



# Saab 9-5 Aero



## What's different?

**High-powered version of Saab's four-cylinder engine plus suspension tweaks equal new sporting flagship.**

**W**E LIKE THE 9-5. IT'S PROBABLY THE best-sorted Saab for a long time, more able to take on the likes of BMW's 5-Series and Audi's A6 and offer real merit, rather than mere individualism, something different.

However, the Aero takes us back to traditional Saab practice, because this new top-powered version shuns the previous V6 route to power and, instead, has developed the 2.3-litre four-pot engine to produce both prodigious power and torque. It's the latter – a less readily understood measure of engine behaviour – of which Saab is justifiably proud.

At any speed between 1900 and 4000rpm, a massive 258 lb ft of twisting force is exerted on the crankshaft to provide a surge of accelerative thrust that surpasses the 9-5 V6 version's by 30 lb ft, as well as that of most six-cylinder rivals. It's the in-gear acceleration, in top and fourth, that makes this 9-5 special.

However, curtailing vibration and harshness is another reason for using inherently better balanced six-cylinder engines, and it's in this respect that we found ourselves

favouring the automatic version. The torque converter may slightly blunt the competitive edge of the Aero's performance and economy figures, but out on the road, this shift-sensitive 'box also smoothes out the low-speed vibrancy. It also has the happy knack of providing massive acceleration on tap, whenever you need it, with minimum driver effort. The whole driveline feels smoother, which is surely always welcome, even on a sporty car.

The suspension tweaks and special alloy wheels result in a trade-off favouring more grip, less roll and tauter steering response. Some torque-steer reveals itself in hard acceleration out of a turn, however, and the ride inevitably suffers – but mostly at lower speed around town; well-surfaced main roads cause no serious discomposure.

Inside, the 9-5 retains its executive club-lounge-with-leather allure – no sporty affectations here – and the extremely practical Estate version (with an even firmer ride when unladen) continues to offer a lot of versatile appeal. It's also a lot easier to reverse, as we said before.

## VERDICT

**The Aero won't be everybody's notion of a flagship – it behaves more like a frigate, with its emphasis on agility and extrovert sporty appeal. Nevertheless, with this and the more stately V6 available at a similar price, the ever-complex Saab range has been given even wider appeal.**

**FACTS AND FIGURES****BODY**

**Styles** four door saloon and estate car  
**Trim level** SE

**ENGINE**

**Type** transverse four in line  
**Size** 90 x 90mm = 2290cc  
**Power** 230bhp at 5500rpm  
**Torque** 258 lb ft from 1900 to 4000rpm  
**Fuel system** multi-point injection with turbocharger and intercooler : 98 octane super unleaded petrol requirement

**TRANSMISSION**

five-speed manual or four-speed automatic with traction control combined with electronic ABS braking

**CHASSIS**

uprated springs and dampers with 10mm-lower stance; three-spoke 17in alloy wheels with 225/45 tyres ; uprated, larger-diameter brake discs

