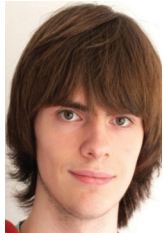


The Seat Terramar



By Fraser Lucas

LOOKS

While originally styled as more aggressive Seat cars, the Terramar represents a shift towards a more unique identity for the Cupra brand.

The triangular lights and sharp gashes all over the front and rear offer a more athletic face than your normal crossover fare. However, between its brothers like the Formentor and Tavascan, it's arguably a little too familiar. You do at least wind up with something sporty and premium without feeling too gauche.

HANDLING AND PERFORMANCE

Here we get to one of the big selling points for a Cupra SUV. The whole party trick behind the brand is that of big, chunky cars that handle with surprising agility, and despite being their biggest car yet, the Terramar doesn't disappoint. The steering is direct and has the right sensitivity, while the suspension isn't too firm. Powering it is a choice of a 1.5 petrol with 148 BHP, a plug-in hybrid version boosted to either 201 or 268 BHP, and a 2.0-litre petrol with 201 or 262 BHP. Most, if not all, of the options provide a fitting amount of thrust, though the hybrid can seem a bit heavy feeling.

PRACTICALITY

The typical colours of dark grey and copper run rampant inside amidst the curves and ridges. In some ways, it can seem gloomy, but I do like the overall effect that it doesn't just feel like everything is made from the old Volkswagen parts bin. Perhaps best of all is the room you get. Everywhere you sit there's lots of wiggle room. Not a lot of five seaters feel this much like a bear cave.

COST

Prices start at £38,995 for the basic 1.5 petrol, while its hybrid alternative will cost between £44,535 and £50,1050. The 2.0-litre option costs from £43,460 to £52,500. Given the more upmarket pricing, it's very fitting that Cupra now offers a 5-year, 90,000-mile warranty. The standard kit isn't something to be frowned upon either, with rain sensing wipers, a heated steering wheel and three-zone climate control onboard all cars.

VERDICT

On the face of it, the Terramar is like a very good advert for what the Cupra brand stands for – a pillar in the SUV community that wants to be driven for fun, not just for a high driving position. Normally, that's a status reserved for BMWs, so I have to admire the sense of ambition involved. More than that, I admire it for how practical it really is for something so moulded towards sportiness.