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DRIVEN

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(but does it make it all too easy?)



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- » France's Ferrari (all for £600)
- » New-look Range Rover Evoque

DEALS

Bargain new and used motors

ENGINE

The engines are typically robust. Ancillaries are more likely to cause any issues. Problems with starting or rough running could point to coil pack malfunctions, and temperature sensors and other sensors can shut down the engine. Such glitches are frustrating, but find a specialist with the correct diagnostic tools and they're usually cheap to put right.

BRAKES

The brakes are prone to squeaking, but a clean and some copper grease behind the pads will help. That's also worth doing to prevent corrosion and binding. Rear brake cables require greasing to prevent sticking. ABS sensors are known to fail.

CHASSIS

Anti-roll bars wear and can start to knock up front; it'll cost about £50 to repair the guilty ball joints. The springs occasionally fail, although they're easy and inexpensive to repair. Bushes will be worn on higher-mileage cars but, again, they're not too challenging or expensive to replace.

TRANSMISSION

The auto needs regular servicing for oil and filters, so check when it was last done. Clutches last forever unless abused, although third gear in the manual 'box is known to lose it synchromesh; crunching during shifts is the symptom. It's a £500-£600 fix, but it isn't a common problem.



PEUGEOT 406 COUPÉ FROM £600

A working-class Ferrari

The 406 coupé gives Ferrari looks at Peugeot running costs. Prices start at £600, says **Kyle Fortune**

Peugeot was riding high in the 1990s. Its cars were widely praised for the way they drove, and nothing demonstrated the firm's stylistic acclaim better than the 406 coupé. Introduced in 1997, the svelte two-door won countless awards for its design, and deservedly so. Pininfarina took care of the shape and its build, and the result was and remains a real head-turner. Barely any of its contemporary tests could resist the temptation to mention Ferrari. Autocar's own report said, "The coupé shares some of its characteristics and shutline arrangements with the Ferrari 550 Maranello."

High praise indeed, and not without substance. The buttress rear pillars with the slightly recessed window and the

rear wings' profile were an obvious nod to Pininfarina's most famous client. All of this and it was practical, too. The 406 coupé shared its 2700mm wheelbase with the saloon, allowing it to seat four adults comfortably in its Recaro seats, and it could carry their luggage in the decent-sized boot. Add fine dynamics, a road-smothering ride quality and decent performance and the 406 coupé made a very compelling purchase.

That's even truer today. A quick look at the classifieds will find you one of these French-Italian lookers for just £600. That's a lot of style for very little outlay. Some people might tell you that it'll cost you dearly in time, but that's simply not true, says Paul King, partner at Peugeot and Citroën specialist

Paris Autos (paris-autos.co.uk, 0161 477 6030). King says, "Find a proper specialist who knows what they're doing and it'll be fine."

The 406 has a reputation for electrical gremlins, but there's a vast amount of information out there on common fixes, and a specialist with the correct diagnostics kit will be able to sort them easily enough. Early 'D8' cars are worse than the later, post-1999 'D9' cars, which came with revisions to the interior and electrical systems.

Unsurprisingly, the 406 coupé has a bit of a cult following. Indeed, the UK 406 coupé owners club website (406coupeclub.org) contains a wealth of information if you're looking to buy one or are an owner with a problem.

Engine choice is limited to three petrol units and a single turbodiesel. The earliest cars were offered with 2.0-litre four-pot and 3.0-litre V6 petrol engines only. A manual gearbox was standard and an automatic optional. The 2.0-litre engine produced 137bhp and the 3.0-litre V6 194bhp, or 210bhp



The 406 coupé tackles corners with élan

**USED CAR EXPERT**

James Ruppert
Volvo has killed it off, but the C30 is a stylish rival to the usual used Teutonic hatches **p86**

**NEW CAR EXPERT**

Lewis Kingston
BMW's new 4-series or classic '80s Aston Virage: which coupé will turn the most heads? **p89**

**DEALS EXPERT**

Nic Cackett
Keeps his head buried in the classifieds to pick out the keenest prices **p90**

**CABIN**

The electric seats are known to cause problems, although it's often just a frayed wire. The interior is based on the saloon's; that means hard-wearing if uninspiring plastics. A new motor and cable for the problematic electric windows costs £150 at Paris Autos.



The interior is functional and hard-wearing

WHEELS, TYRES AND BODYWORK

Bodywork should be rust-free. Any corrosion points to poor accident repairs. Bumpers and the unique door mirrors are rare and expensive, so check them carefully. The doors – which are heavier than those on the saloon – can drop on their hinges and even break the retaining straps.

The result was a head-turner. Barely any contemporary test could resist the temptation to mention Ferrari

from 1999. The 2.0-litre petrol was replaced by a 160bhp 2.2 in 2002. Peugeot offered the then-unusual option (in a coupé) of a 133bhp 2.2 HDi turbodiesel from August 2001.

The diesel is arguably the most appealing. It may not have the V6's outright sprinting ability, but it makes up for that with 235lb ft of torque and far more palatable fuel consumption. Peugeot's official combined figure is 44.1mpg, compared with 25.9mpg for the petrol V6.

Those 2.2 HDi cars come with a

particulate filter, and King says if it gets blocked, the engine will go into limp-home mode. Make sure that it has had an additive to help burn off deposits. This should be done at about 70,000 miles. It's also worth taking the car for a long drive to heat through the system to keep it operating properly. The additive isn't cheap, at about £30 per litre. It needs anywhere between three and five litres plus labour costs, so check that it hasn't been skipped.

