



Source: Yorkshire Post | Date: Apr 21, 2018 | Author: Fredric Manby | Circulation: 40185 | Page: 6

ROAD TEST **Frederic Manby**



New addition to Skoda family

SKODA KAROQ & SKODA SUPERB

Skoda has a new family car, the Karoq. It says it is designed around what matters to us – mentioning the gym or heading off on a cross-country adventure. Nailing this activity label, it adds “it’s a self-assured compact SUV with a big sense of adventure... spacious a home from home, whatever you’re packing into your day.” Fair enough, I could pack my day into one.

You could say much the same about many of several rivals – which include the SEAT Ateca which uses the same VW Group base as the Karoq and has a cheaper starting price – at well under £20,000. Skoda, however, decided to drop its entry model specification for Karoq which means paying £20,875 for the three-cylinder, one litre 113bhp SE. It’s better equipped and easy to like.

The Karoq is the nearest Skoda to the late, loved Skoda Yeti but it’s a size bigger and a price range higher. It’s not as cute, has grown up, looks good but less distinctive. If you want a Yeti-sized car from the VW circus that will be the SEAT Arona or the Volkswagen T-Roc.

The Karoq shape is a down-scaled Skoda Kodiaq, with the same sharp body lines now found in all VW’s mainstream SUVs. It is a five-seater and, importantly, gains over its peers by offering sliding and removable rear seats. Each can be taken out on its own, giving a loading option not matched by anything its class. With all the seats out, you have the equivalent of a half-ton van – but with lots more refinement.

The engines and gearboxes are VW units. Petrol power is the 113bhp mentioned, or a 1.5 litre four-cylinder with 148bhp – with a two-cylinder economy mode when cruising. Diesel is a 1.6 litre with 113bhp or a 2 litre

with 148bhp. All are front drive with six-speed manual gearboxes or a seven-speed DSG automatic. Four-wheel drive is offered only with the 2 litre diesel engine.

Karoq SE has 17-inch alloys, power folding wing mirrors, height adjustment for both front seats, rear parking sensors and dual-zone climate control. SE Technology has navigation and adaptive cruise control. SE L (tested here) brings 18-inch wheels, LED headlights, the switchable rear seats, and a reversing camera. This rear

picture includes a diagram of the car showing its sensor rays. It confuses and obstructs the view and is not necessary.

Just as confusing, the white on gold speedometer markings are hard to read in the wrong light.

The test car performed well, with no trouble on bends at higher speeds. The pace is more than you might expect from 148bhp in this class. Skoda quotes 0-62 mph in 8.6 seconds, with 50.4mpg and 127g on the combined average. My return motorway trip recorded 44mpg, dropping to 38mpg on a hilly forty-miler.

I have read praise for the Karoq’s suspension comfort. Mine was firmly sprung and caused some thud in the rear. There was also tyre noise – not unusual in any class. The car was on Bridgestone’s Turanza T001, which is being replaced by the improved T005.

Verdict: A solid contender and the flexible rear seats appeal very much. They could clinch a deal.

If you need more space then Skoda’s answer is the Superb, which most critics agree lives up to its name – one reprised from a grand luxury Skoda in the 1930s.

It is sold as a hatchback which looks like a saloon and, as tested here, an elegant estate car. The 190-inch long (4.8m) car borrows from the Volkswagen Group kit bag and has become so good that it stands comparison with an Audi A6 or Mercedes E-Class.

At 190in long (4.8m) it matches most large estate cars for capacity and undercuts them on price. It is the What Car? reigning “best estate car”. These are independent awards and merit consideration when you are choosing.

Prices for the estate start at £22,015 for the petrol engine 123bhp 1.4S with front-wheel-drive. My demo car was the AWD automatic with the 187bhp diesel engine, at £35,505 in SportLine trim, which includes firmer suspension. Eco ratings are 54.3mpg and 137g CO₂, with a 0-62mph time of 8.1 seconds.

Fully loaded, my mpg reading was 40mpg on a demanding cross country route, improving to a merry 45mpg, unloaded, on gentler terrain. These figures are similar to those from the smaller, petrol-engined Karoq and demonstrate why the market has been hooked on diesel’s economy. Its braked towing limit is 2200kg.

Verdict: Both are built at Kvasiny, Czech Republic. The more refined and larger Superb can make the Karoq look pricev.



Source: Yorkshire Post | Date: Apr 21, 2018 | Author: Fredric Manby | Circulation: 40185 | Page: 6

With all the seats out, you have the equivalent of a half-ton van – but with lots more refinement.

THE FACTS

- With the 1.5 petrol engine and DSG gears the demo Karoq cost £25,815. There is a Karoq Edition with 19-inch wheels and most of the options, from £27,110 with the 1.5 engine. Top price is £31,960 for the 2 litre diesel 4x4.
- On the Superb, all-wheel-drive is available from £26,945 with the 148bhp 2-litre diesel SE. Top book is £38,440 for the 276bhp 2-litre petrol with AWD.
- One in every four Skodas is sold in China and it has built them a specific urban SUV – to be unveiled at the Beijing show next week.



WINNING COMBINATION: Skoda Superb is an elegant estate which rivals the likes of Audi and Mercedes, main image. Below, the Karoq compact SUV is a solid contender with the bonus of removable rear seats.