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Volkswagen Amarok Aventura 3.0 V6 Double Cab Pick-up Road Test

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VW's Amarok Adventure 3.0 V6 Double Cab Pickup...

...assessed by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency)

Big, bold and you can bet it'll turn heads, the VW Amarok double cab pick-up is the alternative luxury SUV whether it's for family, leisure or work use.

Built with America squarely in its sight over one of the biggest bonnets you'll ever see looming in your rear view mirror, the Amarok is for the family or business which needs capacity and doesn't want to compromise on quality.



There are 12 models in the range offered in five trim levels, all diesel, mostly automatic and four-wheel-drive ranging from 140 to 224 hp, and we evaluated the most powerful and desirable Aventura, which is near the top of the range approaching £40,000.

That's a big wedge to lift your status in any car park and the sheer size of the Amarok rams it home that this is more than a status symbol, but actually a very versatile pick-up.

With the super-smooth 3.0 litre V6 turbo-diesel engine and silken eight-speed automatic transmission the driving experience is refined and really impressive once you come to terms with the fuel consumption.





It is quiet unless really hammered, changes were instant and rarely felt in our test vehicle, and you have a very good acceleration from rest or through intermediate gears, with a completely composed motorway cruising ability.



The brakes are up to the task of taming the Amarok without much effort from the driver's foot and the parking brake was very effective on our regular test hill.

I was surprised by the lightness and ease of steering and its feedback at any speed, but it's a long vehicle and you have to look for big parking spaces and wide roads to turn.



Then you become aware that the high loadbed and sides restrict vision around you and the standard camera really comes into its own with the sensors as well. It's a big loadbed and has a good payload capacity if you can lift things onto it but it's much easier to climb into the spacious cabin with its three-place split-back rear seats and big front heated pair with lots of adjustment. Our test model came with Vienna leather, a luxurious trim and recommended for comfort and long life. The cabin is roomy and has enormous oddments space, the air-conditioning is excellent and there are powered windows.

Secondary controls grouped around the multi-function steering wheel or close on the console and fascia put everything within easy reach. The big instruments display is simple and very clear and the infotainment screen is of a good size and clear as well, if a little slow in responding at times.



Apart from the sometimes restricted rear vision, the low waistline, big windows, very good wipers and bright headlights were appreciated.

The Amarok's biggest surprise was its really comfortable nature for a pick-up. The seats do a good job at locating occupants while they are soft and perfectly complemented by the compliant suspension, a remarkable feat of engineering when you look at the 19-inch alloy wheels.



When you became familiar with its high riding position the Amarok could be hurried along without effort or concern and its height was an advantage in traffic so you could anticipate the need to slow down.

It cornered surprisingly well with some tendency to run wide easily curtailed and at times it



felt tail happy too, but in a very safe way.

Suspension and road noise were the most notable elements with wind and mechanical noises all low unless you accelerated very hard and that V6 engine made a deep-throated roar.

VERDICT

The pleasure of driving the Amarok Aventura 3.0 V6 was immense because it's different to other pick-ups and any other luxury SUV, but it comes at a price when you have to stump up commercial vehicle rate road tax. That's possibly the big turn off.

For: V6 engine, smooth auto transmission with 4WD, compliant ride, comfortable seats, interior room and overall performance

Against: Size, economy, road tax and business Bik personal tax costs, rear visibility, loadbed height.



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

VW Amarok Aventura 3.0 V6 Double Cab Pick-up.

Price: £39,391 as tested.

Engine/transmission: 224 hp, 3.0, V6 TDI engine, eight speed auto, 4WD. Performance: 119 mph, 0-62 mph 8.0 seconds.



Fuel consumption: Official Combined, 36.2 mpg (32 mpg during Robin's test).

Emissions and Taxation: CO₂ emissions 204 g/km, VED commercial vehicle road tax £240 each year, BiK company car tax £3,170 cost each year CV rate.

Insurance Group: 43E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions: L 5.26 m (17.26 ft), W 2.23 m (7.32 ft), H 1.84 m (6.04 ft). Payload: 1,114 kg (2,456 lb), braked towing weight 3,100 kg (6,834 lb).