre VVTi (Variable Valve Timing intelligence) petrol engine is both lively and economical. Toyota say the Yaris can reach a top speed of 96mph and achieve 0-60mph from rest in around 12 seconds. There are also 1.3-litre and 1.8-litre petrol units and a 1.4 D4-D diesel option. With keen fuel economy,





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low inertia and low emissions, the 1.0-litre I tried is a better choice than the diesel for the urban sprawl and crawl. Marry that to Toyota's claim that the Yaris has the tightest turning circle of the whole supermini set and you have a very agile and wieldy city scoot.

As I climbed into the driver's seat for the first time I was teleported back into sci-fi land. The rather unconventional fascia looks removed from the supermini norm, with a 3D effect on the main display. More conservative buyers may find it a bit Buck Rogers but it's certainly distinctive.

On the road, the Yaris lives up to Toyota's promises – it handles safely and competently.

Value for money

At prices that start from around the £9,000 mark, there's no denying that this car offers excellent value for money. Buyers have the option of five doors, and all variants come with impressive equipment levels – just like a larger car. Keyless ignition features on plusher models as well as climate control and a trip computer.

The Yaris is also covered by the company's comprehensive three-year warranty.

Could I Live With One?

This is a car that's a real charmer and on top of all of its other attributes, it looks good. Yes, I could live with one – and we'd be very happy together.