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**VANTAGE DRIVEN**  
Aston aims at 911 and hits bullseye



**DRIVEN C5  
AIRCROSS**

Citroen's funky Qashqai rival that's here next year



**OFFICIAL** New Audi A6 Avant



**TESTED** Yaris GRMN vs 208 GTi



EXCLUSIVE  
IMAGE

**NEW** Lexus CT Hybrid

Essentials

Citroen C5 Aircross Flagship 1.8 THP auto

Price:	£27,000 (est)
Engine:	1.8-litre 4cyl turbo
Power/torque:	201bhp/280Nm
Transmission:	Six-speed automatic, front-wheel drive
0-62mph:	9.0 seconds
Top speed:	134mph
Economy:	40.9mpg
CO <sub>2</sub> :	N/A

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**PRACTICALITY** Big boot trumps many of the C5 Aircross's rivals, while the floor can be raised to offer a flat load bay. Rear seats don't slide or recline, however



**EQUIPMENT** Digital instruments are great, replicating sat-nav instructions from the main touchscreen. Electric massage seats feature, as does Apple CarPlay



Brown accents add a splash of colour to the attractive cabin design

**Mark Andrews**  
IT'S not unusual for multi-national car makers to create China-only models. What is rare is for one to launch a car in the Far East, only to bring it to Europe a year later – something that's about to happen with the Citroen C5 Aircross.

This car shares its EMP2 platform with Peugeot's 3008 (tested on Page 52) and 5008, plus the Vauxhall Grandland X and recently launched DS 7 Crossback. It's one of the most distinctive Citroens for years, and furthers the expressive design language first seen on the C3 Aircross.

The C5 Aircross's exterior stands out from the crossover crowd, but despite its big wheels and rugged body detailing, there's no four-wheel-drive option. Still, that's a trait we're now used to on PSA SUVs and it won't bother most people.

Our early drive took place in China, where engine choices are limited to 1.6 and 1.8-litre turbo petrols. European models should gain smaller petrols and a diesel option, while a plug-in hybrid is due, too. The Chinese C5 Aircross is available in four trim levels and our 1.8T came in range-topping Flagship spec.

While the C3 Aircross has 85 body and roof colour combinations, there are just five paint options for the Chinese-spec C5. Inside, it is visually attractive, with numerous brown inserts offsetting the charcoal grey leather seats. Materials in this car aren't as plush as in rivals

such as the Volkswagen Tiguan or even the Renault Kadjar, feeling more on par with cheaper models like the MG GS. Hard plastics dominate and the leather doesn't feel particularly premium, either, although it's likely European-built cars will see an improvement in these areas.

Thanks to an opening panoramic roof, the cabin is light and airy. There's plenty of headroom in the back, but legroom could be better and, unlike in the C3 Aircross, the rear bench neither slides nor reclines. There's an easy-release mechanism for folding it, and the floor can be raised to offer a flat load bay. The 516-litre capacity beats the Ford Kuga's 406-litre offering, while an electric tailgate helps when carrying heavy loads.

On the road, it's apparent the car is set up for comfort. Progressive hydraulic cushions, carried over from the C4 Cactus, ensure a soft ride, which is at odds with the hard seats. While it does a good job of soaking up bumps, quick manoeuvres at speed see the Citroen wallowing from side to side.

With more than 200bhp, the engine should provide spirited performance, but ultimately it fails to excite. The motor is hampered by the six-speed automatic gearbox, which is the only transmission offered on Chinese models. While initial acceleration is reasonable, it becomes particularly sluggish at mid-range speeds. Still, the addition of a manual



**INTERIOR** Cabin quality wasn't up to scratch on our Chinese test model; we hope European-spec cars will be better. Auto box hampered the performance of the engine



**"While initial acceleration is reasonable, it becomes sluggish at mid-range speeds"**



Despite SUV looks, there's no four-wheel drive, and C5 is set up for comfort

# Citroen C5 Aircross

**FIRST DRIVE** We try Chinese version of big SUV that's heading to Europe

**Performance**  
0-62mph/top speed  
9.0 seconds/134mph



**Running costs**  
40.9mpg (official)  
£73 fill-up



**C3 Aircross has inspired styling; sat-nav offers real-time parking info**



**Auto Express Verdict**

gearbox for European models should go some way to rectifying this problem. Road and engine noise are kept at bay, but there is a shudder from the stop/start as the engine kicks back into life.

The Flagship trim boasts 12 driving aids, including active cruise control and PSA's AEB S2 active safety braking system, which is designed to stop the car in emergency situations.

Elsewhere, electrically adjustable front seats with a memory setting are complemented by a massage function. Citroen Connect also features; this gives real-time info on traffic, parking and fuel prices. Apple CarPlay and MirrorLink help with smartphone connectivity as well.

OUR early drive of a Chinese-built Citroen C5 Aircross shows the brand's latest SUV provides a visually appealing package, plus a comprehensive and generous kit list. It's comfortable, yes, but we've got questions over cabin quality, while rivals are better to drive. These are early days for the C5, though, and with petrols, diesels and PHEVs on the way, the future looks brighter. We'll reserve ultimate judgement until we've driven a UK-spec version on European roads.

