

Vauxhall Corsa VXR Road Test

by Ian Lamming



Sherwoods

VXR is a rebel with a Cors - a

IT'S a politically correct world that we inhabit where free speech is gagged by propriety and where most people are scared of living life to the full in case they annoy their neighbours or officialdom.

Set against this back drop then the Corsa VXR is a remarkable car because from its nose to tail it sticks up a very large V at today's officious society – that's V for Vauxhall of course.



Looking and performing as it does it can't fail to be frowned upon by do-gooders, reviled by the authorities and loved by anyone who likes a car to make a statement.

It is ultra modern yet harks back to those halcyon days of hot hatchbacks, GTIs and GTEs before TWOCers (people who Took cars WithOut Consent) and health and safety executives put the kibosh on driving anything appealing or fun.

VXR has a family tradition to maintain and let's face it is all about speed, not necessarily driving fast, but at least looking like you are, even at standstill.

From any angle this particular Corsa is sporty. The front boasts big lights, a bold grille, deep air dam, large air intakes and themed triangular spotlights. Move back just a little and there are huge 18in alloys with the biggest brakes ever seen on a Corsa.

I wouldn't normally mention wing mirrors but the VXR's are a work of art, gloriously sculpted for aesthetics and to cheat the wind and while they don't provide much in the way of rear vision, who cares when they look as good as this.



VXR is a two door as you would expect and the body swoops to a rather fetching tail complete with top mounted spoiler and rear valance that features a natty F1-esque air diffuser and superbly fruity triangular centrally mounted exhaust.



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Inside you get the same treatment, rally-style this time courtesy of metal pedals, flat bottomed chunky steering wheel and full-on leather Recaro bucket seats.

If you fancy the full effect you can raise up and pull out the steering column so it feels like you are in a British Touring Car – and I'm sure many of the enthusiasts will.

There is no doubting VXR's looks and interior but does it have the bite to match them? It certainly does thanks to a turbocharged 1.6 litre engine that hurls 192PS at the road and 230Nm of torque. Hold the throttle down for more than five seconds and the overboost from the turbo gives you even more wallop, an extra 30Nm to be precise.

If you have a mind 60mph will appear in 6.8 seconds; if you are a law breaker or drive on the Continent, the top speed is world blurring 140mph. But if you are eco-friendly, Corsa will return over 44mpg on the extra urban cycle.

The six speed transmission works nicely as do the huge brakes. The chassis has been tuned by Lotus around the Nurburgring. This has breathed life into its handling with race car-like amounts of feel and exhilaration coming through the chassis.

Floor the throttle and the power is fed back through the steering as the front wheels scabble for grip.

There is more than a hint of torque steer, but this is a good thing and the ride is hard and involving.



Vital Statistics

Engine: 1.6 litre four cylinder turbo

Gearbox: Six speed

Power: 192PS

Torque: 230Nm

0-60mph: 6.8 secs

Top speed: 140mph

Fuel consumption:
44mpg on the extra urban

Grip levels are high and the steering sharp and accurate.

Mid-range is broad and deep and the VXR has big muscles to catapult you past the slower moving stuff of life. It's a driver's car at any speed.

The PCs (politically corrects) and the PCs (police constables) will hate VXR as it rails against everything our safety zealots demand. But it can't fail to appeal to the kids who will be shocked by its contrary nature or drivers who remember the good old days before congestion and the nanny state.