Cupra Born V2 – Road Test

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The Cupra Born V2 all-electric family sized car plugged in, charged and tested by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

As sales growth continues in the electric car market, some traditional manufacturers like SEAT are refining and introducing new sub-brands.

The emerging sector has pulled in completely new brands from China alongside off-shoots of European and Asian manufacturers who all want a piece of this increasingly important "green" branch of the high earning business.

SEAT first launched its sporting Cupra sub-brand in the 1990s on hotter models of its petrol-powered line up, taking its name from SEAT's initial Touring Car and Cup Racing activities around the world.

But things were changing in the naughties and the competition in the market place revolved around developing electric models so SEAT looked into the parts bins of its parent Volkswagen Group and showed the el-Born in March 2019, based on the VW ID.3 platform and powertrain, with modifications.

Cupra became a brand in its own right in 2018 but the Covid-19 pandemic came along too and that slowed introduction of the production model two years later. It really came to market in 2021 but has been further revised since, and the Cupra Born line-up runs to seven-models in three grades priced from £36,475 to £40,150.

Our £40,075 V2 test car uses the more powerful 77 kWh battery and 230 PS electric motor but you can choose an entry level 204 PS motor and 58 kWh battery or slightly more powerful 230 PS motor but with the same battery.

The slightly higher V2 specification included 19-inch Typhoon alloy wheels, heated front seats and steering wheel, head-up display, tinted windows and heated washers.

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At the wheel



Based on the technology under the VW ID.3, like all evs, its simple push-button, twist and go start is silent and swift. It defaults to a Comfort mode but the driver can select Range, Comfort, Performance, Cupra or Individual to maximise economy or speed and set up for really rapid runs or gliding along motorways, main roads and streets.



Acceleration is respectable in the eco-range mode and incrementally much sharper in the others. While the steering wheel felt larger than I thought necessary it had a good turning circle, no kickback or vibration and returned good feel through corners.

The rear wheel drive layout made it very slightly light at the front end but that’s no bad thing so long as you don’t tackle turns with too much enthusiasm. If you do, just easing off the accelerator will bring everything neatly back on line.

Setting the range mode meant it was really a single-pedal drive thanks to very strong retardation but the brakes were well up to their job in the other modes and the Cupra slowed and stopped squarely and quickly. The electric parking brake worked well and held it on our test slope, easing off as the accelerator was depressed.

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Generally, the Cupra’s ride was comfortable even with the V2’s sports springs mostly due to the excellent bucket seats and thick base to the rear offset split back seats.



The suspension could be intrusive over poor roads and even bumpy at times meeting potholes but that was mostly confined to the generated noise, not nasty knocks.

Straightforward effective major controls contrasted with the fussy secondary buttons on the wheel spokes, under the infotainment display and through the touchscreen. Sometimes they worked immediately, most of the time needing a few attempts to change settings.

The 12-inch multi-purpose infotainment system was not easy to view in bright sunlight when reflections dazzled and on two occasions the mapping suddenly jumped off the indicated road into fields beside it for no apparent reason.

In front of the driver is a small screen for the essential speed and charge state and that was

slightly better shielded from sunlight and the head-up display was clear.

The column stalks were partly hidden behind the wheel but worked well for wipers and lights.

Temperature settings in the cabin were effective regarding output and direction from chilled to warm, and the simple buttons for the powered windows backed up.

I was really impressed by the amount of oddments space in the Cupra cabin and it really is a generous family car with plenty of leg and headroom and reasonable visibility all round, although camera and sensors are necessary when reversing.

Front seat adjustment was plentiful though manual and the rear seatbacks simply dropped nearly flat to triple maximum loadbed capacity.

Access was very good with wide opening doors and a high lifting tailgate.



The Cupra Born V2 has a reasonable though not particularly long range of about 200 miles in give and take motoring but you'll probably really enjoy every mile of that.

Recharging to 80% takes a little over half-an-hour on a quick point or over 6 hours on an 11 kw line.


#BORNPROUD

VERDICT

The Cupra Born is priced to compete against its Volkswagen stablemate and rivals from other manufacturers; it turns heads and is very stylish inside.

For: Excellent multi-mode settings, well equipped, very responsive, good roadholding, lots of room inside, comfortable bucket seats.

Against: Constant road and suspension rumbles, very fiddly secondary controls and distracting glare from displays, high-ish price, average driving range and warranty.



FAST FACTS

Model: Cupra Born V2 all-electric 5-door family hatchback


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Price: £40,075 including options

Mechanical: 230 PS motor, 77 kWh battery, single-speed transmission

Max Speed: 99 mph

0 – 62 mph: 6.6 secs

Range: 208 miles

Insurance Group: 26

CO2 emissions: Zero

Tax costs: Bik rating 2%, VED £ZeroFY, £ZeroSR

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Size: L 4.33 m (14.21 ft), W 1.81 m (5.94 ft), H 1.54 m (5.05 ft)

Bootspace: 385 to 1,267 litres (13.60 to 44.74 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,838 kg (4.052 lb)