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Vauxhall Grandland X Ultimate – First Impressions

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New top of the SUV range Vauxhall Grandland X Ultimate - First Drive.
By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

The Vauxhall Grandland X mid-sized five door, five seater SUV arrived with the first UK customers in January of this year and already 75% of sales have gone to retail buyers, making it Vauxhall's second highest retail selling model range after the Corsa supermini hatchbacks.

When launched to the UK media in October last year Vauxhall said they had targeted around 20,000 sales in its first full year of sales and they are on target to easily reach that



total they said at this week's media launch of a top of the range Grandland X model.

To keep up the sales momentum Vauxhall have just introduced another derivative to the range - the Grandland X Ultimate priced at £34,040 or with a 25 month PCP payment of £364 a month. This top of the range version combines an all-new 2.0 litre, four cylinder 177 hp turbodiesel engine with a new eight speed automatic transmission as standard, and both are supplied by Vauxhall's new parent company PSA Peugeot-Citroen.

The flagship model's additional specification includes a 360-degree Panoramic Camera, Premium LED Adaptive Forward Lighting, heated seats front a rear, a premium Denon sound system and a gloss-black treatment to roof and door mirrors set it apart from other models in the range. Also fitted are 19-inch BiColour alloy wheels and automatic cruise control. Carried forward from other Grandland models is Vauxhall's popular OnStar automatic crash response SOS system with Wi-Fi hot spot, smartphone connectivity, stolen vehicle assistance and vehicle diagnostic functions and there is IntelliLink connectivity with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto,

Vauxhall said at the media launch of the Ultimate model this week that while high-spec VW Tiguan and Ford Kuga mid-sized SUVs are in its sights with the highly equipped Grandland X Ultimate model, so are certain Land Rover Discovery Sports models too.



The new Ultimate trim level is also available now for Vauxhall Mokka X and Crossland X smaller Crossover/SUV models and the Astra mid-sized hatchback, reflecting the demand by a high number of retail customers wanting even higher levels of equipment for their lifestyle choice of a must-have SUV or a family type hatchback.

