



LOOKING GOOD

Launched at the IAA Transportation show in Hanover last September, and pretty well simultaneously awarded the International Truck of the Year 2023, expectations were raised sky high before the author so much as opened the driver's door. Since then she has had a proper chance to both crawl all over it and drive it, and this is what was found.

The big noise around XG was all about aerodynamics, and its use of the new EU Masses & Dimensions legislation to both reduce drag and increase the space available inside the cab for the benefit of drivers. One look at XD and it's immediately obvious it shares the same 'DNA' - DAF's description, but an apt one - as its bigger long-haul sibling. The emphasis is slightly different this time around, however, concentrating mostly on the massively improved direct vision from the new cab, as is appropriate for a truck intended to be used for vocational and distribution applications.

XD has put a new marker in the sand for vehicles in its class, stacking up no less than four stars under Tfl's Direct Vision standard, assuming operators spec the DAF Vision Door with its second window and the much-acclaimed Corner View camera. The latter is fitted as standard across the

While DAF's long-running and popular CF may still be very much the current model for some markets, the XD is fairly considered to be its long-awaited replacement, according to Lucy Radley

XD range, a decision that can only be applauded, having seen just how much of a step forward it is from the front and kerb view mirrors it replaces.

The entire belt line of both windscreen and side windows has been lowered, restoring the kind of view drivers were blessed with in the days before high cabs became the norm. Even without opting for DAF's Digital Vision System, the mirror positions have been optimised to keep obstruction to a minimum. The overall result is highly effective from behind the wheel, even in the tightest of circumstances - something DAF made sure to serve up on its press test route in Barcelona (pictured).

The front profile of XD has been elongated by 160mm like the rest of the New Generation model, and even the day cab boasts an extra 150mm of space at the rear, enabling the seats to recline properly during rest breaks. The floor is 170mm lower than New

XF, again assisting with direct vision, but also making access far easier. The sleeper cab has an engine tunnel height of 320mm, giving an interior height of 1.3m, while in the high cab sleeper that increases to 1.75m. DAF is keen that the XD isn't seen by drivers as 'the little truck', and it isn't - certainly less so than CF.

Under the floor, XD is only available with MX-11, Paccar's 11-litre engine. Those low floors mean that MX-13 won't physically fit, plus the XF has been realigned within the range to fulfil the role of those who may want it. The new version of MX-11 has been downspeeded, and DAF's Multi Torque facility, which delivers up to 150Nm of extra torque in the top two gears, is now available right down to the smallest engine size. These range from 295-443bhp, and all boast a new turbo, improved injection and firing pressure, and an upgraded exhaust aftertreatment system.

The latest incarnation of the TraXon automated manual transmission, improved predictive cruise control and a new rear axle complete what seems to be a genuinely impressive picture. Not only does this truck well deserve its award-winning status, but also its driver has the fairest shot yet of actually seeing the thing when it sneaks up on the inside on a roundabout as well. **TE**