

VAUXHALL ADAM 1.2

ROAD TEST

By Jim Mc Cauley

While it might be a case of back to the future for the retro-styled superminis from MINI and Fiat, Vauxhall has entered the competitive fray with a totally modern compact. The four-seater hatchback is Vauxhall's first entrant into a segment that has



grown by 30 per cent since 2000 and where to succeed means that you must be noticed. And with Adam, Vauxhall has certainly succeeded in a car that oozes personality as well as individuality where unprecedented levels of personalisation run to a list of over one million specification and trim combinations.

Engine choices will be phased in and include a new small turbocharged unit but initially cars come with either a 1.2 litre 70PS engine or a choice of 1.4 litre units of 87PS or 100PS outputs. No

diesel or electric power units are planned for the Adam. Test choice was the 70PS 1.2 litre model finished in standard 'Jam' trim and with the optional Start / Stop system.

While the 1.4 engines deliver adequately, the 1.2 litre spins willingly and is more in keeping with the spirit of the car. Although there is a 2.4 second penalty in its 0-62 mph time compared to the lower output 1.4 litre engine, it is overcome by the sheer enthusiasm of the smaller engine which still posts a respectable 14.9 seconds for this benchmark sprint.

Riding on its 'Comfort' suspension, the 1.2 litre also benefits from weighing in at 34 Kg lighter with a much more compliant ride and improved comfort with negligible penalty to cornering support.

The electric power steering on the test car was well weighted for open road driving and for tight manoeuvring situations in town, a one-touch button increases power assistance at lower speeds. This feature is standard across the range.

Over long distances the cabin remains quiet and comfortable with no undue intrusion of road, engine or exhaust noise. A relatively wide body gives an airy feeling up-front while the modern interior



with high quality finishing adds to the appeal of the car. Wide doors provide excellent access to both front and rear, and as small cars go, rear seating accommodation for two adults is quite good. A 170 litre boot provides adequate luggage space in a car of this size.

The Adam is aimed specifically at the younger buyer and it includes forward-thinking technology elements as well as a wide range of option packs. Main feature here is 'IntelliLink', a new infotainment system which connects the owner's smart



phone to the car, transferring controls and content to the car's 7-inch full colour touch screen display. In addition to the phone and music elements, stored photos and video can be viewed when the car is stationary. Among the internet based approved apps that can be accessed are 'Stitcher' – the global podcast internet radio and 'BringGo', a navigation app which provides full European mapping and navigation.

Trim-wise, the Adam is available in three options of Jam, Glam and Slam. Air conditioning, Bluetooth connectivity,

alloy wheels and leather steering wheel with integrated audio and cruise control buttons are all standard as are twin front, side and curtain airbags, Electronic Stability Program, Hill Start Assist and Cruise Control with Speed Limiter.

In addition there is the largest personalisation choice ever offered by a manufacturer which includes roof colours, a range of 20 alloy wheels, individual dashboard covers and even roof linings that feature blue sky with clouds or starry night with 64 LEDs.

Overall, the Vauxhall Adam looks set to be a serious contender in the company's first foray into this sector of the market. The car has the charm, quality, youth appeal and customisation choice that allows the new owner to leave the showroom with a car in which they have had a design input. Because of the phenomenal possibilities for customer input, estimated delivery is around three months from placing of order. With the balance of production biased in favour of left-hand drive

models, the UK will receive just over 8,000 cars in 2013 which will no doubt enhance residual values. The 1.2 litre model tested in basic 'Jam' trim is listed at £11,550 and has a quoted combined fuel consumption of 56.5 mpg. On the environmental front, this model has a CO2 emissions of 118 gms/km, putting it in Band C for zero annual car tax in its first year and £30 per annum thereafter.