

THE CAR MAN

Tim Saunders



SKODA SCALA

My first impressions of the Skoda Scala are that it reminds me of the first generation Kia Rio, in production some 20 years ago. It's the dimensions of the vehicles and the overall look that are similar. The Scala's major selling point is the fact that its boot is larger than that found in a Golf. It's a hatchback, not an estate.

This model is fitted with a £410 electrically operated boot, which can be opened by lifting a switch on the inside of the driver's door but it cannot be closed from inside. It can only be closed by pushing the button on the underside of the bootlid. It's flash and something well suited to a chauffeur or business executive but a young family? As an addled dad, speed is of the essence. After all I have three demanding and impatient children. But I do find many so called luxuries a bit of a pain. You see it's quicker for me to open and close a boot myself without relying on a third party – it's a bit like running a business, if you don't do the job yourself it isn't done properly. I always find it's necessary to double check whether the boot has shut. Sometimes it won't if there's too much inside or the contents are too near the lip for its liking. Then of course there are the children to worry about. If a finger or hand was on the lip of the boot as the lid was coming down, it doesn't bear thinking about. What happens when it fails? How do you then get into it? A good thump of a traditional bootlid will usually always close it. In my opinion, manual is best. Keep it

simple for the best results, just like with writing an article.

It's helpful that the front passenger airbag can be switched off, so that one of our children can safely sit in the front. This is often not the case.

When starting the car it takes time for the centre console to come to life, which is annoying. Driving an old car as I usually do I am accustomed to just getting in and turning the radio on. You can't do that in the Scala. You have to wait for the system to initialise and it requires you to tap the touchscreen before you can get the music on.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Skoda Scala SE L

Price: £21,205 incl VAT

Top speed: 117mph

0 to 60mph: 10.9secs

Economy: around 45mpg

CO2: 114g/km

Watch the video at www.testdrives.biz