Latest Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport – Road Test

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By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency), who writes…

…MY REFRESHING DRIVE WITH THE 2019.5 MODEL YEAR VAUXHALL INSIGNIA GRAND SPORT.

Although I tend to review new or at least recently refreshed cars, just occasionally it is time to relook at a longer serving model which still continues to pull-in awards, mainly due to the space it offers, its extensive range of models and its competitive pricing.

So it's my refreshing time with the Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport – a very grand title for a

volume selling D-segment five door hatchback family car that attracts business, fleet and retail customers. The Insignia is also available as an estate wagon as well, labelled the Sport Tourer. Common to both these titles, apart from the words Vauxhall and Insignia is the use of ‘Sport’ or ‘Sports’ which outlines the models’ aerodynamic styling and attractive kerb appeal. There is also a Country Tourer Estate in the range with elevated ground clearance and a 4×4 traction option, although 4×4 models are also available in the Grand Sport hatchback and Sports Tourer and Country Tourer estate ranges.

With a wide range of engines both petrol and diesel, manual and auto transmissions and a complex range of specification levels, the Insignia range in whatever form is vast. Hatchback prices range from £19,945 to £38,260, estate models from £21,505 to £39,260 and the more rugged looking Country Tourer estates with 2.0 litre turbodiesel engine options and some with 4×4 traction are priced from £27,165 to £30,120.

The Insignia range is huge in terms of engine options and specification levels in addition to the hatchback and estate body style. Engines, depending on the model and spec include: petrol 1.5 litre Turbo 140 and 165 hp and 1.6 Turbo 200 hp units. Turbodiesel engines are 1.6 110 hp and 136 hp, 2.0 170 hp and 2.0 BiTurbo 210 hp. Most have manual and auto gearbox choices and 4×4 traction is available with the most powerful engine.



Spec level choices, depending on the choice of engine, are Design, SRi, SRi VX-Line all with an added Nav option if required, followed up the price scale by Tech Line Nav, Elite Nav, GSI Nav in addition to the Country Tourer versions.

With so many engine and spec level options these have made the Insignia very popular to meet the many rungs on the company car ladder plus the pockets of retail customers. The Insignia has received numerous awards because of its wide range of models, the competitive prices, the interior space, kerb appeal and high equipment levels. There is now a significant demand for these models in the used-car market and that has brought about more recent Used Car awards from the motoring media.

Competitors in this D-sector include the Ford Mondeo, new Peugeot 508, revised Skoda Superb, Kia Optima and Hyundai i40 with premium brand saloons and estates of similar size from Audi, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Lexus and Volvo. But this sector has been particularly hit for sales by the demand for mid to large size SUVs.

Launched in 2017 with various refreshed updates since then, my personal refresh was with the Insignia Grand Sport hatchback with SRi VX-Line Nav 2.0 litre 170 hp automatic turbodiesel priced at a competitive come and buy me price of £28,045. That spec level is reasonable but of course there is a wide range of extra cost options you can add to that price. For my choice I might add the £850 Flex Ride adjustable ride control which provides a more compliant level of ride comfort and the Head Up display would be nice to have at £290. But my test car was fully loaded with options and the final on-the-road price was £35,370, which makes it much less of a bargain new but better value when bought used.

The latest Insignia Grand Sport hatchback continues with its side coupé profile with high waistline and curved roof sloping to the rear to meet up with a steeply forwards raked tailgate. That gives easy access to a roomy 490 litre (17.30 cu.ft) boot and that increases to 1,450 litres (51.21 cu.ft) with the rear seat backs folded down but the load height is compromised by the sloping tailgate which ingresses into that load space. I've always found the Sports Tourer estate body style with its higher roof line to be more practical with 560 litres (19.78 cu.ft) of space with the seats in place and 1,665 litres (58.80 cu.ft) with the seat backs folded. The overall length of the Grand Sport hatchback is 4,897 mm (16.07 ft) and the Sports Tourer estate 4,986 mm (16.36 ft) and both are 1,863 mm (6.11 ft) wide. Whichever body style is chosen there is no shortage of rear seat legroom and the shoulder width for carrying three passengers is also good and despite the hatchback's coupé roofline headroom for six-footers is not exactly ample.

