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INSIDE:

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FROM THE EDITOR

Black Friday & Cyber Monday should apply to cars

We all enjoyed or observed the retail therapy that was caused by the Black Friday shopping craze last month. Considered the unofficial beginning of the December shopping season, it is always followed by Cyber Monday. Together, these dates offer major sales opportunities for Kenyan retailers, both online and within brick-and-mortar stores.

While sales are expected to increase during this time as retailers try to capitalise on the annual tradition of frenzied buying, there are a number of areas to troubleshoot to prevent retail disasters.

For brick-and-mortar (physical) retailers, their biggest challenges are crowd control and ensuring their tellers have enough capacity to help each customer. For online retailers, their priorities lie in the need to prevent overcrowding on their servers, system crashes, and orders getting lost in cyberspace.

One critically overlooked sector is the automative industry which I feel would greatly benefit from such shopping seasons. After all, overcrowding in showrooms and yards won't be a problem as they're widespread and have enough space to cater for large numbers if necessary, which I highly doubt will ever be a problem. Before you think me insane, let me explain my reasoning, then you can judge me at your own pleasure.

We all know that Kenyans love cars and it's no surprise that KRA registers an average of over 9000 new and used vehicles in its system monthly. These figures are quite high and could get higher if vehicle distributors and dealers jumped on this shopping craze that has become a worldwide phenomenon.

Furthermore, we need to understand that vehicles in Kenya generally depreciate by approximately 10% each passing year. With that knowledge in mind, why can't car dealers offer discounts of about 5-10% around this festive period to move more units in order to have a good conclusion to their annual turnovers?

After all, come the turn of the year in January, these same vehicles would have depreciated by the same 10% or so that would be offered as a discount.

Car buyers would inadvertently believe that they are getting a deal on their next car buy, when in hindsight they're just paying what they would have paid a month later in January. This gives buyers a chance to get their "dream cars" at discounted or cheaper prices, while at the same time, car dealers get a chance to move more units as well as make money sooner than later.

I know most of you are probably still sceptical but I'm also sure that you all see my point.

Happy Holidays!

- Martin O'Neil



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2018 Mercedes-Benz A-Class sedan concept revealed



Earlier this year, we all got a chance to see a preview of what to expect from the upcoming Mercedes-Benz A-Class sedan thanks to the Aesthetics A sculpture that was revealed in January, and now we can show you exactly what the new A-Class sedan will look like in the flesh.

According to Mercedes-Benz, by unveiling the Concept A Sedan at the Shanghai Motor Show, it is "providing an outlook into the next generation of compact vehicles and a potential new body type."

Furthermore, the German brand reckons the show car is both "hot and cool". We'll definitely let you be the judge of that, but there's no doubt that this new concept is significantly more attractive than the current CLA-Class we are familiar with.

"Our Concept A Sedan shows that the time of creases is over", said Gorden Wagener, Chief Design Officer for Daimler AG.

"With its perfect proportions and a sensual treatment of surfaces with reduced lines, it is the next milestone of sensual purity and has the potential to introduce a new design era."

There's absolutely no doubt whatsoever as to how important compact vehicles are for Mercedes-Benz globally, hence the value placed on getting the design right for this concept.

Mercedes-Benz has sold more than two million compact vehicles around the world since 2012, illustrating just how important this segment is.

As you'd expect, this A-Class concept features the latest in innovative assistance systems, connectivity, and driving dynamics, as well as the potential to broaden the appeal of the platform with yet another body style.





Buyers will now be able to choose between the A-Class, B-Class, CLA, CLA Shooting Brake and GLA within the same basic segment.

The Concept A is 4570mm long, 1870mm wide and 1462mm high and retains a coupe-like silhouette. It's punctuated by short overhangs front and rear, as well as a graceful rear glass mirror that has been offset rearward.

A relatively vertical C-pillar, large side windows and a high beltline are all tips of the hat to conventional sedan design.

The tough wheel arch design is filled with 20-inch wheels, while there are flush door handles, and exterior rear-view mirrors, which stand proud of the sedan's belt lines.

Mercedes-Benz has opted for a grille design that tilts forward, with vertical inserts and the signature star in the centre as well as stretched 'power domes' in the bonnet.

A dark chrome trim strip and stylised lower air inlets round out the front-end treatment.

The headlights mirror conventional current Mercedes-Benz design DNA, and the grid structure has been coated with a UV paint, which has been exposed to ultraviolet light.

The result is headlamps that glow in different colours depending on the light that is on them. The DRLs for example, are white.

The same lighting technology is present at the rear, as well as a rear diffuser, trimmed in black and satin chrome to match the front.





Integrated exhaust deflectors are also finished in dark chrome and add a premium touch to the styling. Privacy glass and a panoramic sunroof are fitted as well.

As for a production date, Mercedes-Benz couldn't give any more information as yet, but we're confident you'll see the new sedan on the roads by late 2018. Don't be surprised if a new A-Class hatchback arrives at the same time.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- DT Dobie Kenya is the official and sole distributor of all new Mercedes-Benz vehicles in Kenya. They are located off the roundabout at the junction of Lusaka Road and Enterprise Road.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom for more information. ■



Are Subaru cars underpowered?

A senior Subaru executive has been frank with the media about the brand's latest drivetrain being short on power

Masahiko Inoue, Subaru Project General Manager, Product and Portfolio Division, told motoring journalists at the launch of the new Subaru XV in Japan earlier this year that he has been copping it from all angles about the 2.0-litre engine and continuously variable transmission (CVT) auto in the latest-generation Impreza and XV models.

"Everybody is requesting from me a more powerful engine," Inoue said. "Everybody thinks it needs more power. They are satisfied, they understand the Subaru Global Platform and the new 2.0-litre engine – but needing more power is a common complaint from everybody."

So, what is Inoue doing about it? Well, it seems possible that the company will work a new engine into the mix if the sales volumes continue to rise. He said that, because the XV and Impreza are the brand's entry-level models around the globe, there is pressure to make the costs of introducing more powerful drivetrains viable.

He said the brand is looking at a few different options: a larger displacement non-turbocharged engine; a smaller displacement turbocharged engine; or a hybrid version with battery backing.

"Of course, we are studying, and we are now studying one of the options: a 2.4- or 2.5-litre engine, downsized and turbocharged, and power supported by motor, a hybrid. Every way we are studying for the next model, or the future model."

"Now, the XV is not so popular. If it becomes more popular, then we have to go to the next step to have more power in the highest version. We need more volume to justify that," he said. "One of the ways is using a downsized turbo, and of course we are thinking that way."

"But we cannot spend money on this vehicle, because this is an entry vehicle for Subaru. We have to keep competitive with the cost for the entry vehicles, so if the turbocharged









model is requested, maybe it will go to the Forester, or the Levorg, or another vehicle," he said, perhaps giving away a little hint that the next-gen Forester, due mid-2018, will have a turbo engine in lower-grade models, not just the flagship XT.

"In the case of the Impreza and the XV, now it's just a 2.0-litre direct-injection model, and a 1.6-litre in Japan and the European market. This has expanded the customer base for Subaru: this is the entry vehicle."

Inoue said that if hybrid were the answer – and it has been offered in the XV in the past in the North American market (US and Canada) – the brand wouldn't just have one type. We know that the new global platform has been built with electrification in mind.

"Hybrid, now we are thinking of it: many types of hybrid – plug-in and series hybrid. Electric, we have to think of that to have a zero-emission vehicle with some volume in the market in future," he said.

As for a diesel, don't hold your breath…

"Diesel is really decreasing: you have to spend a lot of money to clean up the emissions. Hybrid is better," he said.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Subaru Kenya is the official and sole distributor of all new and approved Subaru vehicles in Kenya. Their showroom is located along Mombasa Road and their parts headquarters is located along Athi River Road off Addis Ababa Road, Industrial Area.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom for more information. ■

Crossover SUV on the agenda for Renault Sport

Renault Sport (RSC) makes no bones about its interest in developing a crossover SUV derivative that offers signature value for money and expands its already existing portfolio beyond the Clio and Megane.

The French company's sporty division – while fiercely proud of its track-honed performance offerings – simply faces the challenge of making one that doesn't water-down its brand, says RSC's Managing Director, Patrice Ratti.

Therefore, it would seem that a Captur, Koleos or Kadjar GT or RS model is only a matter of time away from being developed. Fingers crossed.

"There's a market for it," says Ratti. "Now the market is very upscale, you see Porsche, Lamborghini and Maserati there, so if we're able to find a way to do it at Renault Sport prices, there's probably a market for that."

"But it's not an easy thing to do. If we do it we need to have good handling and enough power." Basically they have to do it right and not just for the sake of it.

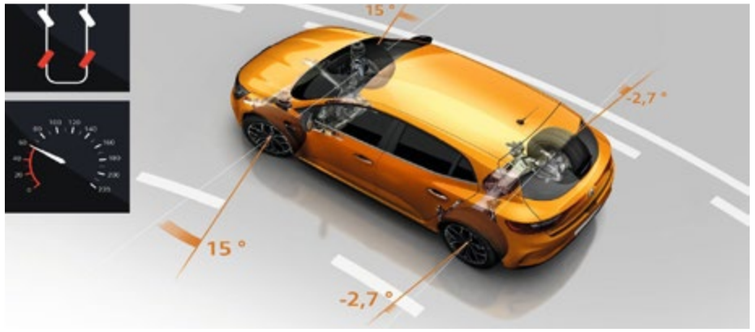
"Look at what happened with Porsche: most of their sales are now Cayenne and Macan, and it didn't damage their brand because they made a good product."

Ratti spoke at the world reveal of the new Megane RS earlier this year. In detailing the philosophy of that car, we can deduce that an Crossover SUV is definitely on the cards.

"In our history of Megane we have never been the most powerful of the segment, but have often been fastest on a circuit. Our objective is not to have the most powerful car."







Renault Sport Cars is 18 months into a major business plan, which demands a doubling of global sales between 2014 and 2018. RSC runs development and commercialisation of all RS, GT and GT-Line Renault road cars.

Part of this will come from developing mass market cars, such as the Sandero RS for Latin America, but the company has also said that it is working on "several projects" to expand its portfolio in Europe and beyond.

The Renault Sport subsidiary; which was dedicated to racing, was established in 1976, and included the Alpine and Giordini marques. Last year it sold 45,000 RS, GT and GT-Line models globally and will do fifty thousand by the close of this month, based on projections.

We eagerly wait to see what the designers, engineers and research & development (R&D) teams at Renault Sport can come up with.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Simba Corp; through Simba Caetano Formula, is the official and sole distributor of all new Renault vehicles in Kenya. They are located along Mombasa Road, as well as along Chiromo Road adjacent to Delta Corner.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom(s) for more information. ■

The Rise of the Crossover

By R. Benn

Crossover seems a strange word to apply to a vehicle yet it works because crossover implies a bridge. And that's exactly what Crossover cars do; they bridge the gap between a regular hatchback or saloon and a full-blown sports utility vehicle (SUV).





The term 'Crossover' was first coined way back in the 1970's around the time of the launch of the terrible Matra Rancho. Now it has become synonymous with, effectively, tall hatchbacks that offer in some cases a degree of four-wheel drive ability. The brilliant new Volkswagen Tiguan is a case in point which has proved to be very capable both on and off road.

Most car makers have at least one Crossover in their catalogue now and there's quite a selection on offer these days. Many offer two-wheel drive only for urban motoring but some have the option of driving all four wheels. When a more rugged approach is needed then an SUV is probably called for, but they can be less than economical. Crossovers, however, are based on a car platform and as such offer a more comfortable ride, essential in a family oriented environment. Crossovers have better economy and lower emissions, two very important considerations these days.

Value for Money

Crucially, the Crossover drives like a regular passenger car. Science tells us that the most efficient form of space is a box, so Crossover design is often informed by the need to provide more space for humans. This is why there's a uniformity to these cars no matter what the price. Manufacturers often have to strive to improve aerodynamics which is why the design is compromised. This does not bother car buyers; they love the Crossover style for its 'off-road' looks, even if the ability isn't there as in the case in some less expensive models.

You get what you pay for. At the top end, the Porsche Macan arguably takes the honours. Although based on Audi architecture this is not just a Q5 in a party frock – it's all Porsche and is inspired, not by the capable Cayenne SUV, but rather by the iconic 911. As Porsche themselves choose to remark, the Macan is a sports car for the Crossover segment. Beautifully designed and built, the Macan is fast and comfortable on hard roads but when the going gets tough it is also well up to the task.

The Best of Both Worlds

The Crossover car is, variously, around twenty-five centimetres higher than a corresponding hatch. This allows the seats to be raised without adversely affecting passenger headroom. This extra height affords the driver a more commanding viewpoint with greater all-round visibility. This extra visibility is especially handy when cruising around cities. It enables the driver to see over forward traffic and obstacles, as well as observing more of their blind-spots for the safety of passengers and other road users alike.

Even models like the impressive, if slightly smaller, BMW X1 stand tall over their hatchback counterparts. Rivalling the Audi Q3, the BMW is an ideal choice for town and suburban drivers, offering high fuel mileage and the option of xDrive for bad weather roads. Not perhaps as convincing off-road as some of its rivals, it nevertheless is quite capable of traversing a muddy track.

Come in all Shapes & Sizes

Mercedes-Benz has acknowledged that the unstoppable rise of the Crossover and SUV market is showing no sign of abating yet. Understandably then, there is more to come from the German brand. They know customers want the higher seating position and superior visibility that the Crossovers, like their very popular GLA model, offer. Even if these cars seldom venture onto the rough stuff, the option of all-wheel drive works as an insurance policy if the weather or terrain turns against them.

Like their SUV counterparts, Crossovers do vary in style and size. The GLA – which is more like a raised estate car than a utility vehicle - and X1 are smaller but buyers have the option to step up a size depending upon their needs. Audi customers are very much favouring the mid-sized Q5 which strikes a balance between the mighty Q7 flagship SUV and the smaller, lighter Q3. They all have their place, in town or out in the country.

The Advantages of Crossover

As mentioned, the high-riding position appeals as does the comfort and the array of safety and infotainment on offer. There is at least a hint of adventure about these cars; the sense that the family can have more fun further afield. The spacious interiors mean they're easy to load up through the big rear hatches and make for handy load carriers when needed as the rear seats fold down. As Crossovers are more compact than the big SUV siblings, they are easy to park too.

What the Future Holds

There's no doubt these cars are here to stay. Nothing seems to halt the inexorable and remarkable rise of the Crossover. There is absolutely no evidence that users are turning against them; quite the contrary in fact.

It certainly looks like the automotive industry will see even higher growth in Crossover / SUV sales in the years ahead. Mercedes, for example, are continuing to develop more product ideas. The company has said that they are exploring options ranging from a coupé version to an even more rugged model that will take on harsher terrain.

Land Rover have already shown their convertible Evoque model which means the industry as a whole has not yet reached anywhere near the pinnacle of what can be achieved with these versatile vehicles.

Depending upon usage or point of view the Crossover is a SUV, saloon, estate car, hatchback and utility van all rolled into one. It is hardly surprising that Crossovers have such broad appeal. Wherever car buyers live, be it in cities, suburbs, towns or villages, there's a chance this multiform motor will have at least some of the attributes buyers look for in their cars. It is probably fair to say that most drivers would be happy to crossover to a Crossover. ■

All New Toyota Fortuner

By M. O'Neil

HIGHLIGHTS

- Competitive pricing with long list of standard features;
- Comfortable seats with plenty of interior room;
- 7 seats; and
- Very impressive off-road.



Despite already offering the Rav4, Prado and Landcruiser, Toyota Kenya has managed to over the years, successfully squeeze one more SUV into the mix: the HiLux-based Toyota Fortuner. With competition in this segment now heating up, has Toyota landed a winner

The all-new Fortuner will take on the Everest from Ford and an established player like the Mitsubishi Pajero Sport.

The Toyota Fortuner boasts impressive off-road credentials and the seven-seater launches with the following specifications: .

According to Toyota, the Fortuner will sit above the Rav4 and below the Prado. While it may look big from the outside, the Fortuner is actually shorter and narrower than the Prado. Despite the exterior size deficit, the cargo capacity wins out on volume and versatility. With the third row in place, there is 200 litres of cargo volume on offer (to the roof).

That space increases to 716L with the third row folded away, and opens up to an impressive 1080L with the second row folded and tumbled out of the way. To put that into perspective, Prado has 742L available.

The Fortuner trumps the Prado's 2500kg towing capacity, with 3000kg on offer.

Inside the cabin, Toyota has gone to great lengths to differentiate the Fortuner from the HiLux vehicle entirely. Despite only sharing the forward part of the B-pillar with the HiLux, the interior and rear of the car is unique to the Fortuner.

