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## Test Hyundai i10 – Autocar (UK)

**Test date** 12 March 2008 **Price as tested** £7,345

**For** Value for money, generous standard equipment, grown-up handling

**Against** Mediocre refinement, some tacky trim, unenthusiastic performance

### BACKGROUND

Hyundai has been building cars for only 40 years, starting in 1968 with a license-built version of the Ford Cortina. It produced its first home-grown car, the Pony, in 1975. The company merged with Kia Motors in 1998 and is now the world's fifth-largest car manufacturer.

Hyundai's first city car was the oddly styled Atoz, released in 1997, which was then replaced by the more conventional Amica in 1999. However, the i10 represents more than just a successor to the Amica. This is Hyundai's first serious attempt at a properly resolved city car. And after the universal praise heaped on the Focus-sized i30 hatch when it arrived last year, big things are expected of this little car.

If Hyundai can achieve anything like the leap forward that we saw from the lacklustre Elantra to the thoroughly impressive i30, then the company's ambitious plans to double its annual city car sales in the UK from 5000 to 10,000 units seems like a perfectly achievable proposition.

The question is, can Hyundai mix the good value, high equipment and dependable reputation it already has with the dynamic sparkle? Because it's just that verve that the makers of city cars like the Fiat Panda and the Toyota Aygo/Citroën C1/Peugeot 107 triplets are so keen to capitalise upon to appeal to young, image-conscious buyers.

If the i10 is to really succeed in the UK, then it must beat – or at least equal – these cars on their own core territory, as well as bettering them on value, reliability, perceived quality and on-paper appeal. No mean feat, then.

### DESIGN

Don't let the fact that the i10's rear end bears more than a passing resemblance to the Picanto fool you; this car shares very little with its Kia sibling. In fact, although the i10 officially sits on an all-new platform, it is distantly related to the Hyundai Getz supermini, although the forthcoming replacement for that car – the i20 – will use yet another all-new platform.

The 1086cc 12-valve engine can also be found in the Getz, as well as in the Kia Picanto. In the i10, different ECU settings mean that peak torque is available at 2800rpm, as opposed to 3200rpm in the



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Getz. However, although the Getz is some 260mm longer and 70mm wider than the i10, the i10 is the same weight, coming in at 975kg on MIRA's scales.

But there is substance to the i10's engineering. For example, the tubular torsion beam rear suspension is tougher than the set-up on the i10's Amica predecessor, allowing the lateral supporting rod to be removed from the design. The resulting extra space has been used to create a lower boot floor, which in turn allows for neat packaging tricks such as the underfloor boot storage tray.

## ON THE ROAD

What you expect from a city car is lively, peppy performance around town, and for the most part the i10 delivers.

Accelerating up to the 30-40mph maximum speeds of town and city driving, the i10 feels immediately lively and agile. Mainly, the i10's feeling of urban agility comes from the action of the gearshift itself. The five-speed 'box's throws are nicely judged and the lever moves with a satisfying, well oiled ease.

If the i10's transmission is deeply impressive, the performance of the engine itself is less successful.

There's nothing wrong with the car's power or torque outputs on paper – 65bhp and 73lb ft of torque are par for the course – but there's not enough zing to the way the engine goes about its business. The 1086cc four-cylinder petrol motor is smooth enough, but there's a buzzy vibration as the revs begin to climb that makes the car feel vaguely unrefined.

Stopping isn't a problem. Being the only car in the class with disc brakes all round and with only 975kg to haul to a stop, the i10's braking is more than up to the job.

Around town ride is the most important aspect of this class of car, and is probably the i10's strongest suit. It subdues the effects of the scars and potholes rather than heaving and pitching over them as a more softly sprung car would.

The steering is also exceedingly well judged for busy urban traffic. The electrically assisted rack is light, direct and relatively quick-acting (3.0 turns from lock to lock), and the car has an impressively tight turning circle of 9.2 metres.

Out of town, the taut but comfortable ride translates into impressive country-road composure, flowing over undulating, lumpy B-roads. Through corners the i10 stays flat, neutral and safe, with very little body roll and a decisive turn-in. The i10's mid-corner behaviour is certainly predictable; it'll either stay on line or drift into safe and controllable understeer.

