

Omoda 5 SUV petrol – First Impressions

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Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) shares his thoughts on his first drive with the petrol-powered OMODA 5.

No-one can doubt the Chinese brand OMODA is very serious about coming to Britain and taking on the legend brands.

We were impressed with a first drive of the pure electric OMODA E5 last May and now we've had a chance to get some initial impressions of the OMODA 5 petrol version of their new SUV.

Yes, a petrol powered newcomer joins the range at a time when most legend manufacturers are moving into electric power big time and sacrificing sales to buyers who still want a



fossil-fuelled car to meet their particular needs.

The Ford Puma-sized OMODA 5 from £25,235 costs the same as a smaller SUV but it comes with a good specification and a really good 7 years or 100,000 miles warranty, rolling annual servicing and roadside recovery, backed up by overnight parts distribution throughout the UK with DHL.

As such it's reminiscent of the first Japanese cars to enter the UK and all the controversy that came too, including tariffs which look like they will be repeated to "protect" less well prepared and dearer existing European brands.

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OMODA has launched with some 60 dealers across the country, destined to sell approximately 6,000 models, but by the end of this year they could rise to 100 dealers and 30,000 sales before additional models are introduced to take registrations to 40,000 models through 120 dealers in 12-months time.

The higher specified Noble version costs £27,035 and gains larger wheels, surround view camera, sunroof, heated seats, zoned A/C and powered tailgate as well.

The brand is well represented with a mix of public and privately owned dealerships, often alongside familiar brands, and it aims to plug gaps in remote areas of Scotland, the West Country and Wales away from centres of population.

OMODA is a new name but is part of China's largest vehicle exporter, Chery, founded in 1997 and has worked with premium brands in the JLR stable in the Far East. Chery has sold 12M cars globally and employs 80,000 people including approximately one third of whom are engineers, so it takes design and technology very seriously.

OMODA has a European studio and engineering centre in Germany to refine the models for Continental markets and has tailored the current SUV for UK roads and driving styles, but



there is still some way to go and they are willing to make rapid changes with feedback from users.

PETROL POWER

As, previously, we drove the OMODA E5, this brief first drive will concentrate on the petrol powered model which uses a European designed and Chinese built four cylinder engine matched with a seven-speed dual clutch auto box. In some markets it gets a 1.6 litre engine and choice of front or all-wheel drive, and this may be brought into the UK in future.





The car features a sophisticated front strut and rear multi-link suspension set-up and comes with all-round disc brakes. Under the skin is a very advanced safety system using cameras and sensors which are installed to meet the ever more demanding but necessary EuroNCap crash testing rigours. It lacks nothing against its rivals but comes in at a lower price than immediate challengers.

Inside are twin 10.15-inch screens for the familiar instruments and then a feature-packed infotainment system as well with large displays and readouts. There's a multi-functional steering wheel, wireless connectivity, adaptive cruise control, three driving modes and LED lights.



On test and two-up the acceleration was adequate but not exceptional, although the engine



freely revved and the changes were very smooth.

It steered well and could be parked with precision once you overcame the blindspots through the windows and learned to trust the sensors.

The handling was good and the roadholding never gave a moment's concern but it wasn't at its best on bad roads when the shock absorbers were very tautly set and the rumbles from tyres were intrusive.

Seats did a good job soaking up bumps but there was little support for anyone in the rear, even though driver and passenger were treated to figure-hugging high-backed seats that were comfortable.

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VERDICT

In conclusion, I think the OMODA 5 is a reasonably priced family SUV with reassuring warranty. It has good manners and will be an attractive alternative to current models and the diminishing number of petrol cars on sale.

For: Challenging price, reasonable performance, nice powertrain, fair consumption, high-tech interior.

Against: Strong shock absorption, average rear legroom, small bootspace, some blindspots, road rumble intrude.

FAST FACTS

Model: Omoda 5 Comfort



Price: £25,235

Mechanical: 187 bhp 4 cyl 1.6 litre petrol, 7 speed auto

Max Speed: 121 mph

0 - 62 mph: 7.9 secs

Combined MPG: 37.2

Insurance Group: 32

C02 emissions: 170 g/km

Bik rating: 37%, £680FY, £190SR

Warranty: 7 years/ 100,000 miles

Size: L 4.40 m (14.44 ft), W 1.83 m (6.00 ft), H 1.59 m (5.22 ft)

Bootpace: 380 to 1,000 litres+ (13.42 to 35.31+ cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,430 kg (3,153 lb)