



Geely EX5 Max – Road Test

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Author:

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If you think Geely is a new brand in Britain, think again, writes Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales).

While it launched its first badged model, the Geely EX5, last year it has been quietly contemplating its place and plans for some years.

Geely is deeply involved behind the scenes with our own Lotus sports car makers, and is providing the knowledge and expertise for Volvo and Smart electric models.

So think about a Chinese brand which has knowledge of sports cars, executive and family cars as well as city commuting cars.

That's a wide ranging, significant spread of experience upon which to draw when designing and delivering your own badged models. It has also added the Geely Starray EM-I Super Hybrid in recent weeks.

And make no mistake, the five-seat launch Geely EX5 is good, very good.

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All-electric powertrain...

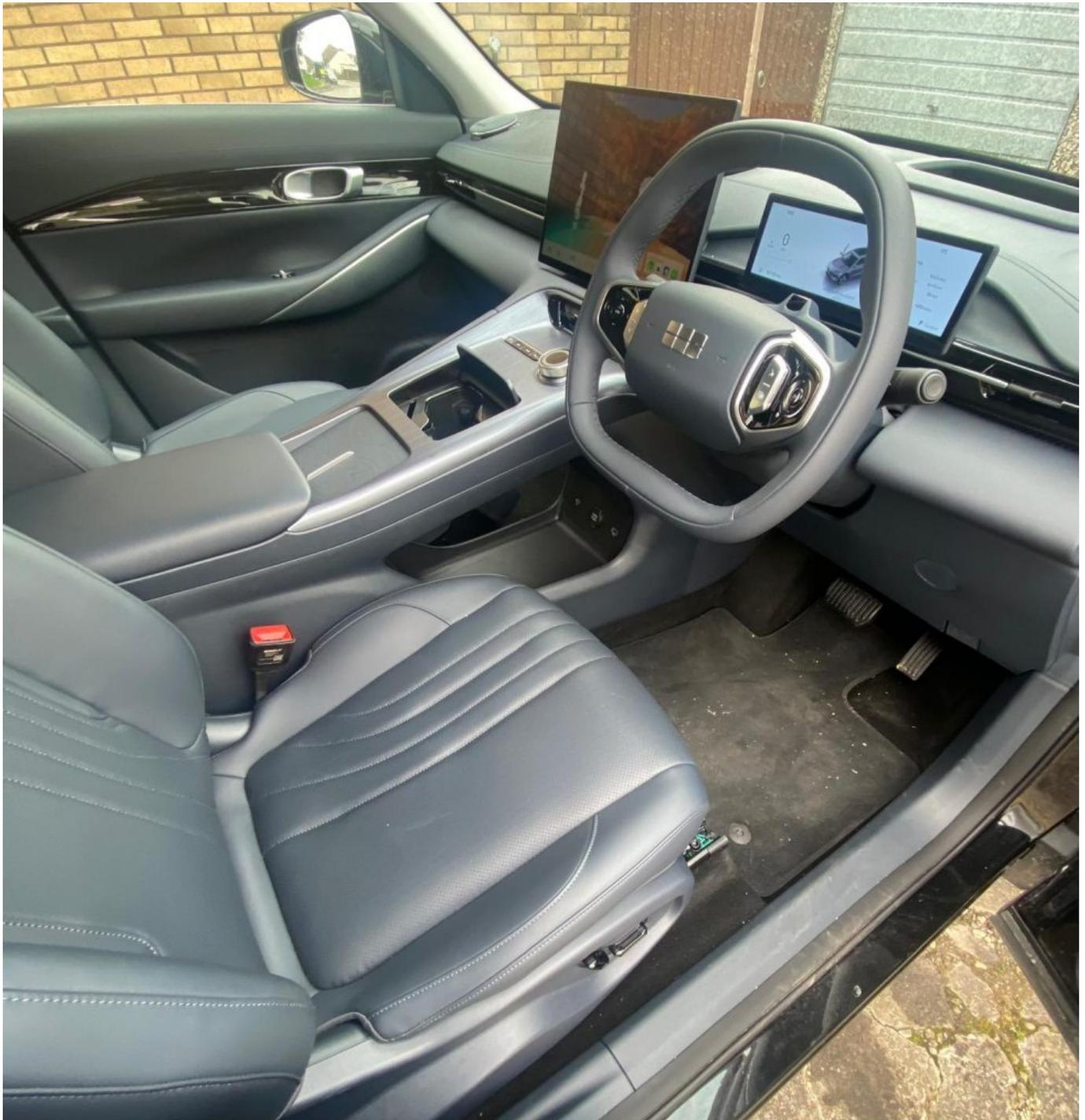
There are three trim levels to the Geely EX5; the SE, Pro and Max from £31,990, £33,990 and £36,990, sharing the same powertrain and differing only in trim and equipment.

