

MOTORING MATTERS *by Anthony Goodwin*

C'MON!

Yet another car with a fun and catchy television advert, I especially like the toys you can buy to go with your new car. For those of you that read Motoring Matters on a regular basis, I have featured the new Corsa before, but only briefly. That was back in the summer, with the fantastic VXR arctic. I have now had a Corsa for a longer trial and have tried and tested the new ecoFLEX model. The new Corsa is wider, longer and more muscular looking than the previous Corsa, the 3-door model has a coupe-like roofline giving it a sporty look. We had a 5 door model on trial and I was impressed with the interior space. This has been achieved with some clever design such as the rear window sloping at a much greater angle which gives more boot space!

As for the interior, it has got a very luxurious and upmarket feel with tactile materials being used. The design takes in the need for greater comfort and space for all occupants. Gone are the days of small hatchbacks being great for the front passengers but the rear seats only really good for small people. During the test I had 4 adults in the car in comfort. The seats for me are one of the best things - they were comfortable and supportive. One feature available as an option gives you the ability to 'personalise' the car to individual driver settings. Up to five drivers can store their preferred climate, audio and on-board electronic systems in individual key fobs so that the car adapts to their requirements as soon as they slip behind the wheel.

I opened the boot and thought there was plenty of space and a completely flat load floor at boot level. But the flat floor lifts out revealing an extra 135 litres of storage space with the seats up, giving up to 285 litres of load space up to the load cover or take it out and you get 1,100 litres if loaded up to the roof.

As for safety features the new Corsa has some innovative systems. As with most modern cars you get twin airbags as standard with curtain

and side airbags being standard on all models above club trim. It also benefits from Vauxhall's patented Pedal Release System, which pulls the pedal box down and away from the driver in a crash to reduce intrusion of the bodywork into the passenger footwell. The Corsa will even warn other motorists if you are in trouble, if the ABS is activated under heavy braking, all three brake lights will blink five times per second. If any of the car's airbags are deployed in an impact, the system will automatically switch on the car's hazard warning lights to alert other road users.

So how does it drive? Very well I can report, the 1.3 CDTi diesel engine was surprisingly responsive and was great on the motorway and fun and nippy round town too. As for economy, it's very frugal with the combined coming in at 70.6 mpg, the emissions are good too - 105g - this means road tax is just £35. The ecoFLEX model was fun to drive and felt just like any of the other models I have driven, it is great on country roads and is very sporty but still maintains a great level of comfort. Sometimes you get a small car that handles well but the comfort is compromised; this is not true with the Corsa. The 5 speed gearbox was great with a purposeful shift between the gears. There are two trim levels available for the ecoFLEX Club and Life. Standard features include ABS with brake assist, central door locking, electric adjustable door mirrors and speed sensitive power steering. For

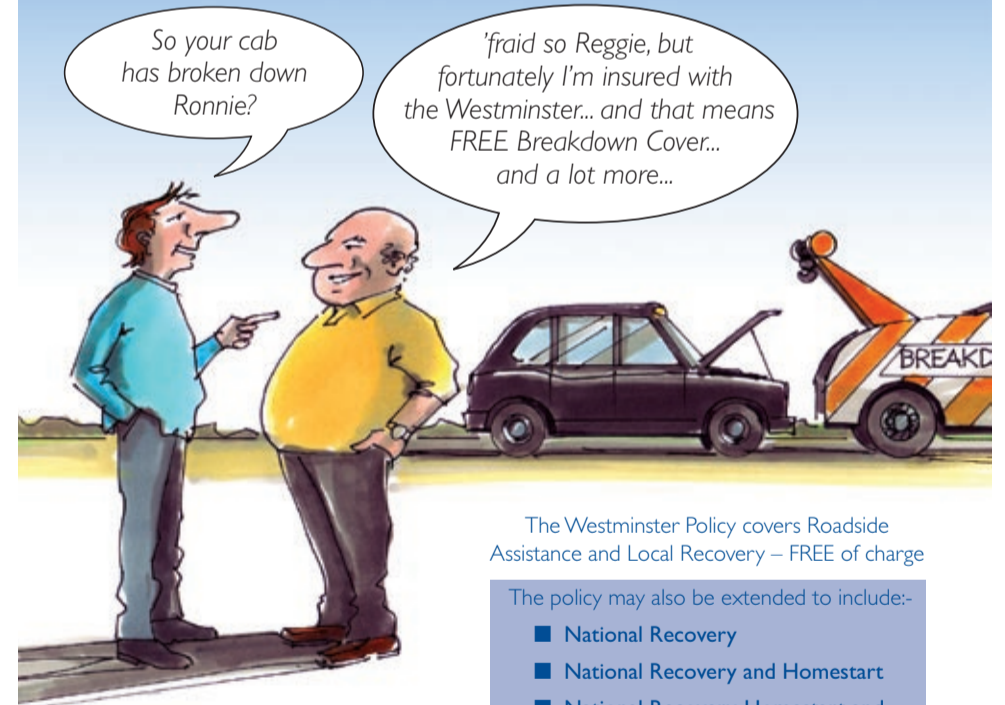


those who like options there is a very comprehensive options list, Vauxhall have created options packages such as a winter pack where you get heated front seats and a heated leather steering wheel.

Prices start at £7,495 on the road for the 3 door 1.0i 12v Expression with the range topping Design 1.4i 16v auto at £12,945.



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