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Skoda Kamiq SE L Edition – Road Test

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Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) writes... Skoda has something for everyone in its family friendly range beginning with their baby SUV, the Kamiq.



Launched in 2019 as Skoda's smallest SUV, the Kamiq shares its floorpan with the Seat Arona and Volkswagen T-Cross, but offers more interior room.

To maintain family resemblances, the Kamiq shares a similar face to the larger Skoda SUVs, the Karoq, Enyaq and Kodiaq but comes as a more compact package.

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To keep down costs and with space limitations, the engines are not hybrid but the biggest version has a clever cylinder deactivation feature allowing it to automatically run on half of its four pots when suitable and this makes it very economical with frugal drivers.

The Skoda Kamiq comes with a choice of petrol engines from £24,975 for the SE Edition, £26,075 for the Design Edition, £28,120 for the SE L Edition and £30,220 for the Monte Carlo Edition. Depending upon model, they are fitted with 95, 116 or 115 PS 1.0 litre engines or 1.5 litre 150 PS engine and the two most powerful power units are also available with automatic transmission. The 150 PS four cylinder engine can automatically run on two cylinders to save fuel when needed.



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The only extra we had was £150 space-saver spare and kit which was added to the list price of £28,730.

Standard equipment includes digital driver display with 9.2-inch infotainment screen, cruise control, heated and powered door mirrors, powered windows, heated front seats, LED lights, lane assist and idling cut-off, four driving modes, wifi and voice control.



The 1.5 litre engine fills the space beneath the bonnet and in a car weighing under 1.3 tonnes it pulls along well in the Sport mode, less impressively in the Normal setting and we have to look to its fuel sipping style in Eco. There is also an individual mode to select some limited features.

Over our usual test route we saw between 44 and 54 mpg recorded and ended up just under 52 mpg overall.

The engine's ability to switch on and off between two and four cylinders was almost imperceptible, probably most noticeable if in two-cylinder mode and you suddenly wanted more power to climb a long gradient for example, or to overtake.

Then it was most responsive in the Sport setting from the mode button on the console behind the gearlever. The car's long-travel clutch action was a nuisance in repeated stop start town driving and unless fully depressed the gears would 'crunch'. In open-road motoring this was less of an issue and the lever action was also a long throw so the two matched well.

It was a very direct box with a narrow gate as well and the long legged nature of the chosen gears meant a wrong selection could be made and the visual change up/ down reminder in front of the driver was useful.

The brakes needed only modest pedal pressure to effect a quick, controlled stop without any drama and the intelligent electric parking brake worked well in traffic or countryside. The Kamiq's turning circle was reasonable, the action nicely weighted and without any kickback or vibration at speed.



Secondary controls on the column and wheelspokes operated well but the details on the stalks were sometimes obscured by the spokes themselves.

The digital display before the driver could be changed as the modes were chosen but each was large, clear and well marked without any margin of doubt.

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The central infotainment screen was smaller than in some rivals but was clear, sharply in focus and quick changing with a very good navigation system included with three years of free updates as well.

Unfortunately, like many navigation systems, it was inevitably out of date with some speed limits displayed.

A slim line of buttons beneath the screen and two rotary knobs operated the comfort controls for heating seats, wheel and the cabin. The system was quick responding and varying with good air output and reasonable direction control through sliding vents.

Oddments space was fair with an inductive charge pad for a phone, some cup-holders and lidded bin on the console, four charge points throughout as well as slim seat-back pockets, door bins and a modest glovebox.

The boot was of a good size behind a small lip with the optional extra cost space-saver spare and fitting kit beneath and the offset split seat backs easily dropped down to triple capacity with good access through the back doors to



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adjust loads or when seats were used. The front doors opened wide as well and the interior room was good for four, a squeeze for five.



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Front seats were nicely supporting and had modest adjustment range but our test car had a very stiff height adjustment lever so we couldn't accurately assess the headroom for a passenger and it was tight for a tall driver beside them. Column movement was good.

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Visibility was very good with big windows, good wash/ wipe, bright headlights and included turning illumination for dark roads.

Noise levels were all modest. The engine was quiet almost all the time but sounded a bit busier if pressed, there was no other transmission noise apart from the occasional gear engagement if a hurried change was made and wind wuffle was low.

Some noises came up from the road through the rumbling tyres and suspension movements but they were not excessive.

The Skoda Kamiq is a compact family SUV, not a sporting hatchback, and it rides with a bias towards comfort not putting in the quickest time between supermarkets. The steering, handling and roadholding were all very predictable, safe and surefooted with just a tendency to roll around tighter turns, particularly when laden.

VERDICT

With Skoda's solid reputation for reliability and lower running costs, the Kamiq comes in as a safe choice, a practical car, which mayn't turn heads but



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just gets on with a job in hand every day.

For: Economical, versatile, well equipped, comfortable

Against: Limited space in back, long travel strong clutch, some engine and road noises.





FAST FACTS

Model: Skoda Kamiq SE L Edition

Price: £28,880

Mechanical: 150 PS 4 cyl 1.5 litre petrol, 6 speed manual

Max Speed: 132 mph

0 - 62 mph: 8.3 secs

Combined MPG: 51.6

Insurance Group: 19E

C02 emissions: 134 g/km

Bik rating: 32%, £540FY, £195SR

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Rating: 4/ 5

Size: L 4.25 m (13.94 cu.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: 1,280 kg (2,822 lb)



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