The test model Max top version gets a big sunroof, powered tailgate and 16-speaker sound system along with a head-up display for the driver, ventilated/heated front seats with massage function and leg support for the passenger, all illuminated with a choice of 265 colour light combinations inside.

Put simply, that is refinement which you don't expect at the price but might see as optional and very expensive on legend marques from premium UK and European car brands.

But there is more. It has not been a case of simply throwing everything into the Geely EX5 and pushing it out at lower than comparable price to competitors and overlooking the dynamic abilities.

It actually rides very smoothly, handles with a lot of agility and has acceleration and economy to challenge rivals from China, Europe and Korea.



The major controls all worked well and acceleration, cruising, steering,



braking and recharging were effortless.

The secondary stalk control for washers and wipers was hidden behind the left-hand wheelspoke and needed familiarity to find functions but the right stalk simply selected the direction of travel forward or reverse as well as park.

Geely has put a lot onto the wheel spokes and then made the buttons multi-functional just to confuse a driver without differentiating on their purpose. You have to look into the screen ahead of the driver to actually see what changes.

Look at the really big central infotainment screen and some shortcut buttons along the lower edge help but can also confuse as you have to dive into the menu each brings up to alter something.

Then it becomes highly distracting and potentially dangerous even before you connect a mobile phone into the system.

It must be said that the screens' clarity and speed of change are very good, but I did wonder if a better technical approach would improve it.

Heating and ventilation was truly sophisticated with full powered windows, that big sunroof overhead, strong output and precise directional control through a multitude of vents.

Driver and passenger have in the Max the ability to heat or cool their seats,



select six massage styles and the passenger can also put their feet up with an electrically operated leg-rest. It's better equipped than many lounge sofas or chairs.

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Leg and headroom was very good, front seats' adjustment widespread and access to the cabin was straightforward. The powered boot release and closure was appreciated, the opening wide and long with added depth for objects under the boot floor. The seatback had a one-third, two-thirds split to help loading and passenger carrying.

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Ride quality was very good and the conventional coil springs and dampers were well chosen to soak up shock without making it too sloppy around corners at speed.

You knew it was doing a good job because you could sometimes hear the ridges and potholes being despatched beneath the car as you passed over them.

Depending on eco, comfort or sport mode selection the take up was good, quicker or much brisker and you could also tune the retardation and thereby the regeneration of the battery to stretch the range.

We saw a best of 254 miles during our test by moving over the three modes. You may get it easily towards 270 miles with more care.



The deeply padded and supporting seats in front and comfortable rear bench contributed to the smooth ride and also gave good location when cornering at speed.

While it generally provided good visibility including the facility to fine-tune the headlights' beams, the 360 degree cameras really are necessary with its large blindspots to the rear and under the front wings. Washers and wipers were very effective.

As a family car the amount of oddments space was very good throughout, the boot capacity generous and adaptable.

VERDICT

The Geely EX35 Max is an impressive newcomer which does everything well and nothing really badly, save for the software access.

For: Extremely comfortable, lively out of eco mode, excellent steering & brakes, very well equipped, good room for five and oddments spaces, quiet

Against: Some visibility issues, fiddly on-board tech, hidden stalk controls.



FAST FACTS

Model: Geely EX5 Max five seats

Price: £36,990

Mechanical: All-electric: 160 kW motor, 60 kWh battery, 2WD

Max Speed: 109 mph



0 - 62 mph: 6.9secs

Range: 254 miles

Insurance Group: 36

C02 emissions: Zero

Bik rating: 3%, £10FY, £195SR

Warranty: 8 years/ 125,000 miles

Size: L 4.62 m (15.16 ft), W 1.91 m (6.27 ft), H 1.67 m (5.48 ft)

Bootspace: 461 to 1,877 litres (16.28 to 66.29 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,765 kg (3,892 lb)