



Rover's *return*

Motoring journalist Tim Barnes-Clay reviews the Range Rover Velar, which fits slap in the middle of the Range Rover Evoque and the Range Rover Sport.

The Velar is refreshing in the sense that it's different looking, with svelte LED head and rear lights that fold around its flanks. It also has a slanted grille and flat door handles. All this helps to modernise the look of the Range Rover family.

It's a style with restrained detailing, such as the crease line going from the front light to the rear, via the drawn-out side vents. It's evidence of Land Rover's 'reductionism' strategy - and that's even more obvious in the cabin.

The Velar houses a conventional flat dashboard, with a middle section flowing from the centre console and upward to the car's infotainment system. This consists of dual 10-inch touchscreens that are simply awesome. When switched off, they're black panels that complement the Velar's uncluttered style. But when the Velar's ignition is turned on, the panels spark into life, with bright displays. What's more, the upper unit pivots forward to welcome you.

Incorporated into the nethermost of the bottom screen are two bigger dials with their own LED displays, and a volume button. The lower monitor governs the ventilation and heating as well as the Velar's Terrain Response technology. Both dials function with each setting. The higher screen will sort out the navigation, audio and telephone systems, while both displays are simple to operate. It's also a cinch to connect your smartphone. Oh, and there's even built in WiFi, should you need it.

The car on test here is the 3-litre V6 diesel in R-Dynamic HSE guise, with a price tag of £70,530. It's gorgeous and well kitted out, but not inexpensive. It will cost a fair bit to run, too, managing around 44mpg. CO2 emissions are 167g/km.

The Velar's 3-litre diesel powered engine produces a refined drive. Yes, you can still hear the familiar diesel rattle if you press the accelerator hard, but it's not a deal-breaker. You can also hear a bit of tyre roar, but that's due to the Velar being so well insulated from any wind noise.



{ As you'd anticipate, the Velar will handle off-roading well, too - probably more so than most people will even attempt. }

Acceleration is quick for a machine weighing in at two tonnes. It's not so much about the 6.5-second 0-62mph time as the immense swell of muscle. It makes the diesel Velar more entertaining than the supercharged petrol version. Throttle reaction is excellent, too.

The Range Rover Velar is seated on the same chassis as the Jaguar F-Pace, so you get the same firm ride. However, the Velar manages to soak up potholes and other road blemishes effortlessly. The car's steering weights up well at speed, and the stiffish ride helps to regulate body roll on corners.

As you'd anticipate, the Velar will handle off-roading well, too - probably more so than most people will even attempt. The car is laden with a bunch of technology in its Terrain Response settings to get you through the muddiest, rockiest, snowiest and sandiest of situations.

At 4,803mm, the Range Rover Velar is a bit lengthier than the F-Pace, but the 2,874mm wheelbase is the same. The Velar's 632-litre boot is slightly down on the Jaguar's 650 litres, but the Velar's cabin quality is far better than the F-Pace's.





The room in the back of the Velar is disappointing, though. If you're 6ft tall, as I am, you'll need the driver's seat as far back as it will go. And this means legroom in the rear is not much better than the space some superminis offer. I anticipated more.

But, as a package, the Velar is compelling. It radiates ladles of luxury as well as off-road prowess. Yes, it's pricey, but it is a Range Rover – and a rather handsome and different one at that.

Yes, it's pricey, but it is a Range Rover – and a rather handsome and different one at that.

Pros 'n' Cons

- Attractive ✓
- Comfortable ✓
- Equipment ✓
- Power ✓
- Rear Space X

Fast facts

(Range Rover Velar 3.0 D300 R-Dynamic HSE - as tested)

- Max speed: 15mph
- 0-62mph: 6.5secs
- Combined mpg: 44.1
- Engine layout: 2993cc six-cylinder diesel turbo
- Ma. power (PS): 300
- CO2: 167g/km
- Price: £70,530

Marshal Land Rover
Mallory Rd, Boongate,
Peterborough PE1 5AU
01733 566767
marshall.co.uk/landrover





RENAULT
Passion for life

Renault CLIO

Seduction never ends



Test drive the Renault Clio at Smiths today

The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the CLIO range are: urban 39.2 (7.2)–85.6 (3.3); extra-urban 60.1 (4.7)– 91.1 (3.1); combined 50.4 (5.6)– 88.3 (3.2). The official CO₂ emissions are 127–82g/km. Figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EU legislation and may not reflect real-life driving results.

SMITHS

Bretton Way, Bretton, Peterborough PE3 8YL
Tel 01733 307823 www.smithsrenault.co.uk

Book a test drive