



More than just shades of grey

Ian Lamming brightens up his life in the Insignia Ecoflex

Fact File

Vauxhall Insignia
Ecoflex SRI
Engine: 2.0 turbo diesel
Power: 163PS
0-62mph: 9.5 secs
Top speed: 136mph
Combined miles per gallon: 65.7
Transmission: six speed manual
Insurance: 20E
CO2 g/km: 114

IT'S a grey day. The car is grey and so is the interior. It's enough to make you feel glum.

But there is a ray of sunshine brightening the gloom and it comes from a surprising quarter.

On paper the colour of the car should match its dynamic but it doesn't. The Vauxhall Insignia is fleet car personified, company car man's chosen ride and should be nowhere near as enjoyable as it undoubtedly is.

Insignia is not just okay, neither is it plain good, it is actually truly excellent to drive and has you shaking your head and smiling in wonder.

Don't be fooled by its monochrome appearance the Vauxhall is colourful in every other way.

The new interior is much improved as the touch screen does away with the plethora of switches that once festooned its interior. The dash is excellent, nice to look at, very easy to use and the driving position is peerless being both comfortable and sporting.

The sporty element translates to the way this particular Insignia drives. It feels sharp and controlled, positive and lively. Handling is superb, grip more than a match and the

dynamic feel of the Vauxhall means it more than lives up to its SRI notation.

The Ecoflex badging refers to the engine that is supposed to be clean and economical – which it is.

But it gives a false impression that the motor might be a bit green, weak and breathless, which it certainly isn't. It is in fact a cracking motor and pulls like a train. It is happy on the motorways, as you might expect. But it also loves the twisty stuff and the ups and downs of the Dales.

The six-speed box is a delight as are the clutch and throttle and overall the Insignia could not be better to drive.

Then there's practicality where it scores with a capacious interior and whopping boot; just the thing for weekend trips away loaded to the gunwales.

I love surprises and the Insignia did an incredible job of bringing colour to my cheeks and light to my automotive life.