

**USED CAR
SURVEY**

Ford Granada/Scorpio



If you're thinking of buying a used Granada, we can help. We've delved into our breakdown, warranty and vehicle inspection service statistics covering the last few years and have come up with what you need to know if you're planning to become the second owner.

FORD'S BIG OL' "GRANNY" HAS BEEN a solid family favourite over the years. Offering a straightforward rear-wheel-drive layout, a cavernous boot, copious executive trappings and huge back seat space, it's not hard to see the attraction. As a bonus, executive-level depreciation allied to modest running costs allow you to have your cake and eat it, as far as second-time-around ownership goes.

The original square Granada gave way to a much shapelier hatchback in the mid-eighties, since when the big Ford has seen a progression of mechanical revisions, along with the addition of saloon and estate versions, in 1990 and 1992 respectively. Witnessing numerous model and power unit changes during its life, it continued on sale until the beginning of 1995, when it was replaced by the extensively reworked and... well, plain ugly to many eyes, Scorpio.

The bug-eyed successor is essentially the same car under a new skin, but extensive power unit, chassis and equipment changes have not only transformed the ride and running refinement, but make it much more pleasant to drive, too. The introduction of the Scorpio saw the ever-versatile five-door axed, so late-model buyers have only the four-door saloon and a big, roomy estate to pick from. An entry-level 1.8 and the 2.4-litre V6 were dropped in 1988/9, so the three main engines under the Granada's bonnet are a 123bhp, 2.0-litre DOHC, a 2.9-litre V6 (with either 12 or 24 valves) and a 91bhp, 2.5-litre turbo-diesel, boosted to 113bhp in late-1993 with the aid of an intercooler.

The main points to look for... Engine and cooling system

The Scorpio (the *car*, that is – not to be confused with what used to be the Granada's top trim level) retains a similar underbonnet line-up, although its original eight- and 16-valve two-litres have now swapped to a gutsy and impressively refined 2.3-litre 16-valver. The V6 is also a bit pokier in its 24-valve form, while the mediocre turbo-diesel was given a 10bhp power boost around the middle of 1996. Scorpions are still fairly new, of course, so most (but not all) of the mechanical maladies we've unearthed relate to your actual Granada. As far as durability goes, the engines are

fairly sturdy, but blown head gaskets aren't unknown (even on later Scorpios); expect to come across a few general oil and water leaks, too. Water pumps fail quite frequently (mainly on the V6), and the radiator has proved a trifle fragile. Fuel injection problems aren't uncommon, either, with the throttle position potentiometer frequently the villain of the piece; expect to fork out £75-£100 to have a new one fitted.

Transmission

While Ford has improved the manual gearbox, the four-speed automatic (standard on V6s, although a five-speed manual was an option on some 12-valves) has barely been tinkered with over the past decade. It's OK on the 2.0/2.3-litre "four", but proves suspect on the 12-valve V6, and too frequently succumbs to the 24-valve's Cosworth-tuned 200-odd bhp. This item has the highest failure rate of any component in our survey, and repairs can easily run to hundreds of pounds, or more than a thousand, if an exchange 'box is called for. Look out for slurred shifts and juddering in reverse, or play safe and go for a manual gearbox, although even this isn't immune to occasional snags; neither are the propshaft and driveshaft joints.

Suspension, steering and brakes

A point worth making here, is that the Scorpio's general road manners are significantly sweeter than its predecessor's - the car rides better and is more rewarding for the driver, with the squat, low-profile tyres transmitting less turbulence around town than the Granada ever managed to achieve. Power steering faults, on the rack in particular, are fairly common, so be on the lookout for these. We've also discovered quite a few brake discs that have needed replacing, together with a veritable assortment of anti-lock brake problems - faulty wheel sensors, especially, which can cost £100 or so to replace.

Electrics and instruments

There's an avalanche of goodies, particularly on top-level models (which are now called Ultimas), but more gizmos means that there's more to go wrong, with the likelihood of substantial repair bills if they do. Air conditioning, for example, is great when it works, but can prove an expensive liability when it doesn't, as has often been the case on the Granadas we've come across. Indeed, air con faults are number three on our list of Granada gremlins, with repairs ranging from a fairly innocuous £50-£75 for gas recharging, up to a wallet-bashing £500 or £600 for a new compressor. Few other items escape snags, with the alternator, wiper motors, instruments and powered/heated seats failing more than most; so vet all the electrics thoroughly.

Bodywork

Short of a stretched limo, there's little to touch the Granada's roomy and extremely comfortable back

seat, but there's a downside, too - diesel versions in particular are a popular choice with minicab drivers. The Granada wears its miles fairly well, but as well as chancing across pristine, chauffeur-cosseted examples, you'll also find plenty that have been less well cared for in their time. Check that the electric windows, sunroof, central locking and locks and keys are all sound and serviceable, and look out for scruffy, kerb-crunched wheel trims or costly-to-replace alloy wheels.

Costs and servicing

From the cheapest Fiesta to a Scorpio loaded with all the options, no-one beats Ford's extremely competitive parts pricing, while reasonable fuel economy, undemanding servicing and executive-class initial depreciation mean that it needn't take a suitcase full of fivers to run the big, executive "blue oval". Also, the dealer network outnumbers anyone else's several times over, but don't expect giveaway insurance, because even the humblest diesel starts at a group 11 rating.

So to sum up...

Ford's big, burly barge can be heaven-sent transport with loads of space, tons of equipment and relaxed, easy-going manners, but it can equally turn out to be a troublesome, money-eating torment. Much hangs on your skill (and luck) in teasing out a good example. The turbo-diesel is best avoided unless running a diesel is essential, while automatics and potentially more troublesome top-spec versions need vetting with care. Hatchbacks and estates are much more versatile than the saloon but, above all, aim for a car with a proven reliability record.

We can't tell you which model to choose, but once you've found a car you like, we can provide reassurance by arranging a comprehensive check anywhere in the country by one of our Vehicle Inspection Engineers. Call 0345 500 610 for details of fees or to arrange an inspection. For longer term peace of mind we can also offer mechanical breakdown insurance. For further information, call AA Warranty Services on 0800 269 798.