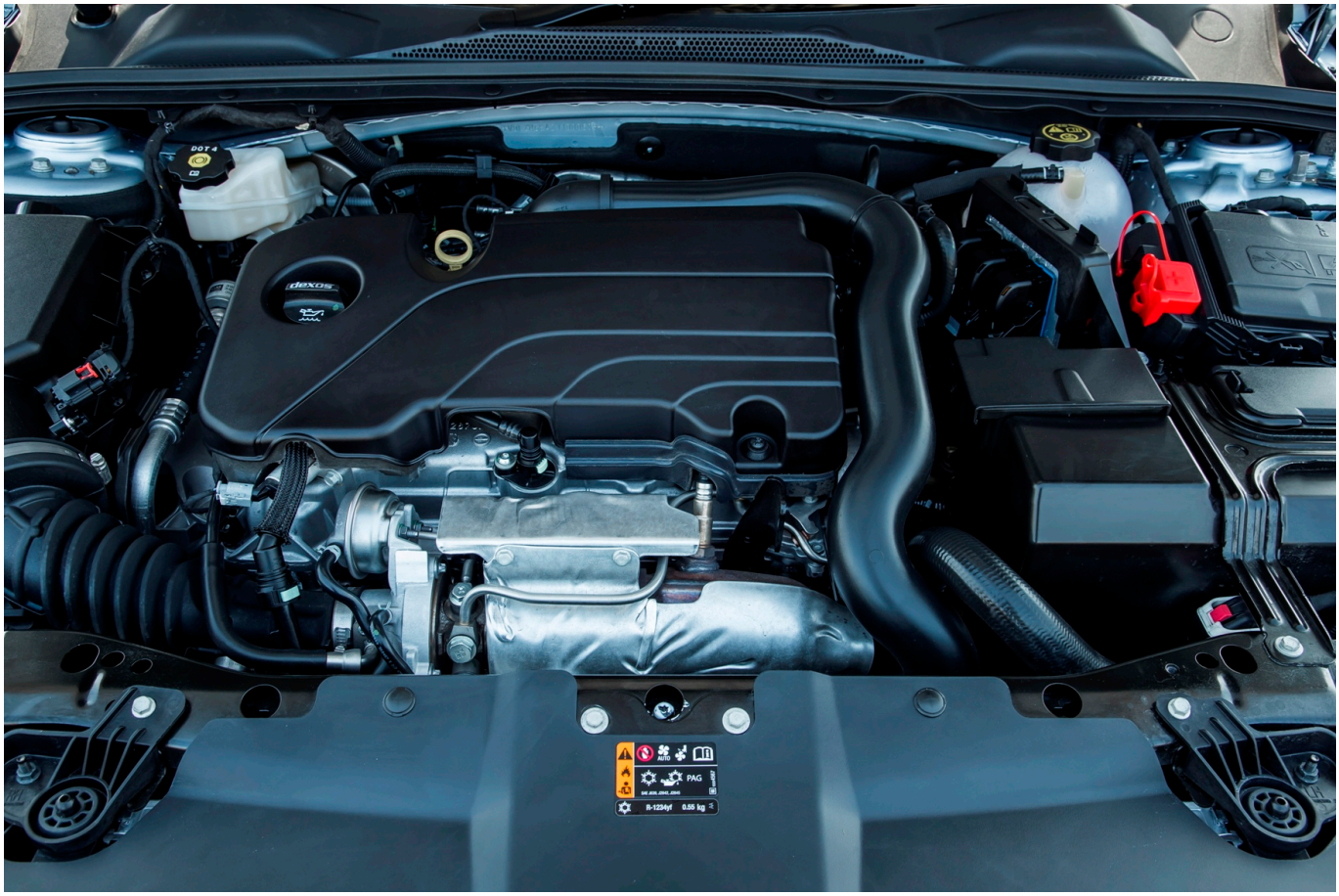
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Up front is a twin cockpit design layout with a curved fascia panel with the styling lines flowing through to the door panels so its looks a fully integrated up-market interior. The

