



Test

Just how good are the newcomers actually?

New Superb against the E class

Skoda is going after the star!

With clear design and plenty of comfort, the new Superb poaches now in Mercedes territory

[Caption p. 31:]

A matter of character: the Skoda with the clean lines of early Mercedes models, and the E class with a more dramatic presence

Dear Mercedes fans: you'll have to put on a brave face! We shall dare to challenge automotive royalty and compare the new Skoda Superb with the Mercedes E class, the German business sedan par excellence. You may very well ask yourself whether AUTO BILD has gone totally bonkers, and the answer would be, no, we haven't, although we do understand your scepticism, considering that back on 16 April 1991, when VW took over the Czech brand, the Skoda range included the proud total of one model – the Favorit, a small, rattly car of clearly Socialist provenance. Mercedes, in contrast, had reached a pinnacle of its engineering ingenuity at the time when it launched the S class under the W140 code. You may remember, that was the big one that was on the news every night and was initially too big to fit on freight trains.

However, since then a lot of water has passed under various bridges over the Moldova and Neckar rivers, and both companies have developed considerably: Skoda has flourished and currently sells over a million cars annually between the six models in its range, and Mercedes has been working on attracting a younger clientele by offering more and more sporty cars with a more and more rounded design. As a consequence, Skoda and Mercedes have started to converge to an extent that it no longer seems out of the question that the Superb, with its clean, Germanic lines, could be quite attractive to even some dyed-in-the-wool Mercedes buyers. But does the large Czech sedan deliver sufficient genuine format to score against the E class, or is its advantage essentially just its lower price?

LOOKS

Both the E class and the Superb (available from dealers from 13 June) are machines to be seriously coveted by any businesspeople working in the field and privileged with a car entitlement. Families and private buyers tend to prefer station wagons, and the Superb

station wagon model is scheduled to be launched in the European autumn. But why not branch out into a sedan? Both cars definitely present incredibly well and look much more expensive than they actually are. Skoda in particular has come a very long way with this new model. The old Superb always looked just a tad too long, too narrow and too tall to be entirely at home in its formal class. The current E class also has certain design weaknesses, although its 2013 facelift, which cost about a billion euros, definitely did it a lot of good. However, the inner values of these two large sedans are what counts much more than appearances. After all, their true home is on the freeways, where their drivers tend to spend many an hour, year after year, racking up thousands of kilometres.

[Captions p. 32:]

Skoda Superb 2.0 TDI DSG

Great class: unrivalled space in the rear and boot. Impressive cockpit with excellent controls and outstanding workmanship. A quantum leap compared to its predecessor.

[Legend:]

Height = 0.51 m

Max. depth = 2.02 m

Min. depth = 1.11 m

Width = 1.01 m

Mercedes E220 BLUETEC

For tall passengers, the E class is a little tight in the rear, and with its classic notchback design, the boot is more difficult to load. Controls are a little complicated, but the workmanship is excellent.

[Legend:]

Height = 0.45 m

Max. depth = 2.00 m

Min. depth = 1.12 m

Width = 1.00 m

PERFORMANCE

The Superb was previously built from a slightly elongated VW Group platform, and this has essentially not changed, although the new modular design is flexible and allowed the Czech designers to make the Superb three centimetres wider and its wheelbase eight centimetres longer, with virtually the same external length. The result is not only unrivalled space, which is considerable larger than even in the E class, especially in the rear and boot, but also a substantial improvement in driving characteristics and comfort. The Superb is the first Skoda to be available with an adaptive chassis, which costs an extra EUR910 and is worth every cent. The Superb responds as smoothly as a luxury sedan, especially to short bumps, and delivers an experience that is even better than in the E class with its air-suspended chassis (for an extra EUR2023).

However, the Czechs went a little overboard in their softening efforts: on vertically undulating roads, the Superb starts to yaw enough to make passengers in the rear quite queasy. Skoda has recognised this, though, and will rectify this flaw by the time the Superb goes into series production. The Mercedes, in contrast, shows how it is done properly: it embodies the smoothness of ride that has always made this brand so great.

In terms of drive, however, the Skoda has the edge again. Its diesel engine runs smoothly and powerfully with optimally damped vibrations, while the Mercedes loses points with a low-pitched noise and a somewhat jerky automatic transmission, even though its drive is very high-level.

