



# Skoda gets Sporty

Ian Lamming test drives the Skoda Octavia vRS

## Fact File

Skoda Octavia vRS

Engine: 2.0 turbo diesel

Power: 184PS

0-62mph: 8.2 secs

Top speed: 143mph

Combined miles per gallon: 61.4

Transmission: six-speed manual

CO2 g/km: 119

**T**HERE are some badges you associate with sporty and Skoda wasn't one – until now.

The marque has moved so successfully away from original perceptions that it is hard to remember the cruel jokes that once slighted the name.

If you are going to go to the trouble of reinventing yourself to this extent then why not introduce a sporting element?

That's what Skoda has done with the vRS range and one glance at the Octavia tells you they might have hit upon yet another winner.

Octavia is a smart enough hatchback or estate but vRS leaps from the page thanks to massive alloys and huge red brake calipers. Subtle spoilers and large diameter pipes peering from the rear valance tell you that this particular Skoda is built for speed.

The diesel variant sports a 2.0 litre oil burner that develops and starling 184PS. Smooth, usable, low down torque make this large car a veritable flying machine but despite its incredible real-for-the-road performance it remains staggeringly economical. It's a combination that always finds favour because you can enjoy the drive with a heavy foot without paying through the nose, if you will forgive mixing my

appendages.

vRS also feels right as it sits squarely on the road. It is long and wide, low and planted. The ride is superb with perfect balance, tenacious grip and forgiving nature.

The tiny steering wheel, sports seats and slick six-speed box can't fail to make you feel special. The interior is tactile, well built and intuitive. The vRS has everything you need in terms of luxuries and it is all extremely easy to use.

Skoda has some very simple design features too which when you use them should be fitted to all car but seldom are.

The rear hatch, for instance, has an easy to grip handle on the inside which means you don't have to touch the filthy outside lip when closing the boot. Simple, obvious, but brilliant.

Unlike a true sports car the vRS remains a practical hatch with massive boot and oodles of legroom, particularly in the rear.

Sometimes we would all like a bit of fun in a car but the sensible thing is to go for the less sporty, practical option. In the vRS there are no compromises to be made as it is incredibly functional but also manages to put a huge smile on the face of the driver.