



WHO: For the photoshoot of the exciting new 207 GT THP 150, we chose British Parkour star Daniel Ilabaca.
WHY: Because free runner Daniel has bags of street style and is a real urban gymnast.
WHAT THE HECK! He caused not one, but two suicide alarms as he prepared to jump for our photographer on the roof of The Lowry.
WHEN: A damp and dismal Thursday morning.
WHERE: The Lowry centre of performing and visual arts – an architectural flagship in glass and metal in Manchester's docklands.

ONE TO WATCH

'GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO WATCH' THEY SAID, SO WE DID. **LAURA DIXON** TOOK THE NEW 207 GT THP 150 AND ONE OF THE UK'S TOP PARKOUR ATHLETES TO THE STREETS OF MANCHESTER AND WATCHED THEM GO

Superman? Spiderman? A suicide jumper? These, and other thoughts, were rushing through the heads of Manchester's office workers at the sight of Daniel Ilabaca taking a hop, a skip, a jump and a somersault across the rooftop of the breathtaking Lowry centre of performing arts, and then using the show-stopping new Peugeot 207 GT THP 150 as a vaulting horse.

Daniel is right up there with the UK's top *traceurs*, the name for participants of the Parkour discipline, the urban phenomenon that involves swinging from the rooftops, throwing majestic mid-air shapes and spinning somersaults from a standing start. And no wonder the workers are baffled – it's not your usual sight on a wet and windy Thursday morning in Manchester's regenerated docklands.

Daniel comes from a close-knit family who live on the Wirral, but fittingly, his background is full of colour and panache. His father was a sailor in the Chilean Navy – hence the unusual surname and dark looks – and he has family all over South America, including cousins on Easter Island. And aged just 18, he's making waves in a sport that isn't really a sport, a discipline that brings together various elements of martial arts, combat, extreme sports, philosophy and acrobatics, not forgetting high diving without the swimming pool. You might have seen this kind of urban freestyle gymnastics on the BBC idents, but it's a tough activity to pin down precisely, and getting Daniel to stand still





Daniel Ilabaca
 18 years old
 Urban gymnast with plenty of muscle
 Street philosopher
 Dark, thanks to a Chilean father
 Awe-inspiring agility and utterly fearless
 Zero stars for safety; no safety equipment whatsoever
 To find out more about Daniel and to watch him in action, visit www.danielilabaca.co.uk

MAN VS MACHINE

- NAME** Peugeot 207 GT THP 150
- AGE** Brand spanking new
- STYLE** Stunningly sporty and packing a punch; style with substance
- PERSONALITY** Vital and dynamic
- COLOURING** There are nine vibrant, classy colours – how on earth do you choose?
- PERFORMANCE** Powerful, and sticks to the road like glue
- SAFETY** 5-star Euro NCAP safety rating
- MORE INFO** To be one of the first to test drive the new 207 GT THP 150, call 0845 200 1234 or visit www.peugeot.co.uk/rapport

for long enough for an interview is just as tricky. Parkour's popularity in the UK has soared since the airing of the documentary *Jump London* on Channel 4 in 2003. It was developed in a suburb of Paris by two friends, influenced by Asian philosophy, who wanted to find a way of being 'fluid like water', to create harmony between the *traceur* and the obstacle: a railing, staircase, wall or other example of urban confinement. The name Parkour derives from the identically pronounced French word, *parcours*, meaning course. And Daniel has been coursing his way through the world's cityscapes since he was about 13, way before the mainstream caught on.

'As a kid I was always jumping on walls,' says Daniel. 'And now I'm older, I haven't stopped – it's just that the walls have got higher! I don't view Parkour as a sport, it's more of a discipline, and the way that I live my life. It influences everything that I do, and how I think.'

