



# Heart of a Lion

Our features editor Neil Bromage test drives the Peugeot 406.

car that provides the driver with the utmost satisfaction.

Make no mistake, whilst with Beethoven caressing the lobes the 406 will soothe those cares away, equally, change the music to something a little racier and it becomes a roaring lion again. As Autocar reported "the 406 has answers for questions that would have many BMWs and Mercedes scratching their heads as it flies across the landscape, outgripping its rivals with ease yet proving more fun to drive".

On one particular outing I had some fun throwing the 406 into some "challenging curves" accompanied by Chris Rea's Road to Hell. It responded magnificently, taking on everything with steadfast surefootedness. It produced little in the way of engine noise, and around some of those really tight curves there wasn't a peep from the suspension.

The award winning 406 epitomises everything that Peugeot stands for; elegant styling, exuberant performance and drivability that is unsurpassed in its class. It also provides a range of state-of-the-art gizmos which include automatic windscreen wipers which adjust their rate of sweep according to the amount of rainfall; column mounted fingertip audio controls and electronically adjustable front seats. But the real finishing touch for me, indicating that Peugeot really have tried to think of everything, was the pair of gloves stashed away with the spare wheel. Now we can arrive at those important meetings with clean hands even if changing the wheel causes us to be half an hour late.

"The Peugeot 406 is to the family car what the Polo was to the small car. It is a vehicle of such innate rightness and sense, of such deep, deep talent that it seems hard to imagine what kind of car must be built to topple it" (Autocar).

And so if I really do have to continue driving the road to hell I'm going to be a whole lot happier doing it in a 406.

The executive model of the 406 is available for just under £20,000.

## PEUGEOT 406 EXEC STANDARD SPECIFICATION INCLUDES:

- ⊗ Electrically operated heated door mirrors
- ⊗ Tinted glass
- ⊗ Intermittent windscreen wiper settings
- ⊗ Headlamp wash
- ⊗ Driver and passenger airbags
- ⊗ Side impact reinforcement beams
- ⊗ Side impact absorbent door padding
- ⊗ Deadlocks
- ⊗ Coded key pad immobiliser
- ⊗ Auto closure of windows
- ⊗ Remote control central locking
- ⊗ Electric windows all round
- ⊗ Rake and reach adjustable steering column
- ⊗ Rear sun-blind
- ⊗ Height, tilt and lumbar adjusted seats
- ⊗ Electrically operated heated front seats
- ⊗ Full leather seating
- ⊗ 60 / 40 split folding rear seat
- ⊗ Rear centre arm rest and ski flap
- ⊗ Electric tilt slide glass sunroof with blind
- ⊗ Air conditioning
- ⊗ Pollen filter
- ⊗ Boot mounted 6 disc CD auto changer



**I**t's four thirty on a Friday afternoon as I exit what could be any city in the country.

Outside it's eighty degrees and rising. Alongside me in the queue I've endured for the last half hour a young-gun blasts out what I assume is "Heavy Metal" through every open window. Horns blare and exhausts fume, whilst men with slovenly ties sweat profusely.

I push a button to close all the windows, another for the sunroof, and a third to operate the air-conditioning. Classic FM are playing a Beethoven piano concerto, and as the temperature drops to a cool sixty degrees I'm starting to relax, wondering whether to open the Chablis or the Chardonnay for the friends we have coming to dinner. Surely the Chablis would be better with the fish?.....

Is this heaven I ask? No (and its not Iowa either). But this executive model of the Peugeot 406 is possibly as close as it gets.

Now I must declare an interest here. Having previously had no less than four 405s, clearly I am an ardent fan of the French Lion. So can I be objective? Absolutely, Peugeot are not paying me for this!

It's hard to find a bad report about the 406. What Car and Autocar voted it "best family car in the world by a considerable margin" and "top of the class". Favourable comparisons are now being made against the Audi A4. Praise indeed.

My first impressions of the car with its full leather interior and wood effect trim were as satisfied as I thought they would be. It drove with consummate ease, cornered reassuringly and purred along in the smug satisfaction of knowing that it is a car to be reckoned with.

The model loaned to me by Perry's of

**"The award winning 406 epitomises everything that Peugeot stands for; elegant styling; exuberant performance and drivability that is unsurpassed in its class"**

Blackburn was in fact a diesel (1.9TD) though frankly few people would have noticed. Blindingly quick it may not have been, but with a drivers seat (complete with arm rest) more comfy than most three piece suites, speed tends to be less of an issue. Initially that comfort was surprising, for when sitting on the drivers seat I found it a little short in length, despite being vertically challenged myself.

That feeling was soon dispelled along with one or two other minor annoyances. Yes, there were some; my loaned vehicle did not have the standard CD player, and the first time I grabbed hold of the gearstick it reminded me of the one in my first SRi, back in 1991! The doors, when opened to their full extent, require the arms of an orangutan to reach.

Those few things apart it took me very little time to re-aquaint myself with the Peugeot even though its ride and handling differed, in my memory at least, from the 405. Nevertheless, Peugeot have again delivered a