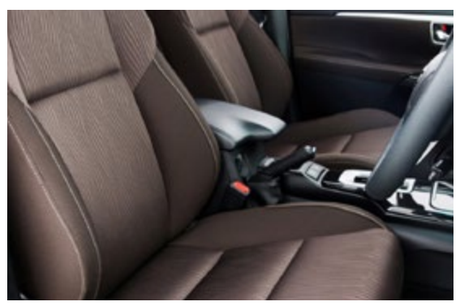
High quality materials and premium fit and finish sets the Fortuner apart from the HILux. Leather-look highlights make it feel more like a Prado than an SUV derived from a commercial double-cabin pick-up.

Handy features like an air-conditioned drink compartment and small grab handles in the B-pillar for little passengers make the Fortuner a versatile vehicle. That versatility extends to air conditioning vents for all three rows, 4kg bag hooks on the back of both front seats and three 12V outlets.

Leg and headroom in the second row is surprisingly good. You can successfully fit three adults abreast in the back with a squeeze, but two with absolute comfort. The third row is really only for smaller kids than larger adults.

Access to the third row comes courtesy of the 60:40 split-folding second-row with centre armrest and cup holders. The second row contains two ISOFIX points and three top-tether hooks, along with a roof mounted seat belt for the centre passenger.

Powered exclusively by a 2.8-litre four-cylinder turbocharged diesel engine, the Fortuner produces 130kW of power at 3400rpm and 450Nm of torque at 1600-2400rpm. The diesel engine is mated to a six-speed automatic gearbox, and consumes 8.6L/100km. the fuel tank has an 80 litre capacity.



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The Fortuner's engineering has been performed all over the world. The Fortuner has been tested across a challenging four-wheel drive course, over hundreds of kilometres of rutted and corrugated dirt roads and over 1000km of varying country highway roads, so this is one of the most comprehensive reviews you will read of the Fortuner. Considering how the Kenyan roads are setup, this should prove very enlightening for readers.

Let's start with arguably the most important aspect: the Fortuner's off-road ability. Built on the HiLux's body-on-frame underpinning, the Fortuner was engineered with the same four-wheel drive equipment, but with a 4-link coil-sprung suspension setup at the rear instead of leaf springs. In the front end, we have a double wishbone independent suspension setup.





Under the Fortuner's shell is a dual-range transmission with switchable four-wheel drive. The driver can switch between a two- and four-wheel drive high-range mode and a four-wheel drive low-range mode.

Additionally, a manually lockable rear differential, as well as Downhill Assist Control (DAC) and Hill Assist Control (HAC) help expand the Fortuner's four-wheel drive capabilities.



The first portion of the off-road course was covered with large loose rocks and featured both flat and inclined terrain. Over the flat portion of the rock-covered terrain, the chassis offered excellent communication through the wheel and seat of the pants, while the impressive 225mm ground clearance helped ensure all rocks were missed with ease.

As the terrain inclined, the Fortuner remained communicative, but it was the hydraulic steering that let it down on a couple of occasions. The steering would load up and become highly resistive for a short period. It didn't affect driving performance, but was a little frustrating. Moreover, the tilt and telescopic power steering is easily adjustable.

With a 30-degree approach angle and 25-degree departure angle, the Fortuner had no issues with front and rear clearance. A 700mm wading depth also positions it as one of the segment leaders in terms of water fording.



The next part of the off-road track involved uneven surfaces that caused the Fortuner to seesaw during a grade change. With one wheel off the ground, torque was easily shuffled to the other three wheels in unison with the stability control limiting wheel slip.

A long downhill portion of gravel gave us the chance to test the Fortuner's Downhill Assist Control (DAC) and Hill Assist Control (HAC). It works well at controlling the vehicle's speed, but we found it to be too slow with no obvious way of adjusting the descent speed accordingly. This meant overriding the system each time the terrain levelled out and the speed was too slow.

The rest of the track further tested articulation and torque distribution with low-range only required for a steep, low-friction ascent.

When not driving off-road, buyers are likely to be spending most of their time on the way there.

With the Fortuner in its rear-wheel drive mode, we snaked through gravel-covered switchbacks and found the car to be quite settled. Even during high throttle loads, the

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RATINGS BREAKDOWN

- Performance & Economy – 7
- Cabin Space & Comfort – 8
- Technology & Connectivity – 7.5
- Price & Features – 8
- Ride & Handling – 7.5

Fortuner remains controllable and predictable. When the rear-end does slip, the stability control does a good job of reining it in and keeping the car under control.

The steering's vague communication about centre improves during cornering as the rack loads up. Under load there is more communication and weight, which helps with placing the car on the road.

The ride is on the firmer side, but soaks up pot holes and undulations with aplomb. Unlike the HiLux, which can bounce on uneven surfaces unloaded, the Fortuner's four-link coil sprung rear absorbs the initial bump softly and then limits reverberation.

However so, it becomes unstuck over rutted roads with continuous corrugations. As the corrugation frequency increases, there is considerable booming in the cabin. The booming is a low-frequency thrum that becomes more evident with greater speed.

On the open road and through the city, some people may find the Fortuner's ride a little on the firm side. Much like on gravel roads, bigger thumps are adequately absorbed, but smaller imperfections impact the ride and upset the feel in the cabin at times.



The six-speed automatic transmission is a slick-shifting gearbox – that is strangely offered with steering wheel mounted paddle shifters – making full use of the engine's 450Nm of torque. In-gear acceleration is great and it can easily be coaxed into dropping down cogs for overtaking purposes.

At times the gearbox would hunt at highway speeds. We found that with the cruise control set at 110km/h, the gearbox would often drop to fifth gear at the slightest hint of an incline.

The handling isn't sports car-like, but it is manageable through corners. That's partly thanks to the front and rear sway bars that help keep body roll in check. This also means that we could see the Fortuner fitted with the Prado and Landcruiser's unique KDSS system.

All the time spent behind the wheel of the Fortuner, allowed us to appreciate how impressive the seats are. Despite potential long journeys upcountry or to one's rural home or area, you'll never feel tired or sore. The seats offer enough side and bottom support while also catering for comfort over rough roads.

Despite the low claimed fuel economy figures, we struggled to get within earshot of those numbers. With hundreds of kilometres spent behind the wheel, consumption figures read 13.1L/100km at the an average speed of 100km/h —almost 40 per cent more than Toyota's claim.





Several journalists came away from the all-new Fortuner's global launch quite surprised. Most weren't expecting such a refined and complete package. The premium elements of the vehicle help differentiate it enough from the HiLux, while the sharp pricing also makes it a cost-effective and versatile SUV proposition.

The Toyota Fortuner will come in various interesting exterior colours, namely: Super White, Silver Metallic, Grey Metallic, Phantom Brown Metallic, Avant Garde Bronze Metallic and finally Nebula Blue Metallic.

When it comes to ownership and servicing of the Toyota Fortuner, Toyota Kenya offers a limited warranty for a period of 36 months (3 years) or 100,000km, whichever comes first. That sounds like pretty good value in my books and you can never go wrong with a Toyota after all.

We can't wait to get our hands on a local model and put it through its paces for a comprehensive test drive and review. The next step will be to pit it against the Ford Everest and/or Mitsubishi Pajero Sport, in a comparison test — keep your eyes open for that.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Toyota Kenya is the official and sole distributor of all new Toyota vehicles in Kenya. They are located along Uhuru Highway, adjacent to Nakumatt Mega, as well as along Waiyaki Way; with a number of dealers spread across the country.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom(s) for more information. ■

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2017 Ford Ranger Wildtrak

By M. Campbell



Much is already known of the assets and abilities of the pre-update version of this double-cabin pick-up, but the 2017 Ford Ranger Wildtrak takes a good thing and makes it even better.

The most recent changes see the flagship Ford Ranger model bring additional standard equipment, including increased safety equipment and better connectivity. Naturally and obviously, it comes at a slight cost, though.

The six-speed automatic version of the Ranger Wildtrak seen here retails at US $43,250, up from US $42,000 for the 2016 model. The manual version is up too – retailing at US $41,700 (was previously US $40,500). All these prices are before taxes and on-road costs.

Previously you could option a Tech Pack for the Wildtrak at US $400, which included the now-standard lane departure warning and steering assistance function, a pre-collision warning system (no autonomous braking though), and adaptive cruise control. No other double-cabin pick-up has the same degree of safety tech available (until the X-Class from Mercedes officially hits markets next year), even optionally, so bravo Ford.

Furthermore, a recent update to Wildtrak models sees a change in seat trim to a more stain-resistant fabric, and the seats themselves have less piping and a shorter squab overhang to improve occupant comfort. The cupholders now have 'secure fingers' to better grip bottles and cups, too.

Moreover, there's the new Sync 3 media system with the latest in-car phone-mirroring tech, meaning Android Auto and Apple CarPlay will pop up when you connect your device via USB. There are two USBs to help keep your phone and/or tablet juiced up, not to mention a smattering of 12-volt plugs and a 220-volt powerpoint in the rear of the cabin.

You will or won't like the orange trim highlights, but you have to admit it makes the Wildtrak stand out from the pack, where some competitor high-grade double-cabin pick-ups remain quite bland and utterly boring in my opinion. As nice as an Amarok Ultimate is, it doesn't have the fun factor or, dare we say it, 'sportiness' of the Wildtrak.

There's a fake leather trim with orange stitching on top of the dash, and orange stitching around the cabin on the doors seats, gear selector and steering wheel.

You pay a high price to get into a Wildtrak, but you're rewarded with plenty of gear. There's electric seat adjustment for the driver, heated front seats, an auto-dimming rear-view mirror, heated side mirrors, puddle lamps and a pair of digital displays for the driver that sit either side of a central analogue speedo. The two small screens can be configured in many ways, including displaying navigation instructions, managing safety systems, offering digital speed readout, a tacho, as well as displaying the stereo configuration.

That's one example of how much thought Ford has put into the interior cabin of the Wildtrak. To add onto that, there are well thought-out storage areas in the front seats and in the back, including a flip-down centre armrest with cupholders, bottle holders in all the doors, and a couple of little storage boxes under the rear seat when you fold up the base.

And there are elements like sun-visors that have slide adjustment for those long afternoon drives home, and retractable grab-handles all around.

THE GOOD

- Standardised safety;
- New media screen better than before;
- Updated infotainment system;
- Still great to drive; and
- Strong drivetrain.

THE BAD

- Standardised safety kit means price is up;
- Not the greatest payload in this specification; and
- Engine can be laboured at times.

We noted one or two fit issues with the vehicle seen here, though. The tops of the pillars didn't quite tuck away nicely into the black headlining, and the sill protectors were again a bit loose on the edges.

Along with all the electronic safety technology, the Wildtrak has six airbags – dual front, front side and full-length curtain, just like every other name brand double-cabin pick-up out there except the Amarok (which misses out on curtain airbags). For parents, there are three top-tether rear child-seat anchor points and dual ISOFIX attachments, as well.

The 3.2-litre turbo diesel five-cylinder engine continues to churn out 147kW of power at 3000rpm and 470Nm of torque at 2500rpm, with a six-speed automatic gearbox taking care of swapping between gears.

The 2017 model saw some tweaks to the engine for better emissions, and as a result the claimed fuel use dropped from 9.0 litres per 100 kilometres to 8.9L/100km. realistically, this figure is about 11.2L/100km, as was seen on test.

The engine feels more effortless in the mid-range than some competitor four-cylinder double-cabin pick-ups, however there is some noticeable turbo lag from standstill under hard throttle, and it runs out of puff as revs rise sooner than some four-cylinder double-cabin pick-ups.

Its refinement could be better, and while it can be a little sluggish if you flatten the throttle at a stop, if you're considerate when applying pressure, it will offer good urgency due to its throttle sensitivity. In fact, that right pedal can be a little too touchy off-road, making it hard to even out progress up hills when things get a little slippery. Probably best to use the vehicle's momentum coupled with your braking ability.

We've mentioned in the past that the Ford drivetrain can be a little frustrating in that it is quite noisy under throttle, and when you're sitting still it is more prone to vibration through the body than rivals. But we'd put up with that for the push the engine offers, because with a load on board – 750 kilograms, for example – it feels as though it's ready to work.

We've said it before, and the fact remains that the Ford Ranger is arguably the best double-cabin pick-up on the market to offer an





RATINGS BREAKDOWN

- Performance & Economy – 8
- Cabin Space & Comfort – 8.5
- Technology & Connectivity – 9
- Price & Features – 8.5
- Ride & Handling – 8.5



SUV-like driving experience. Indeed, it's better behaved over bumps than some SUVs, and it steers with better precision and accuracy than many, as well. As earlier stated, the X-Class from Mercedes could prove a real rival in this market segment.

The suspension is convincing enough to make you think it isn't a workhorse double-cabin pick-up at all. Riding on 18-inch alloy wheels, it isn't necessarily light on its feet, but it doesn't stumble when the wheels hit a pothole, or buck when you contact a road join. And best of all, there's hardly any shudder at the rear when there's nothing in the tray and you find yourself on a bumpy track.

The steering is another example of Ford making its double-cabin pick-up easier to live with than its rivals. The electric steering system possesses finger-tip lightness at low speeds, and though it requires quite a few turns from lock to lock, it is nicely weighted at higher speeds; precise and direct, and not very pick-up-like at all.

The toughness of the Wildtrak isn't as pronounced as its more work-ready siblings down the Ranger range, but it still comes ready to be put to task, should you so choose. It has a tub-liner in the tray to stop you from scratching the paint, as well as a roll-top cargo cover that is lockable, making for good security.

On that note, you can tie down your load to four internal hooks, and there's a 12-volt outlet in the tray as well. The tray is a good size for the class: 1549mm long by 1560mm wide (1139mm between the arches) and 511mm deep, but its payload is on the low side at 907 kilograms.



If you need to tow – and it's a good double-cabin pick-up to do that – there's a 3.5-tonne capacity for braked trailers, or 750kg for the standard-fit towbar without brake attachment.

In Kenya, Ford; through CMC Motors, covers the Ranger (and all of its models) with a three-year/100,000 kilometre warranty, and there's a capped-price servicing plan for the life of the vehicle. It requires maintenance every 12 months or 15,000km, whichever occurs first. Not too bad if you ask me.

It isn't a cheap double-cabin pick-up, but if you wanted a more affordable option from Ford, there are plenty to choose from – none of them are quite as passenger-focused as the Wildtrak, though.

It remains our pick of the double-cabin pick-up segment for safety, comfort and convenience, one that is indeed made even better by the 2017 model year update.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- CMC Motors is the official and sole distributor of all new Ford vehicles in Kenya. They are located along Lusaka Road.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom for more information. ■

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2018 Mercedes-Benz X-Class

By J. Spinks

Luxury car brands have been busy creating niche vehicle segments over the past decade or so, and the Mercedes-Benz X-Class essentially creates another: the global luxury double-cabin pick-up.

Global is a key word, as America had the Lincoln Blackwood and Cadillac Escalade EXT at the start of this century – with mixed success.

Mercedes-Benz Argentina even turned a 115 series 220d sedan into a pick-up in the 1970s, though you only need to see the sales trend for double-cabins – as they've broadened their appeal from workhorse to lifestyle vehicle – to understand why parent company Daimler has decided it shouldn't be missing out on this segment.

After two years of announcements, concepts, reveals and passenger rides, a handful of global motoring journalists found themselves on the opposite side of South America's Andes mountain range, in Chile, to drive the X-Class.

It's less weird seeing a pick-up wearing the three-pointed star rather than the four rings of Audi or blue and white roundel of BMW, simply because of Mercedes' vast fleet of commercial vans and trucks.

It shouldn't be news that this isn't a ground-up original Benz creation, with Mercedes choosing to instead borrow the underpinnings from alliance partner Nissan. (Renault's Alaskan double-cabin pick-up is another relative).

Mercedes says it has made extensive modifications, including strengthening the ladder-frame chassis, tweaking the damping, and changing suspension kinematics – relocating the attachment points for Nissan's five-point multi-link rear, for instance.

The German engineers were delighted to be working with the NP300 Navara's coil springs rather than the leaf springs common to this breed of vehicle, though it swapped the Nissan's rear drum brakes for ventilated versions.

Mercedes also introduced its own front and rear axles, which are still independent and solid, respectively, but are notably wider than the Nissan's – by 62mm and 55mm, respectively.

With the X-Class featuring exclusive sheet metal, it allowed the designers to get close to the width of the concepts that previewed the German double-cabin pick-up – just a finger's width either side, according to Mercedes Vans Design Chief, Kai Sieber.

The production version has still, inevitably, lost some of the concept model's visual impact, though our view is that it looks more effective in the metal than pictures.

If it still looks largely like any other double-cabin pick-up in basic profile, those prominent three-point stars front and rear will have huge visual appeal for many buyers.

