



Radio Taxis Group Limited

## RTG Station Road N19 Driver Centre are opening their doors to all of London's licensed taxi drivers!

Enjoy Complimentary Breakfast Rolls, Tea and Coffee

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May to Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2010 - 7am to 11am.  
Come and say hello, meet the team

Invitation extends to radio and non radio drivers alike

[www.radiotaxis.co.uk](http://www.radiotaxis.co.uk)



## MOTORING MATTERS *by Anthony Goodwin*

### BUILT IN BRITAIN – THE NEW VAUXHALL ASTRA

It is hard to believe that the New Astra is Vauxhall's 10th generation of this compact family car. The Vauxhall Astra has been completely re-designed with coupe styling outside and all new interior finishes you would be mistake for being in a premium saloon. Vauxhall spent along time on the Insignia and you can see they have taken some of the new family styling in the Astra both inside and out. You also get the updated Griffin badge. Another great bonus for the New Astra is it being built in Ellesmere Port and Vauxhall are proudly sporting the fact the Astra is built in Britain on the rear window of every vehicle.

So let's start with the exterior of the New Astra; the front grille is slim and low with eagle eyed styled headlamps which incorporate the wing shaped daytime running lights similar to the Insignia. Working along the car you have a shoulder line which runs along the side of the body into the sculpted rear light units. On most models you also get matt chrome surrounds on the side windows. Pressed into the side panel just ahead of the rear wheels is the unmistakable blade motif, echoing the distinctive design cue in the front doors of the Insignia. On the new Astra, though, the blade swings upward in a rearward movement, providing the car with its own individual identity. The tail light units are set apart to help give the Astra its muscular rear proportions, viewed at night the rear lights have a double winged design to echo the front running lights.

Now let's step inside, which in the New Astra is a pleasure, with a premium feel and design. You can see the wing and blade motifs brought over from the Insignia, the wrap around instrument panel which goes from driver's door handle to passenger door handle is the biggest wing design inside. On our test model we also had one of my favourite things, ambient lighting, you get light points in the door handle recesses, above the central consol and framing the gearbox surround. Interior space is good and you can fit 5 full sized adults comfortably. The seats have been radically changed and have industry leading levels of adjustment, for both driver and front passenger.

Here's an interesting question: do people actually put gloves in their glovebox? Well Vauxhall asked that question in market research and had some interesting results which have helped design the storage within the New Astra. The 20 most common items stored in cars are pens, coins, a flashlight, a road atlas, a parking disc, sunglasses, a wallet, paper tissues,



a mobile phone, CDs, sweets, cups, magazines, newspapers, fruit, a first aid kit, a jacket, a 1.5/1.0/0.5-litre drinks bottle. And, of course, gloves. So you get storage in the centre consul that can hold up to 9 CD's, there's also the option of an under-seat drawer beneath the passenger seat which is big enough to hold a pair of shoes. As for those gloves? According to the survey, most owners don't keep them in the glovebox at all. They usually get thrown in the door's side pocket, next to the ice scraper.

There are 9 engines at present, you can choose from a good range of both petrol's and diesels. Petrol engines are 1.4 ltr 87ps or 100ps, 1.6 ltr 115ps, 1.4 ltr or 1.6 ltr Turbo, emissions are between 129 – 167 Co2 with fuel economy between 51 mpg and 39 mpg. Diesel engines are 1.3 ltr CDTi 95ps Ecoflex, 1.7 CDTi 110ps or 125ps and 2.0 ltr CDTi 160ps. The Ecoflex engine has Co2 emissions of just 109g, with the other ranging from 124g – 154g and fuel consumption figures of 60 mpg – 48 mpg.

So now for some little extras which I like! FlexRide system which offers three driving settings, in standard mode the car continuously adapts to all driving conditions, tour relaxes the damper settings for a more comfortable ride and also reduces the steering effort, benefiting drivers on long journeys. My favourite was Sport mode which offers a more connected driving experience: the dampers stiffen; the steering sharpens and the electronic throttle offers a swifter pedal response. To underline this effect, the instrument panel illumination changes from white to red. Other options are Electronic parking brake, adaptive forward lighting and of course you can choose for a range of in car entertainment packages.

At present the New Astra is only available in a 5 door version; coupe and 3 door versions will arrive later this year. You can choose from 5 trim levels s, exclusive, SRi, SE and Elite. Standard equipment includes ESP, ABS, air con and 7 speaker stereo. Our test model was in SE trim so we got Front fog lights, auto lights and wipers, ambient lighting and cruise control. We also had the following options Sat Navigation, Premium Forward lighting pack, Ergonomic Front Seats and FlexRide.

Prices start from £16,015 for the 1.4 ltr Exclusiv with the range topping Elite 2.0 ltr CDTi being £23,010.