

Wheels: Jaguar Can't Match Citroen's Spacious New Sedan

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This sporty new Citroen offers luxury features like sat nav and sun blinds while minimizing the sticker price.

Editor's note: Wheels is a section featuring car reviews.

The size of a trunk is extremely important, especially if you have a growing family, like me.

And so it is disappointing that so many hatchbacks and sedans are lacking in this area. Even the Jaguar XJ, while having a seemingly long trunk, does not have the necessary depth for bulky items. It is therefore refreshing to find that the Citroen C5 has a cavernous trunk, large enough to swallow a cumbersome tandem stroller, as you can see in the video. I am impressed.

Facts at a Glance

2.0 HDI 16V Exclusive
(160bhp) (Techno Pack) 4d
Auto

Price range: 799,000
to 1,829,000 rubles
(\$25,098 to \$57,452)

Specifications

0- 100 kph: 9.7
seconds

Top speed: 209 kph

Power: 160 bhp

Economy: 19 kpl

Source: Citroen

Externally, the car's rear doesn't look ugly either. In fact, on approaching it early one morning, from the side it looked like a Mercedes C-class thanks to the similar styling. It is also helpful that the rear seats split and fold as well as featuring a useful hatch for long, awkward items to run the length of the car. When I tested the Jaguar XJ last week, I was surprised that the car didn't have split-fold rear seats, owing to the fact that they were electrically adjustable.

My eyebrows remain suitably raised when I open the doors of the C5 and find the rear windows fitted with sun blinds that easily pull up and down. They effectively shield little passengers Harriett and Heidi from the bright sunshine that has finally decided to appear during the road test.

Inside, there is a feeling of being fairly low to the ground thanks to its stance on the road, helping it feel quite sporty. It does seem to be quite a wide car, and despite possessing reasonable spatial awareness, I find maneuvering it a little tricky, although I'm still able to parallel park into a fairly tight spot without trouble, which might be handy for Russian motorists having to negotiate tight spots especially in heavily congested Moscow.

I do suffer from a bad back, and when I tested the Jaguar XJ last week, I foolishly over-used its seat massage function, which has subsequently resulted in severe back pain. This experience has made me even more critical of driver's seats. The electrically adjustable and heated one in the Citroen could do with a better lumbar support, but that's my only complaint.

The C5 is a capable family car and provides a comfortable ride. However, it is also quite a sporty sedan thanks to a sports-mode function, which provides a more punchy performance while its sports suspension switch hardens the ride. The six-speed automatic transmission can also be used as a manual for greater driving pleasure.

A little way into the test, I realize that the striking steering wheel rotates around a fixed column complete with cruise control and radio functions. This takes a little getting used to, especially if lazy hands rest on it. I have not driven another car with such a unique steering wheel. It's a good idea because, for instance, in my wife's old Fiat Punto, if you're going around a roundabout and want to turn the volume down it can be tricky with the steering

wheel mounted controls invariably being upside down. The C5 is also equipped with all the luxuries today's motorists would expect including satellite navigation, all around electric windows and air conditioning. The rear window coated in early morning dew does take a long time to de-mist.

Motorway cruising is made easy by cruise control, which keeps the set speed within 2 or 3 kph, regardless of incline. Over long distances, the adjustable front center armrest provides added comfort for the driver and front passenger.

Externally, when savoring the stylish C5 from the side, there are the smallest welcome hints of the past from the distinctive CX, SM and GS models of the '70s and '80s. Good design does draw on the past, in my opinion.

Overall, this economical diesel is a competent performer, and that cavernous trunk scores very highly with me.

Read more reviews at testdrives.biz. Contact the author at bizreporter@imedia.ru

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