

# CAR review

## The Kia Optima

In his latest review, *Surrey Life's* Ade Holder test-drives the new Kia Optima – and finds it packs a lot of punch in its class



**Above:** There's no doubt that the Kia Optima makes a smart addition to any driveway

**I**n the world of executive/family cars, the kings of the road have always been Vauxhall and Ford, but there have been rumblings for a while that it's time for a change. BMW have been producing cheaper 3 Series, Jaguar have been making diesels and now the new kid on the block is the latest offering from Kia, the Optima, and its got a few tricks up its sleeve.

The first thing you notice is the Optima's good looks. You have to be totally devoid of all remnants of your childhood to not think it looks 'cool'. Its gaping maw of a grill gives a very butch appearance, which is helped by the great light set-up and general stance. It's a serious look and one that turned heads in traffic queues and had people straining to see what it said on the badge.

However, as we all know, looks are not everything; if you're a commuter or someone that does a lot of family miles, it's what the car offers inside that counts. In this field, once again, the Optima seems to deliver the goods.

### Torque of the town

There are various trim levels available as always but Surrey Kia dealer, Lovekyn, took the time to show me round what this model had to offer, including the heated/cooled leather seats, a very simple to use sat nav, fantastic Infinity audio system, climate control, electric folding mirrors, parking sensors, reversing camera and self-park. The latter of which makes it an amazingly easy car to manoeuvre and park – so easy that, in some cases, you almost don't need to do

### NEED TO KNOW:

**Price:** From £19,595

**Power:** 134 BHP

**0-60:** 10.5 seconds

**Transmission:** 6 speed auto or manual

**Economy:** Combined 57.6 MPG

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anything, just let that car park for you. It has a deceptively big boot, plenty of room and comforts in the back and keyless entry.

Performance-wise, the 1.7 turbo diesel engine provides good returns on fuel, enough torque to make motorway overtaking a breeze, and gives plenty of confidence to nip out of a junction when needed. 0-60 comes in around 10 seconds so it's not going to set any records but it's a positive drive and it does what you want it to do. The chassis is tight but not rigid, it seems to enjoy the corners and all the while there's that air of luxury in the cabin.

So who is this car for? Well, it's going to be a hit with people who want an alternative to the usual offerings from Ford and Vauxhall. It is also the perfect choice for people that want something to sit on the drive next to their 4x4 and look just as good, all the while offering all the comforts they are used to.

Get one before your neighbour does; you'll want to wash your car every day! ■