No word has come out of DT Dobie (Mercedes-Benz franchise owner and distributor in Kenya) on pricing strategy; let alone whether it will be available, but the one surety is that the X-Class will set a new benchmark for the cost of double-cabin pick-ups in this country. Considering our terrain and less than perfect roads, the X-Class could really do well in Kenya and the African market as a whole.

It needs to justify that beyond the brand name, there's a promising start when you climb aboard. The X-Class will come in 3 guises: Pure, Progressive and Power.

Even in base 'Pure' form, the X-Class's front cabin presents a tough-but-smart design suited to the vehicle, with its expansive dash, gloss-black lower console, 7.0-inch colour display, touchpad and rotary controller, and a twin-dial binnacle like the one found in a C-Class.



THE GOOD

- Supple, controlled ride
- Drivetrain and cabin refinement
- Interior presentation and comfort
- Strong safety line-up
- Off-road ability

THE BAD

- Twin-turbo diesel can struggle with vehicle's mass
- Steering lacks directness of some rivals
- Question mark against urban ride
- Limited rear headroom, upright back seat
- Pricing still unknown





The mid-spec 'Progressive' adds leather for the steering wheel, gear lever and handbrake, swaps fabrics for the upholstery, replaces the 'Pure's' plastic floor covering with carpet, and the lower console is made from what Design Chief, Kai Sieber, says is the biggest piece of steel fitted to a modern Mercedes interior.

We drove a range-topping, lifestyle-focused 'Power' variant during the launch, which further lifts the perception of quality with Artico/Dynamica (artificial-leather and microfibre) seats, dual-zone climate control, and a Comand 8.4-inch infotainment screen claimed to be the biggest in the class.

The Comand infotainment system also brings Wi-Fi connectivity, while digital radio is standard on Progressive and Power models. Sim-card-based Wi-Fi is also available.

A couple of optional cabin enhancements fitted to the test car included a distinctive, Scando-inspired matt woodgrain trim for the mid dash section, plus extra artificial leather for the upper-dash, armrests and door beltlines. Leather, top-stitched seats are also available as an added option.

There's still more hard plastic than you'll find in any Mercedes passenger car, some of which it can be argued is good for cabin durability, and some not so much.

The plastic vent surrounds also look slightly tacky, and console storage is limited. There's only one proper cupholder as the too-shallow second is more like a tray, and even that isn't large enough to properly stash your smartphone. The console bin is wide but short, and its space further limited by a block housing USB ports.

It's mixed news in the rear cabin. Shoulder room, as up front, benefits from the X-Class's wide tracks, legroom and foot space is in good supply, and there are child-seat anchor points. The bench sits up higher than the front seats, though, limiting headroom, while the seatbacks are too upright.

If the Volkswagen Amarok presents the

X-Class as its biggest hurdle for class honours, the X-Class's rear cabin can at least claim to offer a curtain airbag that covers both rows. Safety first indeed…

Even with the usual caveats of testing a vehicle on unfamiliar, foreign roads, I think we can make an early call and say Mercedes isn't going to be a game-changer in the way double-cabin pick-ups handle.

Its wide tracks provide good cornering stability, but once roads turn from flowing to tightening, the X-Class – as with rivals – feels relatively cumbersome when compared with a similarly sized SUV.

Its steering is more surprising. Despite Mercedes applying a quicker ratio to the hydraulic rack, there are 3.5 turns lock to lock and it requires more twirling than ideal. It also feels rather remote, leaving the X-Class trailing the likes of the Amarok, Ford Ranger and Mazda BT-50 in a key area. Not a surprise as this is their first foray into an unknown segment.

Around-town manoeuvring isn't helped, either, by a 13.4-metre turning circle, which is a full metre wider than the Navara's.

Ride quality has the potential to be at the tail- end of the segment. The suspension hinted at some fidgeting during our brief run through city streets and tunnels to leave a question mark against how the X-Class will handle urban roads; especially here in Kenya. However so, the Benz's relaxing manner on highways and country roads impressed hugely.

The X-Class expertly blends suppleness and control, while its ability to cushion occupants across a barrage of nasty potholes was uncanny.

The vinyl/microfibre front seats also provide all-day comfort, even if the lack of steering wheel reach adjustment means not all drivers will find their perfect position.

Refinement is a stand-out, too. In addition to structural reinforcements, Mercedes thickened existing insulation from the Navara while also ramping up sound deadening measures in the firewall and around the transmission tunnel, and applying a door sealing concept it immodestly describes as "ingenious".

Wind noise was notably muted during our long day drive, while the X250d's 2.3-litre twin-turbo four-cylinder diesel proved only mildly troubled even under heavy acceleration.

The engine is also borrowed from the Navara, with some further NVH tuning for its Benz installation but the same power and torque: 140kW and 450Nm (up 20kW and 47Nm over the single-turbo diesel powering the X220d base engine that's another Renault-Nissan unit).







The seven-speed automatic gearbox complements the diesel's smooth, quiet performance with well-judged shifts.

With the X-Class's extra modifications and extra features, the X250 weighs 2.23 tonnes compared with the 1.97 tonnes of the STX Navara featuring the same engine.

So, after some initial lag at lower revs, acceleration is somewhat gradual. And that's without any load in the tray.

European fuel consumption figures suggest the X250d (7.9L/100km) will use a bit under an extra litre of diesel every 100km compared with the STX and about half a litre less than an Amarok 420TDI.

Mercedes quotes 11.8 seconds for the X250d 4Matic's 0-100km/h acceleration (and 12.9sec for the X220d 4Matic). Expect that to be slashed by the Mercedes-sourced 3.0-litre V6 turbo diesel due a couple of months or so after the X-Class four-cylinders reach global markets around Ester next year.

Mercedes gave us a ride in an X-Class X350d featuring a prototype of the 190kW/550Nm V6, which is known from a variety of Benz vans and passenger cars but still being finalised for its double-cabin pick-up installation.

An X350d 'Progressive' or 'Power' isn't



going to be cheap if you consider there will be a premium over an Amarok V6 that costs from US $42,000 in mid-spec Highline or US $47,600 in top-of-the-tree Ultimate (all before taxes and on road costs), but our first impression from the passenger seat is that you will be rewarded with spirited performance from what will be the most powerful diesel in the segment.

It also comes with a Benz 7G-tronic seven-speed automatic transmission, Dynamic Select multi-vehicle mode, paddle-shift levers, engine stop-start – as well as permanent all-wheel drive, where the Renault-Nissan drivetrains are switchable four-wheel-drive systems.

The workhorse-focused 'Pure' will also be available with rear-wheel-drive only and a six-speed manual gearbox.

A reasonably testing 4WD course proved an X-Class 4Matic is equipped with the requisite low-range gearing, hill-hold and hill-descent systems, ground clearance (222mm), and approach/departure angles to cope with challenges such as sharp gradients, steeped banking, water crossings and deeply rutted tracks – and all without a fuss.

As with the Navara, engaging a dog-clutch that creates symmetrical four-wheel drive is possible on the move up to 100km/h by turning a console dial. Changing to 4L for extra low-rev torque and crawling ability requires a push and turn of the dial while stationary. A locking rear differential is also standard.

The X-Class shares the Navara's 3500kg braked towing capacity (3200kg 4x2) but brings a higher maximum payload of 1067kg if you compare the X250d with the Navara ST-X (941kg auto).

The X-Class also uses its increased dimensions over its donor vehicle to provide greater tray utility. An extra 8.4cm gives the Mercedes one of the longest trays in the class. And while the 1560mm tray width is identical to the Nissan's, those wider tracks create enough space between the wheel-arches to accommodate a default-sized pallet.

'Pure' models feature four load-securing rings in the tray; 'Progressive' and 'Power' variants gain a load-securing rail system; which is optional on all models.

In addition to the full suite of airbags, the X-Class also features Active Brake Assist, Lane Keeping Assist, and Collision Prevention Assist. Useful functions such as adaptive cruise control and blind spot monitoring are missing, however.

Mercedes may be new to the double-cabin pick-up game, but it's clocked onto the fact that buyers love to enhance their vehicles.

The company has developed its own, comprehensive range of accessories. They include hard and soft tonneau covers (covers for the open load tray), 156-litre storage box, plastic tray liner, tray divider system, stainless-steel styling bar, side bar with step in stainless steel or black paint, sports bar in any vehicle colour, and canopy.

The X-Class, then, ticks several important boxes for Mercedes-Benz's double-cabin pick-up debut, though we now wait to see just what kind of premium the company will charge for its premium double-cabin pick-up.

In some respects, it promises to be the S-Class of pick-ups we were hoping it might be, especially in terms of its refinement and open-road ride. Yet it also has enough downsides that benchmark status is anything but guaranteed in this intensely competitive market segment.

A match-up with the Amarok will surely be one of the most highly anticipated head-to-heads of 2018.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- DT Dobie Kenya is the official and sole distributor of all new Mercedes-Benz, Jeep and Volkswagen vehicles in Kenya. They are located off the roundabout at the junction of Lusaka Road and Enterprise Road.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom for more information. ■





The New Ford Everest Titanium

By M. O'Neil

So it was birthday last month, and out of all the great gifts I got or things I managed to do, nothing compares to the 'gift' I got that week. So my friends down at CMC and Hill & Knowlton decided to catch me unawares and surprise me with an opportunity to test drive the new Ford Everest Titanium for the weekend! Now I've test driven cars before but I wasn't ready for what the Everest had in store.

I recently learnt of a new term when reading up about financial services and all: 'Bracket creep'. It's a term used by finance types to signify the often unintentional shift from one tax bracket to another. In the context of cars, the meaning is quite similar; especially when I talk about the Ford Everest Titanium, which drove and felt at par with any European SUV out there.

For years we have seen mainstream brands pushing ever more premium offerings, which in turn attract more premium pricing. Once thoroughly blue-collar brands; like Ford, creeping into more white-collar territory, where the peak of the 'everyday' matches price with the base of prestige.

PRICING

Due to our high taxation on imported vehicles in Kenya, the base Everest (2.2L XLS) retails at a staggering Kshs. 5,995,000 (inclusive of VAT) and our range-topping test car (3.2L LTD Titanium) retails at a whopping Kshs. 8,795,000!

Now many of you if not all, might say that these figures are high, obscene or even vulgar and I probably agree with you; considering you can get a 2010 – 2012 German or British SUV and saloon for that kind of money. No wonder 80% of the cars on Kenyan roads are used imports.

But what most of you might not know is that that final retail price assures you of two things. Firstly, no one else has driven your car and it is in mint condition unlike second hand vehicles at the same price point (premium or not). Secondly, that final retail price is inclusive of 3 to 5 year warranties and service on your vehicle. This simply means that you won't have to pay for service until you get bored of your car, if you ever will, or want to trade-up to a newer model.

It's evident that the Titanium wants to break that ceiling and punch in the same class as the Toyota Prado or Land Rover Discovery. Probably the most thought provoking thing is that the entry-level Land Rover Discovery comes in at about Kshs. 500K less than the Ford.

DESIGN

The Everest looks just different enough from its Ford Ranger cousin that you forget the double-cabin pick-up forms the engineering basis of the SUV. The LED daytime running lights and tail lamps here are standard equipment; and believe me you'll turn a couple of heads considering how good this car looks.

One instance of this on my 3-day test run had me encounter a gentleman driving a 2011 Mercedes Benz E-Class Coupe, and who couldn't help but stare at the Everest Titanium in Traffic and even signal his passenger to look at it as well in traffic. Guess he saw what Ford's been talking about.

The Everest, hides its size well, and is actually 63mm longer than a Land Rover Discovery. It's a modern looking vehicle, and feels very much part of the global Ford truck family, thanks to the giant chrome grille up front.

The higher bonnet line, tapered treatment of the side windows and standard 20-inch wheels create the illusion of a more compact and stocky, yet tough car. Its' sheer size didn't scare me at all, but rather made me feel like I was on top of the world.

The ride height is great as the seats are well positioned high up and this gives the driver great outward visibility at all times

THE GOOD

- Retains familiar refinement and easy-driving character;
- Cosseting and comfortable ride;
- Functional 7 seats;
- Spacious and flexible cabin;
- Light steering and easy to drive;
- Great ride height and outward visibility; and
- Very capable off-roader.

THE BAD

- Still too expensive, considering the well-known competition in the market;
- No reach-adjustable steering;
- Engine lag on start-up and low speeds; and
- Still needs a key to start in 2017.





and from all angles. A panoramic sunroof that stretches all the way to the second row is standard on the Everest Titanium, as are the side steps. I definitely enjoyed bathing my passengers in sunlight and having one of them take a selfie and caption it "#sunkissed".

FEATURES & EQUIPMENT

As is becoming apparent already, the Everest comes fully loaded for its borderline Kshs. 9 million price tag. Electric leather seats, great sound system, panoramic sunroof, and adaptive cruise control are all standard items.

True Red and Cool White exterior paint comes inclusive in the pricing; with the only options being prestige paints (a choice of six other colours are available at a price) and a tow pack. My test car came in True Red, which absolutely suits it.

It's not perfect though, I'm not sure too many other borderline Kshs. 9 million cars can claim to require a key to start; while even used 2009 Toyota Vitz have push to start as standard.





INTERIOR

Being the top-specification of a cheaper car as opposed to the lower-specification of a more expensive one is never more telling than on the inside.

While the Everest has lots of fun buttons, the materials and finish betray its more conservative origins. The embossed panel above the glovebox in particular has a very hollow sounding knock to it.

The feel of the leather on the seats is great but they can feel firm at times, and at this price point, 'real' bucket seats would make more sense. There is good storage and the eight-inch touchscreen is great to work with.

Rear passenger space is excellent, and the inclusion of air-conditioning controls in the second row, as well as a 230-volt power socket, is supremely convenient. The second row is split 60:40 but the larger division is curb-side, making it less than ideal for passengers to climb into the third row.





While the seats stow and open at the touch of a button, the third row space is strictly for smaller passengers, but we actually managed to fit my friend in there and he was fairly comfortable; admittedly he's not the tallest chap around. There are cup holders back there as well and outward vision is still good thanks to big windows and despite the tapering roofline.

Under the powered tailgate, the Everest has a 450-litre boot with the third row erect, or 1050-litres with it stowed. For convenience in shopping carparks, the tailgate doesn't open to an extreme height – but watch your head if you are over six-foot (like I am) as you will need to duck to fit under it.

Yes the Everest is well equipped and very functional, but its working-class Ranger heritage is still noticeable. But this doesn't have to be a bad thing.

DRIVETRAIN

Hauling around 2,495kg is no easy task, so the Everest comes standard with plenty of diesel power under the bonnet. The Ford runs a 3.2-litre five-cylinder turbocharged diesel engine that produces 143kW of power and 470Nm of torque. A six-speed automatic gearbox drives all four wheels in the Everest Titanium.

Ford claim 8.5 litres per 100km consumption and while I saw higher than that on my test drive, the car regularly sat below 6.5 litres per 100km on a highway cruise; which is lower than claimed. At the conclusion of my full test, the Ford recorded about 9L/100km, which isn't too bad.

Although I wasn't able to perform any towing tests, the Everest is rated highly at having a 3000kg towing capacity. This should come handy for those who own horses and play polo or have kids who do motocross.

However so, there's a bit of a problem which I noticed immediately I set off from the CMC showroom. There's a considerable amount of lag from the engine at start-up and stationary starts, that was too evident to ignore. The vehicle gets going pretty quick but just sounds laboured and sluggish while doing it; as if it was being forced to move. When you hit about 2000rpm the engine is strong to respond and pulls away like a race horse. And while the engine offers decent response at speed it is pretty noisy at idle, for those outside; as cabin noise is limited.

OFF ROAD

I wasn't able to really go off-road as I had the car for just 3 days; 2 of which were working days and the other the day I had to return it. Truth be told this car will spend most of its time on the tarmac of urban streets, but what I know is that the Ford Everest begins to shine where the road ends.

Unexpected obstacles inevitably feature in any exciting off-road adventure, and that's why the Everest is built to wade deeper than any SUV in its class; up to 800mm. combine this with an impressive 225mm ground clearance and you'll stay on top of things.

For those who get that urge for off-road-

ing, the big Ford comes with a selectable Terrain Management System (TMS), allowing you to essentially tell the car what surface you are driving on and let it figure out the rest.

Moreover, the Everest has a five-link coil spring rear suspension setup with a (manually) lockable rear differential. With technologies like this and the Active Transfer Case, you can enjoy ultimate grip and traction as well as full engine torque on both rear wheels; even if one wheel is off the ground.

When descending a difficult slope or ridge, you can easily activate the Everest's Hill Descent Control system that automatically brakes the vehicle to take you downhill at a controlled and steady pace. This lets you concentrate on placing the vehicle exactly where you want it.



