

VAUXHALL
CALIBRA

PRODUCT BRIEFING

Calibra's new challenger...

Ford Probe – The facts.



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AND FLEET OPERATORS ONLY



VAUXHALL

Calibra asks Probing questions

The new Probe marks Ford's return to the sports coupé market after a seven year break. It's competitively priced, highly styled and just as highly promoted. Yet the real question remains. How does it compete with Calibra?

Press reaction has been mixed. It is certainly not as enthusiastic as it was for the Mondeo, and with good reason.

Built in a joint venture with Mazda in the USA, the Probe shares most of its basic structure – suspension, transmission, floorplan and V6 engine – with the Mazda MX-6.

Calibra, however has been on sale in the UK for some four years now. So you would expect the Probe to offer some strong advantages. Yet in many ways this is not the case. Like Mondeo, Probe is more a question of Ford catching up rather than leaping ahead. As we will see, the new Ford Probe is still hard pressed to match Calibra in many important areas.

- **Probe 16v is Calibra 8v competitor –**

Calibra 8v has same engine power yet is faster, better equipped (eg: electric sunroof) and is three insurance groups lower.

- **Probe's list price advantage through a 5% dealer margin is easily countered –**

Calibra is better equipped virtually equalling the list price differential and Vauxhall dealers have more flexibility.

- **Calibra "the worlds most aerodynamic coupe" wins on interior room –**

Unlike Probe, Calibra is a genuine four-seater, with same size load area as Probe.



Where's the range?

If we look at the range line-ups, we find just two Probe models compared with Calibra's four (seven if you include auto) – a low-spec Probe 2.0i 16v and a 2.5i V6. There are no Probe automatic models whatsoever (it's not even optional). There is no direct competitor against Calibra 16v and nothing to match the Calibra Turbo 4x4, as a range 'image' setter.



Probe is only available in two models

Calibra range advantages

- Four trim levels as opposed to just two.
- Availability of a 4-wheel drive model.
- Availability of automatic versions.
- Availability of high performance Turbo 4x4.

Styling

Top Gear magazine got it in one – 'All coupes are about style'. Calibra led the way in sports coupé styling and again, it's taken Ford four years to catch up. *Performance Car's* original quote still sums up Calibra's appeal – '...one of the finest looking cars in the world, at any price'. *Car* magazine recently commented on Calibra – 'Vauxhall's greatest asset is its styling, which still looks excellent four years after the car's launch'.

The jury is still out on Probe especially styling features such as the wraparound rear lights, while the pointy snout is clearly designed for the USA where front number plates are generally not required. For all its swoopy curves and pop-up headlights, Probe remains way behind Calibra's world beating drag co-efficient figures.



Calibra has the lowest drag factor in its class

Drag coefficient (Cd)

	2.0i	2.5i V6
Calibra	0.26	0.29
Probe	0.33	0.34



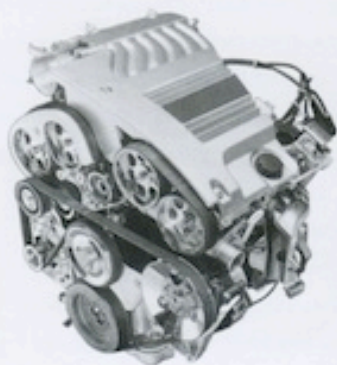
Calibra puts the 'sports' in Sports Coupe

Any sports coupé has to provide some justification for the 'sports' tag. It isn't that the Probe 2.0i 16v can't compete with Calibra 2.0i 16v. It barely competes with our 8-valve model!

While Vauxhall's reputation for leading edge engine technology is widely accepted, both Probe engines have much to prove in the long term.

Don't be fooled by the Probe's 16v badge, it may add an air of sophistication but as the figures show, it only compares with the Calibra 8v for performance and economy. Probe's Mazda V6 engine is also untested for long term reliability in its Ford guise and little match for Calibra's ECOTEC unit. And if you're looking for a Probe to compete with Calibra Turbo 4x4, you'll be sadly disappointed.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the Probe 16v falls into insurance group 16 compared with Calibra 8v's group 13.

