

# Enjoy the Ride

*Motor  
Madness*

**Ian Lamming** revels in the power of the brand new VW Amarok

**T**HIS can't be right. How can I be enjoying the ride this much when I'm in a pick-up? But I am, I really am.

How things have moved on with what used to be the preserve of commercial users.

Recognising the potential of such leviathan among lifestyle customers as well as workers, VW's latest Amarok is much more Touareg than it is a utilitarian workhorse.

The second you climb inside – it is a good height off the ground – it is pure luxury. It is not soft; the dash looks like it has been hewn from granite or riven slate, which, with the lofty driving position, makes you feel tough and unbreakable.

But the clocks are pure VW, the console features excellent touch screen and infotainment centre and the seats are leather and heated. It is comfortable, practical and hard-wearing, but also plush and well equipped.

The thing I love the most is that, despite its touch screen gubbins, the key features for me remain easy to find buttons. So I can zero the

trip with out hunting and scrawling through myriad menus on the touch screen, there are buttons for the heated seats and to turn off the stop start, in fact it is all supremely easy to use.

The diff lock is a button on the transmission tunnel which gives Amarok its all wheel drive go-anywhere ability. Long travel suspension also makes this a proper off-roader. For the heavy stuff you might want to change the rubber.

On reflection, I think the thing that makes this pick-up stand out is the incredible levels of refinement from the engine and transmission.

Amarok comes with a glorious 3.0 litre V6 diesel which is staggeringly powerful and refined. It just has so much power, which allows it to bowl along on just a whiff of throttle. But when you need to accelerate or climb steep hills, woof, it's off like the proverbial scalded feline.

Mated to a superb eight speed auto, the vehicle always seems to be in the right ratio and is so seamless that changes are imperceptible.

Because it has so much oomph – 224PS to be precise – and forward motion is no trouble at all then fuel economy is excellent too. I managed almost 32mpg, which, given its power output, is pretty impressive.

Amarok is big too. With the lid on the back it is sublimely practical. Just flip up the glass, drop the back door and hurl in the bales and sheep with reckless abandon. Well, not too reckless if we are talking about livestock, obviously. It will tow like a train too thanks to huge reserves of creamy smooth torque.

Pick-ups can often be a bit cramped in the back; not so Amarok as the twin cab is spacious and well appointed for driver and passengers alike.

When there is a pick-up in the drive, normally the bar is lower, expectations realistic, after all these vehicles are designed to do a job, a tough job at that, and that often means compromise in terms of dynamics and luxuries.

In the case of the Amarok this is simply not the case and it can be judged alongside any big luxurious SUV. That can't be right but it is, so why not stop worrying and just enjoy the ride.

## Fact File

- VW Amarok
- Engine: 3.0 V6 diesel
- Power: 224PS
- 0-62mph: -
- Top speed: 119mph
- Combined MPG: 36.2
- Transmission: eight-speed automatic
- CO2 g/km: 204

