



Skoda Roomster

Room for thought

Car review | Since 1991 Skoda is part of Volkswagen. Skoda managed to remain daring and different while vastly improving quality and craftsmanship. But now Skoda dares something completely new: the Roomster combines the ride quality of a normal car with the room of an MPV. Autozine picked the brand new Roomster up at the factory in the Czech Republic for a test drive.

The Czech Republic is proud of Skoda and when a brand new car is being introduced everything is possible. "Do you want to take pictures of the Roomster in front of the presidential palace? No problem, we'll stop traffic for you. Do you want to take pictures of the car during the ceremonial changing of the guards? No problem, we'll march around you and your car!".

The Czech aren't just proud, they also enjoy life. This is projected on the car, where prestige or technical specifications are not paramount. A car should make life more enjoyable and that's what it is all about with the Roomster.



The front half of the Roomster is a normal car, the back half is an MPV. In this simply way Skoda solves a couple of complex problems. A traditional monospace, also known as MPV (multi purpose vehicle) is in essence no more than a van that evolved into a roomy family car. No matter how refined a modern MPV is, the ride quality is still affected by the poor road holding (high centre of gravity) and high gasmileage

(poor streamlining). Also: it is still a hard job to make a van look attractive.

Rear

The odd looking Roomster naturally draws a lot of attention. The Czech people recognise "their" car from photographs and now see the Roomster in real life for the first time. Curious tourists come and ask about this funny new car.



The most striking features are the big rear windows that are significantly larger than the front windows. This doesn't just make the Roomster look charming, it also pleases the youngest passengers. Small children can easily look out thanks to the large windows. The rear seats are mounted higher than the front seats, giving the rear passengers an exceptional feeling of freedom.

The Roomster pleases adults by an overwhelming amount of leg- and headroom. The optional glass panoramic roof (highly recommendable) adds to this feeling.

The rear seat comprises of three parts. The outer parts can be moved to accommodate for either more legroom or more luggage space. The three parts can be folded independently or can be removed completely. When only the middle seat is removed,

the remaining two seats can be moved closer together to make even more room. This car really lives up to its name!



Luggage space

Even with all three rear seats in place, the boot is much larger than the outside of the car suggests. A large pram easily fits and even then there's plenty of space for the holiday luggage. Hooks, nets and other fasteners are there to securely fix all luggage.

Removable bendable barriers can be used to separate the boot into partitions. When the rear seats have been removed, the space is so large that Skoda sells an in-car bicycle rack. Although Skoda forgets to tell that this rack will only fit when the front wheels of all bicycles have been removed.



Front

The rear of the Roomster is as spacious and practical as an average MPV. In the front nothing reminds of a people carrier. The driver is not seated high in the air with the steering wheel flat on his/her knees. Instead the Roomster offers the familiar driving position and the comfortable feeling of a normal car.

Thanks to the close relationship with Volkswagen that familiar feeling is even stronger, because many shared Volkswagen components can be recognised. Regretably build quality is not of Volkswagen quality. The doors do not close with a solid sound, the test vehicle showed remainders of glue and on bad roads some rattles were audible.

Trim levels also aren't at Volkswagen-levels, but prices are much lower. Instead of luxury Skoda always chooses small extras that make the car much more practical, but hardly any more expensive. That starts with rubber bands in the door pockets to keep papers

in place and ends with steering headlights (look through a bend before entering the bend) for greater safety. The longer the testdrive lasts, the more the Roomster impresses with small smart things like these.

Driving

And test driving the Roomster certainly isn't a punishment. The ride quality is that on a normal car, not a people carrier. This spacious Skoda is as tall, and therefore as easy to drive, as a Volkswagen Golf or Vauxhall Astra. In heavy traffic the Roomster is easy to handle. Unlike other MPVs the Roomster is easy to park.



Suspension is relatively stiff which gives the car good road holding. Moreover stiff suspension guarantees safe handling when fully loaded. The Roomster is a great drive and even at high speed this car is easy to control. The brakes are very capable. Active safety (to prevent an accident) is okay.

The Roomster comes with a choice of three petrol and three diesel engines. For this occasion the strongest petrol engine was chosen: the 1.6 litre four cylinder putting out 105 hp / 153. This engine is sufficient to keep up with other traffic. When necessary the Roomster 1.6 is quick enough to safely pass other cars or merge on a busy highway. At high speeds the Roomster easily maintains speed making the car capable of driving long distances.

However, this engine does not offer any extra power. The Roomster 1.6 is not a fast or a sporty car. Therefore a lighter engine is not recommendable. This

strongest petrol engine on the list makes the Roomster a highly enjoyable drive. Even better: yours truly seldomly had as much fun as this with a family car!

Conclusion

The Skoda Roomster is a car that makes people happy. That starts with a perky, odd and original appearance. Inside the car, the driver is pleasantly surprised with passenger car comfort. The Roomster offers the ride quality, road handling and manoeuvrability of a normal car.

The huge flexible luggage room gives the Roomster all the space and possibilities of an MPV. In short: the Skoda Roomster drives better than an MPV, is just as spacious and looks much better (Ivo Kroone). ■



Specifications

Skoda Roomster 3 1.6 16v

Size and weight

Length x width x height	421 x 168 x 161 cm
Wheelbase	262 cm
Kerb weight	1.175 kg
Trailer	450 kg
Trailer - braked	1.000 kg
Fuel capacity	55 l
Luggage space	450/1780 l
Tyre size	195/55R15

Engine and performance



Capacity	1598 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	105 PS @ 5600 rpm
Max torque	153 Nm @ 3800 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	10.9 secs
Top speed	184 km/h
Average mileage	7 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	9.2 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	5.7 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	168 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 12,855
Price base model	Â£ 9,920