

NEW COMERS

ONE-LITRE 12-VALVE TURBO HEADS NEW DAIHATSU LINE UP

The baby 1.0-litre, three cylinder Daihatsu Charade might not be thought the most exciting of small cars, but with the launch of the latest-generation model in Japan this month that idea could be in for a dramatic reversal.

And central to shaking up that image is the quite spectacular high performance model that heads the new Charade line-up. Labelled GT-Si in Japan but to be known as the GTi in Europe, the top model has just about the most powerful 1.0-litre engine ever built. In fact the Charade GT Si's engine makes working out the power per litre a simple job, because this remarkable unit delivers 100 horsepower from under a litre capacity — the first time this has been achieved in anything but a racing car.

In comparison with other Japanese 1.0-litre cars, the Charade GT Si delivers some 20 to 30 horsepower more than any of them. And in the case of 1.3 litre cars, only the Toyota Starlet turbo can deliver power comparable to that of the Daihatsu.

But the GT Si is not the only version. The new Daihatsu Charade is available with a standard diesel engine which delivers 36 horsepower, or the same unit with a turbocharger, which produces 47 bhp. The petrol motors come in three different versions: there is the familiar carburettor unit (51 bhp), and the same single-cam engine fitted



with a turbo to give an output of 67 bhp. The car that we drove was the most powerful—it had the new twin-cam turbo intercooled unit.

The new engine has the same short-stroke (76 × 73 mm) cylinder block as the others. The difference is in the cylinder head. There are two overhead camshafts, which actuate the four valves per cylinder, while the fuel mixture comes from an electronic injection unit and power boosted by an air-intercooled turbocharger.

This elaborate design produces no fewer than 100bhp at 6500rpm (JIS net), while maximum torque is 96 lb ft at 3500rpm. Under test driving conditions, this high speed engine often hit the rev-limiter at 7600rpm.

The lower-powered Charades can be chosen with a four-speed manual gearbox or a three-speed automatic transmission. The hottest GT Si is only available with a five-speed manual transmission, which has low ratios in true sporting manner: top gear attains just 18.8 mph per 1000 rpm in this neat little hatchback, and fourth gear nearly reaches the rev limit at 112 mph.

The Charade hits the Japanese 112 What Car? May 1987



HOT-SHOT CHARADE



Charade's new body is more aerodynamic, and it's bigger inside than its diminutive dimensions might suggest. Big power comes from twin-cam, four-valve turbo engine — 112mph, plus, and 0-60mph in 8.6 seconds

works well. The car neither rolls nor dives with its new independent suspension. Each corner of the car has its own coil spring with damper, along with the GT Si equipment that includes an anti-roll bar at both ends.

Compared with the old Charade, length is the same, but the newcomer is two inches wider and the wheelbase is an inch longer than before. The windscreen is more steeply raked, and the aerodynamic body (Cd 0.32) indicates that the designers have spent a lot of time wind tunnel testing.

The interior of the GT Si is quite sporty. The small, three-spoke tilttable steering wheel is thick and fits the

hands nicely. While the instrument panel has a bit of a plastic look about it, the gauges are easy to read.

Although the Daihatsu Charade GT Si is a wonderfully small and sporty car for people who like to drive this sort of vehicle, its price seems somewhat prohibitive. It costs 1.4 million yen (around £6000) in Japan.

The new Charades will enter the European market in the spring, with British launch set for May.

MODEL: DAIHATSU CHARADE GTi	
ENGINE:	3 cyl 993cc 100bhp
PERFORMANCE:	0-62 mph 8.6 sec; max 112 mph plus
MPG:	N/A
DATE IN UK:	May 1987
PRICE GUIDE:	£7500