



Volkswagen Sharan

On with the show!

Car review | We're going out today! The whole family can come, because the Volkswagen Sharan offers room for seven people and their luggage. The all new Sharan features new, efficient engines so there will be money left over to spend on the finer things in life. How about a visit to the Bavaria Movie Studios near München in Germany?

Volkswagen presents ... a Klaus Bischoff production ... designed by Walter de'Silva ... based on a story by Autozine ... the new Sharan! Featuring: "EasyFold", "BlueMotion" and of course, your dedicated test driver.

Once upon a time, in a country far away from here, the MPV was invented: a car that combines the space of a van with the luxury of a regular passenger car. Volkswagen followed suit and introduced their own Multi-Purpose Vehicle called "Sharan". From 1996 to 2010 over 600,000 copies were sold. Now it is time for the sequel.

The show starts with special effects, because the new Sharan looks much smaller than it actually is. With a length of 4.85 metres, the Sharan is a huge vehicle. Thanks to simple yet elegant lines, the Sharan doesn't appear to be vast at all.



Line up in pairs of seven please

After such an impressive presentation, the audience can't wait to enter. The Sharan offers room for seven people, divided in three rows of seats.

The rear seats can be accessed via sliding doors. This is especially practical with children, who might open the doors a bit overenthusiastically and damage parked cars. The downside of the sliding doors is that they easily close when the car is parked on a slope. Powered doors are an option. However, the electrically

operated doors move so annoyingly slowly, that the manual doors are preferred.



How big the Sharan actually is, becomes clear on the back seats. Both the head and legroom is huge! Adults sit comfortably in the back. For extra comfort the Sharan offers folding tables, a 12-volt socket and cubby holders in the back.

Behind the back seats two more seats can be found. These are not merely aimed at children, even adults fit here (of course depending on their posture). Also, the entrance to these rear seat is easy, it does not require any limberness or crawling over furniture to reach them.



When all seven seats are in use, the Sharan still offers 267 litres of luggage space. That is comparable to the boot of an average-sized hatchback. Thanks to "EasyFold" all seats can be folded flat in one easy move. Even the co-driver's seat can be folded, allowing for items up to 2 metres in length to be transported.



Cabin

The room in the front is ample as well, but here the designers aimed to give the Sharan the look and feel of a luxury car. The dashboard looks the same as any other Volkswagen dash, only the seating position

differs. The trim level is comparable to other Volkswagens as well. Those who choose the Sharan as a company car just to have extra space at the weekend, will not regret their choice.

Regrettably, the soundtrack to this show leaves much to be desired. The optional audio system by Dynaudio, which does so well in other Volkswagens, sounds flimsy and metal-like in the Sharan.



Flashback: the Autozine website has a forum for every car. On the forum for the previous Sharan many posts read like this: "the Volkswagen Sharan is a nice drive, if it does drive at all". Therefore, Volkswagen was asked if the reliability of the new Sharan has been improved. The answer: "Most components of the new Sharan are shared with the Passat. So if the current Passat is reliable enough, then so is the Sharan".

Handling

Time for the action sequence! Behold, this is a G-rated show, so don't expect any extremities. Still, for a large family car, the Sharan does handle exceptionally well. The designers of the Sharan aimed to make this MPV handle as well as the Passat. Despite the fact that the Sharan is much larger, the designers did succeed!



This is mainly thanks to the suspension, which continuously adapts to the situation. When making a sudden move (for example to avoid an accident), the suspension temporarily becomes firmer to avoid rolling and pitching.



This same technology is used to make handling more sporty or more comfortable with the push of a button. However, the difference between these settings is hardly noticeable. Compared to the previous Sharan, the new model offers a bit more comfort, while road holding is just as good.

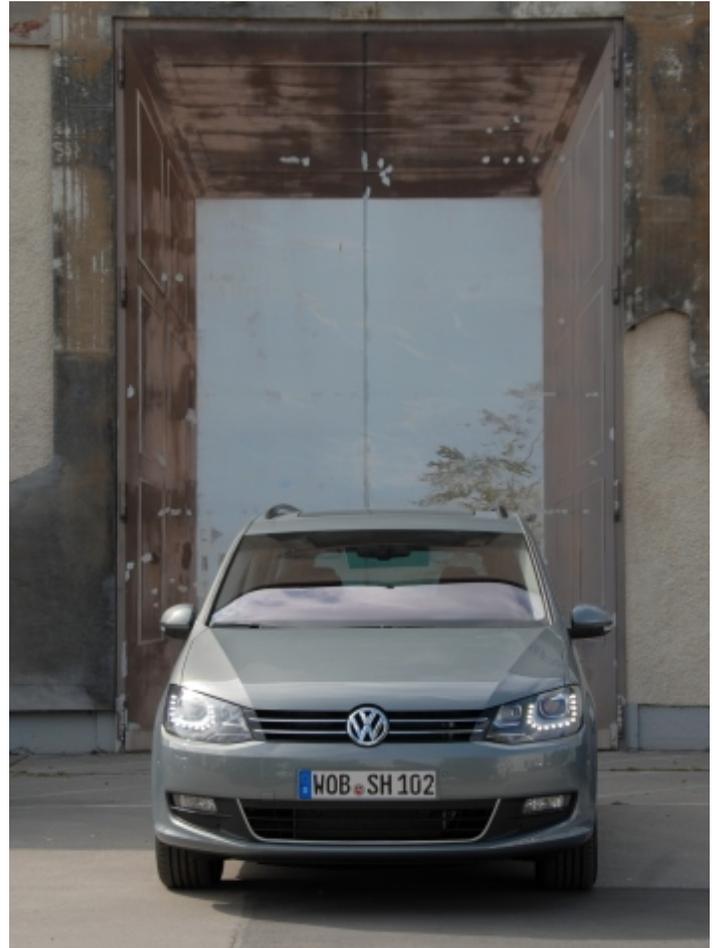
Thanks to the relatively direct steering, the Sharan doesn't feel like a large car. It's only in small villages and on back roads that the Sharan is noticeably large.

