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New Vauxhall Corsa

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Review by Tom Scanlan

Vauxhall's latest generation of its popular Corsa is now on the road.

How new is it?

Although all the dimensions are no different, all of the car's body panels are new, and provide greater definition between the 'sporty' look of the three-door and the 'premium' five-door models.

Almost every element of the Corsa's cabin is completely new, including a completely re-designed instrument panel and dashboard, and greatly improved (claims Vauxhall) levels of functionality, highlighted by Vauxhall's sophisticated IntelliLink system - its first use in a high-volume application. While the basic dimensions of the New Corsa's cabin remain



largely the same, almost everything in it has been re-designed. It feels not at all cramped and appears to be really well put together. Five-door models will be a real boon for those with a young family or those less athletic in getting into the three-door models, not forgetting its higher and easily extendable boot area.

High quality materials - like those used for the soft IP top-pad, or the decor elements in satin chrome, are on board. New Corsa's interior also introduces an industry-first seat fabric printing technology. The seats do indeed look stylish and of high quality.

A new 'driver control centre' is located within the newly-designed instrument panel. There's also a re-designed leather-covered steering wheel that's more ergonomic than before, along with switches and chrono-styled instruments that are all finished in chrome.

The interior is practical, too, with the front doors featuring a compartment large enough for a 1.5-litre bottle as well as three cup-holders in the centre console. There's also a flexible cup-holder located in front of the gear lever.



Corsa is the first high-volume Vauxhall to be available with IntelliLink, an innovative communications system already in the ADAM model. The IntelliLink infotainment system is



fully customisable, and designed with ease-of-use in mind. It operates through a seven-inch colour touchscreen, and can be controlled via apps such as BringGo (for navigation), Stitcher and TuneIn (for global radio channels and internet podcasts).

It's compatible with both Apple and Android mobiles, and incorporates additional features such as voice command, Bluetooth and Siri Eyes Free. I wasn't able to try all of these, but there's no doubt this will appeal greatly to the contemporary buyer and it of course has to be there to keep Vauxhall's new Corsa competitive in this area.

Other models

We also tried the new version of Vauxhall's 1.4 SRi 100PS turbo engine. The official combined economy is 55.4mpg. We registered 49.5 on a fifty-mile mainly cross-country route. Enough power ensured a fun drive, with a faultless six-speed gearbox providing its share of driving enjoyment.

CO2 emissions are 119g/km for the 3-door ecoFLEX version. The same model accelerates from 0-62mph in 11.0 seconds and has a top speed of 115mph.

Two naturally aspirated four-cylinder petrol engines - a 1.2- and a 1.4-litre - have been revised and adapted to suit the new car. The 1.2-litre achieves 53.5mpg combined with CO2 emissions of 124g/km with 16-inch wheels. The 1.4-litre three-door ecoFLEX model delivers 55.4mpg and 119g/km.

There's also a significantly improved 1.3 CDTi diesel engine bringing it up to Euro 6 emissions standards. At launch, the most frugal Corsa diesel version - with 95PS, 5-speed manual transmission and braking energy recuperation system - can reduce the three-door model's CO2 emissions to 85g/km and allow it to achieve 88.3mpg on the combined cycle. The same engine is also available with 75PS.



Sting in the tail

Wheels-alive also tested the most basic new Corsa Sting, priced at just £8995. Not that it's at all basic. In fact, given the 'package' of 1.2-litre, 70PS petrol engine with an impressive list of standard safety and convenience features, it is excellent value. There's even a heated windscreen, tyre pressure monitor, hill start assist, a steering column adjustable for both reach and height, remote central locking and more, plus, very important: ABS braking with ESP helping keep the car stable under slippery conditions.

Importantly too, it was actually a pleasure to drive. We experienced heavy city traffic as well as some fast roads and it was all very easy. There's an excellent turning circle, so the car is easy to manoeuvre, especially in the extra-light 'City' driving mode. The engine has to work hard sometimes, but it doesn't lose its refinement and has a good five-speed gearbox to help.

Verdict

In the development of the new Corsas, Vauxhall worked particularly hard to get its speed-sensitive electric power steering and ride characteristics to suit the varied (to say the least) road conditions we experience in the UK; they have, in my view, come up trumps.

The braking system consists of ventilated front and solid rear discs; testing this, my emergency stops in all the models were as good as I've felt in any other car.

First impressions, therefore, are extremely good.

Prices start at £8995 and top out at £16,825 for one of the five-door versions.



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