## LIVING

Hyundai claims the i10 is "small, but packed with luxury". On the mid-spec Comfort model tested here you'll get four airbags, remote central locking, air conditioning, a six-speaker stereo with CD player and iPod connectivity, a height-adjustable driver's seat and front and rear electric windows.

To get the equivalent specification in a Peugeot 107, you would have to fork out £8454, almost £1500 more than an i10 Comfort.

Where the i10's pretensions towards luxury fall down is in the design, feel and general ambience of the cabin. There's nothing inherently wrong with the cabin's layout or with the way it looks, but neither is there any real flair or spark to the design.



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Space, however, isn't a problem. You should be able to accommodate four average-sized adults in adequate comfort even over long distances. The 60/40 split rear seats are also useful for transporting longer items.

Running costs are generally commendably low, although fuel consumption isn't brilliant, at 37.8mpg over the course of our test route. Even after repeated attempts at driving as frugally as possible, the best touring figure we returned was 43.1mpg. In a segment where fuel economy is often a primary consideration, the i10's consumption during the road test was a disappointment, especially when you consider that the 1.1 engine is the only one available; there's no diesel.

As is almost a prerequisite now for this class, a CO2 emissions figure of 119g/km not only places the i10 just inside the £30 annual road tax band, and also means the Hyundai will be exempt from the London congestion charge from October.

The only question mark surrounding the i10's costs is its depreciation, although early indications suggest that the first models at least will hold their value reasonably well.

## VERDICT



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## DATA

### How much ?

- **Price as tested** £7,345
- **Price as tested** £7,095

### How fast

- **0-30mph** 4 sec
- **0-60mph** 13.3 sec
- **0-100mph** no data
- **0-150mph** no data
- **0-200mph** no data
- **30-70mph** no data
- **0-400m** 19.3 / 70.1 sec/mph
- **0-1000m** 36.3 / 84.4 sec/mph
- **30-50mph in 3rd/4th** 7.2 / 10.4
- **40-60mph in 4th/5th** 11.3 / 14.5 sec
- **50-70mph in 5th** 17.6 sec
- **60-0mph** no data
- **Top speed** no data
- **Noise at 70mph** 71 dbA

### How thirsty?

- **Test average** 37.8 mpg
- **Test best/worst** 43.1 / 19

### Government figures

- **Combined/urban** 56.5 / 46.3 mpg
- **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** 119 g/km

### How big?

- **Length** 3565 mm
- **Width** 1595 mm
- **Height** 1550 mm
- **Wheelbase** 2380 mm
- **Weight** 925 kg
- **Fuel tank** 35.0 litres

### Engine

- **Layout** 4 cyls , 1086 cc
- **Max power** 62 bhp at 5500 rpm
- **Max torque** 73 ft at 3000 rpm
- **Specific output** 60 bhp per litre
- **Power to weight** 64 bhp per tonne
- **Installation** F
- **Bore/stroke** 67/77 mm
- **Compression ratio** 10.1:1
- **Valve gear** 3 per cyl3
- **Ignition and fuel** no data, Unleaded

### Gearbox

- **Type** 5-speed Manual
- **1st** 3.56 / 4
- **2nd** 1.89 / 7.5
- **3rd** 1.19 / 11.8
- **4th** 0.85 / 16.6
- **5th** 0.72 / 19.6
- **6th** no data
- **Final drive** 4.6

### Suspension

- **Front** MacPherson strut with coil spring, gas-filled dampers
- **Rear** Tubular torsion beam, coil springs and gas-filled dampers

### Steering

- **Type** Rack and pinion with electric motor assistance
- **Lock to lock** 3.00

### Brakes

- **Front** 252mm Ventilated discs
- **Rear** 234mm Discs

### Wheel & tyres

- **Size front** 5J x 14" Alloy in
- **Size rear** 5J x 14" Alloy in
- **Made of** Alloy
- **Tyres front** 165/60 R14
- **Tyres rear** 165/60 R14



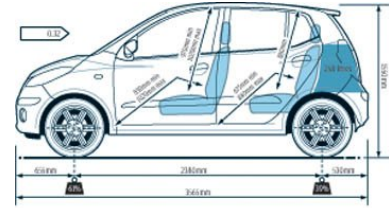
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**PHOTOS**





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<http://www.autocar.co.uk/CarReviews/RoadTestsHistory/Hyundai-i10-1.1-Comfort/231712/>