1.4 TSI petrol

Whoever may have suggested to fitting a full size MPV like this with a 1.4 litre engine, would have been laughed at only a few years ago. Under the name "TSI" Volkswagen adds a turbo and a compressor to small engines, making them perform like a large engine while still consuming fuel like a small power train.

The "Sharan 1.4 TSI" driven here develops 150 PS / 240 Nm and that is just enough. However, because of the poor aerodynamics and huge weight, this is the first car in which the 1.4 TSI engine has to work hard to perform at all.

On the highway the acceleration from 100 to 130 km/h requires a lot of patience or shifting down from sixth to fourth gear. In city traffic staying in a higher gear than required, runs the risk of making the engine stall.



2.0 TDI diesel

For the drive back home, the Sharan with 2.0 litre diesel engine was used. The power of that power train (140 PS / 320 Nm) is roughly the same as the petrol engine and that goes for the performance as well.

Thanks to the higher torque, the diesel engine does perform with more ease at high speeds. On the other hand: the petrol engine is quieter and more refined (less vibrations).

Fuel economy

The Sharan features a host of techniques to improve fuel economy. The first is a start/stop system. As soon as the vehicle comes to a complete stop, the engine is shut down. When depressing the clutch to engage first gear to drive off again, the engine starts automatically. This happens so quickly, that it is never disturbing.

What's extra special is that the Volkswagen start/stop mechanism also works with an automatic gearbox; something many other brands deem impossible. Apart from the fact that start/stop improves fuel economy by 2% it also makes for a nice interlude in the show.



Sharans with a manual gearbox, have a shift indicator. This shows the best moment to choose a higher or lower gear in order to save fuel. Because the Sharan is so quiet, this indicator isn't a luxury at all! When not listening closely, there is a fair risk of driving in a higher gear than necessary.

Thanks to all the fuel saving technologies, the Sharan 1.4 TSI used 9.4 litres per 100 km (Volkswagen promises 7,2 litres per 100 km). The "2.0 TDI DSG" is easier to drive economically, the return journey only required 5.5 litres of diesel per 100 km (factory figure: 5.7 litres per 100 km).

Parking

At the end of the show, the Sharan has a surprise: this car will park itself! Various car makers offer a similar system, but Volkswagen is way ahead. A drawback of the Volkswagen system is that the steering wheel is operated while the car isn't moving, which can lead to early wear and tear of the front tyres.

The computer can certainly park a car: only 25 cm of space on both sides of the vehicle is enough! The parking aid has been tried in the smallest possible parking spot and worked perfectly. All's well that ends

well.



Conclusion

The new Volkswagen Sharan has performed its magic and the critics are enthusiastic! The Sharan offers space for seven and their luggage. Thanks to "EasyFold" all seats can easily be folded in the floor leaving a huge boot.

An important part in the success of the new Sharan is the "1.4 TSI" engine. This relatively small engine performs like a larger one, while still being frugal. The "2.0 TDI" (140 PS) diesel engine performs just as well, but is even more economical. All power trains are quiet, while other road noises are minimal as well.

Finally, the roomy Sharan drives just as well as a normal car and with that Volkswagen meets its goal. Applause! ■



Specifications

Volkswagen Sharan 1.4 TSI SE

Size and weight



Length x width x height	485 x 190 x 174 cm
Wheelbase	292 cm
Kerb weight	1.623 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	1.800 kg
Fuel capacity	70 l
Luggage space	267/2430 l
Tyre size	205/60R16

Engine and performance



Capacity	1390 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	150 PS @ 5800 rpm
Max torque	240 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	10.7 secs
Top speed	197 km/h
Average mileage	7.2 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	9.2 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	6.1 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	167 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 25,030
Price base model	Â£ 22,980