



First drives: Hyundai Ioniq 6



Tim Saunders swoons over the swoopy coupé

Is blazing your own path in life, rather than following the crowd, important to you? The curvaceous Hyundai Ioniq 6 with its striking design should appeal to such drivers.

Evocative retro design from the 1950s is the unique feature of this luxury electric saloon. So much more appealing than anything the bland competition is offering. Until now this area was monopolised by Smeg with its fridge freezers. The Hyundai's sloping back reminds me of a VW Beetle, Porsche or the Citroen CX but it's more pronounced and lower to the ground. It is like a rounded updated CX without the rising suspension. Unlike the aforementioned it has an electric bootlid and other design touches include detailing on the bumpers and a clear plastic strip on the rear spoiler. As an electric car it's vital that it is aerodynamic so the considered design no doubt gives it low drag, too. While I appreciate and applaud the unusual door handles – that you push in on the right-hand side, which then sees the handle rise from the door on the left that opens it – these are fiddly, awkward and impractical when arriving at the car with the children's school bags. Although it is funny when the children first try to get in the car and they are stood there scratching their heads but

it doesn't take them long to master it. Traditional door handles are certainly easier to operate and good design should be easy to use, in my book.

The striking overall design of this modern Citroen CX or slightly squashed and elongated Beetle, certainly catches the attention of the passenger in a builder's van crawling along beside us in a rush hour traffic jam on the M27 one Friday night. He can't take his eyes off it.

And the designers have not just concentrated on the exterior, they have sprinkled some character inside, too. In the cabin there are fins, reminiscent of 1950s Cadillacs, protruding from either end of the dashboard. Here's a car that makes me smile. And I need that at the moment. It's really heartening to see that good design is not dead. Opening the glovebox sees a tray slide out rather than it simply falling open in the usual manner. It's all

quite refreshing.

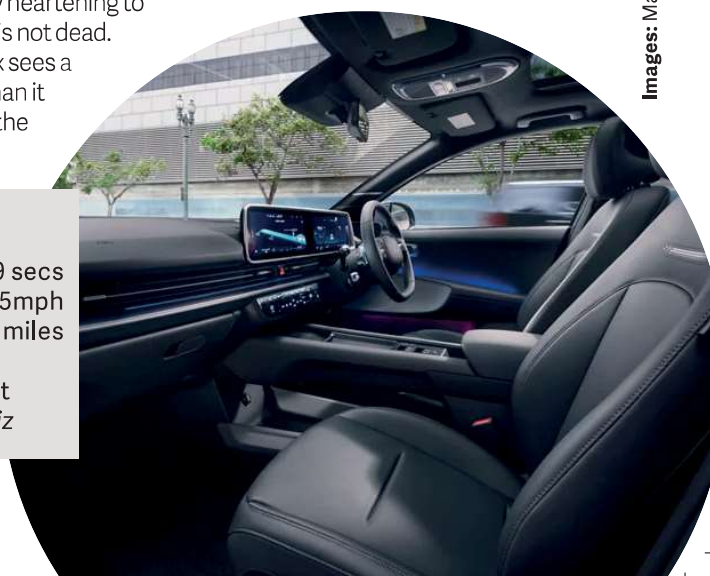
That said, I don't warm to the column gear selector being on the right-hand side of the steering wheel. It's awkward for me and just slows me down. But again, cars of the past had such things and they'll probably sell more of these in the States than here anyway – it frees up space on the centre console for the electric window switches, too.

Hyundai reckons it'll travel over 300 miles on a full charge. I don't know about that because it is delivered to me with a range of 116 miles, which is enough for us to drive to the school cross country awards at Waterlooville where Heidi (11) and Henry (8) are competing. They come 23 and 76 respectively out of a few hundred children from schools across Hampshire. 🍌

At a glance

0 – 60mph: 4.9 secs
Top speed: 115mph
Range: 300+ miles

Watch the video at www.testdrives.biz



Images: Manufacturer