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IHS™ Automotive
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Naming aside, the most notable element of the latest 308 is the new architecture, which is based on the EMP2 (Efficient Modular Platform) system. This has resulted in approximately 150kg being cut from the weight of the car, largely through the increased use of high-strength steel across the chassis structure and the addition of various aluminium parts, including the hood (bonnet), front fenders (wings) and various suspension components. The range-topping 1.6 THP is now reported to weigh 1,165kg, effectively taking the 308 from the heaviest to the lightest vehicle in its class. All exterior dimensions are largely the same, except for the roofline, which has been dropped by 40mm. While this certainly improves the look of the car, it has had a negative impact on rear seat headroom; the rear seating area has further been reduced in favour of a larger trunk, which is not offset by extending the wheelbase just 12mm.

The exterior design of the new 308 is more standard than the previous version, having replaced the gaping radiator opening with a smaller vent – a larger opening is below the bumper. This has made the car perhaps more generic in appearance, but smarter none the less. LED headlights also feature (by market) and the interior has also changed, largely following design cues seen in the 208, such as the smaller steering wheel and raised instrument cluster. Another interior change is the removal of most buttons from the dashboard, with most functions now controlled directly through a large central touchscreen unit.

The new 308 received the European Car of the Year award at the 2014 Geneva motor show, which would imply that Peugeot is on the right track with the new model. Between 2013 and 2014, IHS AutoInsight is forecasting that sales of the 308 will increase almost 100,000 units from 234,000 to 323,000, based on the introduction of this second-gen car. These numbers are expected to decline moderately over the remainder of the decade, to approximately 265,000 units in 2020, although the introduction of a replacement in 2021 will see sales jump again, reaching figures in excess of 385,000 units.

**Citroën C4**

As of 2013, the Citroën C4 is the third best-selling model across the PSA Peugeot Citroën model range. According to IHS AutoInsight, approximately 210,000 units of the model were sold over 2013, down from the 275,000 units sold over 2010, the first year this generation was available. This slow decline in sales is expected to continue over the remainder of the decade, with just 115,000 units forecast to find new homes over 2019.
The current C4 is a direct descendant of the ZX, which was launched in 1991. Itself the successor to the GX, this front-wheel drive Citroën was introduced two years earlier than the Peugeot 306, which shared much of the engineering debuted in the ZX, including the McPherson front suspension and rear torsion beam/trailing arm rear set-up. Like most PSA C-segment models of the modern era, the ZX was first offered as a three- and five-door hatchback, but this range was ultimately extended with the addition of the Break, a five-door wagon. As for engines, the ZX offered a wide range of choices, again mirrored by the 306, including the 1.1-, 1.4-, 1.6, 1.8 and 2.0-litre petrol versions and the 1.9-litre turbodiesel. Most notably, the ZX range featured the high-performance Volcane variant, which rather than being high-powered, benefited from a vehicle structure that weighed less than 1,000kg.

The replacement for the ZX was the Xsara, which was unveiled at the 1996 Geneva motor show before becoming available as a 1997 model. Again, the range largely carried over the suspension and powertrain line-up as the ZX and other PSA vehicles, meaning that the most appreciable change was with the exterior design. Yet even this was not an original, as the Xsara largely followed the same design cues as seen with the larger Citroën Xantia. If there were any positives to be taken from the Xsara it was the well-executed and spacious interior, but predictably this was not sufficient to convince detractors that the days of Citroën building cars that pushed design boundaries (such as the fabled DS) were now very much in the past.

In 2005 and ’06 (by market), Citroën launched the C4 as a replacement for the Xsara. The exterior design of the new model helped to counter criticism levelled at the previous car, with the rounded outline of the new model offering a break from the standard two-box hatch design without being overly unusual. The curved roofline was achieved by extending the C-pillars into the tailgate assembly. Inside, the C4 had a much-improved cabin and, like Citroën models of the past which featured single-spoke steering wheels (as seen in the 1970s CX and others), the fixed-centre steering wheel was again different but effective. The improvements to the cabin served to highlight where Citroën had used its development budget, as the platform and running gear remained an updated version of the same that had been first seen in the ZX over 15 years earlier.

The latest C4, introduced in 2010, retained the mechanics of the out-going car, but lost many of the features that had distinguished it from other C-segment hatchbacks. Although cabin ambience was improved through the use of more sound insulation and overall vehicle weight had been reduced by 15kg, the curved roofline of the first car was gone, replaced by a more conventional design that marginally improved rear passenger headroom. Gone, too, was the steering wheel with the fixed central hub. Overall, this version was far more conservative than the out-going car, and without
these and other unique selling points, the model was forced into a head-to-head battle with other mass-production hatchbacks, a fight that the mediocre handling, numb electric power steering and only adequate interior space of the C4 was unlikely to win.

To break from this contest, Citroën is not planning a direct replacement for the C4. As a demonstration of what the OEM has in mind, it unveiled the C4 Cactus at the 2014 Geneva motor show, a model intended to create an alternative to the standard C-segment hatchback. For the immediate future, the C4 and C4 Cactus are likely to be marketed as separate but parallel models, but before the end of the decade the latter will take over the slot in its own right. Like the sports-oriented DS model variants, the Cactus could help Citroën increase its per-vehicle margin, particularly if the model's availability is extended beyond Europe after its predicted launch in 2015.

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**Figure 5: Unveiled at the 2014 Geneva motor show, the C4 Cactus follows exterior design cues of the C4 Picasso**

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**Citroën C3**

The origin of the current C3 can be traced back to the Citroën AX hatchback, which was introduced in 1986. The vast majority of versions featured a front-wheel drive set-up, but a very limited number of four-wheel drive cars were sold. The three- and five-door AX stands as an early example of vehicle lightweighting; by using relatively advanced design features such as plastic body parts and exterior steel panels of various thicknesses, the AX weighed in at only 650kg. This light weight translated to good performance and excellent mileage figures from the range of small-displacement four-cylinder petrol and diesel engines, all of which were shared with other Peugeot models. The AX underwent a minor facelift in 1991, which saw the addition of uprated brakes and some minor alterations to the exterior bodywork, but most noteworthy was the added sound insulation, which addressed road noise issues and made the car feel considerably more substantial.

The AX was replaced in 1996 by the Citroën Saxo. This was twinned with the Peugeot 106, a model introduced five years earlier in 1991. As both models were largely based on the out-going AX, with only minor changes to the vehicle mechanicals, the Saxo remained a relative lightweight at 960kg. This meant that standard versions of the car retained many of the same benefits, including impressive fuel economy and good handling. Although the Saxo was offered in a broad range of trim levels, one of the most desirable was the performance VTS version, which went on to build a cult following largely due to the performance of its 1.6-litre 120bhp engine.

The Mark II Saxo was introduced in 2000, with a series of changes over the first-generation car, including a restyled front