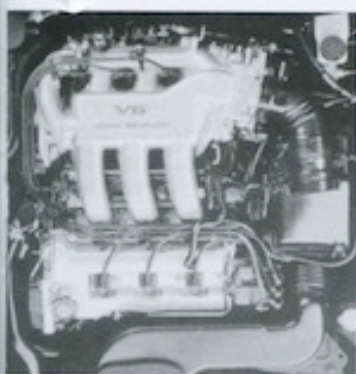


Engine performance comparisons

	Calibra 2.0 8v	Probe 2.0 16v	Calibra 2.0i 16v	Calibra 2.5 V6	Probe 2.5 V6	Calibra Turbo 4x4
Max power (PS)	115	115	136	170	165	204
Max torque (Nm)	170	170	185	227	212	280
Top speed (mph)	127	127	133	147	137	152
0-60 mph (secs)	10.0*	10.6	8.0	7.3	8.5	6.4
*(0-62mph)						
Fuel consumption						
Sim. urban driving	25.4	29.7	26.9	24.8	22.6	24.4
Constant 56mph	46.3	46.3	47.9	42.8	36.2	40.9
Constant 75mph	37.7	35.8	39.8	34.4	28.5	34.0



Calibra 2.5 V6



Probe 2.5 V6

Calibra advantages vs Probe 16v

- Calibra 8v has better flexibility. Peak torque achieved at 2600rpm, compared with 4500rpm on Probe.
- Calibra 8v accelerates faster, reaching 0-62mph in 10 seconds compared with Probe's 10.6 seconds to just 60mph.
- Calibra 16v beats Probe 16v in every performance measure, with the new ECOTEC 136PS engine.
- Calibra 8v matches Probe 16v at a steady 56mph and beats it by 1.9mpg at a steady 75mph.
- Calibra V6 (manual) beats Probe V6 in all government fuel consumption figures – 6.6mpg better at a constant 56mph and 5.9mpg at a constant 75mph.
- Lower insurance rating:
Calibra 8v – group 13, Calibra 16v – group 14, Probe 16v – group 16.

Calibra V6 advantages vs Probe V6

- More power – 170PS to 165PS.
- Higher peak torque – 227Nm to 212Nm.
- Better flexibility – peak torque reached at 4200rpm compared with Probe's 4800rpm.
- Accelerates faster – 1.2 seconds faster to 60 mph.
- Higher top speed – 147mph to 137mph.
- Same insurance rating:
Calibra V6, Turbo 4x4 – group 17, Probe V6 – group 17.

Who gets taken for a ride?

Given the constraints of modern automotive engineering, it is no surprise that both Calibra and Probe have transverse engines, front wheel drive and five speed gearboxes (though Probe has no automatic option.) Of course, the high performance Calibra Turbo has both a six speed gearbox and four-wheel drive something that Probe cannot even match.

Power steering, strut-type front suspension and four-wheel disc brakes with ABS are common to both cars and their independent rear suspension differs only in detail.

Ford do claim that Probe comes with 'a form of passive rear wheel steering', but this is little more than reduced toe-out under normal suspension movement. The press comments below speak for themselves.

What the press say about Probe -

'can be jittery, noisy over poor surfaces' ... 'lacks ultimate precision and handling poise'. Car.

'fails to cope so well with town surfaces'. What Car?

'it's handling was distinctly middle of the road ... on the motorway there's rather a lot of tyre bowl and body jiggling'. Top Gear.



Calibra safely in front

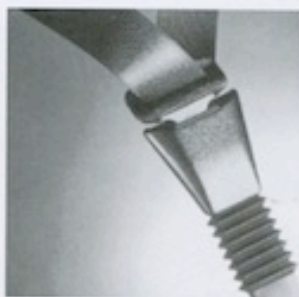
Calibra incorporates so much of what Vauxhall has learned about vehicle safety over the years that it is undoubtedly one of the safest cars on the road today.

