Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport – Road Test

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Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport Elite Nav 200 hp…

Test-driven by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

When size matters, the Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport hatchback has big appeal. The market for large hatchbacks and saloons is supposed to be shrinking as ubiquitous SUVs take over, but why be like everyone else when you can be different and look the part?

This large hatchback offers extremely good room for five with a boot capacity of 1,450 litres (51.21 cu.ft) so it will be popular among those who like the space and want the sharper dynamic delights of a traditional car. You'll also be spoiled for choice.

It comes from a huge range, with scores of models split over seven trim levels from under £20,000 to over £38,200 in the Insignia series. There's a choice of petrol or diesel engines from 140 to 210 hp and even two 4×4 derivatives.

Our test car is one of the most popular, the 200 hp 1.6 Elite Nav with integrated European-wide navigation and multimedia system, eight-inch touchscreen and sophisticated comms fittings, dual zone electronic climate control, multi-way powered driver's seat, intelligent LED lights, 20-inch wheels and a host of safety and convenience features all included at a price of £28,075.

There was £1,785 worth of extra cost options on the test car including winter and driver assistance packs, head-up display and wireless charging of phone, and it seemed a good package at that price.

Under the bonnet is a modern 1.6 litre four-cylinder turbo petrol engine with 300 Nm (221 lb.ft) pulling power between 1,700 and 4,700 rpm and so long as you carefully select the most appropriate of the six ratios the car responds well. It has been geared for long distance motorway work and the upper two ratios sometimes seem to be stretched and are not particularly flexible at lower speed or under load.

Economy was often into the high-40s on main roads and overall returned a figure of just under 40 mpg with a lot of urban work.

Third and fourth gears pack a punch for overtaking but whatever ratio you use the changes are quick and direct, helped by a progressive if long-travel clutch.

I liked the well-balanced, progressive and powerful brakes underfoot, and the nicely weighted power steering, also the Insignia’s responses, handling and grip. It always felt glued to the road and very safe with a trace of understeer on tighter turns, quickly disappearing if you lifted off mid-corner.

The Insignia Elite Nav has large wheels and tyres to aid grip but they also generate a lot of noise and contribute to a firm but not hard ride as the suspension really does a good job absorbing shocks and what gets through is further softened by the thick, supporting seats throughout.

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Drivers of any size can tailor their seat very precisely while their front passenger also has a fair bit of adjustment ability. The back seats look flat but they are surprisingly comfortable and quickly drop down to gradually increase luggage space. Access to the cabin and boot is very good.

Visibility is good all round, aided by cameras and sensors when parking, with extremely bright LED beams which automatically dip or raise, rain sensing wipers and a low waistline and slim roof-pillars.

For the driver everything comes to hand, foot and eyes with a multitude of secondary controls grouped on the wheel-spokes, fascia or central console. You need to familiarise yourself because of their number and functions but the best has to be the optional head-up display which is big, clear and effective displaying essential information.

It comes with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Annoyingly we found the sat-nav system, supposed to be the Pro version, lacked the latest updates regarding local speed limits and traffic updates but overall it was clear and fairly easy to use. The Bose sound system was excellent.

The climate control worked well throughout, filling the cabin with selected air and not too noisily, backed up by powered windows all round. Oddments space was really plentiful for a family car and there were plenty of USB sockets, even in the back.

At nearly five metres long it’s a big car, but it handles more like a medium sized model and the standard or optional systems fitted made parking and manoeuvring very easy.

VERDICT

The Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport does a very good job as a big car without a big price tag usually associated with similar executive models from the Midlands or Germany. It is a bargain buy for what it is.

For: Immense room in cabin and boot, good seats and ride comfort, responsive and handled well, reasonable performance, good visibility.

Against: Road noise, too much dull plastic trim, out-dated sat-nav information, ungenerous

warranty.

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

Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport Elite Nav, 200 hp, five Door Hatchback.

Price: £28,075 *(as tested £29,860).*

Mechanical: Four cylinder, 1,598cc 200 hp turbo-petrol, six speed manual.

Performance: 146 mph, 0–60 mph 7.2 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined cycle 44.8 mpg (38 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 145 g/km, VED First Year road tax £210 then £145 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 33%.

Insurance Group: 25E.

Warranty: Three years/ 60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: Sizes: L 4.90 m (16.08 ft), W 1.87 m (6.14 ft), H 1.45 m (4.76 ft). Boot space: 490 – 1,450 litres (17.30 – 51.21 cu.ft), kerb weight 1,428 kg (3,148 lb, braked towing weight 1,410 kg (3,109 lb).