Servicing isn't punitive. King says a service will cost in the region of £170. →

What to look out for

More than 10,000 Peugeot 406 coupés were brought to the UK in total, so it's worth taking your time to find one that has a fully stamped service history. Check for cambelt changes, in particular.

If the steering is inconsistent in its response or weighting, it's related to the speed-sensitive control unit. It's relatively inexpensive to repair but can still be used as a bargaining chip.

Any thumps from under the bonnet point to worn or completely broken engine mounts. It'll be obvious when accelerating or backing off. Also check for knocks from underneath, which usually signal worn anti-roll bars.

A check under the bonnet will confirm which V6 engine is fitted. Some early 'D9' V6s used the lower-powered unit. The higher-powered one has a silver cover and is marked out with a 'V6' badge just to the left of the oil filler rather than below it.

Any small surges felt when driving mean that the ABS ring is failing. The surging is a result of the sensor getting mixed speed messages and braking slightly. It'll cost about £60 to repair.



Less powerful of two V6s has a black cover



The V6 is brisk in a straight line and it rides well

Have you got one? Tell us about it at autocar@haymarket.com

← The HDi should be done every 12,000 miles and the 2.0 every 20,000 miles. Perishing coolant hoses and leaking radiators are common problems. So, too, are issues with the air conditioning, partly due to the condenser being positioned in front of the radiator, where it's exposed to road grime. If it does fail, it'll cost about £200 to fix.

King says cambelts need changing by 100,000 miles on the HDi. That will cost about £360, including full belt kit and a new water pump. The 2.0 needs its belt changing at 70,000 miles, while

the V6 is due at 80,000 miles and will cost around £500-£600, as it's a bit more involved.

If the belts have been done, the next expense is likely to come at 100,000 miles, when the clutch will require attention, says King. He suggests that it's a false economy to fit anything but genuine parts. A clutch replacement – the clutch being a Valeo or Luk part – is about £350. Manuals are known to lose the third-gear synchro (a £550-£600 fix) and gear linkage rubbers deteriorate (£15 each and an easy fix). King says

the autos shouldn't cause any issues, as long as they've been regularly serviced (a £40 job). CV joint gaiters are prone to failing on early cars, but later cars have far harder-wearing plastic items.

Mechanically, the 406 coupé is a fairly robust car, says King, the biggest problem being those intermittent and sometimes frustrating electrical issues. Like any car of its age, it will require some dedication to keep it running well, but no more than most, and every time you see it or drive it, you'll be certain that it's worth it. **A**

What we said then

Test date | 7.5.97

Gorgeous-looking and capable Pininfarina-sketched coupé belies its humble saloon origins

Design and engineering

Externally, the 406 coupé shares nothing with its four-door stablemate, but there are no styling gimmicks, just meticulously developed surfaces from Pininfarina. The front-drive V6 drivetrain, steering and strut front/multi-link rear suspension are all carried over, though.

Interior

The cabin is spacious but strictly for four, with superb Recaro buckets front and rear. There's a shared DNA between the coupé's interior and the saloon's, but beyond the slightly cheap-feeling console and the basic shape of the dashboard, they share little on the surface.

Performance

Although it lacks the guttural snarl of some V6s, there is no doubt about the car's talents as a coverer of ground. By scrabbling to 60mph in 7.4sec and on to the ton in 19.3sec, the 406 betters the Ford Probe and Vauxhall Calibra V6s.

Ride and handling

The saloon rides and handles well, but the coupé is even better. Corners can be attacked with a confidence that few other front-drive coupés could supply. Handling suffers not one jot because of its ability to smooth away interferences.

Buying and owning

The coupé is generously equipped. The SE version packs air conditioning, full-leather upholstery, 16-inch alloy wheels



and a remote-controlled stereo as standard. Fuel economy peaked at 27.8mpg over our touring route, but we couldn't persuade the V6 to return more than 19.8mpg overall.

Verdict

As a total package, the V6 is crushingly complete, with style, performance and poise in spades. And it can still be comfortably occupied by four adults and their luggage.

Peugeot 406 3.0 V6 SE coupé

Years produced 1997-2003 **Total made** 10,709 (UK) **Price** £26,420
Engine V6, 2946cc, petrol **Power** 194bhp at 5500rpm
Torque 197lb ft at 4000rpm **0-60mph** 7.4sec **0-100mph** 19.3sec
Top speed 141mph **Fuel economy** 19.8mpg

ONES WE FOUND



Price £599 (1999, 98,123 miles)
 Silver exterior, cloth interior, 2.0-litre manual with air conditioning. Full service history, good condition and 12 months' MOT. Recent tyres, low mileage for age and just £600.
Call 020 8936 3340



Price £989 (2000, 102,000 miles)
 Silver 3.0 V6 manual with black leather interior and climate control. Excellent condition inside and out. Full service history, mileage verified, MOT until July 2014 and HPI clear.
Call 01474 879009



Price £995 (1998, 74,000 miles)
 Metallic blue 3.0 V6 SE with optional automatic transmission and black leather interior. Low miles for age, MOT due next July and full Peugeot service history.
Call 01268 412189



Price £1350 (2002, 157,500 miles)
 Red 2.2 HDI turbodiesel coupé with sat-nav and leather interior. Recently serviced and in very good condition throughout. Six months' tax and MOT until June 2014.
Call 07041 371912



Price £3999 (2004, 89,500 miles)
 Black special-edition 2.2 turbodiesel with low miles and four new brakes and tyres. Full service history, but ABS rings need replacing for MOT.
Call 08720 695911