

RENAULT SCENIC 2.0 Litre Manual RX4 and 2WD Privilege Wagons

FEATURES	
BEST	WORST
Versatility of interior layout Capacity of luggage areas and range of storage compartments Well equipped (safety and convenience features)	Driving position, and pedal and control layout Some kickback through steering on bumpy corners (particularly the RX4 model)



The compact, yet surprisingly roomy, Renault Scenic ‘monospace’ five-door wagon is an important component of the marque’s re-launch in Australia, given that it is expected to account for the bulk of sales.

The Scenic comes in 2WD form, or with 4WD (the RX4), and is currently selling alongside the Megane Cabriolet and the Clio Renault Sport.

Later this year, the Scenic will be joined by Renault Laguna sedans and hatchbacks, with a range of commercial models due in 2002.

Base model of the Scenic range is the Expression and it comes with a 1.6 litre engine and manual transmission only. Its price is \$25,878.

Next up the range is the 2.0 litre Dynamique and it costs \$27,878 in manual form or \$29,878 for the automatic. The Privilege tops the 2WD Scenic line-up at \$28,778 in manual form or \$30,778 for the auto.

Two RX4 models are available; the Expression at \$31,150 and the Privilege for \$33,250. Both have the 2.0 litre engine and manual transmission only.

Standard equipment lists are comprehensive across the Scenic range. Even the base Expression models come with six airbags (dual front, two front side bags and two head/chest side curtain airbags), seat belt pyrotechnic pretensioners and load limiters, plus anti-lock brakes and electronic brake force distribution. An engine immobiliser is also standard.

Comfort and convenience features include air conditioning, remote central locking, power windows and exterior mirrors, a trip computer and satellite audio controls on the steering wheel. The three individual rear seats can be adjusted for position, folded, or removed altogether.

The Dynamique adds climate control air conditioning, alloy road wheels, partial leather trim, a leather-bound steering wheel, front arm rests and an in-dash CD player.

Privilege versions gain upgraded alloy wheels, a rear sunshade, a central rear arm rest and an illuminated vanity mirror.

There are two option packs available for the Dynamique and the Privilege; one offers twin sunroofs and roof rails for \$2,000, the other includes full leather trim as well and costs \$4,250. Metallic paint costs an extra \$450 on

all versions. Cruise control is neither standard, nor offered as an option

Tall cars are very much the ‘in thing’ these days and the Scenic is an excellent example of just how much space can be provided in a vehicle that’s actually shorter in overall length than (for example), a Mazda 323 Astina.

Inside the Scenic, there’s good space for five adults, plus a generous area for their luggage. About the only limitation concerning passenger space is that the centre rear seat is rather narrow.

The Scenic’s interior also boasts an almost unmatched versatility in terms of its adaptability to suit various passenger and cargo loads.

For example, each of the three individual rear seats can be slid forwards and backwards, folded flat, or removed altogether to create maximum load space. The rear parcel shelf can be adjusted to four different heights and the Dynamique and Privilege versions have an opening rear window.

Owners will need to remember where they’ve placed smaller items in the cabin as there are around twenty separate compartments scattered throughout the vehicle. These include pull-out drawers under the front seats, a chilled drinks locker in the centre console, compartments under the rear footwell and under the rear seats, two gloveboxes, plus the usual assortment of door and seat pockets, and rear compartment side bins.

When it came to designing the RX4 version, there was insufficient room to store its larger spare wheel and tyre under the rear floor and so it’s mounted externally on the tailgate, which swings outwards and not upwards, as for the 2WD models.

Though the seats themselves are generally quite comfortable, there are some aspects of the seating positions that may not suit all people.

For example, the front seats are set high off the floor (even in their lowest height setting) and while this is good for driving vision, it may not suit some drivers. I found the forward-located manual gear positions (such as reverse, first and third) a stretch to select.

The steering wheel is tilt-adjustable but with no reach adjustment, it’s also a stretch if you want to grip it above the centre line.

