



Renault Laguna II Grand Tour

More than just a name

Car review | The Renault Laguna has been a favourite amongst business drivers for many years now. This is mostly thanks to the elegant design and progressive technology. Added to that, the high level of safety gives a secure feeling. The competition however has not been idle and therefore Renault found it imperative to rejuvenate the Laguna. Is the renewed Laguna ready for battle again?

The looks are by far the most important reason to most buyers for choosing a particular car. Renault must have thought to never change a successful recipe, for the exterior alterations to the renewed Laguna are minimal. Only the front has been slightly adjusted, which makes it fit in better with the other Renaults.

The interior would have changed more, but the differences only become apparent when the old Laguna is used as a reference. The adjustments to the design are small, but the materials used are noticeably better and the finish too has been taken to a higher level. New or not: the interior of the Laguna remains exquisite and even inviting. Especially the test vehicle that has strips of light and dark material at the same time gives a feeling of warmth and space.



Technology

Still, progressive technology is the most important point in which the Laguna distinguishes itself from the competition. Even in the year 2005 a card instead of a key is something special. The electronic card is not only more practical than a traditional key it is also safer. The ignition lock is usually found in the steering

column, which in case of an accident often results in painful knee damage. A start button is sufficient for the Laguna.

All new to the Laguna is the electronically operated handbrake. Until now such a provision was only reserved to very expensive limousines. For the first time it is now available to ordinary people in this business car. With a large button close to the steering wheel the handbrake is engaged or released. The latter is strictly speaking not necessary because the electronics will remember to release the handbrake when driving off. This way a hill start has become a doddle!

Dynamique

The test vehicle is a "Dynamique" version and rises slightly above the basic model. Despite that a climate control system (left/right separately), audio system, light and rain sensor, parking aid and on-board computer are all standard.

The engine too is one in the middle: a 1.9 litre 4-cylinder diesel engine. This power source is quiet, but definitely not inaudible and that makes it always obvious that this is a diesel. The character is as many business drivers want it to be: mainly strong and flexible. But if needs be, there is a good reserve available and the Laguna can, to put it mildly, hold a stiff pace. Thanks to the 6-speed gearbox the Laguna can keep the revs down if so desired, which increases the comfort considerably.

Safety

Road handling however is where the Laguna distinguishes itself the most. The Laguna feels very much like a large car and in this case that is a compliment. The large wheelbase for instance offers tranquillity. Moreover, the car remains well controllable up to very high speeds.



At fast cornering the Laguna feels large and stable too. This is not only pleasant, but also very safe. After all, a sudden extreme steering movement will result in swerving and not in ending up in a ditch. The brakes are strong and have a good bite, which makes the Laguna do well in the crash-test and is also good at preventing crashes in the first place.

Space

Especially when carrying a precious "load" the latter is of great importance. With the back seat in its normal place this load consist of a maximum of three people. The middle part of the backseat is actually suitable to sit on, so extra children do not present any problems. The legroom in the back is average for a car in this segment.

Contrary to Renault's pure spacewagons, there are no smart space saving inventions to be found in this Laguna Sport Tourer. What is very useful however is that the rear door opens in two pieces. The backseat folds according to the traditional procedure, with the only exception that the headrests can remain in place. After that a large luggage room materializes (from 475 to a maximum of 1515 litres), with which the Sport Tourer proves to offer more than just a nice name. This is not a "life style" estate car that only looks that way, but a real working car that can carry a lot of extra luggage.



Conclusion

The final verdict: nothing wrong with it. That is a nice result, but not sufficient for Renault. The Renault Megane in the middle class is on many points better than the competition. The Renault Modus is the smartest small MPV at this moment. However, after its facelift, the Laguna distinguishes itself from the competition only in details. Unfortunately the numerous pioneering inventions that Renault applies in other models are not to be found in the renewed Laguna.

The most important reasons for choosing a Laguna therefore remain the same as before. Especially the design of the exterior and the interior are very successful. The technology is progressive, although the difference from other cars is getting smaller over the years. The road holding qualities are fine, where tranquillity, comfort and safety are the most important characteristics of this business-like Renault. ■



Specifications

Renault Laguna II Grand Tour 1.9 dCi Dynamique

Size and weight

Length x width x height	471 x 177 x 148 cm
Wheelbase	275 cm
Kerb weight	1.360 kg
Trailer	650 kg
Trailer - braked	1.500 kg
Fuel capacity	68 l
Luggage space	475/1515 l
Tyre size	

Engine and performance



Capacity	1870 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/2
Max power	120 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	300 Nm @ 2000 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	11 secs
Top speed	199 km/h
Average mileage	5.7 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	7.3 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	4.8 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	153 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 19,400
Price base model	Â£ 17,525