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Vauxhall Classics No. 11 – VXR220

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Author:

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In this 15th feature in a series looking at a selection of important Vauxhall models since 1963, we reach the 21st Century, and see a concerted effort by the company to return to its sporting roots with the launch of the VXR brand. The first model off the start line? The VXR220.

(All information and photographs from Vauxhall.)

VAUXHALL VXR220



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It's not often that one of Vauxhall's press cars is responsible for launching an entire brand, but in the case of KE04 GYH, it achieved just that.

Built before series production started, the car you see in the photographs (individually numbered 'VXR-000') was the first to wear the now well-known 'VXR' badge, and spearheaded the launch of the eponymous sporting brand in 2004.

Based on the already successful VX220 Turbo model, the VXR220's 2-litre 'Family2' turbocharged engine produced 220 hp, thanks to a free-flow air filter, a hybrid turbocharger and re-programmed ECU. It also received more cooling capacity, changes to the exhaust, a turbo heat-shield and undertray, along with minor revisions to the chassis to cater for the extra performance.



And what performance it had. Capable of 0 - 60 mph in 4.2 seconds and with a top speed of 155 mph, the VXR220 arguably put its Lotus Elise cousin in the shade, with a more pliant ride and greater engine flexibility, too.

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KE04 GYH was in service during 2004-05, winning CAR magazine's Performance Car of the Year shoot-out, against some of the world's top exotica. In summary, CAR judged it, 'a well designed, well engineered driver's car that is guaranteed to spark a warm glow of anticipation every time you reach for the keys.'

Technical Data:

Body: 2-door roadster

Engine: 4 cylinders in-line, turbocharged

Engine capacity: 1,998cc

Top Speed: 155 mph

0 - 60 mph: 4.2 seconds

Fuel Consumption: 33 mpg



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VAUXHALL MOTORS

They tell us:

Vauxhall Motors started making vehicles in the UK in 1903. Today, as the oldest and most familiar of Britain's automotive manufacturers, its philosophy is to build vehicles that are relevant to all. Vauxhall's two manufacturing plants in Ellesmere Port and Luton produced 206,000 cars and vans in 2018, and its sales accounted for nine per cent of the UK market.

Vauxhall has been a Groupe PSA brand since 2017. By 2024, each of its models will offer an electrified version, part of the company's **PACE!** plan to become sustainably profitable, global and electric. www.vauxhall.co.uk

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