Also, the pedal positioning is far from ideal, with the manual’s three pedals all at different heights, and the clutch and brake pedals so close together that your feet sometimes brush each other.

The driver’s job is not made easier by the rather scattered control layout, such as the front power window buttons being on the driver’s door but the buttons for the rear windows tucked up under the dash. The audio controls, with some on the dash and some on the steering wheel, also take some time to master.

Rear seat comfort is generally good, but taller occupants may find that the seats are a little too low to the floor to provide effective thigh support. The flat rear floor makes life easier for a centre rear occupant.

It’s a bit of a climb up getting into (or down out of) the Scenic – particularly the front compartment - and this is more pronounced in the RX4 due to its extra height off the ground.

The 2.0 litre variable valve timing engine that powers all Scenic models except the 2WD Expression (it has the 1.6 litre engine), produces above-average power and torque for its size, and mid-range acceleration in the manual 2WD Privilege tested was quite lively.

However the gearing is such that not too many highway hills are taken in fifth or fourth gears and smooth starts from rest require more engine revolutions than you’d normally expect to use.

It was a similar story with the manual RX4 Privilege tested, except that its extra mass (175 kg) did slow the general performance noticeably.

The manual gearchange in both vehicles was a little notchy at times and, as already mentioned, the reverse gear position – forward and over to the left – is a stretch to reach. Also, the clutch takes up later than in most cars - this was more noticeable in the RX4 version.

Automatic versions of the Scenic have a four speed ‘Proactive’ transmission that according to Renault, offers nine automatically adopted settings, plus one manual setting. With computer control, the transmission adapts to different driving styles, road profiles and operating conditions, and changes ratios accordingly.

Though suspension settings felt softer on the 2WD version, its handling was generally more

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

precise than the RX4 also tested. I put this down to the lighter mass of the 2WD version, its lower ride height and the better on-road grip of its tyres.

Occasionally when the Scenic strikes mid-corner bumps, the effect can be felt in the form of steering kickback, more so in the RX4 version.

Suspension settings are understandably stiffer on the RX4 to cope with potentially rougher conditions and consequently, the ride is not as comfortable.

Neither vehicle was particularly quiet, with a combination of wind noise, engine noise and tyre roar. The RX4 had more mechanical noise than the 2WD version.

Whilst on the subject of the RX4, its design intention is the leisure market, with an ability to capably and safely handle all types of roads – both sealed and unsealed – rather than attempting any cross-country trail blazing. If this is kept in mind, the RX4 can be quite an effective and versatile recreational vehicle

The RX4 does have an advantage over some of its competitors with its permanent four-wheel drive system, however the lack of low range (and strong low down torque) inhibits its ability for climbing steep tracks, or to provide effective engine braking when descending them.

With their four-wheel discs, anti-lock system and electronic brake distribution, both test Scenics returned better-than-average braking results. Emergency braking from 80 km/h was powerful and achieved short stopping distances, whilst resistance to fade after ten consecutive medium-pressure stops was excellent.

SUMMARY:

The Renault Scenic, and its RX4 stablemate, provide a strong dose of Gallic flair and both versions should prove attractive to buyers of recreational-style vehicles who want something a bit out of the ordinary.

This flair is most noticeable in the Scenic's appearance. With its steeply sloping bonnet, tall roof and high waistline, the Scenic makes quite a bold statement, yet at the same time it offers a degree of practicality that's very impressive for this size of vehicle.

The interior layout and the versatility of the seating arrangements, plus the incredible range of storage compartments and the generous load area, should well suit varying family needs.

However, some aspects of the French approach to interior design may not prove to be quite so pleasing. In particular, I refer to the control layout, the driving position and the pedal layout in the manual versions – try it before you buy.

RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE 2WD Manual

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE:

Type Four cylinder, in-line, DOHC, 16 valves
Capacity in litres 1.998
Induction Multipoint fuel injection
Fuel recommendation (used for test) PULP
Claimed max. power 101 kW at 5500 rpm
Claimed max. torque 188 Nm at 3750 rpm
Specific power output 50.6 kW/litre

TRANSMISSION:

Type Five speed manual
Driving wheels Front
Speed per 1000 rpm in top gear 35.3 km/h

WHEELS: Alloy, 6.0J x 15 inch

TYRES: Michelin Energy, 195/60R 15

Spare: Steel wheel, matching size

STEERING:

Type Power assisted rack and pinion
Turns lock to lock 3.5
Turning circle (measured) 10.8 metres

DIMENSIONS:

Mass 1290 kg
Length 4134 mm
Width (incl. mirrors 1890 mm) 1719 mm
Height 1615 mm
Ground clearance (measured) 151 mm
Seating capacity 5
Fuel tank capacity 60 litres

TOWING:

Max. towed mass (trailer plus load) 1350 kg
Max. towball download (loaded trailer) 65 kg

NRMA THEFT RATING:

Points on 0-110 scale (high score best) 57.5

WARRANTY: Three years, 100,000 km

MANUFACTURED IN: France

TEST RESULTS

ACCELERATION:

50 - 80 km/h (in 3rd gear) 5.2 sec
60 - 100 km/h (in 3rd gear) 6.6 sec
0 - 80 km/h 6.7 sec
0 - 100 km/h 10.6 sec
0 - 400 metres 17.3 sec

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Litres/100 km in city 9.2
Litres/100 km on highway 7.9
Litres/100 km overall 8.3

BRAKING:

Distance to stop from 80 km/h 29.2 metres

NOISE:

Interior at constant 80 km/h 67 dB(A)

RENAULT SCENIC RX4 PRIVILEGE 4WD Manual

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE:

Type Four cylinder, in-line, DOHC, 16 valves
Capacity in litres 1.998
Induction Multipoint fuel injection
Fuel recommendation (used for test) PULP
Claimed max. power 101 kW at 5500 rpm
Claimed max. torque 188 Nm at 3750 rpm
Specific power output 50.6 kW/litre

TRANSMISSION:

Type Five speed manual
Driving wheels Permanent four-wheel drive
Speed per 1000 rpm in top gear 34.2 km/h

WHEELS: Alloy, 6.5J x 16 inch

TYRES: Michelin 4X4, 215/65R 16

Spare: Steel wheel, matching size

STEERING:

Type Power assisted rack and pinion
Turns lock to lock 3.5
Turning circle (measured) 11.3 metres

DIMENSIONS:

Mass 1465 kg
Length 4424 mm
Width (incl. mirrors 1976 mm) 1775 mm
Height 1720 mm
Ground clearance (measured) 184 mm
Seating capacity 5
Fuel tank capacity 60 litres

TOWING:

Max. towed mass (trailer plus load) 1350 kg
Max. towball download (loaded trailer) 65 kg

NRMA THEFT RATING:

Points on 0-110 scale (high score best) 57.5

WARRANTY: Three years, 100,000 km

MANUFACTURED IN: France

TEST RESULTS

Note: Damp test track conditions

ACCELERATION:

50 - 80 km/h (in 3rd gear) 6.7 sec
60 - 100 km/h (in 3rd gear) 9.1 sec
0 - 80 km/h 8.8 sec
0 - 100 km/h 14.5 sec
0 - 400 metres 19.3 sec

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Litres/100 km in city 10.6
Litres/100 km on highway 9.4
Litres/100 km overall 9.8

BRAKING:

Distance to stop from 80 km/h 35.2 metres

NOISE:

Interior at constant 80 km/h 68 dB(A)

● Test vehicle supplied by Vehicle Distributors Australia Pty Ltd



MEMBER SERVICES

AUTOMOTIVE TECHNICAL SERVICES

Telephone 1300 655 443



☐ New and used car road test reports



☐ Advice on purchasing or selling a vehicle



☐ Caravan and trailer towing information



☐ Advice on vehicle maintenance



☐ Vehicle operating costs



☐ Fleet management advice



☐ Car Care courses



☐ Vehicle repair advice

Technical Advice 388 George St SYDNEY NSW 2000