Latest Skoda Superb estate car – Road Test

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REVISED SKODA SUPERB ESTATE DOES WHAT IT SAYS IN THE TITLE...

...proclaims David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

The Skoda Superb large Estate and its five door Hatchback stablemate models have over the years not only pulled in huge global sales but have received numerous awards and accolades. These have been not just for its D-segment class-leading interior passenger and load space, but for its value for money appeal and the wide range of engine and specification options including DSG auto transmission and 4×4 traction availability for some versions.

Skoda first used the Superb name 85 years ago on 22 October 1934 with the first modern-day Superb launched in 2001. Very recently the UK range has been ‘fully updated’ as Skoda says of its flagship models. The design has been refreshed inside and out with more new technology added. There are now LED headlights, including Matrix specification and Predictive Cruise Control added for the first time. Prices start from £24,655 and run up to £40,695.



Having such a wide price range means there are a wide range of engine choices with more to come and a wide range of specification levels spread over two body styles, with five-door Hatchback and Estate options both with excellent up-market kerb appeal styling.

But it’s space that really sells the Superb. Both models have very generous rear seat legroom with a long wheelbase of 2,841 mm (9.32 feet) so no wonder they appeal both to

retail and business executives plus the chauffeuring sector. The Hatchback has a boot space of 625 litres (22.07 cu.ft) with the rear seats in place and 1,760 litres (62.15 cu.ft) with the rear seat backs folded down. The Estate has 660 litres (23.31 cu.ft) seats up and 1,950 litres (68.86 cu.ft) rear seats folded and most versions have a braked towing capacity of up to 2,200 kg (4,850 lb) depending on the engine.



Currently the engine choices are the latest specification 1.5 TSI 150 hp with cylinder deactivation, the 2.0 TSI 190 hp and the 2.0 TSI 272 hp – all four cylinder turbo-petrol units. For those high mileage users there is currently a new 2.0 TDI 190 hp turbodiesel with a revised 2.0 litre 150 hp unit becoming available now and both are four cylinder units. Most engines have DSG auto gearboxes as standard and higher powered versions have DSG and 4×4 traction also as standard.

Joining the line-up early next year will be Skoda's first ever electrified model – the Superb iV

plug-in hybrid (PHEV), powered by a 1.4 TSI petrol engine that delivers 156 hp and an 85 kW electric motor. The combined maximum power output of the two power sources is 218 hp. It will have CO2 emissions below 40 g/km, along with an all-electric, zero-emission range of up to 34 miles thanks its integrated 13 kWh battery. This is the same PHEV unit recently introduced with the new Volkswagen Passat GTE models. The Superb iV PHEV will be available with Hatchback and Estate body styles over various specification levels and are priced from £31,970 to £40,240. With low Benefit-in-Kind tax of 16% these versions are sure to be popular with company car customers who are already the mainstay of Superb sales in the UK.

The spec levels for the current petrol/diesel Superb 2020 model year vehicles follow Skoda's familiar path with S, SE, SE Technology, SE L, Sportline Plus and Lauren & Klement.

So with a wide range of engine and specification options plus a huge price difference there should be a Skoda Superb to suit most pockets and every rung on the company car ladder.

Its most likely competitors are the Ford Mondeo, Vauxhall Insignia and VW Passat Hatch/Estates and premium brand models such as the Audi A6, BMW 5 Series, Mercedes E-Class and Volvo S90/V90 variants.

All models are fitted with LED front and rear lights as standard along with seven airbags, a touchscreen infotainment system with DAB, voice control and SmartLink+ for smartphone connectivity.

The SE L model I tried had as standard-fit 18-inch alloy wheels, privacy glass and rear LED lights with animated indicators. SE L models also feature full Matrix LED headlights with AFS (adaptive front light system) and LED daytime running lights. Inside there is leather upholstery and heated front seats, an electrically adjustable driver's seat with memory and lumbar support and Amundsen infotainment system with touchscreen display and integrated Wi-Fi. An Electrically operated boot and colour multifunction trip computer are also standard.



