# Ford Puma ST-Line X – Road Test

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**The Ford Puma has consistently featured in Britain's top ten popular cars for all the right reasons, writes Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales).**

From launch in 2019 as natural evolution of the Fiesta hatchback, the Puma SUV has fitted the bill for thousands of families.

Its fairly compact dimensions enclose a deceptively practical and versatile body with a clever mild hybrid 48-volt power pack assisting a surprisingly

small 1.0 Ecoboost three cylinder petrol engine.

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The combination is good with generally seamless power delivery and good economy potential, and in the case of our test car the added refinement of a seven-speed automatic sequential transmission to ease it through busy traffic in peak times.

Our test car was equipped with £3,900 of extras including large powered sunroof, driver assistance pack, glare-free LED headlights, premium paint, heated front seats and steering wheel.

The Puma ST-Line X is available with a 125 PS engine, automatic or manual powertrain or 155 PS automatic version from under £29,000 to over £31,350 depending on optional equipment available from an extensive list of extras. Cheaper Puma models are available with the less powerful engine but still a choice of gearboxes.

The engine and gearbox were very well suited to their task thanks to a sophisticated software programme giving four modes, normal, eco, sport and winter, together with regular and sport settings to the transmission.

In normal mode, the engine was probably at its best combination but we appreciated the ability to stretch economy and really preferred the sport setting with the sharper feedback and livelier nature.

Overall fuel economy varied as a result between about 44 and 53 mpg during

our test.

You did not have to skimp on the throttle to achieve a reasonable return either and the automatic changes were usually smooth, although occasionally it was jerky from standstill and needed a firm push on the pedal.

Through the gears acceleration was consistent and smooth and motorway miles slipped by very easily and effortlessly.

If you wanted to slip between D and S settings on the transmission lever the arrangement was short and swift as well.

The sophistication of the powertrain extended to the steering with its peculiar semi-square steering wheel which reminded me of the Quartic wheel fitted to original Austin Allegro models in 1973, which gave more room for the driver's legs. Most of the time, the steering wheel is pointing straight ahead so this is fine, and when turning, the steering set-up provided excellent feel and feedback as well as a good turning circle for parking.

Easing along country roads the steering was precise and the handling predictable with no bad manners but a lot of reassuring grip.

Underfoot, braking required only modest pedal pressure to rapidly slow down and you could feel the system building up nicely to enable a feathered stop, while the parking brake securely held it on a few slopes – but it would have benefitted from auto-hold.

Secondary controls were straightforward and well marked although the wash and wipe system for both ends was packed onto a single stalk which was partly hidden by the wheelspokes when operated.

Two 12-inch screens carried the essential instruments directly infront of the driver and which changed appearance depending on the chosen drive mode. The accompanying screen packaged the infotainment system and phone settings along with the climate control display, over the slim row of push buttons for temperature and fan, heated front seats and steering wheel, which were extras on our test car.

They were angled towards the driver, were large and very clear at all times despite the details displayed.

The Puma’s heating and ventilation system was extensive, responsive, and remarkably quiet in operation as well as effective in any setting.

It was backed up by powered windows and a big sunroof to give the car an airy feel and appearance.

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Oddments room was only fair for a family car with some awkward door bins restricting the size and shape of what could be placed inside if not slipped into the central console lidded bin or tray. There are also some slim seatback pockets for the rear passengers to use.

The Puma’s hidden secret is a very capacious cargo area under the boot-floor

behind the low sill and under the powered fifth door. Rear seats folded fairly flat with an offset split arrangement for added versatility and optimum loading ability.

Access to the bootspace was easy, as was getting into and out of the cabin for occupants, but taller passengers might find the legroom a bit tight in the back. In addition, taller drivers or front seat users could struggle to find enough legroom with a restricted range of reach and a badly placed reclining wheel to set the seatback.

The seats were well shaped and comfortable with good location and support even for enthusiastic driving and the column had adequate adjustment range.

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Ride comfort was generally good with only really bad bumps being felt or jarring the chassis and it had little dip, roll, pitch or unsettling behaviour.

Handling was safe and sure-footed and never gave a moment’s concern.

Visibility was a little restricted over the shoulder when reversing or pulling out into traffic so you appreciate the various warning lights and sensors, and parking is easy with a very wide angle or narrow angle camera to assist.

Wash and wipe system did a good job and the optional intelligent LED did a similarly good job, of illuminating the road with a long wide beam which did not seem to dazzle oncoming road users.

Road noise was generally low if ever present from the big wheels and tyres, but occasionally the suspension could be heard bumping up or down as well, although wind and engine noises were muted, even when the power was pouring out.

Performance was adequate for a family SUV but not really head-turning and it was at its best bowling along main roads with some mid-range overtaking being required and the Sport mode in use.

VERDICT

The Ford Puma ST-Line X automatic really does a lot of things very well and certainly nothing badly so it is satisfying, stylish and sophisticated and sits securely in the top ten where it deserves to be.

**For:** Responsive driving modes, good steering, handling and brakes, comfortable seats, very big bootspace, fair economy, excellent instruments display

**Against:** Modest acceleration, road and engine noises intruded, limited seat travel. expensive extras and average warranty.




## FAST FACTS

**Model:** Ford Puma ST-Line X

**Price:** £34,500

**Mechanical:** 125 PS 3-cylinder 1.0 petrol-hybrid, 7 speed

**Max Speed:** 118 mph

**0 – 62 mph:** 9.6 sec

**Combined MPG:** 44

**Insurance Group:** 15

**C02 emissions:** 131 g/km

**Bik rating:** 32%, £540FY, £195SR *(changed 1/04/25)*

**Warranty:** 3 years/ 60,000 miles

**Size:** L 4.23 m (13.88 ft), W 1.81 m (5.94 ft), H 1.55 m (5.09 ft)

**Bootspace:** 456 to 1,216 litres (16.10 to 42.94 cu.ft)

**Kerbweight:** 1,280 kg (2,822 lb)

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