



Chevrolet Aveo

New generation

Car review | Chevrolet is reinventing itself at a rapid pace. The last model that was still based on a previous generation of cars, was the Aveo. That is why the Aveo is now redesigned and reengineered from scratch. While the first Aveo distinguished itself with just a low price, this second generation also promises high quality. Autozine travelled to Zürich to be the very first to test-drive the all-new Aveo.

Nowadays "Chevrolet" may sound American, but the founder of the brand is Swiss-man Louis Chevrolet. That is why the brand still has its main office in Switzerland. It is also why the Aveo isn't an American car, but a "world car".

This means this one car will be sold all over the world and should therefore appeal to a broad audience. To realise this, designers from all over the world worked together. This usually leads to a compromise: the end result doesn't really suit any particular taste, but at least it doesn't put anyone off either. The Aveo is a welcome exception to this rule. The new Aveo has a strong and self-confident look. This may be the second smallest Chevrolet; it is the toughest looking model so far!



Space

The only thing the new Aveo shares with its predecessor is its excellent value for money. For example, the Aveo is wider and longer than the Volkswagen Polo, Vauxhall Corsa or Hyundai i20. Regrettably this doesn't mean the Chevy offers more space. The boot has an irregular shape, making it harder to fully utilise the available space. Those who

seek maximum loading capacity opt for the Aveo sedan. This does have a huge boot (502 litres) and doesn't look half as old-fashioned as the sedans from other brands.

The cabin space isn't larger than usual either, though this doesn't mean the interior is cramped at all. The room in the back is good, while two adults fit comfortably in the front. The angle under which the front seat and steering wheel have been placed is a bit unusual, forcing most drivers to take some extra time to adjust the seat and steering wheel (the latter can be adjusted for both height and distance to the driver).



It is not just the outside of the car that has been designed with a certain flair, the dashboard looks original as well. The lines can even be called "dynamic", because they extend all the way into the doors in a wave. By using different materials, different functions (storage space and operating controls) are separated from each other visually.

While the dashboard may look nice, when touching it the materials feel cheap and flimsy. The leap ahead in quality is certainly not perceived in the test car. The previous generation of the Aveo suffered from problems with reliability. Chevrolet cannot promise this new generation will be more reliable, but it does emphasise that the car shares no parts with its predecessor so it won't carry over the same problems.



Equipment

Even the dials have an original design. A rev counter is more decorative than informative in a car like this, so it is executed as a traditional round clock. The ever important speedometer is digital, because that is easier and more exact to read. The trip computer is controlled by a stalk on the steering column that can be pushed and rotated. It takes some studying to figure out how this all works, but eventually it is pretty handy.

Depending on the trim level, the Aveo is fitted with an audio system including a USB connector (in the second glove compartment, which also has space for an MP3 player). It doesn't only recognise USB sticks with MP3 files on it, but also works with an iPod. The sound quality is fair, considering the price tag.



Engines

For now, the Aveo is available with a 1.2 and 1.4 litre petrol engine. A 1.6 litre petrol engine and a 1.3 litre diesel have been announced for the near future. The 1.2 litre petrol engine develops a respectable 86 PS / 115 Nm, but does so only at a very high engine speed. The power train really has to be provoked to perform, making the car feel slow when driving normally. Just keeping up with traffic while going uphill is quite a challenge.

When the car reaches a cruising speed, this is easily kept while the Aveo is pleasantly quiet at the same time. The low noise levels aren't restricted to the engine, sounds from the tyres and wind are also minimal for a car in this price range.

Chevrolet promises that the "Aveo 1.2" will do 48 mpg, but even when driving very calmly the test car didn't do any better than 38.9 mpg.

As an alternative to the 1.2, a 1.4 litre engine is available. On paper this larger engine isn't significantly stronger (100 PS / 130 Nm) or quicker, but it does perform with more ease. The 1.4 litre power train has a more direct response to any movement of the throttle, making the car feel faster. Because the bigger engine doesn't have to work so hard, it is also easier to drive more economically.

Automatic

Only the Aveo 1.4 can be fitted with an automatic six-speed gearbox. During this test drive it always shifted too late, almost forcing the driver to take over. A small switch on the side of the gear lever allows the driver to shift sequentially, but doing so defeats the purpose of buying an automatic. On top of that the fuel economy of the "Aveo 1.4 AT" is very poor: 31 mpg.



The vehicle used for this test drive is a so-called "pre production" car. This means small changes can still be applied before mass production will start. Because of the experiences described above, Chevrolet promised to revise the automatic gearbox once more.

Handling

At first the Aveo handles very well. The feeling in the steering wheel is pretty good and even when cornering fast the car reacts safely and predictably.



When the same test is done on poor or wet surfaces, it becomes clear that Chevrolet economised on the quality of the suspension and/or tyres. Under difficult circumstances the car understeers and tilts over. This makes it harder to correct for the average driver, but luckily the electronic stability programme ("ESP") avoids this from ever happening in the first place. The

ABS braking system also needs to work overtime to make the car stop quickly on bad roads.

Just like it does with the performance, the 1.4 engine also seems to have a favourable effect on handling as well. With the heavier engine in the front the Aveo is more grippy making the car feel more safe. Although the wheelbase of the Aveo hatchback and sedan is equal, the sedan does feel more stable than the hatchback.



Conclusion

Chevrolet describes the Aveo as a car that offers maximum space, comfort and quality at a minimum price. Handling isn't mentioned at all and that's because roadholding is no more than average. Performance of the "Aveo 1.2" is poor, while fuel economy isn't very good either. The "1.4" does perform as it should and is as frugal as Chevrolet promises. Handling is good only when the road

surface is good. On wet surfaces ESP is a very useful extra.

The Aveo does excel in all areas Chevrolet emphasises. The Aveo is larger than its rivals, although not roomier. The design is highly original, which goes for both the exterior and interior. The Aveo is comfortable thanks to its high specification level and low noise levels. ■



Specifications

Chevrolet Aveo 1.2 LS

Size and weight



Length x width x height	404 x 174 x 152 cm
Wheelbase	253 cm
Kerb weight	1.070 kg
Trailer	500 kg
Trailer - braked	850 kg
Fuel capacity	46 l
Luggage space	290/653 l
Tyre size	185/75R14

Engine and performance



Capacity	1229 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/
Max power	86 PS @ 5600 rpm
Max torque	115 Nm @ 4000 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	14.3 secs
Top speed	162 km/h
Average mileage	5.9 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	7.7 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	4.8 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	138 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 10,475
Price base model	Â£ 9,815