

When the going gets tough



Ian Lamming has a smashing time in the new Vauxhall Insignia Country Tourer 4 X 4

WITH a Pollyanna mindset something good can come out of pretty much anything – even the crump of clashing metal.

When red van man decides to round the bend of our private drive just as the Vauxhall Insignia CT is reversing there is a melding of plastic and metal.

While respective insurance companies wrangle over who is to blame my attention is more preoccupied with the resulting damage...impressive.

The poor old Italian van looks worse for wear and actually has to be recovered from our track.

Meanwhile the best of British has a tiny crack in the brakelight and a light scuff on the bumper. Score one for Vauxhall. This thing must be made of girders. It's a comforting thought when you get round to thinking about it.

Today's roads are pretty full, slow and packed with stressed people. Attentions span those of gnats and distractions are myriad. If you aren't safe in your own driveway then you must be positively vulnerable when you step out into the big wide world. So the bump is a salutary reminder that if you are in a Vauxhall your chances of survival just improved.

The incident cast my mind back to a story I covered when I was a reporter in North Yorkshire. A car had flipped on the A1, skidded some distance on its roof and collided with another. In those days that didn't bode well for the driver and Fire and Rescue Services, who were asked to cut the victim

free, were not too hopeful.

How amazed and pleased we all were when the sum total of the driver's injuries were dented pride and a small cut to his little finger. How come? Well, the car was one of the first on the road to be fitted with a new-fangled device called an airbag. That was a Vauxhall too.

We take it all for granted until it happens to us but the rest of the time spent with the Insignia Country Tourer was blessed with new-found respect.

So what is CT? Well it starts life as an Insignia estate, then it is pumped up to make it look a bit more off-roader and is fitted with a more than useful 4x4 system. It becomes the perfect tool for rural roads and tracks, dodgy asphalt spattered with slurry, squished leaves, gravel, ice and snow, pretty much all the delights of living in the countryside.

Fitting 4x4 boosts traction no end but adds weight. But that is fine as the diesel is Vauxhall's very powerful twin-turbo diesel which more than makes up for any weight increase.

Extra power also means that it doesn't have to be worked any harder which would have damaged economy.

Insignia remains a very good way to travel. It's a good looking estate with a functional, smart and spacious interior and the CT adds another dimension, that of increased go-anywhere ability.

It's a tough car for tough conditions and perfectly suited to North Yorkshire, including your own driveway.

Fact File

Vauxhall Insignia
Country Tourer 4x4
Engine: 2.0 twin
turbo diesel
Power: 195PS
0-62mph: 8.9 secs
Top speed:
139mph
Combined miles
per gallon: 57.6
Transmission:
automatic
CO2 g/km: 129