Lepas 8 Elevate superhybrid – Road Test

Published: November 23, 2026

Author:

Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/lepas-8-elevate-superhybrid-road-test/



Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) writes…

Chery Automobiles are a rising tide landing on UK shores and its latest Lepas range is about to flood in.

Starting with the five-seat Lepas 8 SUV, we will soon see the Lepas 4 & 6 and then a widening range in the near future as well as completely different super luxury series next year.

Chery's latest brand has arrived in the UK, making it the fourth brand from the Chinese car manufacturer after Omoda, Jaecoo and Chery itself.

Lepas is also the newest electrified vehicle brand to enter the UK market.

Lepas, which is a blend of 'leopard' and 'passion', is bringing an innovative new generation of vehicles to the UK and aimed at the elegant lifestyle explorer.

Launching with its first UK model, the Lepas L8 is a 5-seat plug-in hybrid SUV, with the L4 and L6 following.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

There are two models in the Lepas 8 series, the Essence from £34,900 and the Elevate at £37,900, available for outright purchase, PCP, lease or HP through Lloyds Banking Group.

Lepas has a conventional near-1.5 litre petrol engine together with a 18.4 kWh high voltage traction battery requiring external charging but its capacity is smaller than similar class rivals.

However, combining the two power sources gives a potential range of over 400 miles we experienced, and up to 745 miles in certified tests. The super hybrid system permits 30 to 80% charging in about 20 minutes.



Every Lepas 8 gets a 12-point suite of driver assistance systems which help it achieve a comparatively low group 30 insurance rating but each programme has to be individually turned off if they annoy a user and it really needs a one-touch master switch as an alternative.

The upper Elevate trim brings bigger wheels, sound deadening glass and active noise cancellation, fully powered cooling and heated front seats with massage function, powered fifth door, 256 colour combinations interior lighting, in-car selectable fragrance, panoramic camera and front sensors, remote parking and a Sony sound system.

It’s a very impressive specification and for the money shows how overpriced are similar “extras” on European and Asian challenger brands. What’s more the whole thing is very stylishly integrated into the fascia and nothing looks out of place.

The engine and automatic transmission are a seamless blend of power and delivery is instant, smooth and consistent as well as abundant and near silent.

It pulls away strongly and there is always something in reserve for overtaking while motorway cruising is completely relaxing and unfussed.

The hybrid range is good and if you have to select pure electric drive that’s a simple matter and will cover most needs and cities, but remember to recharge from a point when you can. It recharges very quickly.

The comparatively small 1.5 litre petrol engine is up to its task when used without electric backup but best when not more than two people are inside and you are not in a great hurry.

Slowing the Lepas 8 was unchallenging with strong retardation used to regenerate the EV battery system; it almost became a one-pedal operation but touching the footbrake showed a lot of assistance was available and it slowed and stopped briskly and with reassuring control on any surface.

I would have preferred a tighter turning circle in town when parking but the assistance was generous and its lightness appreciated. Sensors and cameras helped precisely place the car in some tight spots made for standard sized cars.

At speed the feedback through the wheel was sometimes vague and it had a tendency to run wide on sharp corners.

Roadholding was good nevertheless and it generally coped well with potholes and tarmac humps although it could occasionally prove jiggly at low speed on the worst surfaces.

Familiar secondary controls were conveniently set close to hands on the column or the wheelspokes and were well marked but not always in direct line of sight, however, the large infotainment screen in the fascia centre was a library of contents which were not always easy to navigate, particularly on the move and this was a potential distraction. Even if you preselect functions, a driver frequently has to reset or alter a mode and you have to dive into system to find the buried feature.

The vehicle’s driver assist and safety features are all very useful but not necessarily what you want to use on each trip so you turn them off as needed, but restarting activates them again. This concept and approach has enabled the Lepas 8 to get a good safety rating but also a high score on the annoyance scale.

The essential driver screen infront of the steering column had straightforward information clearly displayed and the contents were interchangeable with those shown on the main infotainment display on the fascia.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

Heating and ventilation was extremely comprehensive with good temperature range, output volume and directional control throughout the cabin, as well as that from the powered windows.

Oddments provision was well catered for throughout and it’s a real family car or tourer in this respect with bins, pockets, trays and boxes.

Access was through wide opening doors or a high-lifting powered tailgate and once inside everyone had plenty of room to stretch out, while those infront had heating and cooling options together with a wide settings range to meet reach, height and distance preferences.

Ride comfort was very good thanks to the absorbent springs and deep seat cushioning but sometimes the shock absorbers were a bit too keen to reduce bounce and the big wheels and tyres seemed to find every pebble or piece of broken tarmac.

The passenger room for five was excellent and the bootspace was very good even with the back seats in use, while quickly dropping them in stages more than doubled total capacity and the loadbed was wide, long and deep; plenty of space for a family holiday in fact.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

You ride quite high in the Lepas 8 and with thin roof pillars and a low waistline the visibility is good all round, although more restricted when reversing so you really need the camera and sensors. At night the headlights were bright, wide spread and long range with good auto-cut off to reduce dazzle and the big wipers and copious wash really cleared a large slice of glass.

Noises were mostly confined to the road rumbles and suspension working away as described above, powertrain intrusion was very low as was that from the wind.

VERDICT

The Lepas 8 is a very good medium to large SUV at an attractive price and a serious alternative to the legend premium brands. It proves cars don’t have to be expensive to be good.

For: Value for money, smooth powertrain, great interior, very good seats and roomy throughout, highly sophisticated.

Against: Sometimes jiggly ride, confusing fussy touchscreen, average handling and big turning circle.

FAST FACTS

Model: Lepas L8 PHEV Elevate

Price: £37,900

Mechanical: 275 bhp combined 1499c petrol-electric,

Max Speed: 111 mph

0 – 62mph: 7.9 sec

Combined MPG: 48 mpg. EV Range: 56 miles

Insurance Group: 30

C02 emissions: 21g km

Bik rating: 10%, £115FY, £200SR

Warranty: 7 years/ 100,000 miles & 8 years HV battery

Size: L 4.69 m (15.38 ft), W 1.88 m (6.17 ft), H 1.69 m (5.54 ft)

Bootspace: 507 to 1,314 litres (17.90 to 46.40 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,850 kg (4,079 lb)

© WheelsWithinWales