

# NEWS FLASH



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## Gold Duster

Quentin Willson tells any readers thinking of buying a used SUV to "think again" in the Sunday Mirror. "Renault's budget brand Dacia is fielding a new SUV at supermini money," he writes. "The Duster is the UK's most affordable SUV at £8,995. Sold through Renault dealerships, it comes with a three-year warranty, extendable up to seven years or 10,000 miles." Explaining the options on offer, Willson says the 1.5 diesel version offers a "laudable" 56mpg. He describes the car as a "brand new family hauler for the price of a used Focus" and says it's a "genuine five-seater", capable of holding an "epic" 1,636 litres of cargo, meaning it will "swallow tents, kids, dogs, and coffee tables". Willson also advises "not to get snifty" about the brand and its "keen" price. "I've driven Dacia's budget Logan



saloon all over Europe and admired the build quality and reliability," he says. "[The Dacia] is a spectacular value-for-money mobility solution that you could run for three years, have any problems fixed under warranty and sell on for about five grand. "The Duster will be a desirable used SUV - four grand depreciation in three years doesn't sound bad in these wicked times. Order books are open and deliveries start next January. You could do a lot worse than book yourself a test drive." 1 July

**Mirror**

1 July

## Duster ready to sweep the nation

"Is the Duster about to clean up?" asks Phil Lanning in the Sun. "When you consider that the Nissan Qashqai starts at £17,895, the Duster is dirt cheap and could be a massive hit as cash-strapped buyers look for even more economical cars. "The first car from Renault's Romanian budget brand comes in three trims - Access, Ambiance and Laureate, with the choice of a 104hp 1.6-litre petrol engine and a 109hp 1.5 diesel. It goes on sale in January." 29 June

**Sun**

29 June

## Duster available from just £8,995

"The Dacia Duster will be available from just £8,995, undercutting rival compact SUVs by thousands of pounds," reports WhatCar? magazine. "It heralds the UK launch of Dacia - the Renault-owned Romanian brand. Although the Duster is roughly the same size as a Nissan Qashqai, the entry-level version costs £7,600 less than the cheapest Qashqai. "The Duster will be available with front- or four-wheel drive. Engine choices are a 105hp 1.6-litre petrol, or a 1.5-litre diesel with 110hp.

"Prices for diesel models start at £11,495; the premium over petrol models includes an upgrade to Ambiance trim, which adds extras such as body-coloured upper bumper trim, extra chrome exterior trim, foglights, a height-adjustable driver's seat, radio and CD player with steering column controls, Bluetooth and auxiliary and USB connections. "Top spec dCi Laureate models cost an extra £1,500 and get alloy wheels, air-conditioning, upgraded interior and exterior trims, electric rear windows and front seatbelt pretensioners." July

**WHATCAR?**

July

## Dacia Duster is no bank buster

"An SUV for supermini money?" asks Mark Forsyth in the Daily Star Sunday. "Say hello to the new Dacia Duster. Prices for this Renault budget brand motor start at a very reasonable £8,995. "Order books opened last week and first deliveries are expected in January next year. "Two engines (petrol or diesel), three spec levels and a choice of two or four-wheel drive keeps it simple. The range-topping Laureate costs £14,995. I'll be driving the entry-level model sometime soon." 1 July

**STAR**

1 July

## Renault wasn't fibbing - the Duster is a bargain

Richard Hammond believes the Dacia Duster adds up to a "bargain". Writing in the Daily Mirror, he says: "A few months ago Renault let slip the car would go on sale for just under £10,000. That seemed extremely cheap for a car in the Nissan Juke class. But Renault wasn't fibbing, the Duster is much cheaper than that. "You will need to read this twice: the Duster in its basic two-wheel drive form will cost £8,995." Hammond says the shortlisted Duster "should have won" 2012's European Car of the Year instead of the Vauxhall Ampera. "We have driven the Duster. If you want a spacious family car that is cheap and

cheerful, there is no logical alternative." Noting the £10,995 price for the more hands-on four-wheel drive Duster, he says "the cheapest 4x4 Nissan Juke is almost double that much. And I don't reckon only people on a budget will buy the Duster. "Farmers are notoriously keen to save money on motors and will love the Duster. People with ski chalets in the Alps will buy a Duster and leave it abroad for the season." Hammond concludes: "Dacia's advertising strapline is 'Do the Maths'. Actually, you don't need to, because the answer is obvious." 29 July

**Mirror**

29 July



## Dacia is here to stay

Autocar declares that "nobody should underestimate the opportunity the Dacia brand has to develop a customer base in the UK".

Citing the "traditional open-mindedness" of British buyers, Hilton Holloway believes "past experience" suggests the brand will establish a successful niche here. "The fact that Dacias use older Renault technology and will be sold through established Renault dealers gives the brand a racing start. "Today, there is also a strong trend towards a split in the consumer market between budget and premium brands, leaving the middle market struggling to sell at anything but discounted prices. It's a trend that Dacia will be able to leverage."