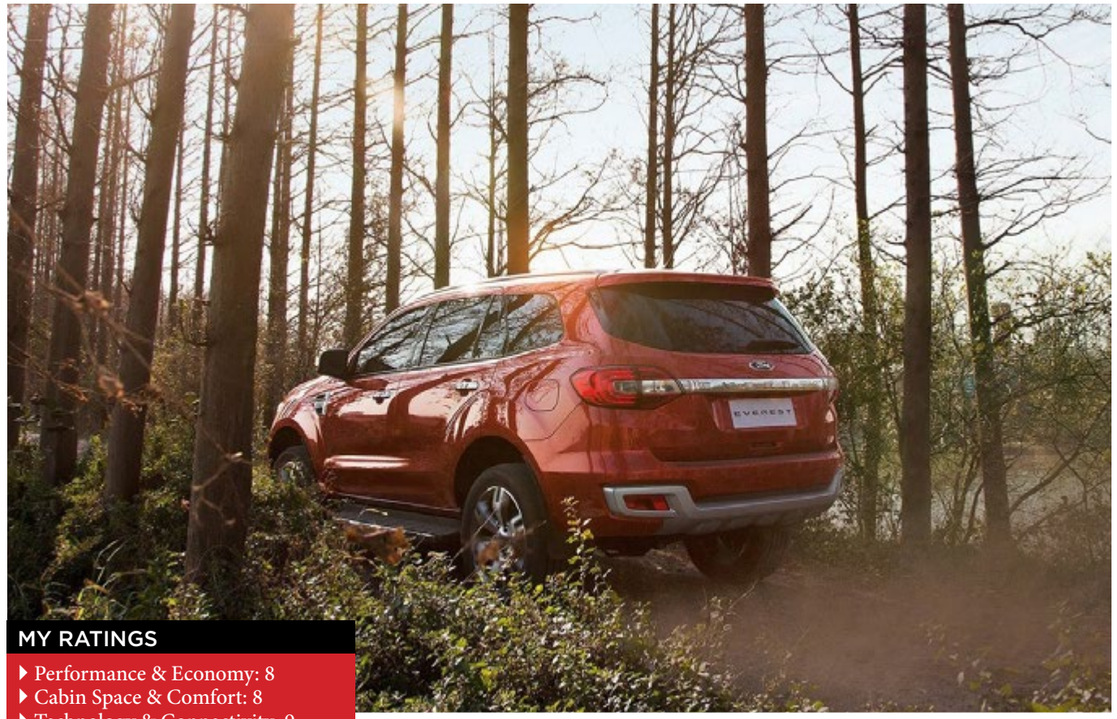


ON THE TARMAC

On the road, where the Everest will undoubtedly spend most of its life, the Ford holds its own and really impressed me. The Everest exhibited a talent for disguising the surface – with the ride feeling much the same on gravel or marram as it did on tarmac. This type of stable and predictable handling is a must for this car and a must have for driving in Africa; Kenya not being an exception.

The handling and stability on the open road was pure driving pleasure. Unlike rigid systems; that you get a lot from a number of SUVs and pickups, the Eeverest's superior Watt's Linkage Suspension delivers superior stability and handling, as well as maximum comfort. I felt like I was driving on European roads; knowing full well the state of Kenyan roads.

Furthermore, the Everest had exceptional control in the corners and curves. This was due to Curve Control technology which is designed to maximise security on winding roads, by monitoring and reducing your speed should you enter a corner too quickly. Coupled with Advanced Traction Control, Dynamic Stability Control and Roll Stability Control systems, the Everest inspired confidence in me on the open road. It had me feeling like I could drive to Mombasa in 4 hours like the upcoming SGR passenger trains.



MY RATINGS

- Performance & Economy: 8
- Cabin Space & Comfort: 8
- Technology & Connectivity: 9
- Price & Features: 8
- Ride & Handling: 9

Around town, the electrically assisted steering of the Ford makes it a tremendously light car to drive around. At no point did I feel like I was struggling to drive the mammoth of a car. The steering wasn't to light but was very receptive at all speeds; high or low.

Drawing on lessons learned from the excellent ride of the Ranger, and the mixed-message desire of many drivers wanting truck-like height with car-like handling, the Everest is a very liveable and loveable car in the city. And best believe it I was already in love 30 minutes in.

OWNERSHIP

A three year, 100,000km warranty and service is standard on the Everest. CMC Motors offers free service for this period of time; which can be extended upon request. These are some of the advantages of buying a showroom vehicle.



CONCLUSION

Ford has shown that they mean business and the Everest has certainly held its own when all things are considered. The American conglomerate is changing their market positioning and creeping closer and closer to becoming a proposition to the premium brands.

The lines continue to blur in this segment, but value and convenience goes to Ford for what they are trying to do with the Everest.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- CMC Motors is the official and sole distributor of all new Ford vehicles in Kenya. They are located along Lusaka Road.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom for more information.■

Volkswagen Golf GTI 40 Years

By A. Fallah



The Volkswagen Golf GTI is an icon, widely regarded as the original hot hatch. When it comes to history lessons, it was actually beaten to that title by the Renault 5 Gordini released a few months earlier in 1976, but that doesn't change the fact that it was the better car, and now, 40 years later, it still remains at the top of its game.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The most refined hot hatch on the market;
- Increased power;
- Great sounding exhaust;
- Unique interior finish; and
- Comparative pricing.

The Volkswagen Golf GTI 40 Years is an odd name. It was meant to be called Golf Clubsport, and it is in most international markets. But, in some markets; due to trademarking, its known as 'GTI 40 Years'.

Starting from US $34,300 the uprated Golf GTI DSG is by no means cheap, though for that extra US $3000 over the standard GTI DSG you do get performance from the 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine climbing from 162kW of power in the regular model to a new 195kW. Torque is unchanged at 350Nm, but a new boost function ups numbers briefly to 213kW and 380Nm.

In terms of numbers, the GTI 40 Years will run from 0-100km/h in 6.3 seconds. Volkswagen claims it will survive on just 7.1L/100km on the ADR combined cycle. However, we're quite sure that number will double.

From the outside it's easily distinguishable from the regular model by the new 'Ruby' wheels. In addition to the gloss black trim, a slightly revised front bumper with larger air intakes (brake cooling ducts) finishes the front while the rear bumper also gets a minor update.

To those looking really hard, you'll also notice the larger diameter exhaust tailpipes that complement the new exhaust system as well as the larger rear roof spoiler and a black-red LED tail light design.

In terms of unique badging, there is nothing but the most subtle '40 Years' decals on the flanks which you'll notice when you look at the new, extended side sills.

Jump inside and everything seems rather familiar to those who have sat inside a Golf GTI Performance, including the ageing infotainment system, though there is now a lot of Alcantara. The Alcantara on the seats, steering wheel, door inlays and shift boot is very evident. Does it add to the cabin ambience? Sure, but it will be interesting to see how it wears over time.

There's red stitching and GTI-badged door sills, all of which add that extra sense of specialness to a car that so very much deserves it.

But no matter what the GTI looks like inside or out, it's how it drives that makes the 40 Year model the best GTI yet.

We tested an automatic; as all manual variants had already been sold. What we had was the rapid fire six-speed DSG, which is no doubt a better performance car but perhaps not as engaging as the manual would have been or is.

Press the start button, engage D, press the mode selector to get to Sport and away you go. At first it feels just like a regular GTI, until you really go for the right pedal.

It is seriously fast. It's that over-boost function in third gear or above that lets you hit highs of 213kW and 380Nm which you can really feel push you back into the seat as you go flat out in a straight line.

Strangely, there is so little torque steer that you start to wonder if you've accidentally jumped on board a Golf R. We expected then, that once we began to drive on twistier roads that the GTI's understeer-prone characteristic would show its ugly head. But, somewhat gleefully, this wasn't the case.

Volkswagen's tricky diff up front has very much changed the characteristic of the GTI. For some, the idea of a front-wheel drive hot hatch that doesn't fight or show hints of play-











fulness through the steering wheel is sinful. For others, like this reviewer, it's a godsend. As are the uprated brakes, which despite plenty of abuse, didn't show any signs of fade.

As we climbed further and further up through very twisty roads, it became awfully daunting as to whether or not this car could be labelled the 'best FWD in the world'. It has certainly proven itself around the Nurburgring in Germany.

That's a big statement to make and I know many would argue that the best FWD in the world is the previous Ford Focus RS. Sure Ford's revolutionary Revoknuckle was good, but this is different.

The RS was a race car trapped inside a compromised road-going hatch, the GTI is a car you can drive every single day and yet, with this new LSD, it's a whole different level of dynamic ability.

It also sounds rather tough. The updated exhaust system seems to emit a deeper tone than the regular car and the gearshifts now burble better than ever.

In saying all that, this is a rather expensive car. Tick a few options (like sunroof) and the price on road will easily stretch to around US 40 Grand, and that's Golf R money. Or, well, Ford Focus RS money.

So in that regard, the question is not necessarily whether you should buy this over a regular Golf GTI (because you really should if you have the financial means), but whether you should, in fact, forgo other options in its favour.

It's a hard question to answer. There's no doubt the Golf R and the Focus RS will be faster off the line thanks to their proper AWD system.

For us, the Golf R is a bit lacklustre in appearance and its relative performance. The Focus RS, however, is a gem and if you can overlook its cheap cabin, massively huge waiting list, then it's the absolute pick of the hot hatch market for the moment.

However, the Golf GTI 40 Year edition is something special. It's not just the way it looks inside or out, or the extra power and torque that it delivers on over-boost, but more so that after 40 years of refinement, the folks at Volkswagen have truly nailed the principles of a hot hatch and this is the ultimate culmination of that work.

If you want one, then it's my displeasure to tell you that most have already been sold, as it is a limited edition car.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- DT Dobie Kenya is the official and sole distributor of all new Volkswagen (VW) vehicles in Kenya. They are located off the roundabout at the junction of Lusaka Road and Enterprise Road.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom for more information. ■

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2017 BMW 5 Series

By C. Dupriez

The BMW 5 Series is a car steeped with heritage. With 45 years of experience under its name, and as BMW's longest running nameplate, the 5 Series formula of blending executive luxury with driving pleasure has been tried and tested. This tradition, which was inspired at its 1972 birth and cemented over six previous and largely accomplished generations, has earned the 5 Series the right to exceed shake-ups and change in this subtly remade G30 form.

While this seventh generation looks, feels and smells very familiar, it must still keep up with the times, if merely for the sake of remaining relevant. With that said it is no wonder why the Bavarian Vehicle manufacturer decided to underline the 5 Series with a bold and wide range of features and technology as its pitch to keep itself at the forefront of the premium mid-sized luxury sedan segment.

The tricky part that 5 Series engineers and designers faced, was the prospect of blending the time-honoured class that anchor the range's character and appeal, with 21st century modern technology expected today from consumers all over. Has BMW succeeded in this effort? That is the question this article aims to answer.

If you're the type who loves a wide array of features, who'll invest your time in fiddling through them, and who likes a high degree of configurable personalisation, then the 5 Series' gadget suite will reward your endeavours.

Truth be told however, there's far too much button pressing and submenu searching for me to fully get the best out of the technology specifications. I would rather be focussed on flexing the sedans' more easily accessible muscles, by negotiating corners and highways at great speed.

There are four variants now available in showrooms; two petrol and two diesel versions. The two petrol versions are the 2.0-litre four-cylinder 530i, which lists for US $76,200, and the 3.0-litre six-powered 540i, currently the priciest in range at US $95,800. The diesel versions are the entry-priced US $65,700 entry 520d, featuring a 140kW/400Nm 2.0-litre diesel four engine, and the 3.0-litre six-powered 530d that asks for US $83,900 and which produces 195kW of power and a whopping 620Nm of torque.

THE GOOD

- Remains true and honest to time-honoured 5 Series heritage and traditions of blending impressive comfort with sheer driving pleasure; and
- Wide range of innovative features and technology that will impress most buyers.

THE BAD

- Pricing has gone up; and
- Getting the most out of the features and technology requires a high degree of user application.









While my inner petrol-head maintains that a real premium German experience demands a proper V6 heartbeat, the 530i can easily convince that such a marriage isn't actually necessary or mandatory.

The four-cylinder offers quiet, reasonably energetic and quite unflustered forward motion. Its claimed 6.2-second 0-100km/h is certifiably handy, no doubt aided by a reduction of weight of "up to 95 kilograms" over like-for-like old-generation 5 Series. The aluminium doors, for instance, weigh as little as just six kilograms apiece, and in 530i trim the scales tip at an impressively lightweight 1540kg. While it's no quicker than its F10-gen predecessor, with identical acceleration claims, consumption for this larger 5 Series is said to have dropped from 6.5 litres to 5.8L/100kms.

It does feel fractionally larger on the road than an F10 sedan, though there's not much of a difference in the driving experience. It's no powerhouse, but as the less-endowed 5 Series of the current or (perhaps) future G30 line-up, it's unreasonable to expect it to be. Instead, BMW engineers delivered where it really matters most, which is in refinement and driveability, areas where Munich's petrol fours have long been segment leaders and where this engine continues the legacy.

The engine is smooth and quiet, even under hard driving. It's paired impressive well with the so-called 'Sport' eight-speed automatic gearbox. The pairing is intuitively responsive in Comfort drive mode and noticeably more assertive in Sport mode without any unwanted bite or edginess. Importantly,

the under-bonnet credentials feel significant and polished enough to deliver a satisfying premium-feel often lacking in four-cylinder-powered luxury sedans of all sizes.

Our test car foregoes its standard-fitment M Sport addenda for a no-cost optional Luxury Line Package, which fits the lower-spec petrol version nicely. Its optional 20-inch wheels, in lieu of standard 19s, perhaps don't do outright ride comfort much favour, but beside some noticeable tyre roar there's little to grumble about.

The adaptive suspension, with continuously variable damping, is plush and pliant in Comfort mode, yet allows the body to settle quickly over larger bumps.

Dial it up to Sport mode – which affects steering, suspension, transmission and throttle calibration – and there's a shade more purpose and focus to the Bimmer, if thankfully without any dramatic shift in character. There's subtlety in changes to even the most conspicuous areas the drive modes govern.

There's more 'oomph' about the 540i, most of that thanks to the extra 100Nm of torque (450Nm outright) rather than the added 65kW of power (250kW total). The six's peak torque spread is wider, too, and the heightened effortlessness of the powertrain is obvious. At full throttle, despite an added 55kg of weight, the 'big six' is said to hit triple figures in just 5.1 seconds and it certainly feels a whole second swifter than the 530i.

Where the four-cylinder manages to rise to the premium occasion, the six-cylinder fully embodies it, especially in the everyday, part-throttle response and drivability stakes. Together with an 11 per cent hike in power over the old F10 535i, this 'B58' drops claimed combined consumption by 15 per cent, to a now impressive 6.7L/100km figure.



The 540i gets 20-inch wheels with 245mm and 275mm run-flat rubber standard (as optioned on our 530i) and electrically controlled roll stabilisation, for a flatter cornering stance, though otherwise the adaptive suspension is identical. Again, it's added tech for a shade of tangible difference, though it's possibly the six cylinder's M Sport Package that provides a sort of combined placebo effect for what seems like extra sportiness compared with the 530i.

Both sedans have excellent steering, are easy to place in corners and are confident at a brisk grand touring pace. Neither, however, are fitted with the optional four-wheel-steering system; that's an added and costly option on any 5 Series bar the flagship 540i, where it can be had for no extra cost. What's most fitting, though, is that at no time do any of these variants sacrifice passenger comfort for swifter progress or more power.

In keeping up with the forward-thinking mantra, the 5 Series is technically adept enough to drive itself unaided: adaptive cruise control with stop/go functionality, active lane keeping, active side collision avoidance, and there are six cameras, five radar sensors, 12 ultrasonic sensors to survey the 360-degree world around the car and avoid clear and present dangers with its comprehensive warning system network.

Tick the Innovations Package options box (for a small fee obviously) and you can park your 5 Series via remote control using the tricky BMW Display Key (which recharges inductively in the cabin), or control some of the infotainment system functions using gesture control like you just stepped into a scene from a James Bond film.



Further, the speed sign recognition system BMW put on local sale years back and then controversially recalled has been updated and rolled out again, this time as a more broadly encompassing 'speed limit notification' system using camera and map data in tandem, and that can be personally 'tuned', with a speed threshold adjustment, by the driver.

Designers have done an admirable and reasonably convincing job in cabin walking the line between conspicuous technological enhancements and maintaining BMW's favoured class. Case in point is the 12.3-inch digital instrumentation: it changes configuration and colour scheme depending on the chosen drive mode, yet retains time-honoured styling, right down to the dual metallic crescents overlaid onto the screen creating physical 'dials'.

