



Vauxhall Astra Sports Tourer

We aim to please

Review | An estate car is more than just a regular car. It starts with the extra space, but that's not all. An estate car is meant for work and long hours. That means extra luxury and comfort are just as important as the extra space. And that is where the new Astra really stands out. And that's why many looked forward to the introduction of the all-new Astra Estate.

Vauxhall has a long tradition when it comes to estate cars, or "station cars" as it calls them. As early as the 1960s the working class used vans for personal transportation rather than freight in the weekends. Vauxhall understood this and built the first "Kadett Caravan" ("car and van") to be used both for work and leisure.

The new Astra Estate is the tenth generation of that "Caravan". And to emphasise it's not merely about the space, the name "Sports Tourer" was chosen. And it has to be said: thanks to the sleek lines, the Astra Sports Tourer doesn't look like a workhorse but instead has even more charm than the Astra hatchback.



Space

Thanks to the low roof line and the flat rear, the boot measures 540 litres (hatchback: 370 litres). The back seat can be folded flat in three pieces, after which the boot volume grows to 1,630 litres. This makes the Astra Sports Tourer averagely spacious for a car in this segment.

To make everyday life with the Sports Tourer more pleasant, a power tailgate is available. Even pressing a button isn't necessary, moving a foot underneath the

rear bumper will do; very convenient when walking with hands full of luggage.



To transport luggage as safely as possible, Vauxhall offers the so-called "FlexOrganiser". This is a set of nets and flexible barriers which can be used to divide the boot space or fix luggage in place. Another handy feature is the reversible loading floor, which has cloth on one side and easy to clean plastic on the other side.

Trim levels

The (front) cabin of the Sports Tourer is identical to the five-door Astra. And that means all innovative technology is also available in this spacious version. The most striking feature is the "Vauxhall Eye"; a camera that looks ahead with the driver. Thanks to this all-seeing eye the computer can warn about dangerous situations and even intervene (either brake or steer).



Also very useful is "IntelliLux LED"; smart headlights which adopt the beam to the weather and / or oncoming traffic. In that way the Astra provides better visibility and thereby increases safety. A test drive in the dark proves this option is certainly worth the money.

Something completely different are the (optional) AGR seats. These seats were developed together with the German association for healthy backs and offer sublime comfort (adjustability, warming, cooling and massage function). For use as a family car the Sports Tourer even offers a heated back seat as well as two extra USB sockets in the rear.

Of course, Vauxhall offers an integrated audio, satnav and communications system and even here the carmaker takes things one step further. For example, the Astra offers an in-car hotspot (4G / LTE) and "OnStar". OnStar is a personal service centre (not a computer!) which offers route info, information about the technical condition of the car and even emergency rescue in case of an accident.



Both Android Auto and Apple CarPlay are supported, but in real life only the latter actually works. When connecting an Android phone a big button labelled "Android Auto" appears, but when this is pressed nothing happens.



Handling

Underneath the skin the Sports Tourer is equal to the five-door Astra and that means handling is also the same. The Sports Tourer drives, brakes and steers just fine but it lacks a strong personality. In this way

Vauxhall appeals to the largest possible audience, and with a car like this that's a logical choice.

The name "Sports Tourer" is therefore mainly a product of the marketing division, because no matter how well the Astra handles it isn't "Sporty" in any way. Vauxhall also speaks highly of the many weight-saving technologies (-190 kg), but competing brands do exactly the same and therefore handle just as well.



BiTurbo diesel

With the introduction of the Sports Tourer, Vauxhall also introduces a new engine: the "BiTurbo". This 1.6 litre diesel engine with two turbos replaces the 2.0 litre diesel from the previous generation but offers the same power while consuming less fuel.

A traditional turbo uses the pressure of the exhaust gasses to generate extra power. However, this means that the engine first has to work hard enough to actually produce a flow of exhaust gasses and that causes a certain lag. The double turbo from Vauxhall consists of a small, light turbo which even rotates at low revs (few exhaust gasses). As soon as the engine is up to speed (many exhaust gasses) a second, larger turbo takes over for an even bigger punch.



Conclusion

After the five-door, Vauxhall now introduces the all-new Astra estate. This so-called "Sports Tourer" offers all the good things from the regular Astra and adds more space to the mix. It all starts with excellent handling and modern engines which perform well while being efficient at the same time.

Vauxhall distinguishes itself from other brands by offering features from a higher segment, and at a very reasonable price. This is even more valuable with the Sports Tourer because this car will be used intensively. ■

The concept of a double turbo is not new, but it is special that Vauxhall uses it on such a small engine. Also, the character differs from other bi-turbo engines. Despite the sound theory, in practice the available power at low revs is disappointing. It's only from 1,700 to 2,000 rpm that this diesel engine is strong and flexible, at lower revs flexibility leaves much to be desired.

Once the engine runs at a decent speed, the performance of the 160 PS / 320 Nm strong diesel engine is excellent. The power is built up very gradually and with so much ease that it's easy to drive economically. In real life it hardly matters how the car is driven, the fuel economy is always around 5 litres per 100 km (56 mpg).



Specifications

Vauxhall Astra Sports Tourer 1.6 BiTurbo SRI

Size and weight



Length x width x height	447 x 187 x 150 cm
Wheelbase	266 cm
weight	1.396 kg
Trailer	700 kg
Trailer - braked	1.500 kg
Fuel capacity	47 l
Luggage space	540/1630 l
Tyre size	225/45R17

Engine and performance



Capacity	1598 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/
Max power	160 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	350 Nm @ 1500 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	8.9 secs
topspeed	220 km/h
Average mileage	4.2 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	5.2 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	3.7 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	112 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 22,685
Price base model	Â£ 17,285