Renault Mégane Sport Tourer First Impressions

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Renault's Mégane Sport Tourer...

Assessed by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

The eagerly awaited estate version of the new Renault Mégane brings additional room and practicality to the range.



Mechanically the same as the immensely popular Mégane Hatchback, the Sport Tourer offers a basic boot space with a low load floor of 521 litres (18.40 cu.ft), but folding away the off-set split rear three seats gradually increases this to 1,504 litres (53.11 cu.ft).

It has a space-saver spare under the floor and a useful additional compartment to stow items, as well as recesses in the rear wings, so you have a well-shaped carpeted loadbed for everyday use. Quickly dropping the back seats triples the available space and the fifth door opens high for ease of use.

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Renault has struck a very good balance between the carrying ability of the Mégane Sport

Tourer and a comfortable ride when very lightly laden, but the comfort diminished as we tried models with the optional 18-inch wheels. A 16-inch set is standard and our optional 17-inch shod 110 was still comfortable but the firmer-sprung 205 sitting on 18-inch rubberware was distinctly harder over poor surfaces.

There are 25 versions in the new Mégane ST range, with the halo GT and GT Line models tuned by Renault Sport. Prices rise from £18,550 to £27,450.

Two petrol and two diesels are currently available and they will be joined in Spring 2017 by a hybrid assist version.

Gearbox choices are six-speed manual or six and seven-speed autos and options include a four-wheel-steering pack on the GT.

Following in the tracks of the Mégane Hatch, the Sport Tourer comes with a host of desirable safety features and up to five EuroNCAP stars, the acclaimed BOSE sound system and five driving modes to personalize cosmetic and dynamic settings.



First Impressions

Renault has extended the appeal of the Mégane with the Sport Tourer five door estate.

What the hatchback may have lacked for some buyers looking for more room, the new addition makes up for, and without destroying or compromising the comfort.

It is a big range of petrol and diesels, manual and automatics and in a total of seven trim and equipment levels with low emissions or higher performance, really mirroring its hatchback stablemate.

There are good reasons to buy an estate if you don't want the bulk of a crossover and the Mégane ST offers room with refinement and an easy driving nature.

We tested the perceived best seller, the Dynamique S Nav 1.46 dCi 110 six-speed manual and it had a reasonable performance and showed a shade under 50 mpg over a mixture of A and B class Cotswold country roads.

On optional 17-inch wheels and tyres the car was still comfortable despite a degree of wallowing and roll over undulating and twisting roads, but it held on and never lost its footing.

Once underway the pick-up was good with one person aboard, and while the clutch pedal seemed to have long travel the gearchanges were short and precise, the brakes worked well and the steering had a good ratio for country or town use.

The top of range GT Nav 1.6 petrol 205 hp auto was firmer on the road with sharper responses and a slightly stiffer ride on its 18-inch lower-profile tyres but it still felt agreeable on bad bits of tarmac.

The autobox is not the most responsive I have driven, with a noticeable delay to kickdown, but once underway the self-selecting changes were very smooth and quiet.

Road noise was probably the most distinctive as engine and wind noises were low.

Over an identical route to the less powerful model, the 1.6 turbo petrol 205 hp version returned 37 mpg average, some way off the other car, but still a respectable figure.

VERDICT

For a sporting model it offered room for four or five with reasonable rear legroom and I think the interior detailing, fit and finish put it on a par with the best in class – but which would cost a lot more.

For: Practical, roomy, economical, refined and sophisticated styling inside and out.

Against: Lacklustre performance, fussy secondary controls, road noise.



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

Renault Megane Sport Tourer Dynamique S Nav dCi 110.

Price: £22,350.

Engine/transmission: 1.46 litre, four cylinder 110 hp, 260 Nm (192 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm, turbodiesel, six speed manual.

Performance:

0-62mph: 11.3 seconds.

Top speed: 116 mph.

Fuel consumption: 49.9 mpg on test (officially 72.4 mpg Combined cycle).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 96 g/km, VED road tax £0, BIK company car tax rate 19%.

Insurance Group: 15E.

Warranty: Four years/ 100,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.63 m (15.19 ft), W 2.06 m (6.76 ft), H 1.46 m (4.79 ft), boot/load space 521 to 1,504 litres (18.40 to 53.11 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.