

VAUXHALL MOKKA 1.7

By Jim Mc Cauley



The Vauxhall Mokka marks the company's entry into the expanding compact SUV market to compete against the likes of the Skoda Yeti, Kia Sportage and Nissan Qashqai. More importantly, it is a sector dominated by the private buyer who accounts for around three-quarters of all sales, so the balance of equipment levels and list price is all-important.

Styling-wise, the Mokka has a very assertive presence, carrying the now established Vauxhall design cues and looking very purposeful with its standard 18-inch alloys filling the wheelarches.

On the engine front, there is a choice of two petrol units and one diesel, the latter being the subject of the test drive. This 1.7 litre turbocharged engine produces 130PS with a useful 300Nm of torque available between 2000 and 2500 rpm. Offered in both two-wheel drive and four-wheel drive, this engine also comes with the choice of a six-speed manual gearbox or six-speed automatic. The test vehicle was the two-wheel drive variant, mated to the six-speed manual gearbox, a combination which returns a 0-60 mph time of 10 seconds while stretching fuel economy to 62.8 mpg on the official combined cycle. Its economy is aided by the engine's 'Clean Tech' technology which ensures best possible combustion control as well as automatic start / stop and the option of an 'Eco' button to maximise mpg.



Behind the wheel, and the first impressions are of a solid and substantial vehicle supported by a slightly heavier diesel sound than expected. The high seating position with full steering column and seat adjustments provides a commanding view of the road, while power on the open road is not lacking. However, in town traffic, changing up from first to second gear could stall the engine if revs are low and something that the new owner needs to be initially aware of. Ride is firm as

expected in a high bodied vehicle but reasonably cushioned over poor surfaces, while steering provides a confident feel.

The overall impression is one of excellent build quality, reflected in the well appointed cabin of the



test vehicle in mid-range 'Exclusiv' trim. Its brown / grey upholstery and matching panel colouring works much better than it sounds. The only cabin downside is an awkward handbrake design with an upper surface mounted release button a little difficult to release if the lever has been pulled firmly on to the 'on' position.

Equipment levels across the range are quite high and include Electronic Stability Program, six airbags, Hill Start Assist, daytime running lights and cruise control. On the next level, 'Exclusiv' trim adds electronic climate control, Bluetooth connectivity, automatic lights and wipers, front and rear parking sensors, auto-

dipping rear view mirror and all-round electric windows.

But the true appeal of an SUV is in its accommodation and the Mokka provides generous room and comfortable seating for all occupants with the rear seat passengers faring particularly well. Luggage space is also commendable, the boot area holding 356 litres, extendible to its full volume of 1372 litres with the rear seats folded. One-touch folding of the rear seats provides an almost flat load bay with an overall length of just over 1.5 metres.

In the market place, the Vauxhall Mokka offers serious customer choice against the likes of the Skoda Yeti, Nissan Qashqai and Volkswagen Tiguan with a choice of power units and transmission options. While prices start at £15,995, the 1.7 litre turbo-diesel version tested in two-wheel drive and in 'Exclusiv' trim is listed at £19,749 and is in Band 13 for insurance purposes. The model benefits from Vauxhall's lifetime, 100,000 mile warranty for first time owners and enjoys the security of the maximum 5-star EuroNCAP safety rating. With a CO2 emissions of 120 gms/km, the model is in Band C for annual car tax of £30.

