

Vauxhall Insignia

Road Test - by Ian Lamming



Sherwoods

AMONGST the gloom and doom of strife-torn global markets big car manufacturers are trying to make a living.

So while at first glance there has never been a worse time to launch a key model, when it comes to survival and success, there has never been a better one either.

Succeed now when times are hard and just think how you will do when the economy turns a corner.



No pressure Vauxhall, but the new Insignia has to be good. There's an awful lot riding on it. Old Vectra was a reliable workhorse, born of its day and pretty successful. But it was more mule than thoroughbred, more clock up the miles during the week and slinging it down the car wash at the weekend.

Insignia needs to be all of that and a whole lot more. It needs to be appealing, it needs to be coveted it needs to be handwashed on the drive every Sunday morning with love and pride. So GM has gone to extraordinary lengths to make this medium sized saloon special – and one glance at the bodywork tells you it is.

Vauxhall left it to a little man from Luton to come up with an eye-catcher and he and his team have certainly done that. They call it sculptured artistry with technological precision. The rest of us are likely to say 'ooh, nice looking motor'.

From any angle the Insignia stands out. I was trying to think what it reminded me of. Then I gave up and realised it was unique. Firstly the proportions are perfect; so the overhangs are short, the wheels large, the bonnet long and sexy. The nose is bold, the sides set off by a deep sculpted feature called a blade.

The lights are attractive front and rear and when they are on form pretty patterns and the rear set have been given a fin to improve already class leading aerodynamics.





VAUXHALL

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Vauxhall Insignia

The Insignia hasn't been forged on the foundry floor, it has been designed, with love and passion in a hi-tech, minimalist studio. Even the famous badge has gone trendy with a new 21st century look, the name Vauxhall engraved around the edges.

Inside it's the same. The cockpit is lovely. The dash has form and shape. It's a delight on the eye. It feels upmarket thanks to carefully chosen materials and the way the dash flows seamlessly into the doors, while the instruments seem to float on a pool of light.



All this would be gloss and fluff if the Insignia didn't have the driving dynamics to match. Thankfully it does and the first thing you notice is how solid it feels on the road – even in atrocious weather.

There's plenty of choice – saloon, hatchback and eventually an estate – but they all share the same verve for life whether powered by any of the four petrol and three diesel motors.

Insignia boasts plenty of technology too.



You can opt for front wheel drive or all wheel drive. You can change ride from comfort to sporting and next year it will come with a front mounted camera that picks up speed limits and warns the driver if he exceeds them or wanders out of his lane.

Insignia will have been on the drawing board long before the credit crunch had even been thought of proving that somewhere out there, there is an automotive God looking after GM's fortunes.

