

## Motoring - Dacia Sandero Stepway...

It was way back in 2012 when we had our first dalliance with a Dacia and that was to test drive the Duster both on and off road. At that time, it was no frills, and cheap as chips and no other manufacturer could compete price-wise. This meant that for some people buying a new car was a distinct possibility and it wasn't long before they were appearing on our roads in their masses. Dacia did that by making the entry level car so basic that even a radio was an optional extra but just think about all the functions your own car has and how many you actually use on a regular basis.

We Scots are known for a keen eye for a bargain and declared the Dacia Duster Scottish Car of the Year 2012, not just because it was affordable but because it was a pretty decent car that just happened to be value for money.



Our recent test car was the Dacia Sandero Stepway, a 5-door SUV themed smallish hatchback.

Unlike the standard Sandero, the Stepway looks sportier and chunkier with roof rails and increased ride height giving good visibility. It has an all-round contemporary look to it perhaps making it attractive to a younger buyer. Options are limited and again that's what keeps the price low, meaning there is no diesel version or indeed a hybrid and the two petrol engines come with a six-speed manual gearbox although an automatic gearbox is an option.

From the outside it is actually quite attractive and compares well to its rivals. On the inside it is a comfortable drive and ride with plenty of room front and back and has good storage space. All dials and instruments are conveniently situated and easy to read. Boot space is more than adequate for this size of car.

The Stepway comes in three trim levels, the Essential which has cruise control, a DAB radio, Bluetooth and two speakers; Comfort, adds rear parking sensors, auto lights and wipers, and keyless entry, and Prestige has sat-nav, smartphone connectivity, an 8-inch screen, electric parking brake, and 16 inch alloys. All come with LED headlights and daytime running lights.

On the road, it is not going to win many races but it is perky and drives well in both rural and urban environments and economical too, with around 45mpg.

We were driving the Prestige Auto TCe 90 (also comes with bi-fuel) which is the top of the range at £15,495 but the range starts at just under £12,000.

**Ally says** - For a car in this price range, it has to be the best value around.

**Lorraine says** - Although it comes in 6 colours, every one I see on the road is almost always orange with a few white now and again!