Geely Starray EMi Hybrid – Road Test

Published: March 16, 2026

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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/geely-starray-emi-hybrid-road-test/

Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) writes: The UK car market is changing forever and being transformed by the arrival of Chinese brands including the very recent Geely group.

Many may not have heard of Geely, but it is the money and technology behind Volvo, Polestar, Lotus, and familiar TX London Taxi.

That's an impressive family to have on your side but a few years ago decided to introduce its own brand directly into Britain and launched the Geely EX5 in 2025.

That is a pure electric battery powered SUV but eager to spread its fingerprints as widely as possible, the Geely Starray EMi is a plug-in petrol-hybrid which is possibly the most practical powertrain for the majority of motorists.

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Recent troubles in the Middle East have focussed on fuel shortages and prices so the Geely Starray can cope with less juice and more electricity to keep going if needed.

It offers powertrain choice with the electric batteries as well, either 18.4 kWh or 29.8 kWh providing either 51 or 84 miles range respectively.

There are three trim levels, Pro from just under £30,000, Max from £32,690 and Ultra beginning at £34,990. That's the same price bracket as better known challengers with a lot less equipment than the Geely Starray – which is more sophisticated than some of the top European brands.

Our test model was the higher emissions model at 54 g/km and had a 80% boost in just 20 minutes with 30 kW DC point. The high technology in the cabin is managed through a 15.4 inch touchscreen with artificial intelligence

voice control along with a 13.8 inch head up display and Flyme 1000W 16 speaker sound system offering four simulated experiences.

As expected it is fitted with the latest advanced driver assistance system to keep you safe, on line and out of danger but you can deselect potentially annoying things like automatic lane monitoring.

Driver and passengers have heated seats with ventilation for front pair, a heated steering wheel and widely tailored air conditioning as well as a full-length sunroof and shade along with four powered windows.

It’s a hybrid which uses a sit-and-start ignition, selecting direction of travel with a right side column stalk and then touchscreen to decide if you want petrol, electric or both and a few mode settings to improve sharpness, speed or stealth, extending range or performance.

You can save some settings to do away with the need to tap in a combination each time you begin a journey.

The throttle response was immediate, pick up good and brakes strong and many will really appreciate the compact turning circle if in town or when parking.

The secondary controls needed a bit of patience to master and the lack of clear marking on the switches was irritating and potentially distracting but the screen shortcuts were essential and easy to use if you coped with their slower than anticipated responses.

The big touchscreen had a selection of backgrounds to choose and all displays were sharp but I have to wonder if some might be better with simple buttons on the wide long console.

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Oddments spaces were really plentiful throughout and the thigh-high loadbed was wide and long with another compartment beneath and offset split rear seatbacks to almost quadruple total capacity.

Doors opened wide, seats were big and comfortable with excellent adjustment infront as well as location support. It would be ideal for those undertaking regular long journeys with room to stretch out.

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The petrol engine worked hard to pull along the near 1.8 tonnes SUV and sometimes sounded gruff doing so but with the electric motor running or assisting it was very smooth.

Some road rumbles were heard but they were not loud and other mechanical sounds and wind noise were near absent.

At night the bright, wide ranging and long seeing lights were welcome, the wash and wipe cleaned both ends and the mirrors were big, helped by a 360-degree camera system if manoeuvring and sensors front and back.

Agility was good, roadholding safe and sure and there were no nasty vices on damp surfaces even if you lifted off mid-corner.

Using both petrol and electric modes we saw close to 40 mpg with ease overall. It would cover 51 miles on battery.

VERDICT

Everything inside the Geely Starray looked well made and fitted, there were no panel gaps or squeaks and it really struck the driver how well made it appeared, how refined it all worked and delivered sophistication at a sensible

price.

Britain’s car market is certainly changing for the better.

For: Very long range, extremely smooth, agile, good ride, roomy, fair performance, highly practical.

Against: Fiddly secondary controls and tech, road and suspension noises, gruff petrol engine.

FAST FACTS

Model: Geely Starray EMi Hybrid Max

Price: £34,990

Mechanical: 262 PS 1.5 4cyl petrol engine 18.4 kW battery

Max Speed: 105 mph

0 – 62 mph: 8.0 sec

Combined MPG: 38.5

Insurance Group: 31

C02 emissions: 54 g/km

Bik rating: 4%, £135FY, £200SR

Warranty: 8 years/ 125,000 miles

Size: L 4.74 m (15.58 ft), W 1.91 m (6.27 ft), H 1.69 m (5.54 ft)

Bootspace: 528 to 2,065 litres (18.65 to 72.92 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,770 kg (3,902 lb)

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