

Rexton moves up a gear with new 4x4

by Ian Lynas

Just now and again this world of motoring can throw up a surprise, such is the case with the new Rexton, an extremely well appointed 4x4 with good on and off road capability.



I put my hand up and say I have never been a fan of the brand, however their new offering has changed that and at last they have a serious challenger in what is a pretty crowded sector of the market.

The next Rexton is the flagship of the Ssangyong brand and it is interesting to note that this company is the longest established in the automotive business in South Korea with a very strong pedigree in the 4x4 area of the market. The company came on stream in 1954 shortly after the Korean War.

Today more than ever the buyer of such a vehicle demands much more than off and on road capability, but looks, equipment and connectivity all come into play.

In these key areas the new Rexton scores, however it is up against an array of established brands in terms of image and Ssangyong are determined to catch a slice of the business, it is difficult to estimate just how many vehicles they will sell. According to a company spokesperson the aim is to increase sales at least three fold.

Always the challenge is to get customers behind the wheel, a challenge to woo them away from so called premium brands.

The newcomer relies on a 2.2 litre diesel engine and you can opt for a manual transmission or the 7 speed Mercedes automatic which has an excellent track record. I suspect that the bulk of sales will go the automatic route.

Power output is 181PS, which give 0-60ph in under 12 seconds and on to a top speed of 115mph where legal to do so. One other point, towing capability is 3.5 tonne.

Giving the customer choice, three trim levels, with the Ultimate taking pride of place and prices ranging from £27,500 - £37,500.

I had the opportunity to try the Ultimate and the mid range ELX, the latter again well specified and costing £3,000 less than the range topper.

First impressions certainly were good and the base for the launch was Weston Park, some will recall it as being the venue for stages on the RAC Rally.

Within the large estate I was able to try the new Rexton on normal road tyres and over the challenging course with its array of electronic aids it came through the test.

Surrounding Weston Park a network of roads, both country and motorway where I was able to



achieve the everyday drive experience and what struck me right away was the low levels of road noise, this leaves the way clear to enjoy the excellent entertainment system.a



Moving to the interior, a surprising level of luxury, the cabin trimmed with quilted Napa leather and the advanced infotainment system with DAB radio, Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and 3 D around view monitoring, the latter on the Ultimate. One further point the display is a large 9.2 inch screen.

With such a vehicle the practical side is important and luggage space is excellent. Apparently the South Koreans are big into their golf and so lots of carrying ability for the new Rexton.

Build quality is good and much emphasis is placed on safety and security for driver and fellow passengers.

Summing a good all rounder from Ssangyong, one which can best be appreciated when you get behind the wheel, I am glad I did. A further piece of icing on the cake, the warranty is 5 years with unlimited mileage.