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Skoda Superb estate car Road Test

Published: February 5, 2016

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/skoda-superb-estate-car-road-test/>



Keith Ward assesses the Skoda Superb Estate

It is worth noting that Skoda has recently (January 2016) manufactured its 18 millionth vehicle since the Czech company started building cars in 1905 - two statistics which may surprise many people.

And the milestone steed was a Superb Estate, the model trumpeted as “The most spacious Skoda yet”. You have to believe it. Lower the rear seats and its cargo volume of 1,950 litres (68.9 cu.ft) blows away all direct rivals.



The extended boot deck stretches, according to our tape, to 1,740 mm - getting on for six feet. It is vast. In this respect the closest competitor estates, some way short, may be the VW Passat and Ford Mondeo, followed by perhaps the Mazda 6, Dacia Logan MCV and BMW 3-series.

Added to which the rear sill height of the Superb deck above ground is a handy 630 mm, or only around two feet, so taking some of the hard work out of loading heavy items.

On a seasonal note: Is there a more winter-friendly car maker than this? Features of the Superb Estate, according to trim chosen, include an ice scraper inside the fuel filler flap, a removable LED lamp in the boot, umbrellas readily stored in the front doors, cornering front foglights as well as headlamps and, in our upper trim version, heated (leather) front seats. At a pinch, if stranded you could lower the back seats and kip overnight in there. This car



does all but wrap a scarf around your neck and tuck you up with a hot water bottle.

However, the Skoda does lose some marks. Those rear seats do not drop absolutely flat, the extensions sloping slightly upward. And there's an obstructive step across the width of that vast boot. Could keep you awake.

With all seats upright, rear passengers enjoy limo-standard legroom and head clearance. You are almost prompted to give a regal wave to passers-by. However, with three up, the piggy in the middle has to straddle a central tunnel. And the boot capacity is reigned back to resemble that of a Passat estate, which after all shares the same VW Group base platform.

Prices of the Superb Estate range from £19,840 for the basic S version (around £3,000 cheaper than the lowliest Passat) to just under £36,000 for the 280 PS petrol 4×4 automatic in posh-most Laurin & Klement garb. That span takes in four trim levels, three petrol and three diesel power options as well as 4WD and six or seven-speed DSG automatics. All engines in the new Superb are said to be unaffected by the VW Group emissions scandal.

Our 150 PS diesel SE L Executive, keenly priced at under £27,000, came with dual-zone climate, eight-inch touchscreen sat-nav, leather seats (front pair heated), rear parking sensors, electric tailgate, electric driver's seat with memory set, electric door mirrors, adaptive cruise control, a series of luggage nets and selectable drive mode according to the driver's mood.

Optional extras fitted included a heated windscreen and washer nozzles (added winter comforts for £350) and a £150 "virtual pedal" - with the car key in your pocket and an armful of shopping, simply waggle your foot below the rear bumper to open the boot.

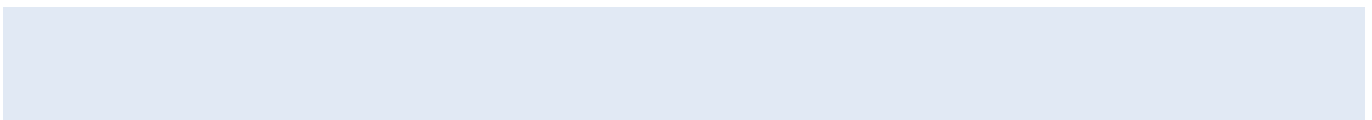
Rear parking sensors, standard on SE versions upwards, are a boon on such a long vehicle - it stands three and a half inches (89 mm) proud even of the sizeable Passat Estate. A bonus in this respect - the Superb is easy to spot along the lines in a multi-storey.



On the road, the estate exhibits pretty well saloon car standards of ride comfort and handling although the larger 18-inch wheels on our Executive version do pick out uneven surfaces and if you push the Superb really hard, encouraged in our sample by the sprightly 150 PS 2.0-litre diesel, you start to feel its bulk on cornering. While the six-speed manual gave smooth changes, an over-sensitive clutch on our car sometimes stalled the engine on take-off. (Or was it me?).

VERDICT

All in all, and given Skoda's established latter-day reputation for reliability and owner-approval, the Superb lives up to its name.





WHEELS-ALIVE TECH. SPEC. IN BRIEF

Skoda Superb SE L Exec Estate 2.0 TDI estate; 5 door; 5 seats

Engine: 4 cylinder; 1,968 cc turbo diesel

Transmission: 6 speed manual; stop-start; front wheel drive

Tyres and wheels: 235/45; R18 alloys

Power: 150 PS @ 3,500-4,000 rpm

Max torque: 340 Nm (251 lb.ft) @ 1,750-3,000

O-62 mph: 8.9 sec

Top speed: 135 mph

Fuel consumption: On test 55.1 mpg; official Combined 67.3 mpg; tank 66 litres (17.4 gallons)

Emissions and taxation: 110 g/km; band B; VED Nil then £20; BIK 20%

Insurance group: 19E

Warranty: 36 months/60,000 miles; 36 months paint and breakdown; 12 years anti-rust

Dimensions: Length 4,856 mm (15 ft 11.2 in); width 1,864 mm (6 ft 1.4 in); height 1,477 mm (4 ft 10.1 in)

Weights: Kerb 1,430 kg (3,153 lb); payload 640 kg (1,411 lb); tow braked 2,000 (4,409 lb), unbraked 750 kg (1,653 lb)



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Boot: Length 1,150 to 1,740 mm (3 ft 9.3 to 5f ft 8.5 in); min width 1,010 (3 ft 3.8 in);
vol 660 to 1,950 litres (23.3 to 68.9 cu.ft)

Price: £26,320; with options as tested £28,925

Rivals (Estates): VW Passat; Ford Mondeo; Mazda 6; BMW 3-series

