



Vauxhall Signum

Significantly different

Review | The Vauxhall Omega went off on a well-deserved retirement. But how would Vauxhall deal with the succession? A new Omega seemed not to be an option because the new Vectra had already become so richly sized that a second Omega would become impractically large. That is why Vauxhall didn't choose an even bigger business car but a completely different business car. The Vectra is the base for the Signum but everything else had to be different. How different is the Signum really?

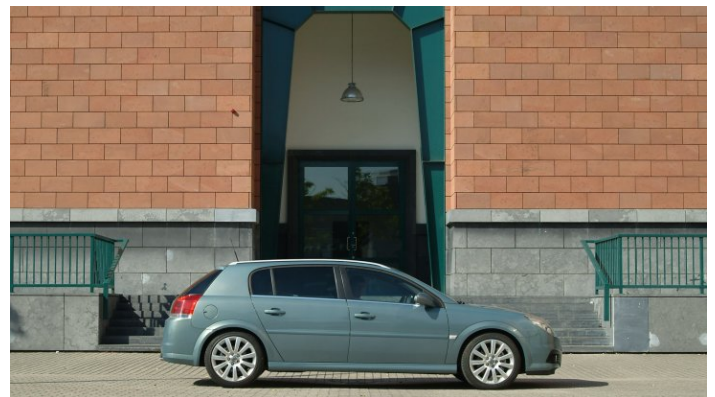
Vauxhall doesn't deny it: the Signum is closely related to the Vectra. That is why a facelift for the Vectra also meant a facelift for the Signum. This rejuvenation treatment was not limited to the usual headlights, grille and bumpers. On a much deeper level the Vectra and Signum have been altered too.

Engines

The engines of the Signum are the same as the ones of the Vectra. However, because of the differences in aerodynamics and weight both cars have a different character. The Signum is also a step higher in the Vauxhall hierarchy and therefore the basic engines of the Vectra are not found in the Signum. For this top-model only top-engines.

The facelift means that, among other things, a completely new 2.8-litre V6 succeeds the 3.0-litre that also had six cylinders. This seems a step back but the new engine has a turbo and therefore performs better than its predecessor that had to do without such assistance. The test vehicle is also equipped with an automatic gearbox and that too gives the engine a different character than the one in the Vectra. The Signum V6 prefers to keep the revolutions down and

pleases with calmness and flexibility.



The chassis of the Signum too is more refined than the one of the Vectra. Partly because of that the Signum glides over the roads like a true limousine. Engine noises and driving wind reach the cabin even less and the Signum creates a certain distance between the comfortable inside and the big bad outside world. Although the car isn't meant to be a business car with chauffeur, this comparison does arise involuntarily. The Signum is noticeably more stable and provides more confidence, especially in extreme situations, than its "little" brother.

Like many Vauxhall models the Signum too has a Sport-button. Push this one and everything, from power steering and chassis to engine management is adjusted. Even the self-learning automatic gearbox now has an extremely sporty behaviour. More importantly: when the sport-option is selected the gear changes of the Signum are so aggressive and the engine reacts so directly to every command that it takes away the fun fairly quickly. Fortunately sequential gear changing is also possible and then the Signum in sport-mode behaves like an extremely capable touring car.

Life Style

Deliberately the word "touring car" is used instead of "sports car". With road holding as well as with the design Vauxhall has done everything to make the Signum stand out from other luxury cars without resorting to the classic coupé or grand turismo. Instead the Signum is a "life style" estate where design goes before functionality.



This does not mean that the Signum is impractical. The backseat easily and smartly folds (removing headrests or folding the seat is not necessary) where after it offers a large, well accessible and even floor.



Compared to the Vectra estate, the Signum however always goes a step further in design and refinement. An example of that is the sunken rear bumper that nevertheless offers just as much safety as the more visible example of the estate car. The curved rear window is a true masterpiece according to the designers.

Behind the wheel it soon becomes apparent that this is not an extra luxurious Vectra but a model on its own. The seats of the test vehicle are upholstered in leather. Wherever even remotely possible Vauxhall has chosen for higher quality materials. All shapes are equal to those of the Vectra, all buttons are at the same position but still the finish gives the Signum a considerably richer feel.

Roof cabinet

Very special is the "roof cabinet"; a strip of pockets, compartments and reading lights that runs over the ceiling of the car from the front to the back. Instead of a backseat the Signum has two separate generously sized seats with equally generously sized head- and legroom around it.

In between, an "entertainment" system can be found. In it, amongst other things, an audio system that is separate from the radio in the front. Under the armrest there is a hidden fridge. According to Vauxhall, this provision is not meant to make the Signum into an executive car with chauffeur. Instead, Vauxhall aims to always exceed the client's expectation. Many a business driver in the meantime

has fallen for the unique concept of the Signum and has therefore chosen Vauxhall. Rightly so, for the Signum is different from the usual.



Conclusion

The Vauxhall Signum has had a facelift at the same time as the Vectra but despite that it is much more than an improved Vectra. The nose is the same and both cars use the same parts as much as possible. However, where possible the Signum goes just that step further, which in the end makes the car much more refined and finds itself noticeably on a higher level. It is noticeable at everything; from technology to design. It makes the Signum into a unique car that is not meant to be the successor of the Omega. The Signum is meant as a special alternative in the higher business market. ■



Specifications

Vauxhall Signum Elite Nav 2.8i V6 24v Turbo Automatic

Size and weight



Length x width x height	465 x 180 x 147 cm
Wheelbase	283 cm
Kerb weight	1.480 kg
Trailer	unknown
Trailer - braked	1.600 kg
Fuel capacity	60 l
Luggage space	365/1410 l
Tyre size	225/45R17

Engine and performance



Capacity	2792 cc
Cylinders / valves	6/
Max power	230 PS @ 5500 rpm
Max torque	330 Nm @ 1800 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	8 secs
Top speed	243 km/h
Average mileage	11.2 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	17.4 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	7.6 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	269 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 25,685
Price base model	Â£ 18,200