Vauxhall Astra Sports Tourer Road Test

Published: August 30, 2016

Author: Robin Roberts

Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/vauxhall-astra-sports-tourer-road-test/



Vauxhall Astra Sports Tourer...

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

Built in Britain and voted the best sports tourer for the money, the Vauxhall Astra ST packs a hefty sales punch for the September new ‘66’ registration plate month and beyond.

The car is made at Ellesmere Port and uses the familiar Astra Hatchback mechanicals and trim levels in an all new roomier body, which at minimum will seat five and take 540 litres (19.1 cu.ft) of luggage, or with just two occupants it expands three-fold.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

Luggage access is excellent from the back with a flat floor or through the side-doors, the seats fold low out of the way and the space is well-defined and practical when you need to use it.

The Sports Tourer shape is not a full estate profile but it is only marginally less boxy, and it provided good visibility all round – although I was surprised that parking sensors are not standard at this price.



Inside, the oddments room was very good in front or rear with lots of pockets, compartments (some lidded), and plenty of bins or trays, making it a true family car.

The usual five seats are easy to access and very well shaped, offering good support to the driver and front seat passenger in particular on two long journeys. Adjustment was very good in the front and the driver should be able to find any desired position with a multi-movement steering column and wheel. Instruments were big and clear.

Underfoot, the 1.6 litre turbocharged petrol engine packed a good punch and loved to be

revved, producing a surprisingly sporty exhaust note, and despite a lot of maximum motorway driving it returned a remarkable 47 mpg overall.

That only tells part of the story as its acceleration from rest, when overtaking and in the intermediate gears was very strong and particularly responsive. The agility of the Astra ST extended to its handling on country roads and manoeuvring around town, showing it was at ease doing either. Steering was very communicative, balanced and effortless while the brakes were easily capable of rapid or relaxed firm deceleration without a hint of effort.

The Astra ST faces a challenge to match comfort with control and has to cope with light or heavy loads as desired but it really does a good job of both. One or two up, and with no or some luggage, it went where it was pointed, had no dramas when turning and it stayed firmly planted on the road over any surface it found. In fact, the semi-estate handled like a sports car, and in a better manner than some which claim to be just that.

What was probably the most surprising performance, however, was the fuel consumption. We did a lot of high speed driving for sustained periods but the long ratio sixth gear really paid off with a figure approaching 50 mpg from a high revving 1.6 turbo engine, and I wonder how much the stop & start system contributed when we were slowly moving in traffic.

VERDICT

The Vauxhall Astra ST 200 hp is a very attractive proposition, mixing practicality with purpose and performance at a price which is very competitive as well, and handsomely undercuts rivals but gives away nothing in terms of dynamic sophistication.

For: Performance, economy, practicality, comfort and room.

Against: Some noise from road and wheels, lacking some standard equipment.



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

Vauxhall Astra Sports Tourer, SRI Nav, 200 hp.

Mechanical: 1.6 litre, 4 cyl, 200 hp turbo petrol, 6-speed.

Performance:

0-60 mph: 7.2 seconds.

Top speed: 46 mph.

Fuel consumption: 47 mpg (actual overall figure achieved on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2, 142 g/km. VED road tax £145, BIK company car tax 25%.
Luggage capacity: 540 to 1,630 litres (19.1 to 575.6 cu.ft).

Warranty: 3 years/60,000 miles.

Insurance Group: 19E.

Price: £24,370 as tested.