Aion V premium – First Impressions

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Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) writes… ‘The eight-year long warranty with the new Aion V is going to be a big attraction to buyers.’

Back that with eight years servicing, eight years AA roadside assistance, eight years of MoTs and you have the ‘great eight’ incentive.

What’s more, each Aion V comes with the promise of an AA technician who will come to your home and do a regular scheduled service if it cannot be done by one of its dealer partners which will rise from an initial 25 outlets to about 100 over the next four years and the first will be named at the end of this month.

Aion modelled its customer offer on that of a Korean rival, but with a few improvements it

believes will convince customers to sign up with them instead.

Network development director Duncan Johnston said Aion was sticking with the traditional retailer arrangements but also providing a personal concierge service for those who might need it. The network has opened its first outlet in Slough and the distributor looking after the expansion is Jameel Motors, which has international experience.

A dedicated DHL operation will deliver service and replacement parts overnight and breakdown calls will be handled by an Aion team at the AA's Rescue Centre. Aion's parts centre at Bury St Edmonds will hold about 60,000 items at any one time so it is confident of a 24-hour turnaround from ordering to picking and dispatching.

Aion anticipates selling more than 3,500 cars in Britain this year and will build on that. Key to the growth is getting customer satisfaction with the two-model Aion V and then introducing a plug-in hybrid in early 2027 followed by a range extended car fitted with a small petrol engine which is the generator for electric motors which drive the wheels.

With the market changing in response to tax breaks and company car ownership patterns, Aion is not predicting the sales split between retail and business registrations but considers its 8-is-Great programme is particularly attractive to leasing companies and fleet managers who want reliable write-down data to work out costs and help fix rates.

Aion is launching with the V in two trim levels from £36,450 or £37,945 with massaging leather front seats and coolhot box, which share a common powertrain platform and proven CAT Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) battery with a capacity of 75.3 kWh. This battery chemistry does not need to limit the upper and lower states of charge in the same way NMC batteries do, because LFP benefits from greater chemical stability, more robust tolerance to high states of charge, and exceptional cycle life. This means all 75.3 kWh of capacity is available to be used.

Recharging can take as little as 18 mins and the full certified range is 317 miles, the longest in the C-sector where the Aion V is sold.

There is no front luggage space and the rear loadbed will take 472 litres (16.67 cu.ft) up to 1,638 litres (57.84 cu.ft) while both models fall into insurance group 34.

The 150 kW motor gives the Aion V a 0 – 62 mph time of 7.9 seconds and maximum 99 mph helped by a kerb weight of under 1,900 kg (4,189 lb).

Aion has been working with Toyota, Honda and PSA since the 1950s in China so it has a lot of experience and more than most other Chinese car brands, and has sold 60,000 V models in its home country this year.

First impressions

The Aion V has been suspension tuned for UK roads and coped very well with our poor surfaces, potholes and tarmac ridges on our initial experience.

It also pulled well and willingly and was modest in its use of the battery power but we thought the adjustable “high” regeneration setting was not particularly strong or distinguishable from a standard or normal mode.

Aion V is particularly attractive if you need access to the rear seats for a passenger with mobility issues as the back doors open a full 90-degrees and the loadbed will easily take a wheelchair, including some powered models. It is a strong candidate for any Motability programme.

The modern software is comprehensive and fairly clear but not particularly quick changing through the touchscreen.

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The steering had a tight turning circle and light feedback, the brakes were effective with modest pressure and ride quality was comfortable, even a little soft on twisting roads so it leaned through some bends.

Noise levels were low from any source and the seats had good adjustment and were comfortable.

ATTRACTIVE

The 8-is-great deal is very attractive but it also means anyone selling or part exchanging after the typical three to four years is handing over a good slice of warranty and what they paid for upfront. Used values will, therefore, be better than many rivals.

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