

Vauxhall Meriva

Road Test - by Ian Lamming



IF you thought having a flexible friend was a thing of the past then think again.

Vauxhall's new Meriva is as flexible as a Russian gymnast.

The old model won many friends and fans, particularly among the more mature sections of the community. It might not have been flash or fancy but it was practical and accommodating.

New Meriva is all that and so much more thanks to innovative design and some quirky features.

Just look at the rear doors. See where the handles are? That's because they open in the opposite way to normal to improve access to the back seats.



Parents are going to love it as it means they can get to the kids quick as you like as they don't have to walk around the back door to access the cabin. It's a trend that seems to be growing and not just for the novelty.

Inside the cabin the flexible theme continues with a vengeance. Flexdoors open to reveal FlexSpace.

What this means is that the rear seats not only fold, tilt and slide, they also move laterally to vary the space.

If you don't need to seat three across the back bench then fold away the centre seats and the remaining passengers can spread their bulk.

FlexRail is another innovation. There are several levels of centre console which slide on rails to provide storage for drinks, the mobile phone and other valuables. It also acts as an armrest and storage unit.



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This level of thought extends into the boot where there are several levels of storage, some out of sight to keep valuables safe from prying eyes.

As a range the new Meriva is flexible too suiting all tastes. There are four trim levels and five engines including two diesels, a 1.3 and a 1.7 litre.

There are three 1.4 litre petrols, one normally aspirated and two that come with turbos.

Vital Statistics

Model: Meriva SE
Engine: 1.4 litre, turbo petrol
Drivetrain: five speed manual
Power: 120PS
Top speed: 117mph
0-60mph: 11.5secs
Insurance group: 14
Miles per gallon (combined): 46.3
CO2 (g/km): 143

The 120PS turbo offers plenty of punch. The new look is enjoyed across the range and it really is appealing.

Proportions are spot on and there are plenty of attractive curves to catch the eye. It's a real looker from any angle.

New Meriva has all the attributes needed to satisfy an inflexible public determined to get the best car they possibly can.

It has the looks, the dynamics and the flexibility not only to satisfy existing friends but make many new ones as well.