BMW's thrown the kitchen sink at infotainment and there are now five different ways to interact. The customary circular controller remains, but its top doubles as a touchpad – a seemingly useless function until you attempt to input a sat nav destination without removing your eyes from the road ahead, where it can be very handy. The 10.25-inch is now a touchscreen, and the voice control system uses what's called 'natural language recognition' that, from our brief test at launch, responds more often than not to very lazy and casual spoken inputs. The gesture control is a bit of a gimmick and extremely limited in functionality, but it'll give the kids something to laugh at while you perform hand puppet movements trying to raise or lower the stereo's volume…

The so-called 'app-style' display format of the new iDrive 6 software, which arranges functions into tiles that you swipe through, seems fiddly and distracting at first. But it's designed so that the end user, most likely the driver, can configure their favourite functions to their personal whims.

There's even a Find Car feature in case you forgot where you parked, and other features intent on convincing you that, much like your smartphone, your large executive car from Munich is an indispensable ally going about





OUR RATINGS

- Performance & Economy – 8.0
- Cabin Space & Comfort – 8.0
- Technology & Connectivity – 9.0
- Price & Features – 7.5
- Ride & Handling – 8.5

your day-to-day business.

We did run through the novel wireless Apple CarPlay facility, which also caters for Android Auto and, via Bluetooth, can cleverly connect two smartphones simultaneously. Why? No lightning cable needed. Recharging? Via inductive charging in the centre console (provided you use a Qi-certified iPhone case). And the BMW will make a song and dance if you attempt to leave the vehicle without your phone.

Another excellent feature is the parking assistance camera system that, by some black magic-like technical trickery, can provide a 360-degree exterior image of the car in its current environment. Very amazing stuff!

The cabin design is a more stylised take on 5 Series tradition, with conventional floating-screen infotainment, central stack layout and intuitively button placement. As rivals Mercedes-Benz E-Class, with its slick digital dual-screen panorama, and Volvo S90, with its 'future minimalist' arrangement, might target adventurous tastes, the creature of habit BMW approach maintains serious appeal for buyers favouring the familiar and traditional. Well, to a point: the 5 Series blends conventional and unconventional user interface, and what's not immediately intuitive – the tiling feature, gesture control – isn't difficult to acclimatise to, though they do demand user application.

Subtle differences create distinction between the (530i) optional Luxury Line and (540i) standard issue M Sport cabin designs, including the respective comfort and sport front seating, each distinctive in shape yet equally plush, supportive and dipped in particularly lush Nappa leather. Either cabin space trades flash for richness and an innate depth of quality, from the variety of finishes on show to sheer tactility.

The most noticeable improvement in interior space for this larger seventh generation is in rear legroom, though generally speaking it's not a particularly cavernous cabin space, but nor is it claustrophobic. In the rear, there's ample room for two adults – three across is a squeeze – and that near coupe-like sloping roofline inhibits headroom a little.

The 40:20:40 splitfold second row folds to allow access to the extremely deep boot space, which otherwise measures 530 litres with the rear seating in play.

On paper, even the lower-spec 530i lays on the standard equipment thick, though neither test car was realistically close to base spec. For instance, Apple CarPlay, wireless or not, commands a hefty premium price, even on the expensive flagship variant.

BMW is hardly the loner of the Euro premium set to charge handsomely for options, but some of this stuff listed above – alarm, washers, tyre monitoring, even seat heating – ought to be standard fitment for what's already proper money without extra boxes ticked. While there's quite a lot of extra standard equipment across the 5 Series range, prices have hiked considerably over F10 forebears: with the 530i wanting about US $6K more than the old 528i; and the 540i being a whopping US $15K pricier than the 535i it replaces.

In summary I can say that the new 5 Series takes all that was good about its predecessor one step further. But there's definitely more to be desired for that price point.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Simba Corp; through Bavaria Motors, is the official and sole distributor of all new BMW vehicles in Kenya. They are located along Mombasa Road, as well as along Chiromo Road adjacent to Delta Corner.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom(s) for more information. ■

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Mercedes-Benz C-Class Coupe vs BMW 4 Series

By P. Maric



Over the years, Mercedes Benz is always at the forfront of cutting edge vehicle design and manufacturing; and 2017 has not been any different. Completely new models have been launched this year and one that really excites us is the C-Class Coupe; which we decided to pit against the industry standard 4 Series from BMW. Here we have the Mercedes-Benz C300 Coupe and the BMW 430i.

We weren't sure what to expect, and we didn't think that these two cars would have the same street cred as their more powerful siblings, let alone be as enjoyable to drive through a set of bends. Their more powerful siblings are of course the with AMG and M badges – cars that treat rear tyres like well-used primary school erasers.

PRICING AND SPECIFICATIONS

Priced from US $583,400 (before taxes), the C300 Coupe is the most expensive non-AMG C-Class Coupe on the market.

The vehicle had a number of options fitted, which included the US $3150 Vision Package (which includes active headlights with automatic high beam, head-up display and an electric sunroof), the US $350 Air Balance fragrance package and US $480 heated front seats. The C-Class Coupe range starts from US $46,100 (before taxes) for the C200 Coupe and goes up to US $113,700 (before taxes) for the C63 S AMG Coupe.

It's no longer like the old stingy days with these types of cars. They actually come very well equipped from the factory, meaning you won't have to spend mega dollars on options. The C300 Coupe, for example, comes with the following features:

A whopping 13-speaker sound system; 19-inch alloy wheels; dual-zone climate control; seven airbags; Bluetooth phone and audio connectivity; blind spot monitoring; brake assistance; front, rear and side cameras; front and rear parking sensors; forward collision alert; radar cruise control; LED daytime running lights; electric seats; steering wheel mounted paddle shifters; satellite navigation; automatic headlights and wipers; lane departure warning; leather seats; electric park brake; semi-autonomous parking; power boot control; DAB+ digital radio; rear cross traffic alert and tyre pressure monitor.

In terms of other options (aside from those fitted to our car), there's only air suspension (US $2100), alarm (US $700), climate controlled front seats (US $1000), a TV tuner (US $1050) and optional paint colours (pricing varies between US $1400 and US $2100).

Powering the C300 Coupe is a 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder petrol engine that produces 180kW of power and 370Nm of torque. It sends its torque to the rear wheels via a seven-speed automatic transmission.

The Benz uses a combined 6.6 litres of fuel per 100km, which is pretty reasonable considering the feisty four-cylinder engine and 1565kg kerb weight. Mercedes-Benz claims a 0-100km/h time of 6.0 seconds.

It's much the same with the BMW 4 Series on pricing and specifications. Pricing starts from US $48,200 (before taxes) for the 420i and climbs all the way to $206,300 (before taxes) for the limited edition M4 GTS. The 430i tested here is priced from US $55,900 (before taxes), making it around US $2500 cheaper than the C-Class Coupe.

The vehicle came with a few options, namely radar cruise control (US $1100), power sunroof (US $2050), Internet connectivity (US $150), metallic paint (US $1290) and the M-Sport package.

Like the C-Class Coupe, the 4 Series range comes loaded with standard kit, including: a nine-speaker sound system; 19-inch alloy wheels; dual-zone climate control; six airbags; Bluetooth audio and phone connectivity; blind spot monitoring; front, rear and side cameras; front and rear parking sensors; proximity entry and start; autonomous emergency braking; LED daytime running lights; leather and electric seats for first row; steering wheel mounted paddle shifters; satellite navigation; automatic bi-xenon headlights; lane departure warning with passive steering; launch control; power boot control; DAB+ digital radio; tyre pressure monitoring and run flat tyres.

Unlike the C-Class Coupe, BMW offers a number of options. Some of these include special paint colours and LED headlights all the way through to a digital TV tuner.

Under the 430i's bonnet is a 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder petrol engine that produces 185kW of power and 350Nm of torque. The BMW sends torque through an eight-speed automatic gearbox to the rear wheels.

Fuel consumption is almost 15 per cent less than the C300 Coupe, coming in at 5.8 litres of fuel per 100km. BMW also claims a faster 0-100km/h time of 5.9 seconds.

INTERIOR SYLING

The striking C-Class exterior design continues inside the cabin. Acres of wood and S-Class inspired switchgears leave a lasting impression. Ergonomically, everything is within easy reach and the clever use of seat controls on the door trim becomes second nature.

Additionally, the lack of a gear shifter means there is plenty of room in the centre tunnel. That includes a sizeable storage area between the driver and front passenger. But it also reveals the clumsy controller that sits ahead of the storage area. It can be hard to see buttons on the passenger side of the controller and its integration with COMAND can be a bit confusing.

The seats are very comfortable with a heap of side and bottom support. The same can be said for the AMG-inspired steering wheel, which sits nicely in hand and features all the buttons necessary for driving without taking your eyes off the road.

Trip computer functions take place on an LCD display that sits between the speedometer and tachometer, while main vehicle settings can be changed using the 8.4-inch COMAND infotainment screen.

That leads us to the infotainment system. The sound system is sensational and offers a heap of bass and very clear high frequencies. Audio comes in the form of AM/FM radio, in addition to DAB+ digital, along with a host of alternatives such as Bluetooth, auxiliary connectivity and USB.

Despite recent changes and usability improvements, COMAND still isn't amazing to use. There's an excessive amount of clicks and menus to reach the setting(s) you need. Entering navigation destinations can be time consuming, as can browsing through radio stations — especially on the digital frequency.

Mercedes-Benz does make up for this with an excellent voice recognition system. It's very accurate and can be used to enter full navigation addresses or even call the hardest contact names. While you're unlikely to constantly carry passengers in the rear seats, we jumped in the back to see how much room was on offer. Both the BMW and Mercedes-Benz seat four, with the section between the rear seat passengers offering space for storage and cup holders. Leg room is good, but not amazing, likewise with head room. It's a slightly cramped space, but once you're settled in it's comfortable. I wouldn't want to be sitting there for a long time, though. The backrests do fold, but not completely flat, meaning you could fit larger and longer items if required.

Boot capacity is a modest 400 litres — some 80 litres less than the BMW. You won't find a spare tyre under the boot floor either,









with both the C-Class Coupe and 4 Series featuring run-flat tyres.

The 430i's interior takes on a very different approach. While it's not as elegant, it's typical BMW and feels better built and more solid in comparison to the C-Class Coupe. Where Mercedes-Benz opts for minimalism, BMW seemingly goes for the million buttons approach.

There's also more space taken up by the manual parking brake (electric in the Mercedes-Benz) and the gear lever; which would be better suited to creating more storage space in the centre console. The M steering wheel sits nicely in hand, with the thin design housing buttons for cruise control and infotainment.

Speaking of infotainment, the 4 Series uses BMW's iDrive system, which we consider to be best in the business. The 10.2-inch colour infotainment screen is driven by an iDrive circular controller and features logical menus with easy shortcut buttons. We found it far easier to scan through DAB+ digital radio stations as they were all presented in a vertical list, as opposed to a rotary display as in the Mercedes-Benz.

The voice recognition system is on par with Mercedes-Benz, offering easy and clear voice inputs for things like satellite navigation destinations and phone contacts. An excellent nine-speaker sound system is backed by a number of music streaming options, such as radio, Bluetooth and a several auxiliary connection methods.

While the seats offer a heap of side support, they lack adequate support in the bottom. But they are easily adjusted to squeeze around the hips and hug you in tight.

In the second row, it's also tight in terms of leg and toe room, but the 4 Series roofline affords slightly more head room. There's also the added versatility of a fifth seat should you require the extra space — mind you, fitting three across the second row would be hard work.

Cargo capacity is an impressive 480 litres, while the second row folds in a 60/40 split to an angle, but not quite flat. This offers extra space for longer items that wouldn't normally fit within the boot.

While the 4 Series offers more room and a sturdier feeling interior, it's the C-Class Coupe that really impresses. The interior is very well presented and makes the car feel like it's worth much more than it actually is; which isn't an easy feat in this price bracket.

ON THE ROAD

Before I even mention a single word on how these two cars drive, we need to point out public reaction to both. We were blown away with the reaction these received on the open road. The BMW impressed punters with its sleek design and long body, but it was the Mercedes-Benz that stole the show.

Many have commented on how impressive the C-Class Coupe looks, especially in its striking white colour.

It probably didn't help that the 430i was finished in the most boring car colour known to man (silver), or that the interior looked drab. With a nicer colour, tinted windows and a respectably coloured interior, we think the BMW would have turned a few more heads.

As it stands, though, the Mercedes-Benz was the clear crowd favourite.

But, was it our favourite on the road?

We started out with a highway run, where we had the chance to measure sound in the cabin, radar cruise control and assess fuel consumption.

The C300 Coupe uses a more advanced version of radar cruise control that quickly responds to breaks in traffic and accelerates sooner when changing lanes with clear traffic.

It's also unique in the sense that it offers a semi-autonomous mode that allows the driver to operate the vehicle without holding the steering wheel.

While it sounds good in theory, the system is far from being as effective as AutoPilot in the Tesla Model S and X, which allows longer periods of driving without driver intervention. It also allows for greater vehicle steering input — the Mercedes-Benz limits steering input on tighter freeway bends and can sometimes have a pinball effect in its lane when it overcompensates steering inputs.

During this stint, the C300 Coupe measured an ambient cabin noise of 63dB at 100km/h on a coarse surface. This is a pretty impressive figure and indicates good sound deadening from both the engine and road (the BMW, as a comparison came in at 65dB at the same speed and on the same stretch of road).

Surprisingly, the Benz used a hefty 8.0L/100km during the highway section of the drive, which was considerably more than the 5.5L/100km in the 430i over the same stretch of road.

In terms of ride comfort; the Mercedes-Benz was good, but a little firmer than it needed to be. The seats were comfortable and offered plenty of side and bottom support, which would come in handy under tougher conditions.

Steering feel at highway speeds was accurate and responsive. The electrically assisted steering rack features a variable ratio, which allows the steering to variably adjust ratio when the car feels it necessary in relation to speed and driving mode.

The available driving modes allow the driver to move through an economy mode, right through to a Sport+ mode, which puts the gearbox and steering into their sportiest setting and restricts stability control intervention to offer a sporty drive.

Without selecting the air suspension option, the damper firmness can't be adjusted. This became more of an issue when we left the highway and drove on some country roads that were undulating and poorly finished.

Road abrasions would be sharply transmitted through the chassis, while the steering would kick at times through corners with mid-corner bumps. There were times that sharp bumps collected during cornering and would cause the car to shuffle along the road laterally, which wasn't overly confidence inspiring.

It was around this point that we started noticing two rattles from within the dashboard — one on the driver's side near the air vent and another on the passenger's side. The rattles would occur when the tyres contacted a bump or travelled over an uneven section of road. It became quite annoying and wasn't befitting of a luxury cruiser.

On the back roads full of corners, the C300 Coupe's engine was sharp and offered quick response, but it was ultimately let down by an overly intrusive stability control system. Out of corners when throttle was fed on, there was a sudden change from traction to no traction; it wasn't as progressive as the BMW, which made it hard to drive.

We found that the Benz couldn't keep up with the BMW on the same run because the traction control system would continuously bog down on torque delivery. But, where it lost out on cornering and acceleration, it make up for in braking.

The brake pedal felt firm and offered plenty of feedback. It was confidence inspiring and never left you in the lurch. The rotors offer cross drilling for even greater braking performance.

In the sportiest drive mode, the steering firms up nicely and offers a progressive variable ratio. It can easily be fed in and the steering wheel is the perfect size to lob the C300 Coupe through bends. Inside the cabin, it was also noisier thanks to artificial engine noise induction. The sports exhaust also helped enhance the exterior noise proposition too.

During both regular driving and harder driving, the C300 Coupe's seven-speed automatic gearbox could be a bit cumbersome. It wasn't as smooth as we would have liked, especially at low speeds. Gears can be manually selected using the steering wheel mounted paddle shifters.

Over in the BMW, it's not hard to see why BMW builds its brand around the slogan 'ultimate driving machine'. On the highway run, it used barely any fuel and felt the most comfortable. Variable dampers come standard on the 430i with M Sport package and offer the perfect balance between ride comfort for





highway cruising and sportiness for country road driving.

Despite being slightly louder at cruising speed, it made up for this with an excellent ride on rough surfaces of the country stretch of road. Both vehicles were fitted with 225mm wide front tyres and 255mm wide rear tyres and 19-inch alloy wheels and despite this, their rides were vastly different.

Where the Mercedes-Benz bucked about at times on rough portions of road, the BMW soaked up mid-corner bumps and sat flatter through tighter stretches. The steering also offered superior feedback with a natural feel that wasn't overly assisted.

The difference became even more apparent when we drove up the country roads. Like the Mercedes-Benz, the 430i comes with several driving modes ranging from Eco Pro through to Sport+. Also like the Mercedes-Benz, the higher sport settings adjust throttle feel and steering feel, in addition to ride damping.

