

# *Chevrolet CRUZE*

## *Road Test*

*by Ian Lamming*

IS it just me or could the dashboard of the new Chevrolet Cruze be a Transformer?

No wonder they were chosen for the latest robotic blockbuster to come out of Hollywood.

And what GM will be hoping is that the new breed of cars to carry the famous gold cross badge will transform the fortunes of a much beleaguered automotive industry.

Well, whether it is good planning or just good timing things do seem to be on the up for this value for money brand. Dealers are reporting record sales and that is despite the recession and Government scrappage scheme.

Chevy's transformation began with the excellent Captiva 4x4 which weakened the opposition by smashing into them where it hurts – on price.

The pummelling continued with a new generation small hatchback – the Aveo – which offered economy and quality on an unprecedented scale.



While the market is down, panting and spitting dust from the dirt it has just bitten, a knockout blow comes in the form of the Cruze – straight from the cinema screen to a dealer near you.

This medium sized saloon is going to do some real damage to the opposition thanks to its pricing and blend of automotive qualities.

From as little as £12K you can get a car that will suit your every need. But don't go thinking that cheap equates to nasty because it doesn't.

Firstly, Cruze looks great with an imposing front end that makes the car appear bigger than it actually is.

You would swear it was a rival for the all-conquering Vauxhall Insignia but actually it's a size down – more like an Astra.



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Side profile is strong and bold and the tail brings up the rear with a fine set of lamps.

It's a handsome car from all angles and opt for a model that comes with big alloys and the Cruze is certainly a head turner.

Inside is better still. That Transformer dashboard is a little gem. It is great on the eye and just as good to use.



The fascia runs round into the doors making the driver feel enveloped in a real car cockpit – or the controls of a fighting machine, perhaps?

There is plenty of room inside the cabin for passengers and their paraphernalia with cubby-holes galore, spacious, comfortable seats and a decent sized boot for their luggage. Fabrics, trim and plastics are all of the highest order and the overall feel is that you are behind the wheel of something different, something special.

This continues once you are under way. The 1.8 litre engine in the LT is smooth and sprightly. There's a power reserve of 141PS to draw on which is more than enough to zap you to 60mph in under 10 seconds and on to a top speed of 124mph. The motor is refined and frugal and you should easily be able to top 40mpg.

The steering boasts plenty of feel and is well weighted and the ride is a great compromise between comfort on the one hand and capable handling on the other.

Specification rides high too with climate control, a good quality stereo, cruise, steering wheel mounted controls, a trip computer, electric windows and mirrors and rear parking sensors.



The transformation to the Chevrolet range is of blockbuster proportions and the Cruze can only help it dominate and conquer these difficult economic times.

### Vital Statistics

Model: Chevrolet Cruze 1.8LT  
Engine: 1.8 litre, petrol  
Drivetrain: five speed manual  
Power: 141PS  
Top speed: 124mph  
0-62mph: 10secs  
Insurance group: 7  
Miles per gallon (combined): 41.5  
CO2 (g/km): 159  
Price: £13,845.00