



# SAFE AND SOUND

It may look unadventurous and for now only powered by diesel, but Volkswagen's new Caddy van is as safe as they come. Steve Banner reports

Anybody looking for a plug-in hybrid or pure-electric version of Volkswagen's new Caddy will be disappointed.

Clearly, it's not because the industry giant does not have access to the technology. Battery-powered versions of the Caddy have been trialled with several fleet operators in Europe. It is simply that, no matter what Renault or Nissan may say, VW does not believe there is sufficient demand.

"We are obeying the market," states Carl zu Dohna, brand director in charge of Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles in the UK, which occupies the number two slot in Britain's van sales league, a long way behind Ford, but ahead of Vauxhall and Peugeot.

A version of the new Caddy that runs on CNG (compressed natural gas) will be made available, but won't be offered in the UK when the newcomer arrives in dealerships in October. Instead, Caddy will be sold solely with a 2.0-litre TDI diesel, with outputs from 75bhp to 150bhp, and the twin-clutch DSG automated gearbox offered as an alternative to the standard manual.

Both Euro 5 and 6 versions will be listed, the latter not yet mandatory on

this size of vehicle. Customers who want the green credentials, however, will opt for Euro 6 along with VW's BlueMotion low-emission technology. This enables Caddy to offer more than 70 mpg.

Also produced with all-wheel drive and as a people-mover, Caddy has been re-styled internally and externally but the results are not dramatically different. Rather more interesting are some of the safety features installed either as standard or as cost options.

## ADVANCED SAFETY

The line-up includes Front Assist. This warns the driver if he or she is getting dangerously close to the vehicle in front, gives a one-off short jolt to the brakes if the warning is not heeded, and then applies them in full when the driver hits the pedal. Also on offer is City Emergency Braking, which automatically applies the brakes at speeds below 30km/h (18.75mph) if the driver fails to spot an obstruction.

Worthy of note, too, is Post Collision Braking. This activates the brakes if Caddy has hit - or been hit by - something and the driver is no longer able to take action. This helps prevent secondary collisions, says VW. Also, if the driver is nodding off, then Driver

Alert triggers an audible and visual warning which should prompt the individual to take a break. Opt for Park Assist and you are also helped to slot Caddy into a parking space.

Cargo space starts at 3.2m<sup>3</sup>. Maximum gross payload will be upwards of 800kg but some way below 1,000kg, and there is no high roof model for the foreseeable future. Anybody who wants to shift more weight and needs more room than either Caddy or its longer Caddy Maxi stablemate with a 4.2m<sup>3</sup> load box, will be pointed towards new Transporter, expected soon, says zu Dohna. There's also a face-lifted Amarok pick-up in the pipeline and a new Crafter due in 2016.

The current Crafter is produced with Mercedes-Benz. However, VW will be going it alone with its successor, which will be assembled in a new £600m plant in Wrzesnia, Poland, currently under construction and with capacity to build 100,000 vehicles annually.

Like its predecessor, the latest Caddy is assembled in Poland, and to a high standard. Tight shut lines, doors that close with a solid clunk and an awareness that nothing is likely to work loose go a long way towards countering unadventurous styling. **TE**