While Ford continue to talk about Dynamic Safety Engineering (DSE), Calibra undoubtedly leads Probe in this department.

The only Probe safety plus is the passenger airbag, but without a body-lock restraint system this is needed all the more. A passenger airbag is optional on Calibra 8v and 16v models whilst standard on V6 and Turbo 4x4. The U.S.-built Probe is the only Ford model in the U.K. to offer a driver's full-size airbag. The same size as those already available across the Vauxhall range.

Calibra safety advantages

- *Twin side impact door bars over Probe's single bar.*
- *Use of front seat body-lock restraint system.*
- *Safety reverse feature on electric windows.*
- *Electronic Traction Control (ETC) on Calibra V6.*



Calibra's body-lock restraint system cannot be matched by Probe.



Calibra's twin door bars

Calibra has the inside edge

Just as the sports coupé driver demands style on the outside, so they expect something extra on the inside too. While the Probe interior is certainly competent (the press found little to actively complain about), there's nothing special about it.

The Calibra 16v, V6 and Turbo 4x4 both come with soft leather trim, of course, while the Probe customer makes do with fabric. Both V6 and Turbo 4x4 Calibras are also available with a cream leather option at no cost on certain body colours. Unlike Calibra, Probe's leather trim option doesn't include the rear seat, instead the catalogue describes the trim as 'leather effect' vinyl.

At just 93mm longer and 85mm wider than Calibra, you could reasonably assume that Probe would offer comparable interior space. This is not the case. The press are unanimous that the Probe's rear space is never intended for two adults. The dimensions shown below bear this out.

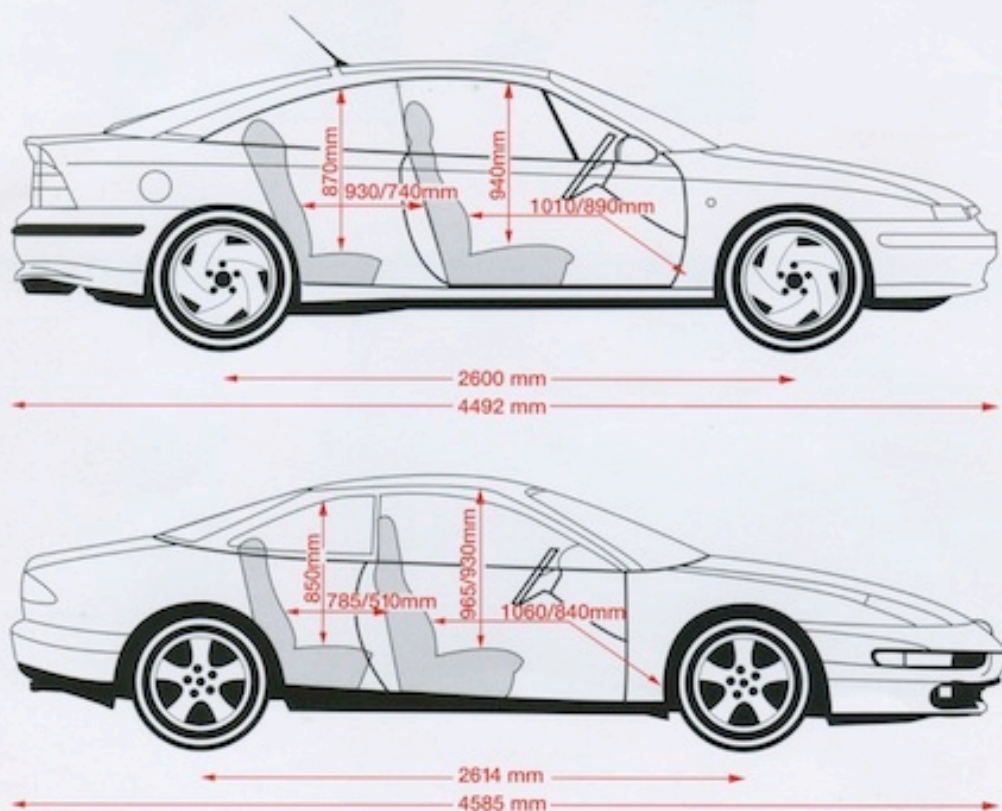
What the press say -

Probe

'With two tall people in the front, the rear seats are rendered useless.' **What Car?**

