Vauxhall Insignia SRi – Road Test

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Vauxhall's latest Insignia SRi VX-Line Nav 1.5D Manual on the road with Robin Roberts (and Milestones Motoring).

The Vauxhall Insignia is a lesson to its rivals. While many challengers have or are about to move out of saloons/ hatchbacks and into crossover models in the modestly priced family

sector, or executive brands keep pushing up prices but offering less in return, the Vauxhall hatchback stands out as extremely good value and packaging. However due to slow sales in their global market the Insignia Sports Tourer and Country Tourer estate models have been dropped from the current line-up.

After replacing the Vectra and Signum in 2008, the Insignia became Vauxhall's large car in the UK, but it also sold in Germany, Australia, USA and China with different badges.

Its size, room, performance and price have made it a firm favourite with high mileage business users and fleets and it's won numerous awards over the years.

The first generation was replaced in 2017 and it was radically overhauled at the end of 2020 with the latest models going on UK sale this spring but without estate versions in the latest line-up.

The Insignia hatchback range today now spreads over 17-models, mostly diesel engines producing 122 hp with 1.5 litres or 174 hp from 2.0 litres and a couple of petrol units developing 200 hp or 230 hp from their 2.0 litre capacities.

They are nearly all front wheel drive but there is an all-wheel-drive version at the top of the range and while most are manual you can order automatic transmission.





In February this year, Vauxhall introduced all new engines and transmissions with class leading low emissions and fuel consumption, restyled “active-aero” bodywork and the latest safety and convenience technologies.

Starting at under £24,000, the big, roomy Insignia is a challenger to much more expensive rivals which deliver less in the real world.

We tested the likely best seller in the new line-up the mid-range 122 hp 1.5-litre diesel with six-speed manual gearbox in SRi VX-line Nav trim. This includes premium Bose sound

system, integrated mapping and telecoms, leather upholstery, dual zone climate control with heated front seats and steering wheel, automatic head and tail lights, intelligent cruise control with lane assist and black/chrome detailing.







It all adds up to a very attractive package but what is not so apparent is the lively performance from the 1.5-litre triple-pot turbo-diesel engine. It’s a generally smooth and willing engine and proved very economical on test consistently providing over 50 mpg between refuelling.



You have to exploit the six-speed manual gearbox to keep the pulling power at its peak or the engine runs out of breath and then it becomes noisier, but the long travel clutch and wide-gate to the box are not ideal in this respect.

On main road or motorways the Insignia SRi 1.5 is in its element just hustling along and sipping fuel, very quiet and smooth.



The suspension soaks up nearly all bumps without complaint or sending them into the cabin and the seats are very well shaped and have lots of electric adjustment in the front. The front pair are particularly supporting and the rear three are comfortable if not so good at locating occupants.

Their offset split backrests can be gradually folded down to eventually almost triple luggage space and with a low floor and sensible shape the boot will take large objects with ease.


VO70 EXD

The room in the boot is matched by a very commodious cabin, ideal for six-footers if needed, with good access and headroom.



We have said how well it copes with any surface, although you can hear the suspension and tyres rumbling away, but it also steers and stops with confidence even if it’s a little distant with the driving feedback through the hands.

It stays rooted to the road and is never put off line by mid-corner bumps or potholes and while it’s unlikely you’d rush into many corners, just easing off the throttle or steering brings it all back under control very quickly and safely.

Those excellent, bright, long-range headlights, sensors and reversing camera along with other warning systems back up the good wash/ wipers and generally clear sightlines, although you have to be careful with over the shoulder blindspots when pulling out.

VERDICT

The Vauxhall Insignia is a car in which you can pack in a lot of people, goods and miles and it will not short change you in any way.

For: Very roomy interior and large boot space, good seats, excellent economy, smooth powertrain, strong brakes, quality feel to controls and trim.

Against: Engine noise when pressed or under load with occupants, long clutch travel and wide gear-gate, little feedback through steering, no hybrid or plug-in hybrid options, estate versions discontinued, average warranty.



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

Vauxhall’s latest Insignia SRi VX-Line Nav

Price: £29,080.

Mechanical: 122 hp, 3-cylinder 1,496cc, turbo-diesel, 6-speed manual.

Performance: 127 mph, 0 – 62 mph 10.7 seconds, Combined Cycle on test 55 mpg, CO2 124 g/km.

Tax costs: VED diesel first year rate £220 then £155 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 28%.

Insurance Group: 19E.

Warranty: 3-years/60,000 miles.

Size: L 4.91 m (16.11 ft), W 2.10 m (6.89 ft), H 1.46 m (4.79 ft).

Boot space: 490 – 1,450 litres (17.30 – 51.21 cu.ft).

Kerb weight: 1,580 kg (3,483 lb).