



Vauxhall Insignia (2008 - 2017)

New signature

Car review | Vauxhall opts for a new signature. The Vauxhall Insignia is not meant to be the successor of the Vectra but a completely new car for executive drivers. Henceforth the emphasis is on luxury and design. The latest Vauxhall should not only be chosen consciously but also instinctively. At the same time Vauxhall's ever so familiar and sound touch is supposedly still intact. Have they really managed to do so?

The Vauxhall Insignia is truly different, which can already be noted from its appearance. Its prominent chrome grill and highly positioned headlights give the Insignia an extremely distinguished appearance. Its profile is somewhere in the middle of a superbly streamlined saloon and that of a four-door coupé. Its taut lining comes ever so well to fruition in the colour demonstrated, "Pannacotta".

Attention to detail is what gives the Insignia the necessary flair. Obviously, this is not an ordinary ten a penny lease car but a car designed with passion. Thus the Insignia-logo recurs on various places. Like in the lighted LED edge around the headlights (which at the same time serve as day time lighting) or in the backlights which also light up in the shape of the Insignia-logo. The lights behind the counters change from white to red as soon as one starts to drive up-tempo.



Interior

As Vauxhall promises, external ostentation does not go at the expense of soundness. Its finishing is impeccable and the materials used are of a tangible high quality.

Despite its coupé-like lining there is plenty of space inside. Even more so, the headroom in front is way above average! Tall drivers won't even be able to reach the pedals once the front seats are in far back position! The rear space and the capacity of the boot are pretty average for a car of this size.



Its interior also goes smart. "Cosmo", the most luxurious model, can be fitted with creamy coloured upholstery and a beige dashboard with wooden inlays. This gives the Insignia the air of a proper executive car.

Should you prefer a more contemporary style then opt for the "Sport" model in which dark shades and panels in piano varnish predominate. Besides, the "Sport" model is equipped with superb sports seats which on its own are reason enough to go sporty.

Vauxhall Eye

Insignia's urge to reinvent is not just limited to its appearance. Vauxhall's pupil has also incorporated a few technical novelties. Most significant of all is the "Vauxhall Eye". A camera positioned behind the windscreen that watches along with the driver and reads road signs.

A display positioned between the speed and the rev counter reminds one of the prevailing speed limit or

notifies one e.g. of an overtaking prohibition. In reality the system works fine and does not get distracted by signs that may look like speed indications such as a maximum wheel pressure for lorries ("4.0 t"). It also recognises the end of an overtaking prohibition or speed limit flawlessly.

Those who drive the same route every day will not really benefit from the "Vauxhall Eye". But in unfamiliar, areas where rules are far from evident, the all-seeing eye of Vauxhall makes life a lot easier. This option is definitely recommendable considering its small additional expense.

Adaptive Forward Lighting

Also extremely significant is the "Adaptive Forward Lighting" (AFL). Through this feature the headlights "think" along with the driver. On the motorway the light beam is elongated in order to cover as much road surface as possible right in front of the car. On the other hand, the beam gets wider in town so as to visualise road signs, pedestrians and cyclists.

Its most useful feature is the automatically turned on high beam. In case AFL does not detect any other traffic, the high beam is automatically switched on. As soon as an oncoming car appears (or drives in front of the Insignia) it will automatically opt for dipped headlights.



Sometimes the computer switches the high beam a split second later off than the driver would have done. What's more, the computer mistakes its own reflection in e.g. a road sign for a different car causing the high beam to be unnecessarily switched off. Apart from these minor flaws the AFL makes nighttime driving a lot easier and safer.



Engines

Upon its introduction (in December 2008) the Insignia will be available in four petrol and three diesel engines. Mid 2009 the super-frugal "ecoFLEX" model will be launched.

For this test drive the most powerful engine available was driven first: the 2.8 litre V6 (260 bhp / 350 Nm). This model is definitely the most convincing sporty Insignia because its engine is extremely agile which simply turns this posh executive saloon into a fast car. Moreover, the V6 is manually geared which adds to the overall sporty feel. Thanks to its standard four-wheel drive system, power is safely transmitted to the tarmac and without any wheel spin.



The more economical 2.0 litre four cylinder turbo-charged engine (220 bhp / 350 Nm) performs instinctively just as well as the V6. As the engine is smaller, the car is lighter which results directly in a more dynamic road-holding

Yet most mileage has been covered by the 2.0 litre 160 bhp strong diesel engine. When cold, this engine is a bit noisy and sturdy, but after a few minutes the diesel engine is all warmed up and significantly quiet and smooth. Here, another merit of its extraordinary design comes into the equation: the Insignia is perfectly streamlined which reduces head wind. Its driving noises are minimal and this diesel in particular is a true first class mile-muncher.



Road-holding

The emphasis of the Insignia is on cruising comfort, which by no means entails that it is an excessively smoothly suspended or callously steered car. Vauxhall has managed to find a perfect balance between comfort and sportsmanship. The chassis is sturdily built as can be expected from a European manufacturer. Its massive size and modern chassis make the car extremely stable and quiet.

Along with the Ford Mondeo and Volkswagen Passat, the Insignia is among the largest cars in its segment. Nonetheless, the Insignia is surprisingly easy to handle. The Insignia can easily be geared through town or in a narrow car park, which cannot be said of others of this size.

"FlexRide" allows for its character to be adjusted to match the driving conditions. This can be instigated through a single press on the button. But as soon as the computer detects that the driver is driving more up-tempo (G-forces are measured), the Insignia automatically tweaks the steering, throttle and damper response.

In short: the Insignia is a completely different car than the Vectra and therefore one has opted for a new name. The Insignia has more character and its emphasis is on luxury and design. Vauxhall vows for this!

Conclusion

Vauxhall has launched a completely new luxurious executive car. Its emphasis is more than ever on exterior and fitting-out. At the same time, the familiar and solid feel which is characteristic to Vauxhall has been preserved.

Its driving characteristics are fine, but not exceptional. Thanks to its massive size the Insignia is calm and stable. The engines have incorporated the latest technology and therefore perform excellently yet remain economical. Hence the Insignia is a fine, modern car but no better than the rest.

The Insignia distinguishes itself from its competitors by its classy appearance. On top of that its kit is ample and the additional extras make the Insignia truly special. "FlexRide" adjusts the character of the car to the driver's driving mood, but its effect is limited. The "Vauxhall Eye" (lighting that adjusts automatically to a situation) are true must haves, because they make life easier and driving much safer. ■

Specifications

Vauxhall Insignia (2008 - 2017) 2.0 CDTI (160 hp) Elite

Size and weight



Length x width x height	483 x 186 x 150 cm
Wheelbase	274 cm
Kerb weight	1.503 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	1.600 kg
Fuel capacity	70 l
Luggage space	520/1070 l
Tyre size	225/55R17

Engine and performance



Capacity	1956 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	160 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	350 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	9.5 secs
Top speed	218 km/h
Average mileage	5.8 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	7.6 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	4.8 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	154 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 22,735
Price base model	Â£ 15,935