controls are logically laid out with the usual centrally positioned infotainment screen. Thankfully the Insignia retains its independent heating, air-con, electric screen/rear window and heated front seat controls so there is no need to delve into the touchscreen to make adjustments, although you still can use that function if you wish. Several storage compartments in the centre console were very useful but the narrow pockets in the lower door cards limited their usefulness. The connectivity and sat-nav functions are easy to use. Being quite a long vehicle I missed not having a rear view camera and dipping rear view door mirrors when reverse gear was engaged. The lack of a wiper unit for the tailgate window was not ideal on wet mornings and didn't help the rearward vision. Front and rear parking sensors helped with parking and once underway of course there is the now usual fit front end collision warning and auto city emergency braking system. Another drawback for me as a six-footer was the lack of height through the front door frame, even with the electronically adjustable driver's seat in its lowest position.

Generally the SRi VX-Line Nav spec is an ideal level for most users and just some of the most important items of spec are the multimedia sat-nav, 7-inch touchscreen, DAB radio, Bluetooth, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity, air-con, computer, cruise control with speed limiter, heated flat-bottomed steering wheel, sports pedals 18-inch alloy wheels and auto lights and wipers.

Under the bonnet is the well known Vauxhall 2.0 litre, 170 hp, four cylinder turbodiesel engine, which despite the current anti-diesel campaigns, is still the most ideal power unit for high mileage, long distance drivers.



With 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm it has ample grunt, matched to the well-spaced ratios of the auto gearbox, to provide smooth travel both in-town and on the open road. It's not the quietest of engines or perhaps the smoothest, but it is ideal for this size of vehicle. Top speed is 139 mph with a zero to 60 mph acceleration time of a swift 8.4 seconds. The new WLTP Combined Cycle fuel economy figures are 42.8 to 46.3 mpg and for my week of driving covering most types of roads was 38.9 mpg, which was reasonable for such a large vehicle. The CO2 emissions are 147g/km so VED First Year diesel rate road tax is £530 followed by the Standard rate of £145. The only drawback for company car drivers is the 37% Benefit-in-Kind tax rate because, being diesel, it incurs the dreaded added 4% penalty. Insurance is relatively low though with a group 21E rating. The warranty is an ungenerous three years/60,000 miles period.

VERDICT

The Vauxhall Insignia range might have been around now for a few years but in its latest 2019.5 model year configuration it is still a refreshing, no hardship proposition to own in its sales segment. Selecting the right engine and spec level provides a very affordable business, or when bought used, stylish family transport. The Sport Tourer estate versions are even more practical for those that need more load space.

For: Very popular in its sector, competitively priced, good specification, spacious, compliant ride, nice kerb appeal sports styling, choose the right model/right spec and it's a value for money offering new or used.

Against: Not the sharpest handling sports styled hatchback in its sector, high company car tax cost, no rear view camera, dipping door mirrors or tailgate wiper with this spec level, limited headroom through the front door frames for six footers, ungenerous warranty.



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

Model year 2019.5 Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport hatchback, SRi VX-Line 2.0 turbodiesel 170 hp, automatic.

Price: £28,045 (£35,370 as tested with options).

Engine/transmission: 2.0 litre, four cylinder turbodiesel, 170 hp, 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) of

torque, six speed automatic.

Performance: 139 mph, 0–60 mph 8.4-seconds.

Fuel consumption: WLTP Combined Cycle 42.8 to 46.3 mpg (38.9 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 147 g/km, diesel rate First year road tax £530 then £145 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 37%.

Insurance Group: 21E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,897 mm (16/07 ft), W 1,863 mm (6.11 ft), H 1,455 mm (4.77 ft), boot/load space 490 to 1,450 litres (17.30 to 51.21 litres), five doors/five seats.