Polestar 3 Long Range – Road Test

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Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithWales) writes: “When you discover your car’s glovebox can only be opened by an electric switch you realise you’re driving something a bit different, a bit special and out of the ordinary.”

The discovery was made as we sat transfixed by the sheer complexity of the Polestar 3’s infotainment and driving display contained in a 14.5-inch laptop-like portrait screen in the centre of the fascia.

And that was just the start before we ventured further and had even moved off. At this point we need to stress the importance or necessity of becoming fully acquainted with what is hidden deep behind that big screen.

The wheel-spokes have just two toggle switches either side and they operate a multitude of functions chosen by tapping the console screen, such as mirror settings and even column angle and wheel rake. Stalks work the indicators and wash/ wipe in a more traditional way, thank goodness.

It’s a big and busy screen but once you begin to explore the settings you can pick and save them to your personal taste and even use them to set up what you want to show on the simple 9-inch instrument display ahead of the driver and even the head-up display as well.

It is a case of familiarity breeds contentment.

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Polestar 3 is the Geely brand’s first car to be produced on two continents, with initial production in Chengdu, China followed by additional production in Ridgeville, South Carolina, USA. That means it will not qualify for the UK EV grant, unfortunately.

Mechanically, the two motors develop identical output so each pair of wheels is powered and makes the car very suitable for light wintry roads. Adjustable air suspension also increases the ride height by 25 cms (about 10 in) if you go off road or you can leave it in normal road mode and get better feedback on

quick cross-country trips.

Polestar 3 is the SUV for the electric age. Launched in late 2022, it is a 5-seat E-segment electric SUV built on the SPA2 technology base developed by Volvo Cars with core computing from NVIDIA. Core competitors include the Porsche Cayenne, BMW iX and Audi Q8 e-tron.

Recognising SUV hallmarks like a bold, upright front, commanding driving position and true off-roading capability, Polestar 3 reimagines the archetype for the modern era with a low roofline, wide stance and exceptional driving dynamics. Polestar 3 features single- or dual-motor powertrains with as much as 380 kW (517 hp) and 910 Nm (671 lb-ft).

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Chassis dynamics continue to hone Polestar’s performance DNA, and with true torque vectoring via a dual clutch setup from BorgWarner on the rear axle.

Exterior design plays a key role in the efficiency of Polestar 3, with front and rear aero wings and rear aero blades producing unique styling cues, while contributing towards improved range and efficiency.

Increased sustainability of interior materials continues to drive Polestar’s efforts towards a net-zero future, with recycled plastic and aluminium, and new-age textiles like bio-attributed MicroTech, which replaces crude oil with pine oil in its manufacture, creating a new form of sustainable luxury.

The motors work seamlessly to deliver strong acceleration from standstill or intermediately when overtaking on main roads or dual carriageways and motorways. Then you can set the level of regeneration you prefer, again through that big screen shortcut, to stretch the remaining miles after a recharge and it really does make a difference as it works in conjunction with the navigation to prepare the powertrain for the opportunity ahead to eek out the miles.

Steering was selectable for the level of assistance, again through the touchscreen, but it still needed a big sweep to turn 180-deg or wiggle into a tight space with all the sensors buzzing and the camera alerts getting more frantic.

Brakes were strong and use electric wires to determine how much pressure is being exerted and energise the discs, but they had a surprisingly good feel.

Secondary controls for wash/ wipe and indicators did a good job and cleared the front and back screens very well but the one-touch indicators also need getting use to before you appreciate how good they are.

Heating and ventilation was more straightforward and effective with individual controls front and back together with heating and cooling systems for the seats. Output was strong, well directed and finely tuned for the big cabin and you have powered windows as well but a fixed glass roof.

Oddments room was good for a family car with big compartments throughout, power points and a 40/20/40 split rear seatbacks arrangement to gradually

raise total carrying space to over 1,400 litres (49.4 cu.ft) with a ski-hatch as well. There is a reasonable compartment beneath the boot floor and a decent sized front box but you have to decide where you'll carry the power cable.

Access was good to the luggage area and wide opening doors to the cabin, but care was needed entering or exiting as the apertures had a low roofline for taller people. The seats were very comfortable for short, medium or tall users with a wide range of adjustment and support including the side bolsters.

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With a kerb weight over 2.6 tonnes the Polestar 3 is not going to be as agile as a smaller and lighter SUV but it has the weight to smooth out many bad surfaces and only a few bumps were felt. Its throttle response was very good and it exhibited good roadholding on a series of bends with its ride height giving a good view of the conditions ahead.

Range is an issue with any battery electric vehicle as it very closely relates to a driving style, traffic and even prevailing weather so we were delighted to see an indicated 330 miles possible, a little short of the manufacturer's test condition but a good distance nevertheless and the car's software will point you to a convenient chargepoint anyway.



VERDICT

The Polestar 3 is a big SUV for today's world, ideal for a family, longer trips and doing a multitude of jobs, on road as well as some soft-road situations.

It's a good standard against which to judge others.

For: Very roomy with comfortable seats, strong performance, quick recharging and good range, masses of tech to master, strong brakes and

adjustable steering, quality finish.

Against: Some road noise, masses of tech to master, some blindspots, occasionally bumpy ride, big turning circle, did not feel very agile.

FAST FACTS

Model: Polestar 3 Long range Dual motor

Price: £77,610

Mechanical: 483 bhp twin motors, 400v 111 kWh battery, AWD

Max Speed: 130 mph

0 – 60 mph: 4.8 secs

Range: 330 miles

Insurance Group: 50

C02 emissions: Zero

Bik rating: 3%, £10FY, £620SRx5

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles & 8 years/ 100,000 battery

Rating: 4/ 5

Size: L 4.90 m (16.08 ft), W 1.97 m (6.46 ft), H 1.62 m (5.31 ft)

Bootspace: 484 to 1,411 litres (17.09 to 49.83 cu.ft) , frunk 32 litres (1.13 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 2,623 kg

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