

## RENAULT LAGUNA 3.0 Litre V6 Auto Authentique Sedan



FEATURES	
BEST	WORST
Equipment levels	Steering is a little vague
Engine performance and smoothness	Automatic transmission operation
Comfort and space for four	Comfort for centre passenger

The Renault Laguna has been absent from the Australian new car market since 1996, but now it's back with a new distributor and new models.

Renault Australia (as part of the Nissan/Renault alliance) kicked off here in June 2001 with a range that comprised Clio hatchbacks, 2WD and 4WD Scenic wagons and a Megane Cabriolet. Now, after some frustrating delays, the Laguna saloon and Laguna estate have arrived.

The Laguna saloon (read sedan, though it actually has a rear hatch!), comes in three equipment levels. They are the Authentique, the Privilege and the Privilege LX. The Laguna estates (read wagons) are available in Authentique and Privilege form.

For the present, all Australia-bound Lagunas have a 3.0 litre V6 engine, mated to a five-speed 'tiptronic-style' automatic transmission. Later this year, four cylinder models are due.

Prices for the V6 Laguna saloons start at \$46,990 for the Authentique, with the Privilege costing \$51,990 and the Privilege LX, \$57,990. Add \$4,000 for the Authentique and Privilege estates.

Equipment levels are generous, with all Lagunas featuring dual front and front side airbags, side curtain airbags, anti-lock brakes with EBD and emergency brake assist, electronic stability program, traction control, climate control air conditioning, power (front) windows and mirrors, remote locking, cruise control, alloy wheels (4), a trip computer and single CD player.

Privilege models add Xenon headlights, power-adjustable front seats, a six-stack CD player, leather and velour upholstery, fog lamps, rain-sensing wipers, rear side window sunshades and extra storage compartments.

The range-topping Privilege LX gets a power sunroof, full leather upholstery, a rear spoiler and 17-inch wheels (in lieu of 16 inch).

A novel touch in the Laguna is the lack of a key. Instead, there's a plastic card a little bigger than a credit card that inserts into a dashboard slot to activate the ignition and unlock the electro-mechanical steering lock. Starting and stopping is by a button on the dash. The ignition card also operates the remote locking and unlocking, and stores service and other data.

Of the two body styles, it's the estate that has the more striking looks. The sedan has modern, contemporary lines, but it doesn't set any new trends or make a particularly bold statement. Standards of finish look very good throughout.

As we've come to expect from Renault over the years, the Laguna provides a high standard of comfort for its occupants (four of them, at least).

The front seats are generously padded for comfort and provide satisfactory support when cornering. There's plenty of legroom and the range of seat and steering column adjustments allow for a good driving position.

Space in the rear is quite reasonable and there are three head restraints and three lap/sash seat belts. However the rear seat shaping and floor hump spell discomfort for a centre rear occupant. The deep footwell is good for placing feet under the front seats, but it's a bit awkward when exiting the cabin.

As was the case with previous Lagunas, the new model has a cavernous load area, plus a 60/40 split folding backrest should longer loads need to be carried.

The 3.0 litre V6 engine that powers the Laguna is a very nice unit that's smooth, powerful and responsive, but it's hampered at times by the automatic transmission.

The auto boasts five speeds and a tiptronic-style manual select function and as such, would be expected to perform exceptionally well. But we found that sometimes it was slow to react, other times it held on to a lower gear too long and there was some jerking at low speeds when cold. The transmission also changes up sometimes when slowing down, requiring more braking than you might expect.

Despite these gripes, the Laguna's overall performance is quite good, with very smart acceleration times recorded during testing.

The ride/handling package is typical Renault, with compliant suspension settings that readily soak up bumps and road surface irregularities and ensure good comfort for occupants.

The compliant suspension allows a little body roll, but the handling remains sure-footed and stable over all types of roads and conditions. The only disappointment in this area is the steering, which is light in the straight-ahead position.

The brakes are powerful and fade-free, however the pedal feel is very sensitive and takes some getting use to. There's the usual rapid wheel soiling from brake dust that's common with European cars.

### SUMMARY:

Overall, the new Renault Laguna saloon and estate are worthy newcomers to the ranks of mid-size luxury cars. They look good, are comfortable and pleasant to drive, and are equipped to the standards expected in this class.

The Laguna's top European safety rating is a plus, and this time around the Nissan/Renault alliance gives the cars a much stronger backing than was the case with previous distributors.

## RENAULT LAGUNA Authentique Sedan

### SPECIFICATIONS

#### ENGINE:

Type ..... V6, 24 valves  
Capacity in litres ..... 2.946  
Induction ..... Multipoint fuel injection  
Fuel recommendation ..... ULP  
Claimed max. power ..... 152 kW at 6000 rpm  
Claimed max. torque ..... 285 Nm at 3750 rpm  
Specific power output ..... 51.6 kW/litre

#### TRANSMISSION:

Type ..... Five speed automatic  
Driving wheels ..... Front  
Speed per 1000 rpm in top gear ..... 51.0 km/h

**WHEELS:** ..... Alloy, 6.5J x 16 inch

**TYRES:** ..... Continental, 205/55 R16

**Spare:** ..... Steel wheel, Michelin 205/55 R16

#### STEERING:

Type ..... Variable ratio, power assisted  
Turns lock to lock ..... 3.25  
Turning circle (measured) ..... 11.1 metres

#### DIMENSIONS:

Mass ..... 1431 kg  
Length ..... 4576 mm  
Width (incl. mirrors 2080 mm) ..... 1783 mm  
Height ..... 1429 mm  
Ground clearance (measured) ..... 131 mm  
Seating capacity ..... 5  
Fuel tank capacity ..... 70 litres

#### TOWING:

Max. towed mass (trailer plus load) ..... 1500 kg  
Max. towball download (laden trailer) ... 75 kg

#### NRMA THEFT RATING:

Points on 0-110 scale (high score best) ..... 90

**WARRANTY:** ..... Three years, 100,000 km

**MANUFACTURED IN:** ..... France

### TEST RESULTS

#### ACCELERATION:

50 - 80 km/h (in Drive) ..... 3.9 sec  
60 - 100 km/h (in Drive) ..... 5.2 sec  
0 - 80 km/h ..... 6.4 sec  
0 - 100 km/h ..... 9.1 sec  
0 - 400 metres ..... 16.7 sec

#### FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Litres/100 km in city ..... 11.4  
Litres/100 km on highway ..... 8.6  
Litres/100 km overall ..... 9.5

#### BRAKING:

Distance to stop from 80 km/h ..... 26.8 metres

#### NOISE:

Interior at constant 80 km/h ..... 65 dB(A)

- Test vehicle supplied by Renault Australia Pty Ltd

**Call NRMA Technical Advice on 1300 655 443, should you require additional information on this vehicle, on other makes, or for general advice on automotive matters.**