

Vauxhall Zafira Elite 1.9CDTi 150

Road Test by Ian Lamming



Sherwoods

HORSEBOX, camper van, obvious Sunday driver, me – and the end of the crawler lane is in sight.

The fact the test vehicle is a people carrier says ‘no’ but the ‘sport’ button on the dash has a different view.

Press the demon button and the Zafira comes alive. The steering is sharpened, the ride becomes firmer, the excellent automatic gearbox shifts change patterns and the 150PS turbo diesels breathes deeper still.



The result is shove-in-the-back acceleration from the seven-seater in a most, unseemly but welcome fashion. We are through with yards to spare and free to enjoy the challenges of cross country motoring. But that’s the Zafira all over; always ready to surprise.

The good thing about people carriers is that they provide you with loads of practical space. The bad thing is that they tend to look like vans.



Vauxhall has managed to overcome this problem with the Zafira, an MPV which still looks like a car.

From the front the Zafira could be any in the Vauxhall range – a Corsa, an Astra or a Vectra. It shares the same trendy 3D headlamps and thankfully

still has a bit of style about it, with proportions that are much more estate-car like than commercial.

That said it is an MPV of the highest standard largely thanks to the innovative Flex7 seating system.

Tug on easy to grab handles and the seats do all manner of useful things. They slide, they fold, they tilt; they even disappear into the floor completely leaving a huge uncluttered cargo area.



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It can carry up to seven people in relative comfort – while still leaving a bit of room for the luggage – or just the two with enough space for the kitchen sink and other domestic appliances.

But while Zafira is an accomplished carrier of people and loads it also remains a plush and sophisticated way to travel.

The latest incarnation of the popular MPV boasts an Elite version which packs just about every luxury going. There are leather sports seats – heated of course – satellite navigation, bigger alloys and two stereos, one for the front another for rear seat passengers who get their own controls and headsets.

There's also climate, cruise and steering wheel mounted controls, keyless entry and a useful trip computer. There is the option too of a natty twin panoramic glass sunroof, complete with draw blinds and aircraft style overhead luggage lockers – neat.

It's just as sophisticated on the road. When called upon the diesel has serious oomph yet it will cruise along all day in an economical and tractable manner. It is easy to hustle along when you are in a hurry and a doddle around town thanks to high-set driving position and swathes of glass.

Vital Statistics

Model: Vauxhall Zafira Elite 1.9CDTi

Engine: 1.9 litre turbo diesel

Drivetrain: six speed automatic

Power: 150PS

Top speed: 123mph

0-60mph: 10 secs

Insurance group: 10

Miles per gallon combined: 39.2

Discerning drivers demand a lot from their vehicles nowadays but often when they buy this involves compromising looks, dynamics or practicality.

Not so Zafira which really is all things to all men, women, children and loads.

