



Volkswagen Passat Variant (2005 - 2010)

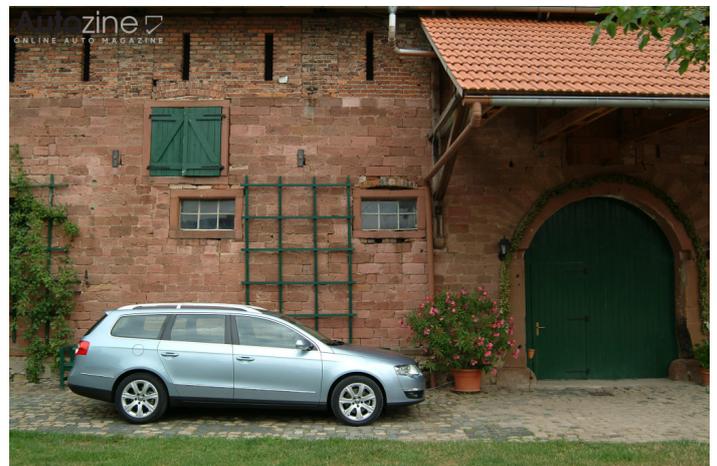
Space miracle

Review | Space is the factor that distinguishes the new Volkswagen Passat from other business sedans. The car has grown in all directions and thanks to smart use of this space this also applies to the interior. It is therefore quite understandable that many people have eagerly anticipated the Passat Estate; the estate version. From 29 September the Estate can be seen in the showrooms, but we have already driven it in Frankfurt.

In short this is the conclusion of the Passat sedan's test: the car is a huge step forward from its predecessor. Not only have technology and ergonomics improved tremendously. The car offers more for its money and is most of all much, much bigger than before. Maybe this sudden growth is the reason why 60% of all Passats sold is a Estate.

Front and back

Another discovery from the first Passat-test was that the basic interior is very plain and dull. That is why this time the choice was made for the Highline-version. Thanks to light colours the interior is now very pleasing to the eyes. Particularly the seats with a half leather, half fabric upholstery are very nice (even though the shape is still not ideal for every body type). The dashboard also looks much better with a lighter interior and it makes the cabin luxurious and inviting.



The test vehicle has almost all available options, including a DVD-based navigation system. This consists of a small display between the rev counter and speedo on which detailed instructions appear, plus a colour screen with maps and various dialogues. Bluetooth-telephone connection, voice recognition and the most exciting audio system of the pricelist are part of the equipment. The audio system has been developed in conjunction with the renowned Dynaudio, but because of the moderate speakers and amplifier the sound is disappointing.

Not only in the front but also in the back it is very comfortable in the Passat Estate. Again the Passat scores on space and two adults are seated comfortably. All electronics can be taken along because the Passat has a 220-volt socket in the back! The smallest passengers have been considered with an (optional) integrated child seat. This easily folds out of the backseat, which makes the cumbersome procedure of taking it in and out of the car a thing of the past!



Variant

To transform the sedan into an estate car Volkswagen went a lot further than simply extending the car to increase the luggage space. It starts with the access to that luggage space. The boot can be operated electrically (optional). This is not unique but the thing that is quite special is the memory that determines how far the boot is opened. The maximum is 2 metres so that even tall people won't collide with the boot. In a low garage for instance a more limited opening can be chosen.

With its 1,731 litres the boot is considerably larger than average in this category but it is not just the size which makes the Passat stand out. More importantly: Volkswagen dropped a small stitch by not using the maximum width. Compartments are created between the rear wheels and the rear bumper and only between the front seats and the rear wheels is the total width of the luggage space available. The length however can be used to the full. If necessary the front seat (optional) can be folded after which objects with a maximum length of 2.9 metres can be transported.



Luggage management

And that is only one of many smart inventions. The "Luggage Management System" for instance comprises of two rails in the luggage room where to several different accessories can be attached. This forms a barrier in width, which prevents luggage from sliding when braking or accelerating. A handy variable and adjustable bungee band prevents things from sliding while cornering. Ingenious is the net that can be used to keep luggage in its place or that can transform at the turn of a hand into a large bag to safely carry delicate items.

With all netting, separators, bungee bands and so on in their place the Estate shows its next trump card: automatic level control. Thanks to this provision the car leans over as little as possible even with a full load. Handling therefore is almost the same irrespective of the load and that always guarantees safety. While driving with a trailer the electronic stabilising programme goes a bit further than usual and also

stabilises a caravan or trailer if it starts swerving.

Diesel

The Passat Estate is available with the same engines as the sedan. Previously the smallest diesel was tested. This engine performed well on the motorway but only moderately in city traffic. That is why the largest diesel now gets a chance to prove itself: a 2-litre 4-cylinder with 150 horse power (an example with 170 horse power will follow in December) and naturally a soot filter.

This power source sounds and performs noticeably better than the basic engine but has a typical Volkswagen-character. At low revolutions this diesel has a reasonable performance but only at high revolutions the turbo kicks in and the engine really springs to life. Then the performance is good which turns the 2-litre diesel Passat into a fast business car. However: the competition currently offers more advanced diesel engines that are even faster and/or more economical. On the German autobahn this Passat diesel does well on the left lane, that is fast lane, and the overwhelming display of power of competing diesels remains to be seen.

No competitor however has an answer to Volkswagen's DSG gearbox. This unique system has two clutches. It works in a way that the next gear up or down is already prepared so that at the time of "changing gears" the only thing necessary is to depress the clutch. The effect is staggering: if used correctly even this diesel estate acts like a lively sports car!



Conclusion

Volkswagen has taken a huge step forward with the new Passat. Already from the basic model up the car is more complete and well-considered than before. However, comparing it to the competition the new Passat is good, but not significantly better than the rest.

With the Estate however Volkswagen proves that the Passat is capable of being much more than that. The considerable size makes the Passat an immediate favourite for, as an estate car, it offers considerably more space than average. Furthermore, this space is much more useful than in other estate cars thanks to many smart inventions.

With the right equipment and options the Passat becomes a grand and not least a fine car. Particularly with the DSG gearbox the Estate transforms from a reliable German "space wonder" into a more than justifiable lease favourite. ■



Specifications

Volkswagen Passat Variant (2005 - 2010)

Size and weight



| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Length x width x height | 477 x 182 x 152 cm |
| Wheelbase | 271 cm |
| Kerb weight | 1.507 kg |
| Trailer | 750 kg |
| Trailer - braked | 1.800 kg |
| Fuel capacity | 70 l |
| Luggage space | 603/1731 l |
| Tyre size | 215/55R16 |

Engine and performance



| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Capacity | 1968 cc |
| Cylinders / valves | 4/4 |
| Max power | 140 PS @ 4000 rpm |
| Max torque | 320 Nm @ 1750 rpm |
| Drive | front wheels |
| Acceleration 0 - 62 mph | 10.1 secs |
| Top speed | 203 km/h |
| Average mileage | 6.7 l / 100 km |
| Mileage urban | 8.8 l / 100 km |
| Mileage extra urban | 5.4 l / 100 km |
| CO2 emissions | 159 gr / km |

Price

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|------------------|-----------|
| Price | Â£ 22,620 |
| Price base model | Â£ 16,465 |