In its highest setting, the 430i was settled and offered excellent communication through the chassis and steering. Progressive applications of the throttle led to predictable changes in direction and a highly communicative drive experience.

We could easily push harder in the 4 Series and know that it would do as we expected, as opposed to surprising us with stability control intervention or a reduction in torque.

The only thing we didn't like about the 4 Series in comparison to the C-Class Coupe was brake pedal feel. In isolation it's fine, but in comparison to the Benz, it's soft and requires a great deal of force before it reacts as intended.

In terms of the transmission, the 430i's gearbox is very smooth at low speeds. It's also fairly well placed throughout its rev and speed band to be in the correct gear at the right times. Eight gears is a lot to work with, but it manages to do a good enough job.

Like the C300 Coupe, the 430i has steering wheel mounted paddle shifters, but it also has a launch control program. Activated by pressing the brake and the throttle at the same time and then releasing the brake, gear shifts are far more rapid and it allows the car to reach a 100km/h sprint from standstill around one second faster than the same run without launch control.

We learned from this drive that while both vehicles feel comfortable in the urban grind, the differences open up significantly when they are pushed a little harder or when the road surface becomes more complex.

The on road win definitely went to the BMW.

CONCLUSION

The realisation is that the Mercedes-Benz C300 Coupe and BMW 430i are actually style multipliers. Anybody can jump into these cars and instantly become cooler and more desirable, than they were before. It doesn't matter that they're not showered with AMG and M badges, they cut a sleek line in traffic and get plenty of attention — the C300 Coupe more so.

As a driver's car, the 430i wins hands down. It's fast, it's easy to drive and it's the most confidence inspiring. It's also damn quick for a car sporting a turbocharged four-cylinder engine.

But, it's the C300 Coupe that looks best and has the premium presented interior.

So which should you buy? I would recommend the C300 Coupe. It comes loaded with plenty of equipment, the interior looks nice at first glance and it wears the all-important Mercedes-Benz badge. But, the BMW is far more enjoyable to drive.

If you want to be the hip trend setter, buy the Benz, if on the other hand you want to head out for a weekend blast on occasion and have a damn good time doing it, buy the BMW.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Simba Corp; through Bavaria Motors, is the official and sole distributor of all new BMW vehicles in Kenya. They are located along Mombasa Road, as well as along Chiromo Road adjacent to Delta Corner.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom(s) for more information.
- DT Dobie Kenya is the official and sole distributor of all new Mercedes-Benz vehicles in Kenya. They are located off the roundabout at the junction of Lusaka Road and Enterprise Road.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom for more information.■

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MOVING WITH YOU

Audi Q3 vs Mercedes-Benz GLA-Class

By D. DeGasperi

The Audi Q3 has been commanding and dominating the small premium SUV segment. Its sales numbers globally seem to be edging out its arch-rival the BMW X1. With that in mind, it's no wonder then that the Audi is the biggest rival to the all-new GLA from Mercedes-Benz in the small premium SUV segment.









We've chosen top-spec 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol automatic all-wheel drive grades for this twin test; with the US $40,000 Audi Q3 2.0 TFSI and the US $40,500 Mercedes-Benz GLA250 4MATIC.

It's worth keeping in mind that a fully loaded mainstream SUV, such as a Mazda CX-5 GT or Volkswagen Tiguan 155TSI, costs around US $5,000 less than these premium-badged variants, so both the Audi and Benz also need to prove their worth beyond the allure of four rings or a three-pointed star.

Although the Q3 and GLA250 start at about the same money, one contender is significantly better equipped than the other.

Both come standard with leather (and leather-look) trim, fog lights, automatic headlights and wipers, rear parking sensors, and dual-zone climate control.

From there the GLA250 exclusively adds 19-inch alloy wheels (17s on Q3), a panoramic sunroof, electrically adjustable front seats with heating, bi-xenon headlights with auto high-beam, satellite navigation, front parking sensors with semi-automatic parking function, adaptive cruise control, blind-spot monitor and nine airbags – adding rear side airbags and a driver's knee airbag to the Audi's six in total; including dual front, front-side and full-length curtain protection.



Various packages are available on the Q3 2.0 TFSI including the S line sport package fitted to our test car, which for US $6400 includes 19" wheels, xenon headlights, leather/Alcantara sports seats, and sports interior trim and steering wheel.

Adding xenons with smaller 18s comes in a Style package for a more reasonable US $1800; ticking the Technik package with nav, semi-auto parking, and reverse-view camera adds about US $3500 on top; and matching the Benz's auto high-beam and blind-spot monitor needs a further US $1150.

Even selecting those latter three packages, plus the stand-alone panoramic sunroof option (US $1750), raises the Audi Q3 2.0 TFSI price tag by almost US $7K to just under US $46K, and you still don't get adaptive cruise control. Our test car with the S line sport package totalled an eye-watering US $53,250.

The Q3 looks more like a traditional tall-boy SUV than the GLA, which deliberately aims to be different by looking like a larger A-Class hatchback. Although the Audi seems larger, its 4.39-metre-long body is actually 3.2cm shorter than the Mercedes-Benz. Both stretch 1.8 metres wide, though expectedly the Q3 towers 9.6cm above the 1.5m-tall GLA.

That height advantage is realised inside where in this test the Audi offers a raised driving position for better visibility. In the Mercedes-Benz you sit lower; and less side and rear glass makes it more difficult to see out of, two aspects which may turn off some SUV buyers.

Typical-Audi plastics are soft to touch, nicely grained and consistently matched, although the pop-up colour display and audio system is the same as that used in the A1 hatchback that costs half the price.

The seven-inch screen isn't as large as that available in the newer A3 hatchback, and nor is the same level of connectivity included.

The Technik package gives you twin SD card readers and 20 GB music storage in addition to an intuitive and user-friendly satnav with voice control, but you'll still need an Audi-specific USB/iPod cable and there's no apps or internet connectivity included.

Arguably, the Mercedes-Benz GLA has the more stylish interior, with stitched-leather-look dashboard surfacing, a nice interplay of textures and five, eye-catching aviation-style air vents. However the tactility of its controls isn't as good as its rival.





The Mercedes-Benz Comand infotainment system is excellent, and the only box worth ticking in the GLA250. It includes a high-resolution eight-inch screen with web connectivity. Digital radio is also standard, and the 12-speaker Harman Kardon audio system that comes with Comand is a treat, though there's only a 10 GB music register.

There are similar levels of storage space in each car, and further back both score rear-seat air vents. Actual legroom is similar, but because the second row in the Q3 sits higher, longer legs have more space to drop down without forcing a knees-up position.

Not that the GLA is bad in this respect, but in addition to the panoramic roof taking up space, headroom is also more compromised.

The Mercedes-Benz offers 421 litres of boot volume, extending to 1235L with the 60:40 split-fold rear-seat folded – 39L/130L down on its rival. Surprisingly, though, the Audi has the less usable space with a higher loading lip and an awkward fixed cargo cover compared with the big, deep, simple space of its rival's.

Both models utilise a 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine that produces 155kW of power (at 5500rpm in GLA250, but consistently between 5000-6200rpm in the Q3).

The Benz is, however, lighter than the Audi, weighing 1505kg versus 1565kg. The GLA also gets 350Nm of torque (between 1200-4000rpm) compared with 300Nm (over a broader 1800-4900rpm) in the Q3. Each vehicle rans a seven-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission, which Benz dubs 7G-Tronic and Audi labels S tronic.

Curiously, despite weighing more but thanks to the inclusion of launch control, the 0-100km/h performance claim in the Q3 is 6.9 seconds, or two-tenths faster than its rival. The GLA250 wins the claimed economy award, though, its combined cycle figure of 6.6L/100km a full 1.1L thriftier than its competitor.

Both SUV models have different upsides and downsides to their drivetrain on the road.

The Mercedes-Benz engine is louder, but it has a rugged induction rasp that feels as sporty as its strong, surging mid-range performance. It feels slower off the line than its rival thanks to an auto that can stumble off the line in its default comfort mode, with a throttle that feels doughy and discourages spritely spurts of acceleration.

When you need to fill that fast-disappearing traffic gap, the auto can take an age to downshift. The problem is solved by selecting Sport mode, which makes the car feel more alive; sharpening the throttle and keeping the gearbox in lower gears, though occasionally it can feel too frenetic.

The Audi engine is quieter and silky smooth, and its automatic is more immediate and reacts faster to a press of the throttle.

It feels more urgent, though when maximum acceleration is asked for the Q3 feels more strained through the mid-range and slower than its rival, owing to the heavier weight and 50Nm deficit. Curiously, the VW Group 2.0-litre is available in 350Nm application (as it is in Golf GTI) but not in this older variation.

The GLA spins the tables around town, feeling smoother than its rival over bumps large and small. Only very occasionally does it clang its 19-inch wheels over the sharpest of potholes. Generally, however, it presents an excellent balance between comfort and control, perhaps better than any A-Class, B-Class or CLA-Class model we've tested.

Wheels that match the size of the Benz affect the ride quality of the Audi more. It is very firm and occasionally fidgety and unrefined around town, though it smoothens out at higher speeds and on rougher country roads.

Both models also suffer from a level of coarse-chip road noise that isn't to premium SUV standards, with the Q3 being marginally quieter in this regard. Both also put the 'S' in SUV with greater emphasis than the average mainstream model, though each have different handling characteristics.



The GLA250 has smoother and more consistent steering, with a slightly heavier and more reassuring weight than its rival. Tip into a bend and the Benz rolls noticeably more than its competitor, but its balance is exemplary. It always feels planted, yet remains playful. The on-demand all-wheel-drive system sends a noticeable amount of drive to the rear wheels quite quickly, making this little mini station-wagon feel very rear driven at times.

By comparison, the Q3 2.0 TFSI does not feel like it sends much drive to the rear wheels. Thanks to a stiffer suspension setup, though, and in conjunction with super grippy tyres, the Audi is ultimately more agile and can be thrown around with a verve that is verging on hot-hatch standards. You can lean on its front end more than in the GLA, but don't expect the same adjustability.

With the exception of the brilliant dynamics of the Mazda CX-5, there are no cheaper













small SUV models that handle as well as these two models. For drivers who once owned a hot-hatch but have been forced into domestic duties, both will satisfy them well.

In the final reckoning, the Q3 2.0 TFSI simply can't overcome its poor value equation. We know from experience, however, that Audi dealers are very willing to throw in options packs that should be standard, so if you bargain hard there really isn't much in it between these two.

It's the Mercedes-Benz GLA250 4MATIC that best balances sport with utility. It is brisk and involving to drive, more comfortable in its suspension and is superbly equipped for the money.

However the Q3 is ultimately more like an SUV in its driving position, easier to see out of particularly if you're in the rear, and is less cumbersome to drive in stop-start traffic – three big advantages for the SUV buyer and enough to sway the verdict if only the price was right.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- DT Dobie Kenya is the official and sole distributor of all new Mercedes-Benz vehicles in Kenya. They are located off the roundabout at the junction of Lusaka Road and Enterprise Road.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom for more information.
- Unfortunately, Audi does not have an exclusive, official or sole distributor of their new vehicles in Kenya; however, there are a number of international car importation companies and local dealers who bring in Audi models by themselves or on request.
- This lack of an official local dealer for Audi means that after sales service for Audi owners is dependent on relying on credible garages or mechanics that are familiar with Audis or such luxury vehicles. ■

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Porsche Boxster S vs Jaguar F-Type V6 S

By J. Ward



Nairobi and Kenya as a whole is first changing. People have more disposable income as well as better access to foreign luxury brands and products; especially exotic sports cars. Long gone is a time when having such cars on our roads was a mere fantasy; but alas here we are.

This all changed when RMA took over the Jaguar Land Rover franchise in Kenya and brought the Jaguar F-Type (two door sports car) alongside the traditional SUVs and saloons to the local market. This was closely followed by the opening of Porsche Centre Nairobi, and the access it gave buyers to the 911, Cayman and Boxster sports cars alongside the Cayenne and Macan SUVs as well as the Panamera saloon. Bentley has also made an entry into the market with the Continental GT, but that's a story for another day.

With the weather not being the best at the moment, having one of these convertibles probably isn't the best idea; but this is sure to change come January.

I say this with a light touch as what we have on offer are two very capable sports cars that can be driven day-to-day; albeit the constant traffic will keep your speedometer in check. Before us we have the 2016 Porsche 718 Boxster S which has a starting price of US $100,700 (before options and taxes); and the 2016 Jaguar F-Type V6-S which starts at US $123,274 (before options and taxes).

STYLE AND DESIGN

Looking at the pair of two-seater roadsters, either would make a fine choice to replace the SUV, saloon or van in the garage.

Finished in classic white (a no cost option) with a black soft top, the Porsche is the more understated of the two. The black leather interior is a standard selection, but the classy carbon-fibre trim is a US $2000 option, as are the embossed Porsche logos on the headrests (US $350).

It's clean, clinical and relatively German (a very good thing) in the Porsche. There is good storage for a little roadster, but the materials are quite cold in the way they feel. It's a smart looking car, top up or down, and the 718 will deploy a small rear wing automatically at speed or at the touch of a button inside the cabin.

You get a 150-litre boot in the front-end, and a second 130-litre boot in the back. All this is possible as it's a mid-engine vehicle and not traditional in having the engine upfront or at the back like conventional or other sports cars respectively.

With the Jaguar, the Ammonite grey paint is also a US $2000 option, and the beige convertible top (which we'd probably go without due to cleaning) is US $650 extra. The car features the extended Exterior Sport Design Pack (US $2600) which colour-matches the sills, elements of the rear diffuser and other aero parts.

The final leading edge of the rear deck deploys as a spoiler and like the Porsche, it can operate automatically or via a button on the console.

A two-tone interior never goes astray, so the Cirrus leather and Jet dash with contrast stitching makes the Jag look a lot more special than the Porsche. But this can be easily changed with a wide array of colour options for the Porsche's interior.

It's not all roses though, as some touchpoints around the infotainment switch gear feel light and cheap, but in general the cabin has a more classy character to it.

For example, at night the lighting design goes from white and orange to red when you switch into sport mode; which is pretty cool in my opinion.

We have to say, the Jaguar is a top-down car. With the soft-top roof in place it looks a little goofy; especially from behind. The coupe variant is absolutely stunning, and I'd recommend it any day over the convertible if you are not a wind-in-the-hair kind of person.

If going anywhere, my advice is to pack light, as the Jag's boot barely exists and is a meagre 148 litres, which will undoubtedly fail to fit any bag that you own. Even ladies handbags these days seem to be border on hand luggage proportions.

It's strange as the F-Type looks much bigger than the 718, but it is only 91mm longer (4470mm) and is actually 71mm thinner than the Porsche (1994mm).

It does carry a bit more weight though; by a lot more. There's a 424kg penalty to the Jaguar. That's a whopping 32 per cent increase over the Porsche, and something that starts to feel a bit more obvious when we get off the mark.

Put mildly, the Jaguar looks fantastic and certainly turns heads more than the Boxster, which is just another white Porsche to most passers-by. But remember this is Kenya, which means you'll definitely get your fair share of onlookers and admirers alike.





ENGINE & POWERTRAIN

Sports cars are all about conveying a sense of driving enjoyment, and both our contenders deliver on that account.

New for 2016, the 2.5-litre four-cylinder turbocharged 718 Boxster S had to prove to the purists that it was capable of proper Porsche performance despite using the dark-art of small capacity and forced induction to replace the familiar 3.4-litre flat-six. It produces 257kW of power and 420Nm of torque.

It is mounted to a seven-speed dual-clutch PDK (Doppelkupplung) transmission (a US $3500 option) driving the rear-wheels, which allows both relaxed automatic driving as well as self-shifting from the alloy paddles on the steering wheel.

The big cat heads a more traditional route of a front-mounted 3.0-litre supercharged V6 with 280kW and 460Nm of power and torque respectively.

It too drives the rear wheels and offers peak power at the same 6500rpm mark, but a narrower torque-band from 3500 through to 5000rpm.

There's an eight-speed single-clutch automatic transmission in the Jaguar that again gives the option of automatic or self-shifting, but has plastic paddles to pull on.

Each car features a sports exhaust for some extra drama and theatre, which is standard on the Jag and a US $3000 option on the Porsche. The Boxster also has the Sport Chrono package (another option at US $3500) which, when in Sport+ mode, improves throttle response, increases shift times and even offers a launch-control program.

Putting all this together though, when considering the mass of each car, gives the Porsche the power-to-weight edge at 195kW/t against the Jaguar at 161kW/t.

ROAD HANDLING TECHNOLOGY

Getting all that power to the ground requires some clever technology, and by standard rule of thumb, you can't show up to that school reunion on stock wheels; so each car has been dealt a serving of style and substance.