Autocar adds: "The base Duster comes with a 105hp 1.6-litre petrol engine and front-wheel-drive. This



engine is also offered with four-wheel-drive in entry-level Access trim. The diesel engine is a 1.5-litre, with 107hp in front-drive form and 109hp with all-wheel drive. This engine is offered in mid-range trim, which gets a CD player with USB and Bluetooth connectivity, and top-spec Laureate trim. The £12,995 front-drive Laureate is expected to account for the majority of sales thanks to its 16-inch alloy wheels, air-con and leather-trimmed steering wheel. It's also the most frugal, returning 56.5mpg combined **AUTOCAR** economy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 130g/km." 27 June

## How Dacia made the Duster so affordable

An £8,995 SUV was always going to raise eyebrows but now that industry experts have recognised the Duster as a serious prospect they want to know how that price has been kept so low.

Before answering that question, Autocar's Richard Bremner explains just how highly the Duster is thought of in the rest of Europe. "Dacia has been a wholly owned subsidiary of Renault since 1999, and the Duster is a competent, pleasingly styled SUV that's proving a hot seller for a brand that has lately been the fastest-growing European marque on the mainland," he writes. "Dacia is also the fifth best-selling brand in France, a market leader in both its native Romania and Morocco, and a big seller in Germany. In case you're wondering about quality, Dacia came second in the 2010 German JD Power customer satisfaction survey, and first in France's 'Que choisir' reliability survey in 2011 ahead of Honda and Kia. The warranty is three years and 60,000 miles, but you can extend it to five years for £395, or seven years for £850. Depreciation? In Germany, Dacia has won Auto Bild's top award in 2011 and 2012, and it's likely that we'll see similarly robust resale values over here."

Bremner explains that Renault is pitching Dacia as a "value brand", appealing similarly to consumers who spend with the likes of Tesco and easyJet - "below Waitrose and Virgin but above ultra-low-cost brands like Lidl and Ryanair. The target is just as much buyers who previously bought a used car as it is new car buyers tempted away from other brands. The temptation has the potential to be quite strong because Dacia's bold strategic aim is, in the words of UK Brand Manager Adam Wood, to 'challenge the current new car value system'.

"This is the result of a brand strategy built around the idea that every Dacia is generous, simple, reliable and

smart. Generous, explains Wood, means that you get a car the size from one segment for the price of one from the segment below.

Dacia produces "straightforward, no-nonsense" models and equips them with "essentials only, allowing you to specify any of the extras that you actually need as an option". Those essentials include "four airbags, power steering, electric front windows, roof bars, a chrome grille and, indeed, seats, carpets and a heater".

Acquiring a diesel version will cost £2,000 more than the base model, adding a few more air and graces in the process, and another £500 gets you into a 109hp 130g/km two-wheel-drive dCi diesel, "which means you're still paying only £11,495 for the mid-trim, oil-burning front-drive Duster".

The air-con flaunting Laureate top trim costs £14,995. "Even in its most expensive form, the Laureate is £6,600 less than the equivalent Kia Sportage diesel 4x4, or £3,525 less than an all-wheel-drive diesel Skoda Yeti." As well as the pricing, the "amount of space" on offer, "the durability and strong resale values" have underpinned the Dacia's success.

So how does Dacia do it for the money? Rafael Treguer, the Paris-based director of Dacia's brand development, tells Autocar that platform sharing is key. Bremner writes: "Every one of the current range is based on the same low-cost core platform that Renault developed for the Logan in 2004, which itself drew extensively from existing Renault hardware. There have been eight models in eight years derived from this platform, which gives Dacia excellent economies of scale. Limited option and colour choices also reduce the price."

Bremner adds that, come January, "Dacias should be quite a common sight in the UK, if the range makes the same impact here as it has in France, **AUTOCAR** Germany, Morocco and beyond." 27 June

## Cheap thrills, real appeal

The interest being generated by the Dacia Duster is demonstrated by its appearance as the subject of Jim Holder's editorial in Autocar. "The beauty of being a car enthusiast is that your passion can grab you at every level of the automotive spectrum," he writes in the magazine's opening column, "and nowhere is that more evident than in our excitement at the UK launch of the ultra low-budget Dacia brand this year. This Renault offshoot plans to sell the Duster SUV from less than £9,000, but the brand's real appeal lies in its ability to send a ripple through a long-stagnant car business. "Traditional buyers of used cars will now find that they can buy new, and new car buyers may be tempted by the prospect of a budget **AUTOCAR** workhorse." 27 June

## Out to clean up

"It's billed as the SUV for supermini money, and the Dacia Duster is hoping to clean up in the UK," reports the Northern Echo. "From the stables of its parent company Renault, the Dacia might not have the cache of some of its rivals, but it plans to offer plenty of bang for your buck. "Prices start at £8,995 on the road, but an extra couple of grand will buy you the UK's most affordable 4x4. Available in three trim levels, there are two engines on offer, a 1.6-litre, 105hp petrol and a 1.5-litre, 110hp diesel. If you want to personalise your Duster, Dacia offers four accessory packs to ensure you stand out from the crowd." **Northern Echo** 29 June

