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Vauxhall Corsa – Driving Impressions (after 25 years!)

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Born in the Britpop, Walkman and shell-suits age to the sounds of The Spice Girls, it has outlived them and is still Vauxhall's best-seller.

What's more it consistently lurks mid-way in the UK's top ten best sellers list and blocks out



more modern super-mini rivals.



A lot of that success must be down to price, although it's not cheap but it's cheerful and actually when taking into account the rate of inflation the Corsa today is less expensive than when introduced. Three door hatchback models are priced from £11,050 to £18,720 and five door versions from £14,435 to £19,370.

Maturity means the Vauxhall Corsa is more powerful, economical and "greener" than ever and delivers these virtues with a sophistication and refinement unheard of in 1993.



At last week's Vauxhall regional media tour with new and interesting models I had a brief opportunity to reacquaint myself with Vauxhall's super-baby in its SRi Nav trim, three door hatchback body with a 100 hp 1.4 litre turbo-petrol engine and six-speed manual gearbox. It has the DNA of the noughties boy racers but it's playing a modern generation game with its appeal and abilities.

The smooth-running, pokey powerplant and sporty six-speed gearbox are a delight once you come to terms with the surprisingly long travel clutch, and it steers and stops with confidence and precision.



You just have to read the road ahead and carefully anticipate overtaking opportunities and the Corsa 1.4T rewards with swift and safe responses.

The ride is biased towards firmness but it's not hard and felt supple over some bad roads without being too soft on undulating sections or rolling around bends.

It pulls well, particularly through the gears in mid-range, and it provided a composed character on main roads, returning over 47 mpg without a problem.

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There's no shortage of creature comforts which include air conditioning, cruise control and Apple-play, automatic lights and wipers. Seats are sporty and supporting in front with reasonable room but those in the back might find legroom was short once they wriggled into them.

The boot holds 285 litres (10.06 cu.ft) with the backseat in use and 1,090 litres (38.49 cu.ft) maximum. It's not the roomiest of modern superminis but will take a few cases and it's easy to use.

VERDICT

There is something Tardis-like about the Corsa, not because is bigger inside than out but it is a true time machine, and who's not going to enjoy it?

For: Brand/model longevity, wide range of models and prices, suspension tuned for UK road conditions, nippy high torque engine, still looks young after 25 years.

Against: Not as roomy as the latest new generation super-mini competitors, Fiesta, Polo, Ibiza for instance, ungenerous warranty.



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Corsa Clips

Corsa means 'race' in Italian.

Vauxhall has sold two-million Corsas in the UK, 52,772 of them in 2017

Around 20,000 have been sold to police forces

There have been convertibles and pick-ups



Grey is the most popular colour at the moment

Originally it cost £7,195

Today's price means it's actually less after inflation

An electric Corsa will arrive in 2019

Mini Milestones and Wheels-Alive Fast-facts:

Vauxhall Corsa SRi Nav 1.4T

Price: £14,345 (with options £17,190).

Engine/transmission: four cylinder, 1,364 cc, 100 hp, 200 Nm (148 b.ft), turbo-petrol engine, six speed manual.

Performance: 115 mph, 0-60 mph 11 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 55.4 mpg, (47.5 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 119 g/km, VED road tax First Year rate £165 then £140 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 24%.

Insurance Group: 10E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,020 mm (13.19 ft), W 1,736 (5.70 ft) mm, H 1,479 mm (4.85 ft), boot/load space 285 to 1,090 litres (10.06 to 38.49 cu.ft).



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