



Citroen Grand C4 Picasso 1.8 VTR+ (manual).

An owners personal road test
mozins, 13 July 2008

Length (mm) 4,590

Width (mm) 1,830

Height (mm) 1,680

Boot space (max ltr) 1,951

Kerb weight (kg) 1,510

If your family has expanded, you may well be in the position where you now need a 7 seater, it was once the case that you would have to sacrifice style, luxury and refinement, in favour of practicality and space, this is no longer the case, with the Citroen Grand C4 Picasso, you can now have your cake and eat it.

We pick our cars for a variety of reasons, some people like gadgets, where as others like comfort, some need lots of space, while safety is a must for everyone, the Citroen Grand C4 Picasso scores top marques in all those areas, while still delivering reasonable performance and fuel economy.

The Grand C4 Picasso is not only beautiful on the outside, it's a real class act on the inside too, the first thing you will notice, once you take the drivers seat, is the massive expanse of windscreen (largest in its class), the panoramic windscreen is wide, and the glass extends to above the drivers head, the excellent visibility doesn't stop there, with its super slim A-pillars (either side of the windscreen), even a person from a Lowry painting will have difficulty finding a blind spot to hide behind, all-round visibility is exceptional too.

Sounds tempting already, doesn't it? Well lets find out more shall we? The next thing you will spy is a large digital centre instrument display panel, with all the usual information displayed in a large, clear, easy to read layout, you can also change the colour, from white, to 4 different shades of blue, as well as being able to change the brightness at the touch of a button, the display consists of, speedometer, rev counter, fuel gauge, cruise control and speed limiter setting, ambient temperature, multi function trip computer, with average speed, mpg, miles covered, time and date, service indicator and radio station/CD track display, you can also choose to hide some, or all of this information, leaving just the speedometer visible, again all at the touch of a button.

The braking system is normally quite a boring topic, this is not the case here, most cars have ABS & EBD these days, and the Grand C4 Picasso is no different, however, the handbrake is very clever, it is applied electronically by pressing a button on the dashboard, to move off, you just find your biting point, then when you are ready to move off, just push the accelerator, and the handbrake will automatically disengage as the car detects power going to the front wheels, but lets be honest with ourselves, when you are waiting at traffic lights, you don't use the handbrake (unless you know your gonna be there ages), no, you hold the car on the footbrake, well its got a trick up its sleeve for that too, its called hill start assist, you can hold the car on the footbrake, on a hill, and when the lights change, the car will hold its self for a short time, giving you



time to move your foot from the brake to the accelerator (for up-to 2 seconds or until it detects torque going to the front wheels), so it won't roll back.

Now for storage, first there are two separate large lidded storage bins on the dashboard, that pop up at the touch of a button, one in front of the driver, the other in front of the front passenger, these are useful for storing things like, mobile phone, CD's, house keys, blue badge and sat-nav, although these are very handy, you will hear things sliding around in them when cornering, I have alleviated this problem by lining them with rubber mats, cut to size, there is also a cooled & illuminated glove box, this is handy for keeping snacks cool, it is a bit on the small side though, 4 large door pockets, the front ones are big enough to fit a 4 pint bottle of milk (upright) in each, while the rear are a bit smaller, but still a good size, 2 under floor storage bins take care of everything else, 2 picnic style tables for 2nd row passengers, pockets behind the front seats swallow up colouring books and magazines, as for the boot, in 7 seat mode you get about as much space as a typical town car (208 ltrs), in 5 seat mode you get an estate car sized (576 ltrs), and in 2 seat mode you get a small van sized (1,951 ltrs), it is a more than capable load lugger, so whether you're looking for a school bus, a part time removals van, or just an honest family motor, this is a car that more than meets your needs.

Even the nicest looking and most gadget filled car, is of no use, unless it transports you in comfort, and it is here where the Grand C4 Picasso really shines, where to start? Front occupants get dual zone air conditioning, so if you are hot, and your passenger is cold, you can have cold air directed to you, while your passenger can have hot air, that they can adjust themselves, or vice-versa, the large glazed area lets in lots of natural light, so the cabin feels light and airy, there's also a massive amount of adjustment in both front seats, as well as reach and rake adjustable steering column, so any driver will be able to find the right position, armrests for both front occupants, as well as adjustable and foldable headrests, 4 anti-pinch electric windows, with one touch down for all windows, 2nd row occupants get roll down sun blinds, so they can have the windows open, while still having the shades up, you will also find 3 individual seats in the second row, each slides back and forward individually, as well as reclining individually, 2 picnic tables with cup holders too, as for the 3rd row occupants, they have cup holders and a 12 Volt power socket (for powering their game boy of course), there is even enough leg, shoulder and head room for small to medium sized adults, and even with all 7 seats up, there's enough space for a few bags of shopping in the boot, the 3rd row seats are also the easiest to set up (I can do them both in 4 seconds).

As for refinement and build quality, it glides smoothly, over all but the most poorly surfaced of roads, makes short work of speed ramps (no chiropractor needed), fit and finish are second to none, and child proof too, nothing has fallen off in 10 months (despite my children's best efforts), the engine is quiet and smooth, and only makes a noise when you floor it, road and wind noise are also at a minimum.

I almost forgot the most important thing, how it drives, despite the vehicle's weight, it is responsive and feisty, with perhaps just a little more body roll than you would like when cornering aggressively, saying this, there is no shortage of grip, the steering is light and precise, the speed sensitive power steering makes manoeuvring through town effortless, whilst feeling nice and weighty at motorway speeds and thus eliminating twitchy steering, it also has a smaller turning circle than the famous Xsara Picasso, making manoeuvring and parking that little bit easier, ESP (traction control) keeps the car in check when the road

gets twisty, wet or slippery, the high seating position is a favourite for elderly, disabled or short drivers and passengers alike.

I could so easily write so much more, but I don't want to give everything away, hopefully I have written enough to wet your appetites, at the very least, if you are on the market for a 7 seater, don't buy or sign up for one before taking a Grand C4 Picasso for a test drive.