Calibra

'The Calibra wins hands down on accommodation ... compare rear seat legroom with that of the Probe and you can see why. Add the opulence of leather trim (standard equipment) and the Calibra's lush, roomy cockpit stands out from the cloth-and-plastic affairs of the opposition.' **Car.**



Figures taken from *Autocar & Motor*

Calibra interior



Calibra cream leather interior



Probe interior



Probe V6 leather interior



'Leather-effect' vinyl facings
on rear seats

Calibra – first for value

Ford have priced Probe very aggressively, mainly by slashing dealer margins to 5%. The Probe 16v falls enticingly below the £16,000 mark, presumably to attract style-conscious user-choosers, and the V6 model comes in at almost £900 cheaper than its Calibra counterpart.

Don't forget to compare like with like, on V6 for example, Calibra is only £320 more expensive when specified with cloth trim to match Probe V6. To bring 16v Probe up to Calibra 8v specification it is necessary to add the £1000 'Plus Pack' which includes electric sunroof, an RDS radio cassette and leather rim steering wheel. Metallic paint adds another £220 to Probe's price. The supposedly cheap Probe 16v comes in at a far more realistic £17,215 – not far off Calibra 16v, especially if you remember the extra 5% margin in Calibra.

If we compare feature specifications Calibra again comes out on top, at the same time showing Ford's preference for little used items – electric seat adjustment and cruise control (optional on Probe 16v). Probe does have tilt steering, but its other advantages – engine compartment light and luggage security net – are minor features.

Price comparison

(as at 29.04.94)

Price range	Calibra	Probe
£15,000		Probe 16v £15,995
£16,000	Calibra 2.0i £16,740	
£17,000	Calibra 2.0i 16v (Lens cloth) £17,635	
£18,000	Calibra 2.0i 16v (Leather) £18,195	
£19,000	Calibra V6 2.5i 24v (Lens cloth) £19,670	Probe 24v £19,350
£20,000	Calibra V6 2.5i 24v (Leather) £20,230	
£21,000 +	Calibra Turbo 4x4 2.0i (Lens cloth) £22,215 Calibra Turbo 4x4 2.0i (Leather) £22,775	

Calibra value advantages

- *Metallic paint – £220 extra on Probe.*
- *Electrically operated sunroof – £375 extra on Probe 16v.*
- *Leather trim* – £595 on Probe V6 (£1000 if combined with air conditioning).*

* This does not include rear seats which are 'leather effect' vinyl.

Calibra equipment advantages

In addition to those mentioned above, all Calibra models offer the following feature advantages over all Probe models.

- *Passenger seat height adjuster.*
- *Cabin pollen filter.*
- *Two extra audio speakers.*
- *Additional rear fog and reversing lamps*
- *Outside temperature display.*
- *Security deadlocks*

In addition, Calibra V6 customers gain the following.

- *Heated front seats (with leather trim)*
- *Compact disc player*

Calibra vs Probe

Better performance –

Calibra puts Probe in its place on performance, flexibility and economy.

Practicality –

Ford's Probe can't come close to Calibra's stylish practicality.

Calibra's comprehensive safety features –

Single side impact door bars and no body lock restraint system put Probe at a disadvantage.

Value –

Calibra's extra value specification – price for price Calibra scores over the Probe.

Price –

Probe's dealer margin is just 5% and equipment levels are inferior to Calibra.

Summary

Matching a car to its maker has always been Ford's forte and Probe is no exception. The car's looks, its price and its advertising, will no doubt attract customers eager to be seen in this newest Ford.

Closer inspection, however reveals the true story. The looks and the image are greater than the substance behind them. And for all the hype, Ford's Capri for the '90's has still got a lot to learn from Vauxhall's trend setting Calibra.



Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this publication were accurate and up-to-date at the time of going to press (April 1994).

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