

ALL-NEW RENAULT SCÉNIC

By Jim Mc Cauley

Renault invented the 'C' segment MPV when they launched the original Scénic in 1996, a car that confirmed their understanding of the market when it immediately took the European Car of the Year title. Five million models later, including the addition of the Grand Scénic, Renault have asserted their commitment to their original idea with the all-new 2017 range.



The car is built around the company's new CMF platform and, as with previous models, the new vehicle is available in both standard 5-seat form and longer 7-seat configuration. Styling-wise, the vehicle is immediately eye-catching with its elegant silhouette constantly reflecting the light on its flowing lines and stepped waist line. Twenty-inch wheels on all models fill the wheelarches to their very edges and there are no distracting gaps to distort the smoothness of the body form. New colours further emphasise the bold design. Subject of this article is the Grand Scénic which is 228mm longer than the standard model and can be identified by its

slightly flatter roofline and different tail-light units which extend vertically and taper in towards the top of the rear hatch window.

While a range of petrol and diesel engines are on offer, test choice was the 1.6 litre dCi diesel model finished in higher level 'Dynamique S Nav' specification. This 130PS unit is the mid range diesel sitting between the 110PS and 160PS options and drives through a 6-speed manual gearbox. With 320Nm of torque on tap from 1,750rpm, the vehicle pulls well, covering the benchmark 0-62mph time in 11.4 seconds, but always responsive and forgiving across the rev band. The manual gearbox, locates positively with the light steering responding accurately to give the vehicle the agility of a smaller hatchback. Despite the long wheelbase, ride can lose its general smoothness over more irregular surfaces, but overall stance is excellent and the suspension holds the vehicle well through corners.





The wishbone format of the 'A' pillars not only provides excellent forward visibility, but also helps towards the vehicle's accident protection and its maximum 5-star EuroNCAP rating. For the occupants, the cabin is a luxury environment with quality finish to the mouldings and panel fit that betters that of some executive car interiors. For the driver, the main instruments are clearly presented with the digital speed readout featured in the middle of the bordering rev counter. For greater convenience and increased safety, this is duplicated on the head-up display which raises on start-up from its covered position. A separate central console is contained by a chrome border line and contains the gear lever, electronic handbrake switch and Multi-Sense selection button at its base with the R-LINK portrait format infotainment and satellite navigation screen at the top.

The Multi-Sense technology gives drivers the choice of five optional menus to personalise settings for the throttle and engine responses, engine sound, steering weight, and the colour of the interior ambient lighting, all of which can be controlled from the upper touch screen.

Cabin storage features a large central sliding console with twin USB ports and 12volt charging sockets for both front and rear passengers. Luggage space obviously varies with the number of seats in use, and the mid row seats can be folded in a one-touch operation from the boot panel or using the dash mounted touch screen. The third-row pair of two seats can then be brought up in a one-touch manual operation with access to them by the sliding and folding facility of the mid-row seats.

In terms of equipment, the new models come comprehensively equipped with supporting safety technologies, and all models feature 'Active Emergency Braking' with pedestrian detection as standard. The test vehicle, in its 'Dynamique S Nav' specification also featured Renault's 'Visio' system which includes lane departure warning, traffic sign recognition and automatic high/low beam. Other safety features include front and rear parking sensors with rear view camera, fatigue alert, Electronic Stability Program with understeer control and hill start assist.

The continuing list of high level specifications also makes the car a comparable executive contender, elevating the fourth generation Grand Scénic into a very desirable position, where it can clearly maintain the innovation and leadership it first laid down as the sector leader.



In terms of running costs, this 130hp dCi model with a CO2 emissions of 119gms/km is in VED Band C, while for business users it has a BIK rating of 23%. The model tested in higher range 'Dynamique S Nav' trim is listed at £28,445 and is covered by the company's 4-year / 100,000 mile warranty. For additional peace of mind, extended servicing plans are available from £439 for 3-years / 30,000



miles. Among the optional equipment available is metallic paint at £545, full LED headlights at £500, and hands free parking system with blind spot warning, also at £500.

(Driven February 2017)