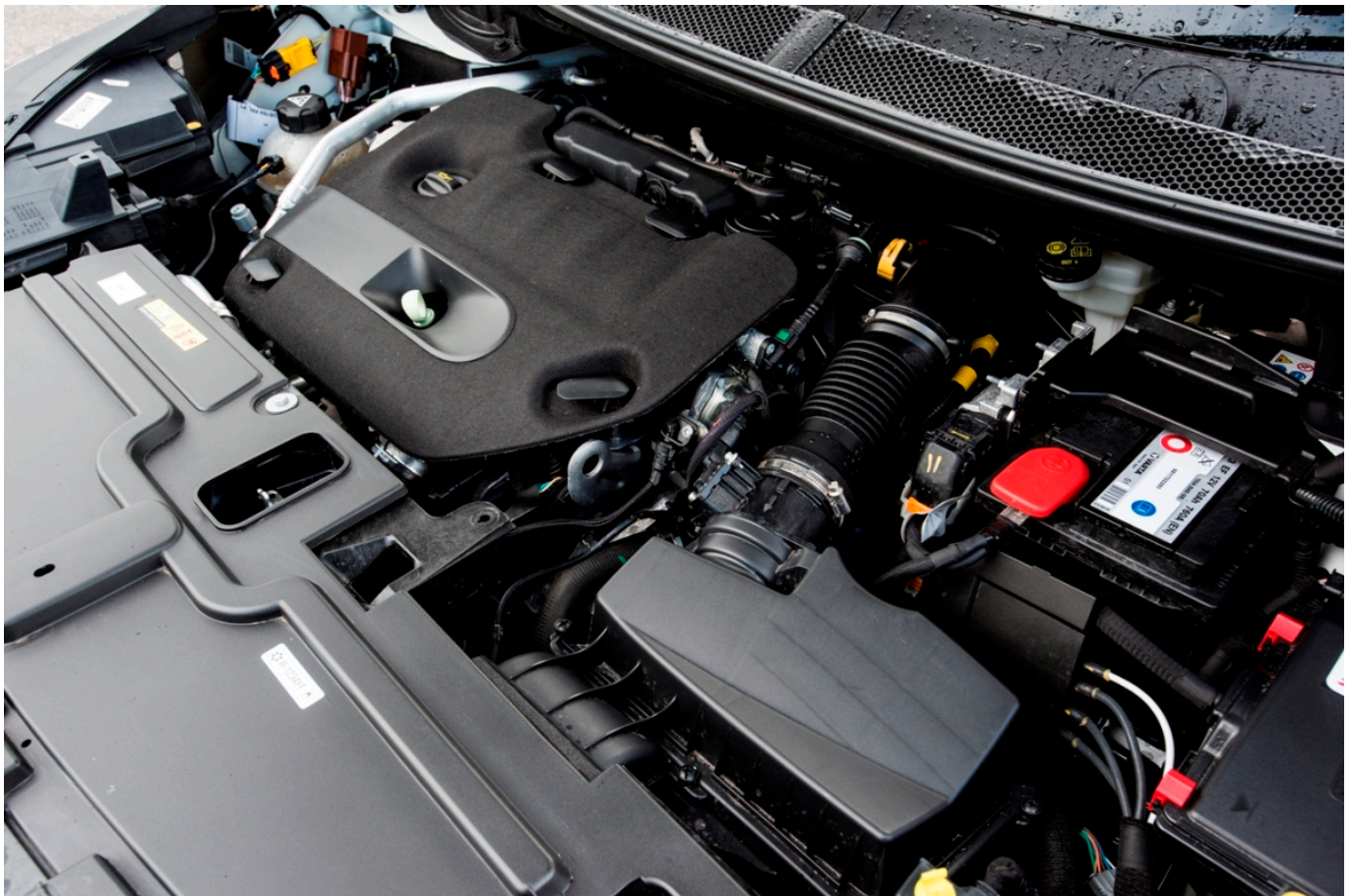
As a reminder to what the Vauxhall Grandland X is; it is a mid-sized five door, five seater SUV which is closely related to the Peugeot 3008. But the collaboration took place before the more recent takeover by PSA Peugeot-Citroen of Vauxhall/Opel European production and sales operations. The smaller Crossland X is also based on the Peugeot 2008 SUV.

Current Vauxhall Grandland X prices range from £22,890 up to £30,380 with 25 month, 0%,



PCP prices starting from £200 a month. Until the arrival this week of the 2.0 litre turbodiesel Ultimate version there had been the choice of two PSA Group engine options, a 1.2 litre 130 hp Turbo petrol unit and a 1.6 litre Turbo D 120 hp diesel unit, all with Stop/Start and both are available with six-speed manual and automatic gearboxes. None are available with four wheel drive but there is the option of the Vauxhall's designation of Peugeot Group's Grip Control system called IntelliGrip, which lets the driver select from five different driving modes to optimise traction, and this option comes with grippier mud and snow tyres.

The specification levels to date have been SE, Tech Line Nav aimed at the fleet market, Sport Nav and Elite Nav and all have been available with both engines and both manual and automatic transmissions.





Now arrives the 'Ultimate' Grandland X again with a PSA Group sourced engine, this time a 2.0 litre Blue Injection turbodiesel unit coupled with the standard fit new eight speed automatic gearbox also from PSA. The four-cylinder engine delivers 177 hp at 3,750 rpm and 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) of torque from 2,000 rpm. Top speed is 133 mph and it achieves 0-60 mph in 8.6 seconds. With added more gutsy performance comes potentially good fuel economy. The official Combined Cycle figure is 57.6 mpg and during my brief test drive this week, using motorway and winding Berkshire country roads, the figure was 41.2 mpg. The CO2 emissions are 128 g/km so the new, from April this year, VED First Year road tax cost is £205 and then reverting to the £140 Standard rate for year two onwards. Company car drivers will now pay 30% Benefit-in-Kind tax; prior to the April increase it was 27%.

