

## MOTORING MATTERS *by Sandie Goodwin*

### NEW SEAT EXEO TAKES TO THE ROAD

SEAT has just launched their latest model, the Exeo, an ideal choice for today's 'credit crunch-ed' driver. Luxury, comfort and spaciousness come as standard but the Exeo also has the sports philosophy of Auto Emocion SEAT is so well known for. At launch, there are three engine choices – two diesel and one petrol – with the diesels having advanced common rail technology, for the first time in a SEAT. All the models comply with stringent new EU5 emissions legislation. With a choice of four trim levels, S, SE, Sport and SE Lux, the Exeo is sure to appeal to both new customers and those who have already got to know the brand. Until now, SEAT owners have not had the choice of a car in this segment so for those looking to step up to a larger car the Exeo will be welcomed.



On the outside, the Exeo looks sporty, with SEAT features such as the Arrow Design nose and the brand logo that doubles as a boot latch at the rear, and the side mirrors located on the door panels. Inside is a comfortable, safe environment, with the entry-level 'S' version featuring six airbags as standard, with a driver's side knee airbag and two additional rear seat thorax airbags optionally available across the entire range. The 'S' also features, as standard, dual zone climate control, ABS + TCS, ESP with EBA emergency braking, Bluetooth phone connectivity, 16-inch alloy wheels, trip computer, front and rear power windows, heated electric door mirrors, fog lights, remote controlled central locking, CD AM/FM radio with MP3, Aux-in and four speakers, and Isofix anchoring points on the front passenger seat and rear side seats. Standard equipment on all models includes Bluetooth mobile phone connectivity, dual zone climate control, alloy wheels, one-touch electric windows all round; twin halogen headlamps with electric range adjustment, height and reach adjustable multi-function steering wheel; AM/FM radio/CD player with a minimum of four speakers; Aux-in

connection; USB port; integrated rear window radio antennae; ABS; ESP + EBA; six airbags with front seat passenger airbag deactivation; remote central locking with deadlocks; volumetric alarm with back-up horn and tilt sensor; electronic engine immobiliser. SE trim adds rear parking sensors, automatic lights and wipers, auto-dimming rear view mirror, leather steering wheel and gearknob, and an acoustic windscreen. Buyers of Sport models get the same equipment as the SE, with the addition of sports suspension and seats and 18-inch alloy wheels. As all models are so well equipped the Exeo does not offer a huge range of "extras" but these include solar sunroof; rear side airbags; DVD-based satellite navigation with SD HC card slots for MP3 playback and upgraded colour dash display; Bi-xenon headlights with AFS; double-glazed side windows with heat-reflective windscreen and electrically adjustable front seats with driver's seat memory function. There are 13 body colours available combined with the three fabric trims offered in S, SE and Sport versions. SE Lux buyers get a black leather interior as standard with the option of cream leather.



#### FIRST DRIVE OF EXEO

Driving the Exeo for the first time was put to the test in the beautiful Cotswolds countryside. This included every kind of road surface from motorways down to small country lanes with passing places. When getting into the Exeo for the first time the interior space immediately impresses and there is a certain familiarity to the vehicle because the front dash area is styled on the Audi A4 Cabriolet. Instruments are easy to read and easy on the eye. One thing definitely easy on the pocket is the fuel consumption with the 141bhp version of the 2-litre diesel having an official average of 51.4mpg. The central console design has a folding armrest. There is a button panel next to the handbrake that includes the tyre pressure monitoring control, Aux-in connection

and 12V power socket. The solar sunroof keeps the passenger compartment cooler on hot days by activating the cabin air vents using electricity generated via small solar panels in the sunroof, rather than the car's battery. It activates automatically when temperature sensors detect a significant difference between interior and exterior values, and draws cooler, ambient air through the cabin.

As compliance for emission levels gets ever more tough, the Exeo has 143 and 153g/km for the 141bhp and 167bhp engines and the petrol engine produces 179g/km. The Exeo is made in Spain at the Martorell facility near Barcelona. 18 months ago the SEAT Exeo project was announced making this a record time for the development of a new model, thanks to the significant synergies within the Volkswagen Group. The Martorell factory is equipped with a new sheet metal shop totalling 15,000 square metres with a daily output capacity of 450 vehicles, with each SEAT Exeo taking just 25 and a half hours to make.

The warranty package for the Exeo includes:

- \* Three-year/60,000-mile warranty (comprises two-year manufacturer's warranty with unlimited mileage plus a further one-year Dealer Warranty limited to 60,000 miles)
- \* 12-year anti-perforation warranty – the Exeo has a fully-galvanised steel body
- \* Three-year paintwork warranty against manufacturing defects
- \* Two-year SEAT Assistance roadside assistance package valid in 33 countries throughout Europe and bordering countries

All Exeos have the same servicing requirements, with a major service required only at 20,000-mile intervals with an oil change every 10,000 miles. Exeos which travel less than 10,000 miles a year require an inspection service, which includes oil change, every 12 months. Prices start from £17,740 for the 2.0 TDI CR on the road, although these are the recommended prices and there are deals to be had at SEAT dealers.

