Skoda Superb SE L Estate 150 PS diesel – Road Test

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Value for money rarely comes with the sophistication and refinement of the Skoda Superb SE L Estate, writes Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales)…

Skoda introduced the Superb range in 2001 and it has gone through to the

fourth generation, growing in size at each point until the current version based on a stretched version of the VW Group's MQB Evo platform, also underpinning the largest models in the family group with VW or Audi badges.

There are hatchback and estate bodystyles with a wide choice of petrol, diesel or phevs power from just under £37,000 to almost £45,100 but there may be offers on some models of the six trim levels available.



The test car's standard price of £39,705 was topped up with ice tea yellow metallic paint, electric tow bar with adaptor, a winter pack and head up display which together raised it to £42,600 and took it into the higher road tax band for years two to five.

For those who have to pound the roads every day and demand reliability at a

realistic price, the Skoda Superb takes some beating and explains why it's so popular with police, ambulance and taxi operators. Simply put, it does their job very well.

With a 150 PS 2.0 4-cylinder diesel engine the Superb SE L Estate is a rarity today but it is a highly refined engine delivering good acceleration across a wide rev-range, excellent motorway cruising ability to gobble up miles and consistently returned remarkable economy figures.



Matched to a wide seven ratio automatic transmission it demanded nothing of the driver but you could play around with paddles on the column to make the most of any ratio or opportunity. Changes were silent and swift with uncanny smoothness even under hard loading.

It will tow a unit up to 2,200 kg (4,850 lb) weight and the brakes are well up to their task without this pushing behind and give the driver excellent feedback and power with modest pedal pressure.

In your hands, the steering had a good turning circle without any vibration at speed and a good indication of where the wheels were pointing.

I liked the multitude of secondary switches once accustomed to their position on the spokes or column but the speed control is well hidden from view on the left side behind the wheel-rim. Less used buttons were to the right of the fascia end.

The big and clear selectable display for the main instruments was directly in line of sight from the driver’s viewpoint and it came with a good headup display of variable content.

The console’s huge infotainment screen did so many functions it could be distracting and it’s advisable to select what you want to see and set it up, only altering through the spoke-switches when required. Much of the data is minimised on the driver’s display when chosen and is less distracting.

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Heating and ventilation was masterminded again through the screen and it also controlled the heated seating selection for comfort while the system filled the cabin with chosen air in a strong, silent and efficient manner, backed up by powered windows.

Oddments room was plentiful although some compartments were on the small size for a well-used family car.

At the other end, the luggage area was easy to load and large even without dropping down the backrests to triple capacity – hence the popularity with taxi and private hire businesses – and there were various ways to secure items from rolling about.



Access to the cabin was unrestricted, easy and once inside the room was good even for three abreast in the rear. Front seat occupants had a lot of adjustment room and excellent support from the cushion and backrests.

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Visibility was clear all round once you adjusted for a thick A-pillar and made the most of the sensors and reversing camera with its extremely clear and large display with built in safety margin on the overlaid markings.

Intelligent headlights were extremely bright but a bit slow responding to conditions of oncoming traffic or moving from lit to unlit roads.

Wipers and washers both ends were powerful and cleared a big sweep of glass and the mirror housings included warning of approaching traffic from the rear.

Inside, the Superb lived up to it name with room, excellent ride quality over any surface thanks to its over 2.8 m (9.2 ft) wheelbase while roadholding and handling were safe and surefooted. If you need it, there is an all-wheel drive derivative as well.

A little road noise found its way into the cabin but the diesel engine note was very muted even at higher speed and there were no wind or other mechanical noises to intrude.

It felt, both physically and audibly, and responded too, like a more powerful larger and more expensive luxury car.



VERDICT

The Skoda Superb Estate offers more practicality than its hatchback stablemate and is easy on the eye as well as the wallet.

For: Extremely comfortable ride and seats, very roomy throughout, highly economical and surprisingly quiet, sophisticated and refined.

Against: Test car just edged over highest tax band for expensive costs until five years old, slow-acting intelligent headlights, average performance and warranty.



Fast facts

Model: Skoda Superb SE L Estate

Price: £42,600 as tested

Mechanical: 150 PS 2.0 litre 4 cyl turbo-diesel 7 speed auto

Max speed: 137 mph

0 – 62 mph: 9.3 secs

Combined mpg: 59

Insurance group: 25

CO2 emissions: 136 g/km

BiK rating: 332%, £270FY, £600 SRx5

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Size: L 4.91 m (16.11 FT), W 2.09 m (6.86 FT), H 1.49 m (4.89 ft)

Bootspace: 690 to 1,920 litres (24.37 to 67.80 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,678 kg (3,699 lb)

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