[Tables p. 33, left column:]

Vehicle Data	Mercedes	Skoda
Engine type/cylinders	4-cylinder, twin-turbo	4-cylinder, turbo
Mounting position	Longitudinally mounted front engine	Transversely mounted front engine
Valves/camshafts	4 per cylinder/2	4 per cylinder/2
Camshaft drive	Chain	Timing belt
Capacity	2143 cm ³	1968 cm ³
kW (HP)/rpm	125 (170)/3000	140 (190)/3500
Nm/rpm	400/1400	400/1750
Maximum speed	230 km/h	235 km/h
Transmission	Nine-speed auto	Six-speed dual clutch
Drive	Rear-wheel drive	Front-wheel drive
Brakes front/rear	Disc/disc	Disc/disc
Test vehicle tyres	245/45 R 17 Y	235/45 R 18 W
Tyre type	Continental SportContact 5	Pirelli Cinturato P7
Wheel size	8x17"	8x18"
CO ₂ emissions	118 g/km	118 g/km
Fuel consumption*	5.5/3.9/4.5 l	5.4/4.0/4.5 l
Tank capacity/fuel type	59 l/diesel	66 l/diesel
Refrigerant/air-conditioning #	R134a	R134a
Pass-by noise	74 dB(A)	69 dB(A)
Towing capacity (braked/unbraked)	2000/750 kg	2000/750 kg
Boot capacity	490 l	625-1780 l
Length/width/height	4879/1854-2071**/1474 mm	4861/1864-2031**/1468 mm
# R134a: old refrigerant, to be superseded; R1234yf: new refrigerant, controversial due to safety concerns. For more information visit autobild.de/go/killer * City traffic/country traffic/total over 100 km ** Width including external mirrors		
Costs/warranties		
Emissions standard	Euro6	Euro6
Tax per year	EUR255	EUR236
Insurance categories (third party, fully comprehensive, comprehensive)	20/25/28	17/23/26
Service intervals	25,000 km/1 year	30,000 km/1 year
Maintenance cost range	EUR310/460	EUR280/420
Time/mileage limit	2 years/none	2 years/none
Anti-corrosion warranty	30 years	12 years

Mobility warranty	30 years	Unlimited
Technical data		
Acceleration:		
0-50 km/h	3.1 s	3.2 s
0-100 km/h	9.7 s	8.6 s
0-130 km/h	16.1 s	13.8 s
Sprint:		
60-100 km/h	5.3 s	4.4 s
80-120 km/h	6.5 s	5.5 s
Empty weight*/load limit	1760/585kg	1565/545 kg
Weight distribution front/rear	53/47 %	60/40 %
Turning circle left/right	11.3/11.3 m	11.4/11.6 m
Braking distance:		
From 100 km/h cold	37.2 m	38.1 m
From 100 km/h warm	35.8 m	37.4 m
Interior noise:		
At 50 km/h	56 dB(A)	58 dB(A)
At 100 km/h	64 dB(A)	64 dB(A)
At 130 km/h	68 dB(A)	69 dB(A)
Test consumption/CO ₂ emissions	5.8 l/154 g/km	6.0 l/159 g/km
Range	1010 km	1090 km
* Manufacturer's data		
Price/features		
Model	Mercedes E220 BlueTec	Skoda Superb 2.0 TDI
Basic price	EUR44,387	EUR32,290
Test car features	Elegance (+EUR1945)	Style (+EUR2760)
Automatic transmission	EUR2559	EUR2000
Navigation system	EUR3487	EUR1740
Heated front seats	EUR429	S
LED/xenon lights	S (LED)	S (xenon)
Adaptive cruise control	EUR2678 (package)	EUR320
Tow bar	EUR1058	EUR830
Metallic paint	EUR1035	EUR570
Test car price	EUR55,924*	EUR40,090**
S = standard; * = including Elegance options EUR1945, 9-speed Tronic EUR2559, air suspension EUR2023, active multi-contour seats EUR1523 and Command Online navigation system EUR3487; ** = including Style options EUR2760, DSG EUR2000, shock absorber adjustment EUR910, Columbus navigation system EUR1740 and 18-inch tyres EUR390		
Leasing		
Basic price	EUR44,387	EUR32,390
One-off payment	EUR8877	EUR6458
Monthly payment	EUR421	EUR275
Total cost	EUR24,033	EUR16,358
Private customer leasing; 20 % one-off payment, 36-month term, 15,000 km annual mileage; figures are rounded; information is provided by automotive banks and subject to change.		

