



Citroen C4 VTS An owners review

C4 VTS with all the trimmings!

Goon, 20 August 2007

My car is a 35,000 miler with full leather, panoramic sunroof, front and rear reverse sensors, Sat Nav and phone. It has every option fitted to it except the lane departure system. It also has FSH I paid (No word of a lie) £7,000 for it. The catch? Yep, its a Cat D car. It had sustained a minor front ender damaging the front lights, bonnet, bumper etc as well as a minor side. The front has been repaired to perfection, the side needs re doing but is passable.

The truth of the matter is that I would never be able to afford such a car had it not been a Cat D and being somewhat handy and having a full garage at my disposal, I took the plunge. Cat D cars are ones that have sustained minor damage that is repairable but not economically viable. They have an advantage in that they are worth approximately 2/3 to 3/4 of the normal market values but the bad news is that they are no longer covered by warranty and if you are considering buying one, make sure you inspect it thoroughly first. Cat D cars do not need to undergo a VIC test.

So what about the car? It drives extremely well and I have now covered approximately 3,500 miles in it. The engine is responsive but due to the variable valve timing, needs to be worked hard. The good news is that after about 30,000 miles, the engine loosens up well and improves with age.

Less satisfying is the infuriatingly poor gearbox. The change is long and sloppy and the lack of a sixth gear is a real oversight. This hinders progress from a standing start but I have found changes from third upwards much more rewarding. The lack of overall power from the engine means a comparatively slow 0-62 time but much of this is down to the box. If a quick shift kit becomes available, it would be a highly recommended modification!

Suspension and road noise are acceptable on smoothish roads but the set up is hard and can be a little crashy on country roads. On the plus side, the steering is both communicative and responsive. I am impressed with the way it handles but it is rather willing to understeer too quickly if I am too heavy with the accelerator coming out of bends.

The optional extras that my car came with have been a mixed blessing. The seats are comfortable but a little soft and I have noticed a hard edge under my backside and it is apparent, to a lesser extent, on the passenger one. The leather is of good quality but given that the dash and door cards are finished in black, everything can get a little dark. The panoramic sunroof is one option I would strongly recommend is left off the option list. On hot days, the car will roast if left open but if it is left closed, the lining expands and it is impossible to open fully. More impressive is the Sat nav system. It is relatively easy to use and can be controlled from the wheel. The display is good and the directions clear. However, road names are said in a female version of Stephen Hawkin's voice and are a constant source of amusement, especially when saying "Boongate" in Peterborough! More frustrating is the phone, which is really best suited to receiving calls as the directory navigation is fiddly and frustrating. My car is also fitted with an appalling 5 CD changer, located (In Citroen DS style) in the arm rest. It is infuriating to use from the steering wheel controls and will



happily take an age to load up a CD and then skip is you try to do a forcable gear change. In addition to this, the actual rest has taken to sliding forward on its own accord every time I brake hard. I have fixed this by wedging in a couple of Lottery scratch cards which seems to be doing the trip.

In addition to the above, several other niggles have made themselves known. Firstly, the key fob no longer fully closes. The driver's side change drawer has lost its spring, the passenger side seatbelt continually tells me no one is sitting there, even when my wife is. Also, the doors are impossibly wide and the alloys are very easy to scratch.

So, what do I think of it? Honestly... I love it! It is a true quirky Citroen! Its one of those cars that you just can't stop looking at. When I pull up at my gym, I am surrounded by BMWs and Audis and I love the fact that no one has got one. I also think that the headlights are a work of genius (Even if they do look a bit Dame Edna-ish). The folding mirrors always make me smile when you hear small kids go 'woooah' when they see them. They are also a great reminder of whether you remembered to lock it. Would I recommend one? Yes. There are faster, better made hot hatches out there but most smack of a little 'Chav' and lack class.

Posted by: Goon