

VAUXHALL CASCADA 1.4i VVT Turbo

By Jim Mc Cauley



The Cascada heralds an assertive upmarket move by Vauxhall in a specialist convertible that is rated by the company to be good enough to challenge the Audi A5 convertible at a savings of several thousands of pounds. While there is a selection of five engine and transmission options, test choice was the turbo boosted range-opening 1.4i VVT model.

The Cascada is the first full-sized convertible designed, engineered and manufactured by Vauxhall since the 1930s, its 4.7 metre length providing comfortable 4-seater accommodation. Design-wise, the car incorporates Vauxhall's signature styling elements in a carefully balanced body that looks

equally attractive with the hood up or down. And the fully insulated fabric hood provides saloon-like insulation when raised, yet folds in under 19 seconds at speed of up to 30 mph. Luxury detailing includes full electric operation and a flush fitting heated rear screen.

The quality of the exterior continues into the cabin with leather trim and exacting detail. Fire up, and this range opening turbo option may be the smallest engine but in comparison to the 2.0 litre diesel sacrifices little in terms of benchmark performance figures. A 0-60 mph time of 10.2 seconds is just 0.8 seconds behind that of the diesel and potential top speed of 129 mph is only 6 mph shy of the larger engined car.

The difference, however, is in the appeal of the car with the diesel offering long range refinement and relaxed pace while a slightly more aggressive approach to the petrol driven version awakens the soul in the car. An added bonus in the test vehicle was the FlexRide

adaptive chassis control system with continuous damping (CDC). This £790 option can be set to deliver a sharper response and greater precision during cornering, or provide a more relaxed





faceted heated front sports seats with multi-point adjustment, heated leather steering wheel with inset audio controls, dual zone climate control and auto-functional lights, wipers and anti-dazzle mirror.

On the economy front, the car is fitted with start / stop technology and has a combined fuel consumption of 44.8 mpg. A CO2 emissions of 148 gms/km puts it in Band F for annual car tax of £130, while its Benefit in Kind rating for company car users is 21%. The 1.4 litre Cascada Elite is listed at £26,095 and for insurance purposes is in Group 21E of the ABI's (1-50) ratings. First owner warranty cover extends to the lifetime of the vehicle to a maximum of 100,000 miles. Additional equipment includes satellite navigation with upgraded audio facilities at £1,200, perimeter protection pack incorporating advanced park assist at £795 and Bluetooth mobile phone system at £220.

suspension algorithm for long distance cruising. Standard Electronic Stability Program-Plus in conjunction with the company's 'HiPerStrut' front suspension provides reassuring grip and directional stability, revealing the sporting aspirations of the car.

The test vehicle was finished in the higher of the two trim levels - Elite - embellishing the already standard luxury provision. This features leather

