



Citroën Dispatch

Fiat Scudo

Peugeot Expert



One of the longest-standing joint ventures in the light commercial industry is that between PSA — Peugeot and Citroën's parent company — and Fiat. Among other products it has resulted in Citroën's Dispatch, Peugeot's Expert and Fiat's Scudo.

All three models are virtually identical apart from their badges and all three have been completely redesigned, taking them into new sectors of the market. The changes have been so effective that the latest front-wheel drive Dispatch, Expert and Scudo have jointly scooped *What Van?*'s Small Panel Van of the Year award for 2007.

Customers get to choose between two different common rail diesels; a 1.6-litre generating 90hp or a 2.0-litre good for either 120hp or 136hp. Biodiesel-friendly, both

engines are sourced from PSA.

Developed in conjunction with Ford, the 2.0-litre is married to a six-speed gearbox.

The old model was available in just one size and that's where the big change has taken place. Its successor is up for grabs with three different cargo areas.

Load cube ranges from 5.0m³ if you opt for the short-wheelbase standard roof van — it's low enough to get into most multi-storey car parks — rising to 6.0m³ if you select the long-wheelbase standard roof instead.

Opt for the long-wheelbase high roof and you'll have up to 7.0m³ to play with. The most the previous offering could muster was 4.0m³.

A sliding door provides access to each side of the cargo box, payload capacity ranges from 1,000kg to 1,200kg, and it's worth noting that

platform cab and people-carrier variants are available.

ABS comes as standard along with Emergency Braking Assistance.

Few, if any, drivers will moan that Expert/Dispatch/Scudo's three-man cab is difficult to get into. There's no step up thanks to the low floor and the handbrake lever doesn't get in the way, despite the fact that it's mounted between the driver's seat and the door.

What's more, the comfortable seat is set at just the right height for those users who have to hop in and out of their vehicles umpteenth times daily.

The driving position is slightly offset to one side as you face the steering wheel, but that need not be a handicap. Vision is good ahead and to either side, with vision backwards along the vehicle's flanks aided by large exterior mirrors.

The stylish cab interior offers plenty of storage space for the various items drivers carry around with them. There's a shallow bin in each door with a moulding that can grasp a soft drink can or a small bottle of water, a lockable glovebox with mouldings to accommodate two cups on the interior of the lid, and a deep bin on top of the dashboard on the passenger side.

These facilities are supplemented by overhead shelving, a cubbyhole plus a pull-out cup-holder at each end of the dashboard and a shelf half-hidden beneath the steering column.

Bear in mind that Dispatch comes with Trafficmaster's Smartnav satellite navigation package plus Trackstar, its GPS-based stolen vehicle tracking service, when you're choosing which member of the trio to acquire. ♦