Skoda Kamiq SE 1.0TSI 95 PS – Road Test

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Author:

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Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) test drives Skoda’s latest small ‘crossover’…

As the retail motor trade goes through a reset at the moment, squeezed by new technology

and rising prices which private buyers are reluctant to embrace or pay, models like the Skoda Kamiq are standing out.

It’s a straightforward petrol model for a family, with up to five seats, price-pitched perfectly for many and it comes with a suite of safety and convenience features normally found on more expensive cars.

When it launched the Kamiq in 2019, Skoda coined a new class of ‘city SUV’ and it quickly became one of their most successful models with 576,000 assembled, including over 107,000 in 2023.

Early in 2024, a second generation was introduced, largely featuring sustainable materials as well as new upgraded features and driving safety systems. The cars were also refreshed front and back to improve their kerb-appeal styling.

The new small crossover from Skoda comes in three trim levels, SE, SE L and Monte Carlo and is priced between £23,765 and £31,775 using 95 or 116 PS 1.0, and 150 PS 1.5 litre engines, with 5 and 6 speed manual gearboxes or 7 speed automatic transmission.

The mid-range SE specification we tested included 8.25-inches infotainment display, cloth upholstery, cruise control, powered mirrors and windows, front and rear LED lights, mobile phone compatibility, many accessory charging points and an umbrella.

The three-cylinder sub 1.0 litre engine employs some very clever design and technology to overcome its inherent imbalance and lack of cubic capacity to deliver a generally remarkably smooth if not head-turning performance, a satisfying economy and responsive drive.

We actually achieved more miles per gallon overall than indicated by the WLTP figures and without having to be very light-footed either.

Ok, its not fast from standstill or through the gears when accelerating and overtaking so you have to carefully judge opportunities, but it has a respectable turn of speed and it fairly hummed along the motorway.

At times I wished for a sixth gear in the manual box and a shorter clutch pedal action but it was progressive and changes were positive, clean and quick. Just as well, because on hilly roads or long gradients you might have to change down once or twice depending on speed and vehicle load.

It did not complain too much unless you thrashed it through the lower gears and even then the engine note was not annoying, just busy.

Brakes were powerful and smooth with a strong parking brake as well while the steering was easy yet communicative and city driving and parking was straightforward and effortless, with a good turning circle and no kickback on open roads.

Secondary controls on the wheel-spokes and column stalks worked well, those on the fascia were clearly marked and the big digital instrument pod was pin-sharp and good in the day as well as night.

I would have preferred a slightly larger infotainment display for the many features but you get use to it and the content and speed of change display was good, barely distracting and it all integrated well with mobile phone features.

Climate controls were simple and the system proved effective in cooling or warming the interior throughout, backed up by four powered windows.

Electric mirrors, strong LED lights at night, big wipers each end and low waistline meant visibility was very good, but the lack of a reversing camera was a nuisance and you have to rely on eyesight and audible sensors when parking and reversing.

Access to the cabin was simple and the fifth door opened high to reveal a deep boot behind the rear panel, with a sensible capacity, luggage net and cover as well as hooks for bags to secure items. The offset split rear seat backs gradually tripled total capacity and they folded nearly flat for maximum space.

Infront the seats adjusted well and were nicely padded and supporting, fairly generous in size and the driver had a good range of steering column adjustment too.

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Ride quality was ever so slightly firm but still absorbing and with modest rolling or pitching on corners it handled with agility and just a trace of understeer on tighter turns. You could hear the suspension working away but rarely felt any bumps or jarring. Otherwise, all noise levels were low.

VERDICT

It’s clear a lot of clever thinking has gone into creating this modern compact crossover which is sure to satisfy many owners, particularly on a restricted budget with today’s rising costs of buying, insuring, running and enjoying a family car.

For: Economical, comfortable, agile, versatile, well equipped and roomy.

Against: The 1.0 litre engine audibly struggles with added load of people or cargo and in hilly areas, five speed gearing leaves it hunting at times and in need of a sixth gear when cruising.

FAST FACTS

Model: Skoda Kamiq SE 1.0TSI 95 PS

Price: £24,850

Mechanical: 95 PS 3 cyl 1.0 variable-turbo petrol engine, 5 speed

Max Speed: 113 mph

0 – 62 mph: 11 secs

Combined MPG: 60

Insurance Group: 12E

C02 emissions: 125 g/km

Bik rating: 29%, £220FY, £190SR

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Size: L 4.25 m (13.94 ft), W 1.80 m (5.91 ft), H 1.57 m (5.15 ft)

Bootspace: 400 to 1,395 litres (14.13 to 49.26 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,227 kg (2,705 lb)

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