Vauxhall Insignia Sports Tourer – Road Test

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LONG LIFE VAUXHALL INSIGNIA SPORTS TOURER STILL MEASURES UP…

…By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Launched in 2008 and facelifted in 2013, followed by continuous upgrades to specification.

the Vauxhall Insignia range of five door D-segment Grand Sport hatchbacks, Sports Tourer and Country Tourer estates is a story of evolution and the latest models are still as fresh and competitive in the market place as the original versions were.

And to add to their competitiveness there is a huge range of spec levels, a wide selection of petrol and diesel engines, transmissions and front or four wheel drive variants to choose from. Prices start from a shade under £20k for the hatchback, £21,505 for the estate and £27,165 for the Country Tourer.



Sales wise the Insignia range does well in the company car market sector and then ‘used’ models are popular choices with retail customers who need roomy well-equipped vehicles.

But overall the D-segment remains under sales pressure from the must-have SUV models and of course brand conscious users still edge towards premium brands such as Audi, BMW, Mercedes and Volvo saloons, hatchbacks, estates and also their SUV offerings.

I've just finished a week long spell living with the Insignia Sports Tourer estate with SRi VX-Line Nav specification, powered by a 2.0 litre 170 hp turbodiesel engine with an eight speed automatic gearbox. The on-the-road price is £29,545 but various options pushed the price up to £34,250, which given the comprehensive equipment is still competitive.



Standard SRi VX-Line spec includes as standard a styling pack which includes sports style front and rear bumpers and side sills, alloy wheels, multimedia Navi Pro system 8.0-inch

touchscreen, DAB radio, Bluetooth, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, dual zone air-con, multi-function computer, cruise control with speed limiter, heated flat bottomed steering wheel, sports pedals, heated door mirrors, front and rear parking sensors, front camera system, forward collision alert with emergency braking, following distance warning, lane departure control with lane assist, traffic sign recognition, remote central locking and LED daytime running lights – there is more but these are the main standard features.

From the extra cost options list Vauxhall's additions included on my test car were the must-have £850 FlexRide system if the £880 20-inch alloy wheels are chosen, enhanced driving support pack at an expensive £1,025, a nice to have £290 head-up display, wireless phone charger at £160, a winter pack at £410, towing pack at £685 and Brilliant paint at an extra £285.

Other figures to be considered are of course performance and running costs. With 170 hp and a strong 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm the latest EU 6.2 C and D Temp compliant 2.0 litre, four cylinder turbodiesel engine gives this car practical 'muscle' for responsiveness during acceleration, relaxed untroubled cruising speeds and smooth and easy dawdling in stop-start traffic, all made easier whatever the conditions by the eight speed auto gearbox. Now the engine is not the most refined turbodiesel around today, it's a bit noisy on start-up and at tickover but the sound drifts away as you get underway. What noise there is, lots of it, comes from the 20-inch wheels shod with rubberband shallow-walled low profile tyres. Not only is the ride noisy the ride comfort is poor, and only marginally offset by the optional cost FlexRide system which helped soften the impacts from potholes a bit.

I digress so back to the figures. Top speed is 137 mph, zero to 60 mph takes 8.6 seconds so this version is definitely not a company car slouch-mobile. The WLTP Combined Cycle figure is 45.6 mpg and my week of driving returned a realistic 43.2 mpg. With CO2 emissions of 147 g/km with standard sized wheels and 150 g/km with the optional 20-inch alloys the VED diesel rate First Year road tax is the same for both and costs £530 and then £145 Standard rate. Unfortunately for company car drivers the Benefit-in-Kind tax rate is the maximum

37% due to the extra and unjust 4% added because it’s a diesel car. The insurance is Group 21E which is very competitive given its size, spec and performance. Unfortunately Vauxhall haven’t joined the move to improve their warranty terms so this model is only covered by a three year/60,000 mile warranty.

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Other figures of note, being a roomy estate, the boot space is 560 litres (19.78 cu.ft) with the rear seats up and that increases to an impressive 1,665 litres (58.80 cu.ft) and for good measure the braked towing weight is 1,700 kg (3,748 lb). The overall dimensions are; L 4,986 mm (16.36 ft), W 1,863 mm (6.11 ft), H 1,500 mm (4.92 ft) with a long wheelbase of 2,829 mm (9.28 ft) which makes this not only a spacious load carrier but with lots of interior passenger space with good rear seat legroom. Styling wise, especially with the sports body kit, it has desirable kerb appeal.

Inside there is ample room front and rear and the quality of the upholstery and soft-touch trim coverings in the main areas is very acceptable. The layout of controls is generally good and logical but some items, such as the start button, are hidden by the steering wheel. The heating temperature controls, heated screen/rear window and fan speed controls are operated outside the touchscreen but air-con and heat/ventilation distribution are selected via the touchscreen which is not user-friendly.



VERDICT

With various driving modes to select from with the 20-inch wheels the softest suspension setting was almost mandatory but that also relaxed the big estate's handling and it tended to float through corners without any great degree of confidence or feedback to the driver. Stay away from large optional wheels and low profile tyres and it will be a much sharper and overall more comfortable handling vehicle. That aside it might not be in its first flush of youth but the Vauxhall Insignia in Sports Tourer form is a hugely capable estate car standing the test of time really well and at competitive prices and with a wide range of engine options.

For: An affordable very spacious alternative to the many large SUVs on sale, sports styling and desirable up-market kerb appeal, very roomy, well-equipped, most models are well priced, good range of engines and specifications.

Against: Harsh ride with optional 20-inch wheels, some heat/ventilation controls operated via the touchscreen, some hidden controls, ungenerous warranty.



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

Vauxhall Insignia Sports Tourer SRi VX-Line Nav, 2.0, 170hp Turbo D.

Price: £29,545 (£34,250 as tested).

Engine/transmission: 2.0 litre, four cylinder BlueInjection turbodiesel EU 6.2 C&D Temp compliant, 170 hp, 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm. Eight speed automatic, FWD.

Performance: 137 mph, 0–60 mph 8.6 seconds.

Fuel consumption: WLTP Combined Cycle 45.6 mpg (43.2 mpg overall on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 150 g/km with large wheels (147 g/km with standard wheels), VED diesel rate First Year road tax £530 then £145 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 37%.

Insurance Group: 21E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,986 mm (16.36 ft), W 1,863 mm (6.11 ft), H 1,500 mm (4.92 ft), boot/load space 560 to 1,665-litres (19.78 to 58.80 cu.ft), braked towing weight 1,700 kg (3,748 lb), five doors/five seats.