Porsche's torque vectoring system (PTV) is a US $2200 option and helps the Boxster

maintain stability when cornering, particularly under brakes. The system includes a locking rear differential.

The Jaguar's torque vectoring and limited-slip differential package is US $1440, and essentially manages vehicle rotation in the same manner, by braking the inside wheels as needed to help the car turn-in with more precision.

Both cars have 20-inch wheel options, the Tornado option on the F-Type adding US $2500 to the asking price, and the Carrera Classics pushing the Porsche's price up a further US $2900.

The Jaguar offers sports-suspension with variable damping settings as part of the standard S-Package, where the Porsche needs the PASM (active suspension) option box ticked for another US $1900. This does lower the car by 10mm and provide two-levels of suspension activity though.

It's a close race at this point, in terms of handling hardware, so we'll call it a tie.

PRICING & SPECIFICATIONS

At this end of the market, the starting price is very much that. Think of this as an auction where an eager bidder throws in a price to kick things off, only to have the final sale settle much, much higher.

Both cars, as you can tell by now, have extensive (read as expensive) option lists – and neither are really scratching the surface of what is available.

Personalisation elements on cars like this are fine, but the US $1200 premium charged for front and rear parking sensors and rear-view camera on the Porsche is a little rich and a bit foolish considering that even Toyota's come with parking sensors as standard these days.

The Jaguar takes its fair share of liberties too, with our car needing an extra US $2100 spent to get memory powered seats and folding mirrors, and a further US $3100 for the adaptive xenon headlamps.

Neither car has heated seats as standard (a bit of a must for a convertible and any car at this price range) with the Jaguar optioning these in at US $1010. You have to spend an extra US $430 for a digital radio tuner in the F-Type, too, if you still listen to radio that is.

Fortunately, to enjoy the crisp digital airwaves, the Jag runs a ten-speaker Meridian sound system that comes standard, where just a basic six-speaker stereo is fitted to the Porsche. You can upgrade to a US $1900 BOSE or US $6150 Burmeister system if that's your kind of thing.

Electrically adjustable seats, satellite navigation and obviously a power-folding roof are standard on both cars though, but it's a pretty short list of crossover points.

Keyless entry and push-button start, something you get on a US $6,000 Toyota Vitz from 2009, is still an option on the Porsche!

Value here is very subjective given the more personal nature of the cars. At pure list price, the cars have about a US $23,000 variance in favour of the less-expensive Boxster.

More has been added to the Porsche though, about US $21,000 worth of options against roughly US $16,000 on the F-Type. That closes the gap a bit, but still leaves the Jaguar wearing an US $18K excess.

Ownership though tells a slightly different story, with the Jaguar having a longer service and warranty period 5 year / 100 000km service plan & 5 year / 150 000km warranty. This is all standard.





ON THE ROAD

Let's start with the Porsche.

Lower the Boxster's roof from the key-fob as you walk up to it or on the move at up to 50km/h and it's gone in under 10-seconds. The perfect convenience of a modern sports convertible.

You sit low, vision is good and the driving position is excellent, even for a taller chap like me.

From the specific 'click' when you turn the key and the exacting weighting when moving the gear lever to Drive, everything in the Porsche is an exercise in pin-sharp precision.

The four-cylinder fires quickly and the 718 thumps with a trademark boxer rhythm.

The sports exhaust amplifies things a bit at idle, giving the Boxster a more raucous undertone, and perhaps the only part of the car that seems a little rough.

Low speed steering is light and the car feels very direct even at lower speeds. The throttle responds well and the Boxster is an easy car to motor about in through traffic.

Get out in the open and the more scientific approach to the roadster becomes apparent.

Change into sport mode and the rate of response from the throttle increases, but there is no drop in the level of grip or accuracy on the winding bush roads we are testing on.

The cabin too, does just what you need. The tri-pod instrument displays are clear and the switchgear ergonomics excellent. At first it seems there are a lot of buttons on the console, but you get used to it very quickly.

You are snug and secure in the seat, even through sharper corners and tighter bends in the road. It is very clear that despite more humble beginnings, the 718 Boxster is now every bit the proper sports car.

Turn in with precise weighting, balance through the corner without a wiggle from the back or a push from the front and power out again, the engine revving past 6000rpm, the 718 pulling away strongly.

Even when chasing the Porsche, you can see just how planted and balanced it is. The words 'calculated' and 'measured' come to mind when driving too, as there is such a minimal sensation of movement, other than the g-forces your body is subjected to.

It's a very easy car to drive fast. Enjoyable and rewarding in its own clinical way, and deserved of being the popular 'go to' car in this segment.

The big Jaguar though, is another thing entirely. Again the seating position is low, but you feel almost enveloped by the car as you step down into it. Push the glowing start button to trigger the V6 to life and there is a hint of a scream and a snarl as it fires.

You look out over the endless bonnet and almost feel as though you are sitting right at the back wheels. Vision with the top down is excellent, but the rear-quarter vision isn't great when it's up.

The Jaguar can feel a bit claustrophobic too. The top fits snugly, but is a tight fit around the passenger cell, and the car is much more comfortable letting it all hang out and running topless.

Pottering around at suburban speeds and that extra 400kg is very apparent. It feels heavier in every way compared to the Porsche. From the steering to the movement, it just seems like a much bigger car.





Again, we leave the shops and schools behind and sample the F-Type on some winding country roads and there's something about the more brutal Jaguar that feels a bit more fun and less serious than the Porsche.

The exhaust is a perfect example. Leave everything off and it sounds good in its most pedestrian mode; but activate Dynamic Mode, which opens the sports exhaust and the sound can only be described as epic.

The Jaguar shouts, barks, screams and crackles like a Hollywood firefight. Pass someone, where there is a chance the sound may reverberate or echo, and the F-Type sounds downright frightening.

Hilariously too, even when winding the 718 up to that 6500rpm power band peak, you can still just hear the wailing, crackling Jaguar drowning out the sound of the turbo-boxer and everything else around you.

I'm not going to admit this, but I turned the active exhaust off when driving in traffic, such is the antisocial volume of the supercharged Jag, that if a long-bonnet supermodel of a convertible wasn't already attracting enough attention, shouting and exploding past everyone on their morning commute would just seem a bit over the top.

Noise and theatrics aside, the Jaguar is a pure freight train in terms of straight line performance, and pure land yacht when pushing through corners.

I'm not sure whether the Boxster gave me a sense of courage through some of the twisty sections of the road, but trying to match speed in the Jaguar is just not possible without a few pulse-exciting moments.

Those giant 275mm wide rear tyres will squirm and slide as the whole car juggles with being able to either wash off speed, or reintroduce a slab of power while maintaining its intended direction.

Compared to the pure-sports Porsche, the Jaguar is a muscle-car mixed with a GT. It cruises and bruises with such effortless showmanship, it's more of a character than you are







on the road.

It's a contest win to the Porsche in terms of pure dynamic excellence, but you get out of the Jaguar with a big, stupid grin each and every time; and as for the more mature driver choice, well that's up to what is important to you.

CONCLUSION

We started this test by posing a rather loose question as to which of these slightly irresponsible purchases was the best choice for those who wanted to rekindle some of their hard-working youth.

And like all of life's choices, the answer depends on who you are and where you need the most support for your mid-life crisis.

In terms of financial outlay, each model can be had in a slightly less elaborate guise for a lower entry point, but each can be customised and personalised well into the tens-of-thousands of dollars on top.

For our test cars, each represents about the same investment as one child at a private international school for all of their primary and secondary schooling. We'll leave you to choose whether you apply this expenditure before or after they have finished…

So where there is a difference in pricing isn't what drives the decision here.

The Porsche is excellent in every way, bar character. That's not to say it is boring, far from it, it just takes a very exact approach to everything and is colder, but better for it. To make the most sensible, irresponsible decision then the 2016 Porsche 718 Boxster S is the better contender in every way.

But a midlife crisis isn't necessarily about making a sensible decision, and for every place the Porsche says no, the Jaguar says yes. And then shouts and sets off a small explosion.

The Boxster is faster, lighter, more accurate, and cheaper. But the Jaguar doesn't care. This is a car you step out of smiling, every single time. If the ticket to your midlife happy place is loud noise and a silly grin, then it's the Jaguar for you.

Most people, especially here in Kenya, would really end up choosing the F-Type because most of us if not all simply don't have enough opportunity day-to-day to really drive like a racing driver. That means that the Boxster's true brilliance wouldn't be extracted enough.

Personally, I'd rather cruise around at the speed limit, sounding like I'm doing 300km/h and looking like a million bucks in the Jaguar. Rest assured though, whichever direction your midlife crisis takes you, these two topless models are guaranteed to take some of the pain out of the ageing process.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- RMA Motors is the official and sole distributor of all new Jaguar vehicles in Kenya. They are located along Chiromo Road at Oracle Tower (Delta Corner).
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom for more information.
- Porsche Centre Nairobi is the official and sole distributor of all new Porsche vehicles in Kenya. They are located at Sameer Business Park, along Mombasa Road.
- The company offers after sales service as well as comprehensive warranties for all their vehicles. Check out their official website or visit their showroom for more information.■

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Safely restraining your child in a vehicle

By M. O'Neil

Allowing your child to ride in a car without the proper restraint puts not only your child's life at risk but also the life of the other passengers in the car. According to the World Health Organization, when a crash occurs, three phases or collisions happen. The first collision occurs between the car and the object it strikes.



The second collision occurs between unrestrained occupants and stationary objects within the car, such as seats, windows, windshield and dashboards. Finally, the third collision happens when the internal organs of the car occupants collide with the chest wall or skeletal structure of the occupant.

The World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that the majority of fatal injuries that occur in car crashes are a result of the second collision. When unrestrained, occupants will move through the car at the same rate of speed that the crash occurred at through momentum. Unrestrained or improperly restrained occupants can collide with stationary objects or suffer ejection from the car. An unrestrained occupant can also collide with other car occupants, resulting in serious head or organ injuries.

Whenever you are on the road, make sure you buckle up all child passengers. The safest place to restrain a child in the car properly is on the back seat. All children aged 12 and under should ride in the back seat. Airbags can kill young children riding in the front seat. Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat or in front of an airbag.

To restrain your child safely in the back seat, use a seat belt on every trip, no matter how short it is. This sets a good example. Buckle up children on the car seat or booster seats depending on their corresponding age, height or weight.

The following will guide you on the appropriate ways to restrain your child, depending on the age bracket:

- **From birth up to 2 years, use rear-facing car seat.** For the best possible protection, keep infants and children in a rear-facing seat. Then use the car seat belts to harness the rear-facing seat to the back. Continue doing so until they reach the upper weight or height limits of a forward-facing car seat. Check the rear-facing seat's manual for weight and height limits.
- **From 2 years, up to at least age 5, purchase a forward-facing car seat.** Connect the forward-facing seat to the back and buckle it with safety belts. The use of the forward- facing seat should continue until the kids reach the recommended upper weight or height limit of a booster seat. Again, check the forward-facing seat's manual for weight and height limits.
- **From 5 years, up to age 9 a booster seat will be more appropriate.** Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats, they should ride in belt positioning booster seats. Remember to keep children in the back seat for the best possible protection at all times.
- **When the seat belts fit properly, let the child use the car's seat belts.** Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs, not the stomach, and the shoulder belt fits across the chest, not the neck. For the best possible protection, keep children in the back seat and use lap-and-shoulder belts. ■

Auto Finance: Determining your loan repayment period

By M. O'Neil

When it comes to buying a car, most people have an idea of what monthly payments will fit their budget, and what they target when making a deal. However, majority of the buyers lose track of the bigger picture; the total cost of the car and the length of time it will take to clear the loan.

For the past decade, the average car loan term has slowly crept past three years, and is now close to four or five years. Majority of buyers opt for a long time span loans. The benefit for such a move is the lower payments one will be making each month. It is important to consider the following reasons before opting for long-term car loans.

Higher Interest Costs

The longer you finance a car, the more interest you will have to pay on it. It is better to choose a three-year car loan than going for the long term five-year car loans. The monthly payment for a five-year car loan is normally lower than that for the five-year loan term. The finance charges for the car loan, however, might be more than double the amount one pays for a five-year loan. In addition, one will also have two more years of car loan payments.

Insurance Payment

As soon as the car leaves the showroom, it begins to depreciate quickly. Hence, at the beginning of a car loan, the buyer is typically "upside down," or "under water". This means the buyer owes more than the car is worth. The situation is made worse if the buyer has not made a large enough down payment. The time it takes you to get "above water" and build equity in the car will vary, based on the car you bought and amount of a down payment made. However, one thing does not vary; the longer your car loan, the longer it will take you to build equity.

When you have no equity in the car, you cannot sell if it you need the money in an emergency. It also gives you fewer options if



you get tired of the carw. A buyer will only pay you what the car is worth, not what you owe on it. You are stuck with the balance of the loan. Similarly, if you get into an accident and write off the car, the insurance company will only pay you what the car is worth at the time of the accident. The remainder of what you owe will have to come out of your pocket. This value is called pre-accident value. Ensure that your car is valued every year before taking insurance.

Limits Trade-Ins

Our love for the car we have brought is at its highest level when the car is brand-new. The romance quickly fades when we notice something better. Our anxiety rises when we want to trade in our car for something new. If you have a five-year loan and get the itch to buy a new car around the four-year mark, you will have to wait another year to trade in. The other alternative is to roll the balance of the loan into your next car purchase. However, note that this is an extremely bad idea, as it adds up to an even longer loan commitment and higher monthly payments.

Low Resale Values

Resale value is another reason to avoid extra-long car loans. A three-year-old car is more desirable and more valuable in the used-car marketplace than a five-year-old vehicle. A dealership will likely give you more money for the three-year-old car. At that age, it is a great candidate for the certified-pre-owned process, which means the dealer will have a more valuable car to sell. On the other hand, a five-year-old car has too many kilometres on the dial and one will earn less deduction for a trade-in compared to a newer car.

Conclusion

If want to buy a new car but the monthly payments that are being quoted for the usual three-year loan are too high for you, you're shopping outside of your price range. You also could consider buying a used car. Interest rates are a bit higher for used cars, but since the cars cost less, there is less to finance and the payments will be lower. Take a look at all the numbers in the sales contract before you make that crucial final decision in taking a car loan. ■

Auto Insurance: Basic facts of auto insurance

By M. O'Neil

Many people are applying for auto insurance without adequate knowledge on how it works and how it can help them. While auto insurance does have many benefits to car owners, there are also disadvantages that you need to know. You must know quite a lot about auto insurance before you sign up for one. Here are some of the known facts about auto insurance that might help you in decision-making.



Losing personal items because of car theft is not a part of your car insurance policy. The insurance policy is only applicable for the car but not the items inside it.

Purchasing a low risk car can lower your auto insurance rates. The risk is computed based on the cost of car, theft data and safety features. If the car is less likely to be stolen, you can expect a lower car insurance rate.

Your profession can determine the rates of your auto insurance. For instance, engineers often get discounted rates because it is said that they are better drivers than other professionals are. Teachers also get a lower insurance rate because of their occupation. Married drivers also enjoy favourable rates, as they are more stable drivers on our roads.

Memberships and affiliations from some professional organizations may lower your car insurance rates. You can try asking the insurance representatives about the groups and organizations that may lower your insurance rates. If you want to know more about auto insurance rates, they might give you some information about this. Generally, lady drivers attract low rates and some firms have special insurance products specifically tailored for lady drivers.

If your car got into an accident and you are not the driver, you can still file a claim on the auto insurance, but you have to pay for any deductibles and your insurance rates may increase.

If you are going to purchase insurance for your home and car, make sure to it is from the same company so that you can enjoy a multi-policy discount. It is also said about auto insurance that your car insurance rate is also dependent upon your credit score. If you are paying your bills and dues on time, you have a good credit score, and it means that you are good in paying bills, and they won't have any risks of late payments. It is good to note that the colour of your car does not determines the rate of your insurance premiums.