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My test model was the Superb Estate SE L with the new 2.0 litre TDI 190 hp turbodiesel engine with its standard fit seven-speed DSG auto gearbox and with 4×4 traction. The price was £35,300 and with the specification it offers it still looks very good value in its class. But it is becoming more evident that Skoda like so many VW Group brands are now charging for some options which would in the past have been standard fit items.



My actual test car with options had a price tag of £39,105 which seems less of a bargain. These options included £610 for electrically adjustable front seats, heated steering wheel with DSG gearshift paddles at £240, tow bar at £790, metallic paint at £595, park assist costs another £410, the must-have rear view camera – given the Estate's size, adds another £365, a temporary spare wheel costs £150 and ventilated front seats adds yet another £645 to the overall price. So with all the options the Superb, not even in its highest spec level, is venturing into premium brand territory.

Interior space is the Superb's biggest asset as is its kerb appeal with its strong styling, sculptured styling lines and wide stance; it looks a substantial classy vehicle whether it's the

Hatchback or Estate version.



Inside it's a welcoming atmosphere with well laid out controls and as Skoda is part of the VW Group of brands there is loads of commonality to the controls and equipment. There is of course the usual driving modes selection but annoyingly the default setting is Normal so selecting Eco mode has to be done every time the car is started.

And I mention this because the new 2.0 litre, 190 hp four cylinder TDI turbodiesel engine produces 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) of high torque from 1,900 rpm so there is always enough 'grunt' to allow the Eco mode to be used all the time whether it's high speed cruising, or in mid to low speed driving conditions. This certainly helps fuel economy as I found covering 600 miles of driving across the country to Norfolk/Suffolk and back home to The Cotswolds. The official WLTP Combined Cycle for this Estate version is 43.5 to 39.8 mpg but my test car's computer showed an overall figure of 47.8 mpg. During high speed motorway cruising the figure was 51 mpg.



The performance is definitely not sluggish and with a top speed of 138 mph which means that the 70mph cruising limit is effortless. The Zero to 62 mph acceleration time was 8.1 seconds which is impressive for such a large vehicle. The engine worked really well in harmony with the seven speed smooth-changing DSG auto gearbox and my model also had 4×4 traction which distributes grip to the wheels that need it most at any given time. Having this all-wheel-drive function and auto gearbox made the fuel economy even more impressive.

Insurance is Group 26E, and tax costs are not unreasonable for a car in its sector either, with CO2 emissions of 132 g/km First Year diesel rate VED costs £530 before the Standard rate of £145 is applied. Company car drivers, the mainstay of UK Superb customers, pay

34% Benefit-in-Kind tax so I can see in future the introduction of the Superb PHEV plug-in hybrid with its BiK tax at 16% being popular.

VERDICT

The latest refreshed Skoda Superb does really live up to its name; it's big, it's roomy, it's comfortable, it 'drives' very well and it has lots of up-market kerb appeal. What's not to like – apart for the price for some top spec models perhaps!

For: Masses of interior space with excellent rear seat leg room and a huge boot/load area, well-equipped, comfortable ride, smart exterior styling with lots of kerb appeal, strong new engine with excellent real-life fuel economy.

Against: Top spec higher powered models are starting to lose their value for money appeal, Eco mode has to be selected every time on start-up, ungenerous VW Group warranty.



Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

2020 Skoda Superb SE L Estate, 2.0 TDI 190 hp DSG auto, 4×4.

Price: £35,300 (£39,105 as tested).

Engine/transmission: EU6-Temp compliant 2.0 litre, four cylinder, turbodiesel, 190 hp, 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) of torque, seven speed DSG auto gearbox and 4×4 traction. Performance: 138 mph, 0–62 mph 8.1 seconds, WLTP Combined Cycle 43.5 to 39.8 mpg (47.8 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 132 g/km, VED diesel rate First Year road tax £530,

Standard rate £145, BiK company car tax 34%.

Insurance Group: 26E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions: L 4,862 mm (15.95 ft), W 1,864 mm (6.12 ft), H 1,496 mm (4.91 ft), wheelbase 2,841 mm (9.32 ft), boot/load space 660 to 1,950 litres (23.31 to 68.86 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.