[Tables p. 33, right column, and p. 34, left column:]

EVALUATIONS

Chassis	Max. points	Skoda	Mercedes
Space front	20	17	18
Space rear	20	20	17
Sense of space	10	9	8
Boot	20	20	16
Versatility	10	3	0
Load limit	10	7	8
Towing capacity	5	5	5
Clear design	15	13	13
Sense of quality	20	17	18
Functionality	10	8	8
Safety features	10	8	9
Chassis score	150	127	120
Drive			
Acceleration	15	7	6
Sprint	20	13	11
Maximum speed	5	3	3
Sophistication	15	10	9
(Revvng) responsiveness	10	6	5
Transmission	20	18	17
Test consumption	30	26	26
Range	10	8	7
Drive score	125	91	84
Driving dynamics			
Driving characteristics	20	18	18
Electronic driving assistance	15	13	13
Directional stability	10	10	10
Agility	20	16	14
Steering	20	19	18
Traction	10	8	8
Turning circle	10	4	5
Braking	20	12	15
Driving dynamics score	125	100	101
Connected car			
Mobile	5	4	4
Navigation	15	14	14
Online functions/apps	5	4	4
Audio	5	5	5
Assistance systems	20	15	16
Connected car score	50	42	43

Environment			
External dimensions	10	4	4
Empty weight	10	9	6
CO ₂ emissions	10	7	7
Efficiency category	5	5	5
External noise	5	3	1
Environmental technology	10	6	6
Environmental score	50	34	29
Comfort			
Entry	5	5	4
Seating position	20	18	18
Front seats	25	22	23
Rear seats	10	9	8
Controls	10	8	7
Suspension	30	26	26
Interior noise	10	7	8
Noise perception	15	13	12
Comfort features	15	11	8
Air-conditioning	10	6	6
Comfort score	150	125	120
Characteristics score	650	519	497
Cost			
Price	20	16	6
Resale value	15	10	10
Tax/insurance	10	8	7
Maintenance	10	4	4
Warranties	15	4	5
Fuel costs	20	19	19
Optional extras	10	8	7
Cost score	100	69	58
Overall score	750	588	555
Ranking		1	2
Price in EUR		40,090	55,924
Price per scored point		EUR68.18	EUR100.76
Value for money ranking		1	2

COSTS

Unsurprisingly, the Superb is about EUR15,000 less expensive than the Mercedes. What is surprising is that it has come out the winner in this comparison, so while it may not bear a star in its logo, it scores with a number of star qualities, which may be all that new fans will need.

At prices from about EUR40,000 (Skoda) and EUR55,000 (Mercedes), both of these sedans are dream cars. Both are clearly on top of their game, and delivering smooth rides over long distances is what they are made for. While the Superb offers a more

contemporary drive experience and design, the Mercedes scores with its virtually unbeatable image. Both are the stuff of dreams.

CONCLUSION

Stefan Voswinkel, Manfred Klangwald, editors

It may not come as a great surprise that the new Superb wins over the old E class, but what is astonishing is that it does so not only through its price, but also through delivering great driving characteristics and some classic Mercedes virtues.

[Caption p. 34:]

Deceptive: Both the Skoda and the Mercedes appear to be notchback sedans, but the Superb has a large hatch and is therefore easier to load.

Fun Factor

This score is about personal preference, and its results do not form part of the overall evaluation.

Categories	Skoda	Mercedes
Design	★★★★	★★★
Temperament	★★★★	★★★
Handling	★★★★	★★★
Wellness	★★★★	★★★★
Image	★★★	★★★★★
Total	★★★★	★★★★
5 stars = a dream, 4 stars = very attractive, 3 stars = acceptable, 2 stars = could be better, 1 star = boring		
Ranking (Max. 750 points)		
1st: Skoda Superb 2.0 TDI 588 points		2nd: Mercedes E 220 BlueTec 555 points
The greatest strength of the Superb is that it does not have any weaknesses. This is an incredibly well-balanced car that is extremely good value for money.		The E class has aged a bit, that much is obvious in many aspects of this car, but it still is a very likeable business sedan.