Nissan Qashqai e-Power 190 – Road Test

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The Nissan Qashqai e-Power 190 2WD Auto mid-sized Crossover tried and tested by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

Built in Sunderland since 2006 when it was launched, the Nissan Qashqai has been an enduring success story.

It was one of the first modern generation Crossover models and instantly won hearts and minds, not forgetting bank accounts, of British buyers, rolling into new generations in 2013 and 2021.

It was Britain's best-selling car in 2022 and it's also picked up UK awards for reliability and low running costs so it's as relevant today as it was 17 years ago.

The introduction of the e-Power electric-petrol model last year was a landmark, harnessing Nissan group's experience with electric drive and state of the art mechanical engineering. And it shows.

The e-POWER system comprises a high-output battery complemented by a variable compression ratio 1.5-litre three-cylinder turbo petrol engine generating 190 PS, a power generator, inverter and 140 kW electric motor of similar size and power output as found in Nissan's electric vehicles. The petrol engine generates electricity which can be transmitted via the inverter to the battery pack, the electric motor or both, according to the driving scenario selected by the driver.



What sets this powertrain apart is that the electric motor is the sole source of power and drive to the wheels, so its response is instant and linear.

This represents an alternative to traditional hybrids where the internal combustion engine drives the wheels with a power boost from an electric motor.

It is broadly similar to an electric-petrol powertrain created by General Motors a decade ago and shown in British versions of the Ampera but then quickly abandoned only for Nissan's engineers to refine their own ideas and deliver the new e-Power system. Qashqai is the first Nissan to use e-Power and it's going to carry it towards a fully battery powered future over

coming years.

Qashqai range models come in five grades between £26,000 and £41,000 with 140, 158 PS petrol or the e-Power 190 PS output from the 3-cylinder turbo-petrol and petrol electric hybrid engines, manual or automatic transmission and run to 19 models in all with one 4WD version.

This summer a Qashqai Kuro Edition was added to the range based on the N-Connecta grade but with glass roof pack, 18” Black Gloss Alloy Wheels, Illuminated kicking-plates and a wireless charging pad. Kuro comes in three two-tone paint combinations: a refined black roof with either a Storm White or Ceramic Grey body, or a grey roof with a Pearl Black body.

Our £39,605 e-Power test car in Tekna grade sits towards the top of the range and was very cleanly styled both outside and in, taking elements from the look of the larger BEV Ariya series.

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powertrain really felt no different to a traditional petrol or petrol-hybrid source and needed no particular input from a driver unless they engaged the e-pedal to optimise retardation and traction battery recharging or chose one of three mode settings.

It was all very smooth working together with the six-speed automatic transmission and we were happy with the 50 mpg-plus petrol consumption as the system optimised the power delivery as required and reflected the driver's demands.

You would also be hard pressed to realise it was a triple-pot engine, so smooth and willing as it was, except when pressed to perform at upper revs and a busy engine note crept in.

The gearchanges were smooth whether going up or down the box and using the e-pedal allowed for single-foot driving and a pedestrian crawl in heavy traffic or when parking. You could select pure electric drive for commuting and have the confidence of knowing you'll never be stranded as the petrol engine cuts in once the clever computer brain alerts it to the charging state.

Underfoot, the brakes were well up to their job once the e-pedal was disengaged and mode button allowed selection of eco, normal or sporting responses to the throttle while the changes were instantaneous.

Steering responses were all quick and gave adequate feedback with a reasonable turning circle when parking or sweeping through a series of bends.

Secondary controls were better placed than in many cars, with the wipers and lights' stalks high up on the column, supported by a lights' panel on the right of the fascia. Steering wheel spokes carried the cruising and phone buttons on the right-hand side, and the left operated the infotainment selection and display views.

Heating and ventilation was simple and effective with good output, distribution and temperature controls throughout the cabin through easily changed buttons and rotaries.

The big central infotainment display was very clear, quick to change and largely reflection-free, and the driver's display that could be changed to emphasise different elements was also unhindered. It's compatible with modern mobiles and music streams.

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Oddments room was very good for a family car with plenty of bins, pockets and recesses infront or behind and those in the back also had their own power point for mobiles etc..

Access to the boot was via a powered lifting tailgate which revealed a deep, wide and fairly long boot-floor with another level beneath, and offset split folding seatbacks to almost triple capacity as the backrests laid nearly flat.





Doors opened very wide in relation to the body and access was excellent with leg and headroom plentiful throughout. Infront the seats' adjustment was generous along with that of the steering column.

All seats, including the rear three-place bench, were comfortable and the front pair had mildly shaped bolsters and cushions to give additional support.



Visibility was clear all round with low waistline and deep glass, big wipers and strong washer action while night-time was not an issue with bright lights having long and wide beams. The Qashqai e-Power Tekna comes with a host of driving aids around the body to assist parking, alert the driver to objects and vehicles as well as gentle reminders when crossing lanes or getting too close to other traffic, or exceeding the speed limit.

It felt very safe to drive without the systems being too intrusive or annoyingly strong in their feedback.

Depending on the selected mode, degree of electrical assistance and mind of the driver, performance ranged from economical, through good to respectable acceleration with only the comparatively average power output limiting it. There was adequate power to keep up with traffic on main roads and overtaking never gave cause for concern, while stopping to refuel was a pleasant surprise as well.

It went where pointed and held its place on the road without any drama or concern.

VERDICT

Nissan has done a very good job making the Qashqai relevant to motoring needs ever since 2006 and the e-Power version is more than a match for newer models from rivals which may cost a lot more but deliver no significant advantage over it.

For: Excellent controls, reasonable performance, good economy, very roomy family car, safe handling, refined and technically clever electric-petrol hybrid powertrain, no driving range anxiety, built in Britain.

Against: Lots of road noise from tyres and suspension, some engine noise when pressed, lacked top end punch, very dark interior, ungenerous warranty.



Fast facts

Nissan Qashqai e-Power 190 Tekna 2WD mid-sized Crossover



Price: £39,605

Mechanical: 188 bhp 3-cyl 1.5 litre turbo-petrol + 140 kWh electric motor hybrid, 6 speed auto, 2WD

Max speed: 105 mph

0 – 62 mph: 7.9 sec

Fuel consumption: 53 mpg

Insurance group: 25

CO2 emissions: 120 g/km

Tax costs: BIK rating 29%, VED £200FY, £170SR

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Size: L 4.43 m (14.53 ft), W 2.09 m (6.86 ft), H 1.63 m (5.35 ft)

Boot space: 504 to 1,100 litres (17.80 to 38.85 ft)

Kerbweight: 1,636 kg (3,607 lb)