Vauxhall Crossland X – First impressions

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Chris Adamson gives his views on Vauxhall's compact Crossland X SUV...

(All words and photographs by Chris).

Vauxhall was among the pioneers in the sports utility market here in the UK with the Frontera (remember that rather agricultural mud-plugger) even if it did borrow heavily from Isuzu in the first place.

Times have moved on and everyone, including Vauxhall, has a model range bulging with compact soft-roaders of all shapes and sizes.

The griffin badge adorns the already successful Mokka (now refreshed as the Mokka X) and it has now been joined by the smaller Crossland X, and will be expanded in 2018 with the upcoming Grandland X – sorry no prizes for Vauxhall when it comes to choosing catchy names.

But the Crossland X does match its name rather well, being a shrink-wrapped urban-style crossover clearly targeted at families who want something fashionable with lots of flexibility.

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At 4.2 metres (13.78 ft) long, 1.7 metres (5.58 ft) wide and just 1.5 metres (4.92 ft) tall it neatly fits into the baby SUV category – often where quirky is seen as good and here Vauxhall may have missed a trick.

If little thought has gone into the title, the same is also true of the visual styling which, frankly, in a highly competitive sector, does nothing to stand out in a crowd and to be totally honest is a little bland.

Yes, there are nice optional 17inch alloy wheels, chrome trimming for the large grille and headlights, highly visible front and rear skid pans, side mouldings and Vauxhall makes a great fuss about the floating style roof design (available in contrasting colours). This serves to lengthen the appearance but as an overall package, it could be one of several models already out there on sale.

Inside things are better with a capacious and well thought-out cabin that defies its lack-lustre external appearance.

One of the best features is that the step-up into the cabin isn’t as high as on many SUVs and the doors are wide so it is easy to access for those with limited mobility, or for small children clambering in and out.

For the driver there is an elevated seating positon behind the deep-set dashboard and low windows on the doors, giving a commanding view of the road ahead and to the sides (essential in urban situations) while clear instrumentation is a feature of the deep, horizontally zoned layout.

There is a practical choice of modest quality materials and comfortable seating to be

savoured while surveying the generous proportions of the interior.

Rear passenger accommodation is excellent for leg and head room although the compact width means it will be a squash for three adults, shoulder-to-shoulder, so Crossland X is more suitable for four adults all-round or two adults with three children in the back.

Added versatility comes in the shape of the 60/40 split rear seats that slide backwards and forwards (by up to 150 mm or six inches or so) for extra leg room or luggage space and then fold almost flat.

Vauxhall gives the Crossland X a Flexifloor boot with two load levels giving a generous luggage capacity which is claimed to be a class-leading 410 litres (14.48 cu.ft) which swells to an impressive 1,255 litres (44.32 cu.ft) with the seats down.

In the mid-range Elite specification, as tested, this version is kitted out with a huge array of technical goodies including automatic headlights and wipers, tinted rear windows, dual zone climate control, cruise control and a multi-function computer.

To this you can add in Apple Play and Android Auto operating through a seven inch screen, also DAB radio, Bluetooth connection, a front-facing camera and Vauxhall OnStar connection system, plus advanced park assist, forward collision alert with pedestrian collision warning, autonomous emergency braking, lane departure warning, blind spot alert and even traffic sign recognition.

Cost options fitted ranged from a 180 degree panoramic rear camera, keyless entry, LED light package, satellite navigation and a spare wheel (yes a spare wheel is a cost option these days).

On the Road

Vauxhall, in this case in partnership with Peugeot Citroen, has been quietly going about its work behind the scenes designing a new class of three-cylinder, all aluminium direct

injection turbocharged petrol engines, in this case a 1.2 litre block and in range-topping version outputting a more than adequate 130 bhp to the front wheels.

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Surprisingly for such a good size or power ratio the engine actually feels a bit sluggish and is noisy at low speed; there is no real excitement or enthusiasm, just a very workmanlike plodder that gets the job done but never really enthuses.

Matched with a six-speed manual transmission the Crossland X will happily rumble along in traffic or cover lots of ground without breaking sweat but, best of all, this combination should be good for fuel economy. Vauxhall's promise of over 55 mpg seems more than achievable.

Like much else here the steering is a bit lifeless but is light and easy to turn so will be good for parking and negotiating the urban environment where it is likely to spend the majority of its time.

A compliant suspension set-up results in a surprisingly good ride quality which is not as bouncy as some compact SUVs and appears more tuned for tarmac than off-road excursions, which is probably a good thing.

Should the driver, however, decide to take to the rough, the traction control and drive modes along with features such as Hill Start should be able to cope with most modestly challenging situations although ride quality will suffer.

VERDICT

In a sector where being different should be a selling point, the Crossland X lacks personality and individuality but if you can live with blending into the background the Crossland X is efficient and easy to live with as well as being highly versatile and very accessible.

Wheels-Alive Tech Spec in Brief:

Vauxhall Crossland X Elite 1.2

Engine: 1199cc, turbocharged petrol

Transmission: Six-speed manual

Power: 130 PS @ 5,500rpm

Torque: 230 Nm (170 lb.ft) @ 1,750 rpm

Performance:

0–62 mph: 9.1 seconds

Top Speed: 128mph

Fuel Consumption (Official Figures):

Urban: 47.9 mpg

Extra-Urban: 60.1 mpg

Combined: 55.4 mpg

CO2 Emissions: 116 g/km

Price (On the Road): £19,395 (£22,105 as tested)