From the outside the Grandland X is similar in styling to the Peugeot 3008 on which it is based and they are both built on the same PSA Group production lines in France. The Grandland X has a different face following the Vauxhall family line but the front remains upright with the central grille flanked by sleek headlights. Move around the vehicle and there are the same sculptured doors as the 3008, the plastic cladding around the wheelarch edges and over the door sills, there is a slightly rising waistline and at the rear remodelled bumpers which differentiate the Grandland and 3008 variants.

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Inside there is a much more noticeable difference in the front of the vehicle. Whereas the Peugeot 3008 has the futuristic i-Cockpit striking multi-layered dashboard, much of it seemingly fabric covered with prominent elevated central touchscreen, the Grandland X models have a simplified less fussy moulded fascia with soft-touch vinyl and neat printed stitching lines. The touchscreen is centrally positioned and inset into the fascia panel and most of the controls and switchgear are Vauxhall rather than Peugeot. Unlike the 3008, where many of the main functions need to be operated through the touchscreen, the items such as heating and ventilation controls are separate to the touchscreen in the Grandland which is thankfully much more user-friendly. Also the Grandland has a conventional and larger multi-function steering wheel, not the same as the much smaller diameter wheel used



for the Peugeot 3008. The downside to this for the Grandland is that that 3008 has sharper steering responses. The additional higher spec and larger engine provided by the new Ultimate model add to the Grandland's appeal in a very competitive sector.

Whilst the components such as engines, transmission, platform, steering and suspension are the same for the Grandland and 3008, Vauxhall has tuned the steering and suspension characteristics to suit their standards. This has resulted in a similar level of ride compliancy but the 3008 feels a shade more agile in its overall handling. The worst potholes do create thumps and bumps felt inside the cabin but not to any real detrimental effect. Higher speed cruising on better road surfaces is comfortable with a compliant ride.

The new Vauxhall Grandland X Ultimate edition is 4,477 mm (14.69 ft) long, 1,865 mm (6.12 ft) wide and 1,630 mm (5.35 ft) high with a 514 litre (18.15 cu.ft) boot with all five seats in use. Fold down the 60/40 split rear seat backs and this grows to a very useful 1,652 litres (58.34 cu.ft). The braked towing weight goes up to 2,000 kg (4,409 lb) due to the heavier kerb weight, with its more powerful engine.

During my brief test drive of the new 2.0 litre, 177 hp turbodiesel powered Ultimate version of the Grandland X this week around the country Berkshire roads, the added performance was very noticeable, especially the ample supply of torque of a healthy 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) available from 2,000 rpm which suits the new eight speed automatic gearbox ratios very well. It proved responsive for acceleration when needed, maintained high cruising speeds at relatively low engine speeds due to the tall eighth gear ratio, yet was flexible and docile for urban driving.

VERDICT

Coupled with the added luxurious specification and more power with improved driving refinement this is the 'Ultimate' Grandland X so far, perhaps not the ultimate SUV in its sector but a welcome flagship model addition to this popular range.

For: More powerful engine addition to the range, very high specification, roomy,



comfortable, practical, well laid out logical and easy to use controls and thankfully the heating/ventilation/air-con controls are not included in the touchscreen system.

Against: Higher VED and BiK tax costs due to new diesel fuel penalties, doesn't have the unlimited mileage warranty of the donor Peugeot 3008 SUV models, bland Vauxhall family face front end styling, only an inflation kit rather than a spare wheel even though it's a flagship model.



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



Vauxhall Grandland X Ultimate, 2.0 Blue Injection turbodiesel automatic.

Price: £34,040.

Engine/transmission: PSA Group supplied 2.0 litre, four cylinder direct injection turbodiesel, 177 hp, 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) from 2,000 rpm, eight speed auto, 2WD.

Performance: 133 mph, 0-60 mph 8.6 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 57.6 mpg (41.2 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 128 g/km, new VED First Year road tax £205 then £140 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 30%.

Insurance Group: 24.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,477 mm (14.69 ft), W 1,856 mm (6.12 ft), H 1,630 mm (5.35 ft), boot/load space 514 to 1,652 litres (18.15 to 58.34 cu.ft), braked towing weight 2,000 kg (4,409 lb), five doors/five seats.