

First Look - the new Skoda Karoq

by Ian Lynas

No better location than Stockholm to stage the world premiere of the new Skoda Karoq. Both share a vibrancy and quality, one with huge appeal to all ages.



The Karoq marks yet another important landmark for Skoda, a thoroughly modern compact SUV which will take over from the Yeti, which in its eight year long history found a lot of friends, not just existing loyalists to the brand but by a considerable number of conquests.

Skoda put their latest offering on stage in front of the motoring media from twenty nine nations, amidst the usual colour of such an occasion, but the star of the show was the Karoq.

There is no doubt the compact SUV sector of the market is the fastest growing, it is highly competitive with an array of players and early indications after having a close look at the new Skoda that it will be strong in the field.

With the Karoq and the recently introduced big brother the Kodiaq, their armoury is two fold, they will simply cover all options.

Four years of development and thousands of test miles has resulted in this newcomer and just like the rest of the Skoda product range they have put quality and value first.

Today the buzz for any new vehicle is connectivity; it is simply what a large percentage of the buying public demand, that quest to be never out of touch. With the Karoq comes full connectivity and what a joy to see such a large screen and to add further digital instrumentation. So those who go down this route will always be connected.

Infotainment building blocks come from the second generation of the Group's Modular Infotainment Matrix, offering state-of-the-art functions, interfaces and equipped with capacitive touch displays. The top systems Columbus and Amundsen have a Wi-Fi hotspot and an optional LTE module is available for the Columbus system.

The internet connection is based on today's fastest mobile radio standard, with which passengers can surf and access email freely with their phones and tablets. The new mobile online services SKODA Connect are divided into two categories; Infotainment online services are used for information and navigation; the CareConnect services for assistance in case of breakdowns and emergencies.

The Emergency Call button, which will be part of the standard equipment from 2018, is now



available as an optional CareConnect service. Additional online services can be accessed via the SKODA Connect app. These can be used to remotely check, configure and find the parking place of your car using a smartphone.

The intelligent capability of pairing a car with a smartphone has reached a new level; the SmartLink+ platform, compatible with Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and MirrorLink is available as an option for the basic infotainment system Swing. SmartLink+ comes as standard with higher infotainment systems. The Phonebox with inductive charging couples the smartphone to the roof antenna and simultaneously charges it wirelessly.



To keep driver and fellow travellers safe, a comprehensive package is standard, indeed to the level you would expect from a car in the executive class.

There are lots of nice touches such as an umbrella, which would be useful taking into account our weather in Northern Ireland and there is also torch. How often have you been caught out and wished that you had bothered to carry a torch.

All of these features are housed in a robust design which speaks quality, something which we now take for granted with the Skoda brand. Customers will not be disappointed when it comes to engine choice, an excellent palette of petrol and diesel units, providing a wide

performance band, all delivering wallet pleasing economy, a total of five with two new petrol units and two new diesel units, power choice from 115 – 190PS. With transmissions it is the same, manual and automatic to choose from, including a seven speed DSG, which still rates as my favourite transmission.

I must stress this early encounter with the Karoq was to take a close look, the opportunity to get behind the wheel will come much later, something I am really looking forward to.

I have no doubt that the newcomer with its 4x4 capability will be a means of transport for all seasons.

With a the luggage compartment a capacity of 521 litres with the rear seats in place and with the rear seats folded down, the volume increases to 1,630 litres. The VarioFlex system consists of three separate seats, which can be individually adjusted and the seats can also be completely removed and the SUV is then converted into a van with a maximum load capacity of 1,810 litres

Alas at this early stage no idea of pricing, however I am confident that it will be highly competitive and that you will get a lot for your money.

This attractive, well engineered compact SUV whose name originates from Alaska will go on sale early next year, with the opportunity to take a closer look at an earlier date in dealerships.