And in the past six months, this dedication has really paid off. As part of a group called Worldwide Jam (www.worldwidejam.tv), Daniel's profile has been rising and he's been able to leave his job as a roofer to pursue Parkour full time. This has led to various globe-trotting trips, like an invite to perform at Jump Bahrain, during the Bahrain Grand Prix, which involved making the most of the city's ancient forts and modern complexes, death-defying handstands on top of buildings and even jumping over Bernie Ecclestone himself.

On his return, things got even hotter. He turned down an offer to perform on Madonna's current world tour and has been busy appearing in music videos and films, most recently playing a terrifyingly acrobatic zombie chasing Robert Carlyle about in his new film, *28 Weeks Later*. His high profile on the internet has been behind

many of these ventures – type his name into Google and you'll come up with a vast number of movies of his acrobatics.

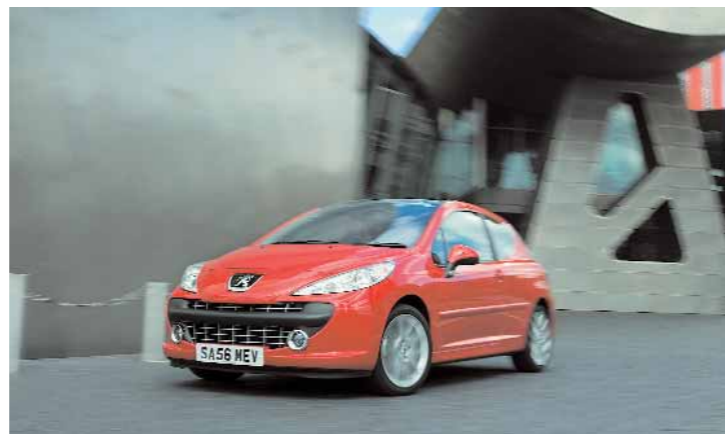
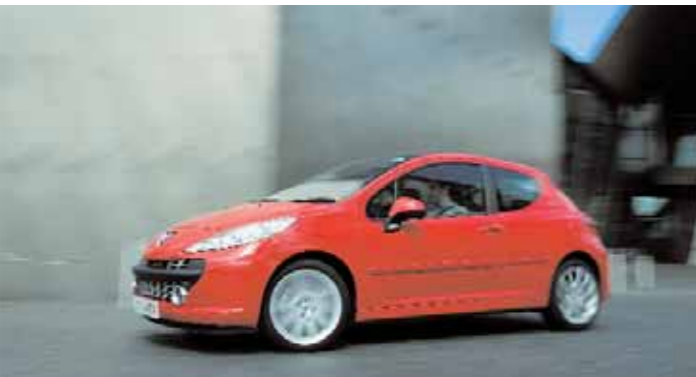
And the Peugeot 207 is a rather distracting part of the photoshoot for him and the crowd that has gathered to watch him. Not only is he using it as a springboard – generating gasps from the audience – he's also been checking it out himself.

For now though, Daniel's quicker around town on his own two feet – and his hands too. Parkour is in everything he does, and the daredevil spirit that makes him want to scale tall buildings and do handstands on the top is underpinned with something a lot calmer, a philosophy of being.

'Parkour's a discipline that helps you move on to so many other paths. And it's something that helps you overcome obstacles in your life, both physical and metaphorical. The thrill is in the danger factor. It's about the fear that you might fall. And it's about overcoming that fear by really putting your mind to it.'

Bruises and grazes aside, Daniel's obviously got an innate skill at this discipline, and puts his talents to work climbing up a column of The Lowry centre that had last week defeated a set of climbers – but this time with no ropes. It's like watching the actions of an urban monkey, or a real-life Spiderman.

His next challenge is to take up a different character, that of the Prince of Persia. Daniel is hoping to get some stunt work as the action film, transformed from a computer game to the big screen, requires the prince to have superhuman skills of agility. The prince will run up walls and display other feats of acrobatics once only really possible in the computer realm. Until now, that is.



'THE PEUGEOT 207 IS A DISTRACTING PART OF THE PHOTOSHOOT ... HE'S USING IT AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR BACKFLIPS'

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