

Chevrolet Spark Road Test

So you've got to choose a car, make your money work hard and avoid anything that you'd rather park on someone else's driveway... Finding the perfect match isn't easy, but there's a new small car from Chevrolet which could be just the thing.

The Spark is a new model on a mission. It needs to kick start the new Chevrolet car company in the UK and open the eyes of the masses to the potential of stylish, desirable transport that doesn't break the bank. That's no mean feat, but it doesn't take long to work out that the Spark is something different in a sea of same-shape small cars.



Designed to stand out without sticking out, the Spark aims to merge the appeal of a sporty model with the easy-to-park size of a city car. At the front the bold face makes a statement with its large headlamps and sharp angles, while from the side designers have given the Spark the appearance of a three-door by hiding the rear door handles in the C-pillars. The blunt rear provides the perfect finish for the well

proportioned Chevrolet.

Get on board and the bold design continues. The emphasis is on space, but there's more than enough to catch your eye with bright coloured inserts on the doors and dashboard in range-topping LT models. From the drivers seat you will also see the motorbike inspired instrument pod, complete with analogue speedometer and digital rev counter. All this may well break the budget I hear you say... Not with the Spark. Entry-level models cost a scarcely believable £6,945. Sitting in insurance group 1 (out of 50!) it won't cost the earth to get covered, either. Even the top of the range LT model costs only £9,845, coming equipped with pretty much everything you would want on a small car: 15-inch alloy wheels, climate control, four electric windows and more. There's even a six-speaker sound system with a USB socket to plug in your iPod.



Go for the LT model and your Spark will be powered by an 81PS 1.2-litre petrol engine. Compliant with the latest European emissions regulations and capable of 55.4mpg on the combined fuel cycle, the engine has impressive green credentials – the CO₂ output is only 119g/km.



As you watch the digital rev counter flick towards the 6,400rpm peak power, the Spark easily keeps pace with traffic, while changing gear is a breeze thanks to the sharp shifting five-speed manual. Entry-level models get an equally efficient 1.0-litre engine.

All-round visibility is great both in town and out on more challenging A and B-roads, where the Spark's steering really comes into its own providing a meaty feel and good responses when cornering. Add in confidence inspiring brakes and you've got a highly competent dynamic package. And should you carry too much speed into a corner the Spark is available with ESC (Electronic Stability Control) which uses the latest technology to bring you and your Chevrolet back on track, no fuss.

Among the raft of small hatchbacks bursting out of every car maker's showrooms, the Spark is sure to turn heads. Choosing your ideal small car just got a whole lot easier...



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