

The new Opel Astra makes a bolting introduction

 By [Barend Du Plooy](#)

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The Opel Astra is a well-known vehicle and it has been around the block for a very long time, competing and rivaling with many mid-range hatchbacks in the process.

I had the opportunity to test drive the brand-new Opel Astra for a week and it was nothing short of exhilarating.



Source: www.quickpic.co.za

The technicalities...

The Opel Astra has a 1.6litre inline 4-cylinder turbocharged power plant with a sporty 147kW at 5,500rpm and astonishingly 280Nm of torque at a low 1,700rpm.

This exceeded my wildest expectations with such a cheeky little engine. This car really shines when it comes online at 5,000rpm, as most petrol engines do...



Source: www.quickpic.co.za

The Opel Astra will do 0-100km/h in 7 seconds flat, and it will accelerate to over 200km/h in absolutely no time. This model also has a nice little button below the throttle, but be warned when it's activated as this will shift down two gears and really unleash this beast's potential and also hurt your pocket as this is a thirsty little hatchback, so definitely don't expect performance paired with economy.

The throttle response is sharp and superbly smooth. If I were to compare, well, it would probably feel like you're driving in a Golf GTI - blindfolded. You can definitely compare this to similar vehicles in its class, hence the only words that come to mind are... simply breathtaking!

The Opel Astra features a 6-speed automatic gearbox, gear shifts are reasonably smooth and sport mode ensures max power as revs hit the 6,000rpm mark.

Features

Traffic sign recognition is included in this model. The heated steering wheel, which is certainly a nice feature to have, is the same as I encountered in the Grandland X, but it is more efficient with the sport steering wheel. Also, the steering wheel looks really nice and is extremely comfortable, but it's a tad small and gets in the way of the speed dials in front of you, no matter how you adjust the seat.



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Cornering wasn't as grippy as I expected, but this vehicle definitely makes up for it in the acceleration department. 18-inch Alloy wheels accompany the sleek design of this eye catcher, as heads definitely turned while I was driving it.

The brakes on this vehicle were rather disappointing. To be honest, I feel they tried to cut costs here and this is definitely not the place to do so.

The new Electronic Stability Control improves the Astra's stability greatly by detecting and reducing the loss of traction (skidding) and ensures a clean pull away - every time!

The Astra also boasts an LED IntelliLux Matrix Lighting System with automatic headlamp levelling control and adaptive forward lighting. Hill-start assist which detects when the vehicle is nearing or exploiting an incline is really nice to have in such a mid-range hatch, the brakes stiffen up and ease up hills.



Source: www.quickpic.co.za

The suspension could be better, but for the retail value I feel it suits the Astra, not too harsh on our reasonable roads. Just be sure to not hit any potholes as this could have devastating consequences.

So to cap off, here are, in my opinion, the pros and cons.

What did I like?

- Performance is truly right up there regarding only a 1.6litre engine, and it surely gives 2.0l engines a go.
- The sport steering wheel, which in my opinion, is really comfortable to hold.
- The beautiful 18-inch rims suit this hot little hatch.

What did I dislike?

- The brakes are under par and not truly able to halt this vehicle's immense speed.
- The sport steering wheel is in the way of the top of the tachometer and the speedometer.
- Fuel consumption is going to hurt your pocket if you step on it.

Pricing

Starting price from R381,589 for the 1.4 M/T and A/T respectively and R471,747 for the 1.6 M/T model. R508,000 for the 1.6 A/T Sport top spec model.

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