Due to new risks, due to riots and terrorism, many innovative insurance companies have introduced new comprehensive auto insurance products that cover all risks. ■









MANUFACTURER	MODEL NAME	RETAIL PRICE (KSH)	STATUS
BMW			
Saloons	1 Series	4,400,000	S/O
	3 Series	5,500,000	S/O
	5 Series	9,200,000	S/O
	7 Series	22,000,000	S/O
Crossover SUVs	X1	5,280,000	S/O
	X3	8,500,000	S/O
SUVs	X5	11,600,000	S/O
SAVs	X6	11,900,000	S/O
CHEVROLET			
Saloons	Aveo	2,225,000	*
	Cruze 1.6 MT DLX	2,950,000	*
	Cruze 1.8 AT LUX	3,450,000	*
Crossover SUVs	Captiva 2.4	5,000,000	*
DAIHATSU			
Crossover SUVs	Terios DX M/T with A/C - low spec	3,500,000	*
	Terios SX AT - Hi Spec	3,750,000	*
FOTON			
Pick-Ups	SUP V S/C 4x2	1,850,000	*
	SUP V D/C 4x2	1,950,000	*
	Conquerer D/C 4x2	2,450,000	*
	Tunland 4x2	3,383,000	*
	Tunland 4x4	3,808,000	*
MPVs	View Minibus	2,500,000	*
GWM			
Pick-Ups	Wingle 3 S/C 2.2 Litre 4x2 - P	1,400,000	*
	Wingle 5 S/C 2.5 Litre 4x2 - D	1,788,793	*
	Wingle 5 S/C 2.5 Litre 4x4 - D	2,025,862	*
	Wingle 5 STD D/C 2.5 Litre 4x4 - D	2,500,000	*
	Wingle 5 LUX D/C 2.5 Litre 4x4 - D	2,801,724	*
SUVs	Haval H5 STD 2.4 Litres 4x2 (M/T) - P	2,543,103	*
	Haval H5 STD 2.4 Litres 4x4 (M/T) - P	2,801,724	*
	Haval H5 LUX 2.4 Litres 4x4 (M/T) - P	2,952,586	*
	Haval H5 LUX 2.0 Litres 4x24 (A/T) - D	3,577,586	*
ISUZU			
Pick- uPS	TFR 54	2,460,000	*
	TFS 85 S/C	2,925,000	*
	TFS 54 D/C	3,168,000	*
	TFS 85 D/C	4,127,000	*
KIA			
Saloons	Rio 1.5 Litres LS- P	2,350,000	*
	Cerato 1.6 Litres - P	3,000,000	*
	Optima 2.0 Litre - D	3,500,000	*
Crossover SUVs	Sportage 2.0 Litre- P	4,200,000	*
	Sportage 2.0 Litre- D	4,600,000	*
	Sorento 2.4 Litre- P	4,900,000	*
	Sorento 2.2 Litre- D	5,200,000	*
Pick-Ups	K2700 S/C Pick-Up	2,100,000	*
MARUTI			
MPVs	Omni (Cargo)	860,000	*
	Omni (Passenger)	860,000	
	EECO (5-Seater)	1,240,000	*
	EECO (5-Seater) Airconditioning	1,330,000	*
	EECO (7-Seater)	1,260,000	
	Maruti (Gypsy) 1.3 Litre Soft Top	1,400,000	*
	Maruti (Gypsy) 1.3 Litre Hard Top	1,700,000	

CAR PRICING

MITSUBISHI			*
Saloons	Lancer 1.6 Litre GLX M/T	2,200,000	*
	Lancer 1.6 Litre GLX A/T	2,400,000	*
	Lancer 2.0 Litre GLS A/T	3,600,000	*
	Lancer 2.0 Litre GL A/T	4,187,000	*
Crossover SUVs	Outlander 2.4 Litre M/T	4,900,000	*
SuvS	Pajero Sport 2.5 Litre M/T TD	4,150,000	*
	Pajero Sport 2.5 Litre A/T TD	4,750,000	*
	Pajero Sport 2.5 Litre A/T TD (7 seater)	6,900,000	*
Pick-Ups	L200	From 1,899,000	*
NISSAN			*
Saloons	SunnyAlmera 1.5 Litre STD - P	1,995,000	*
	SunnyAlmera 1.5 Litre HI Spec M/T - P	2,450,000	
	Nissan Sunny Almera 1.5 Litre Hi Spec Auto - P	2,550,000	*
	TIIDA Saloon 1.6 Litre SC11 M/T -P	2,700,000	*
	TIIDA Saloon 1.6 Litre SC11 A/T-P	2,800,000	*
	TIIDA Saloon 1.8 Litre SC11 M/T-P	2,900,000	*
	TIIDA Saloon 1.8 Litre SC11 A/T-P	3,200,000	*
Pick-Ups	NP 200 3/4 Ton 1.6 Litre (4x2) S/Cab - P	1,900,000	*
	Hardbody (4x2) 2.7 Litre S/Cab - X56 / X09 - D	2,385,000	*
	Hardbody (4x4) 3.2 Litre S/C - X82 / X33 - D	2,890,000	*
	Hardbody (4x2) 2.7 Litre S/C - X40 / X34 - D	3,100,000	*
	Hardbody (4x4) 3.2 Litre S/C - X83 / X12 - D	3,685,000	*
	Hardbody (4x4) 3.2 Litre D/C - X83 / X37 - D	3,850,000	*
	Hardbody (4x4) 2.5 Litre D/C - J86 / X38 - TD	4,000,000	*
	Navara (4x4) 2.5 Litre D/ SE - 6 M/T STD - TD	4,350,000	*
	Navara (4x4) 2.5 Litre D/ LE - 6 M/T WIDE - TD	4,880,000	*
	Navara (4x4) 2.5 Litre D/ LE - 5 A/T WIDE - TD	4,980,000	*
Crossover SUVs	X-Trail Mpfi 2.0 Litre M/T P	4,987,500	*
	X-Trail Eti 2.2 Litre M/T TD	5,838,000	*
	X-Trail Mpfi 2.5 Litre CVT T31-P	6,142,500	*
	Qashqai 2.0 Litre (4x4) 5 CVT (5-Seater) -P	4,400,000	*
	Qashqai 2.0 Litre (4x2) 6 CVT (7-Seater) -P	4,175,000	*
SUVs	Pathfinder 2.5 Litre (4x4) 6 M/T R51C 802 - D	6,850,000	*
	Pathfinder 2.5 Litre (4x4) 5 A/T R51C 804 - D	7,150,000	*
	Murano 3.5 Litre (4x4) M/CVT Z51 - P	9,500,000	*
	Patrol 3.0 Litre GI - Y61 -TD	8,064,000	*
	Patrol 3.0 Litre GRX - Y61 -TD	10,473,750	*
	Patrol 4.2 Litre STD - Y61 -D (Project Vehicle)	7,192,500	*
	Patrol 4.2 Litre GL - Y61 -D	8,662,500	*
	Patrol 4.2 Litre SGL - Y61 -D	10,473,750	*
	Patrol 4.8 Litre SGL - Y61 -D	11,392,500	*
	Patrol Pick Up 4.2 Litre UY61 + S/ Fuel tank-D	4,750,000	*
MPVs	Minibus 2.4 Litre E24 -P	3,225,000	*
	Minibus 2.7 Litre E24 -D		*
	Civilian Bus 4.2 Litre-TOURIST VERSION -W41-D	8,450,000	*
PEUGEOT			
Hatchbacks	308 1.6 Litre Acess HDi D	3,650,000	*
	308 1.6 Litre Alure P	3,249,000	*
MPVS	3008 1.6 Litre Auto	4,849,000	*
	3008 1.6 Litre Fully Loaded	5,299,000	*
	Partner Teepee 1.5 HDi	3,510,000	*
	Partner Teepee 1.5 Litre P	2,999,000	*
Saloons	508 Active Petrol (Auto)	4.999,000	*
	508 Allure Petrol (Auto)	5,499,000	*
Estates	308 1.6 Litre Acess HDi (D)	3,249,000	*

















SKODA			
MPVs	Yeti 1.8 Litre TSi 4x4 M/T	3,850,000	*
SUBARU			
Saloons	Impreza 1.6i CVT	4,350,000	*
	Legacy 2.0 M/T	5,250,000	*
	Legacy 2.0 A/T	5,425,000	*
Wagons	Legacy 2.0 M/T	4,975,000	S/O
	Legacy 2.0 A/T CVT	5,235,000	S/O
Crossover Hatchbacks	XV 2.0i A/T CVT (Full Spec)	4,745,000	*
	XV 2.0i A/T CVT (Full Spec)	4,985,000	*
Crossover Wagons	Forester 2.0i - L	5,250,000	*
	Forester 2.0 XT (Turbo)	7,095,000	*
	Forester 2.5 XT AT (Full Spec)	6,525,000	S/O
	Outback 2.5i M/T 6-speed	6,215,000	S/O
	Outback 2.5i A/T CVT	6,475,000	*
	Outback 3.6R A/T	7,675,000	*
Crossover SUVs	Tribeca 3.6	8,150,000	*
TOYOTA			
Saloons	Corolla 1.3 Litre M/T P with A/C	2,590,000	*
	Corolla 1.3 Litre M/T P	2,760,000	*
	Corolla 1.6 Litre Loaded Specs M/T P	2,800,000	*
	Corolla 1.6 Litre Loaded Specs M/T P	2,970,000	*
	Corolla 1.8 Litre Loaded Specs M/T P	3,000,000	*
	Corolla 1.8 Litre Loaded Specs A/T P	3,000,000	*
	Camry 2.5 Litre A/T - Petrol	8,200,000	*
Crossover MPVs	Avanza 1.5 Litre - Hi Spec M/T -P	2,600,000	*
Crossover SUVs	RAV4 2.0 Litre 4x2 STD (CVT)	4,000,000	*
	RAV4 2.5 Litre 4x4 Hi-SPEC	5,100,000	*
	Fortuner 3.0 Litre (M/T) D	5,000,000	*
	Fortuner 3.0 Litre (M/T) D 7 seater)	5,200,000	*
SUVs	Prado 3.0 Litre TX M/T D	6,800,000	*
	Prado 2.7 Litre TX-L M/T P	7,200,000	*
	Prado 3.0 Litre TX-L M/T TD	10,200,000	*
	Prado 3.0 Litre VX-L M/T TD	10,500,000	*
	Landcruiser STD 4.5 Litre M/T TD	11,200,000	*
	Landcruiser XG 4.5 Litre M/T TD	12,100,000	*
	Landcruiser VX 4.5 Litre A/T TD	14,400,000	*
	Landcruiser VX 4.5 Litre A/T TD [A1]	15,400,000	*
	Landcruiser VX 4.5 Litre A/T TD [A2]	16,200,000	*
Pick-Ups	Hilux 2.0 Litre 4x2 S/C - P	2,600,000	*
	Hilux 2.5 Litre 4x2 S/C - TD	2,500,000	*
	Hilux 2.5 Litre 4x4 S/C - TD	3,100,000	*
	Hilux 2.5 Litre 4x2 D/C - TD	3,400,000	*
	Hilux 2.5 Litre 4x4 D/C - TD	4,000,000	
	Hilux 2.5 Litre 4x4 D/C DELUXE- TD	4,500,000	*
	Land Cruiser 4.2 Litre 4x4 HD Pick-Up	4,200,000	
	Land Cruiser 4.2 Litre M/T D Ambulance	5,700,000	*
	Land Cruiser 4.2 Litre Hardtop M/T D	7,000,000	
	Land Cruiser 4.2 Litre Hardtop T/C M/T D	7,100, 000	
	Land Cruiser 4.2 Litre Hardtop TRV M/T D	7,200,000	*
MPVs	Hiace 2.5 Litre -TD	5,400,000	*
	Hiace 2.5 Litre with A/C -TD	5,800,000	*
	Hiace 2.7 Litre -P	4,500,000	*
VOLVO			
Hatchbacks	C30	POA	S/O
Crossover Wagons	V40	POA	S/O
	V60	POA	S/O

CAR PRICING

Saloons	S60	5,200,000	*
	S80	POA	S/O
Crossover SUVs	XC60	8,500,000	*
SUVs	XC90	POA	S/O
MERCEDES BENZ			
	A 200(Low Spec)	€ 52,000	
	C 180	€ 59,800	
	C 200(Avantgarde)	€ 63,000	
	C 200(Exclusive)	€ 63,000	
	E200	€ 70,900	
	E250	€ 74,500	
	E300	€ 79,900	
	ML 350CDI	€ 102,000	
	ML 350 PETROL	€ 102,000	
JEEP			
	Jeep Wrangler Sahara 3.6L 2Dr	$ 57,200.00	
	Jeep Wrangler Sahara 3.6L 4Dr	$ 63,500.00	
	Jeep Wrangler Rubicon 3.6 2Dr	$ 65,600.00	
	Jeep Wrangler Rubicon 3.6 4Dr	$ 68,800.00	
	Jeep Grand Limited 3.6 P	$ 85,900.00	
	Jeep Grand Overland 3.6 P	$ 99,000.00	
	Jeep Compass 2.0CVT 2WD	$ 48,100.00	
	Jeep Grand Overland 5.7L	$ 107,000.00	
	Dodge Journey 2.4L	$ 48,300.00	
	Dodge Journey 3.6L	$ 61,000.00	
	Jeep Cherokee Limited 3.2L	$ 71,000.00	
	Jeep Cherokee Trailhawk 3.2L	$ 78,200.00	
	Grand Cherokee 6.4L SRT 8	$ 130,000.00	
DEFENDER (L316)			
	Defender 110 Pick Up	$ 66,111	
	Defender 110 HCPU	$ 73,333	
	Defender 110 Station Wagon$ 73,333		
DISCOVERY (L319)			
	Discovery 4TDV6 XS	$ 99,444	
	Discovery 4SDV6 S	$ 116,667	
	Discovery 4SDV6 SE	$ 127,778	
	Discovery 4SDV6 HSE	$ 143,889	
	Discovery 3,0 V6 SE	$ 127,778	
	Discovery 3,0 V6 HSE	$ 143,889	
FREELANDER (LR2)			
	Freelander TD4 S	$ 68,889	
	Freelander SD4 S	$ 77,222	
	Freelander Si4 XS	$ 70,000	
	Freelander Si4 HSE	$ 87,778	
	Freelander SD4 SE	$ 94,444	
	Freelander SD4 HSE	$ 98,889	
RANGE ROVER EVOQUE (L538)			
	Range Rover Evoque Si4 Pure Petrol	$ 88,333	
	Range Rover Evoque SD4 Prestige	$ 111,056	
	Range Rover Evoque Si4 Dynamic	$ 111,056	
	Range Rover Evoque Si4 Prestige	$ 111,056	
	Range Rover Evoque Autobiography	$ 119,444	
RANGE ROVER SPORT (L494)			
	Range Rover Sport 3.0TDV6 S (Diesel)	$ 150,000	
	Range Rover Sport SDV6 S(Diesel)	$ 161,111	

















	Range Rover Sport SDV6 SE (Diesel)	$ 173,333	
	Range Rover Sport SDV6 HSE (Diesel)	$ 200,000	
	Range Rover Sport 4.4SDV8 HSE Dynamic (Diesel)	$ 221,667	
	Range Rover Sport 4.4SDV8 HSE AB Dynamic (Diesel)	$ 254,444	
	Range Rover Sport 3.0V6 S/C S (Petrol)	$ 150,000	
	Range Rover Sport 3.0V6 S/C SE (Petrol)	$ 165,556	
	Range Rover Sport 3.0V6 S/C HSE (Petrol)	$ 184,444	
	Range Rover Sport 5.0V8 S/C HSE Dynamic (Petrol)	$ 221,111	
	Range Rover Sport 5.0V8 S/C AB Dynamic (Petrol)	$ 243,333	
	Range Rover Sport SVR	$ 284,444	
RANGE ROVER (L405) MODELS			
VOGUE SE MODELS			
	Range Rover 3.0 TDV6 Vogue (Diesel)	$ 213,333	
	Range Rover 4.4 Vogue SE (Diesel)	$ 270,556	
	Range Rover 3.0 V6 S/C SE (Petrol)	$ 254,444	
	Range Rover 5.0 S/C Vogue SE (Petrol)	$ 270,000	
VOGUE AUTOBIOGRAPHY MODELS			
	Range Rover 3.0 S/C V6 AB (Petrol)	$ 303,889	
	Range Rover 4.4 AB (Diesel)	$ 315,000	
	Range Rover 5.0 S/C AB (Petrol)	$ 315,000	
VOGUE LWB			
AUTOBIOGRAPHY MODELS			
	Range Rover 3.0 S/C V6 AB (Petrol)	$ 315,000	
	Range Rover 4.4 AB (Diesel)	$ 326,111	
	Range Rover 5.0 S/C AB (Petrol)	$ 337,222	
JAGUAR XF			
	2.2 Luxury Diesel	$ 77,222	
	2.0 Luxury Petrol	$ 83,333	
	2.2 Premium Luxury Diesel	$ 88,333	
	2.0 Premium Luxury Petrol	$ 88,333	
	3.0 S Premium Luxury Diesel	$ 116,667	
	5.0 S/C XFR	$ 162,778	
JAGUAR XJ			
	2.0 Luxury Petrol	$ 121,111	
	2.0 Premium Luxury Petrol	$ 143,889	
	3.0 S/C Premium Luxury Petrol	$ 166,111	
	3.0 S/C Portfolio LWB Petrol	$ 199,444	
JAGUAR F TYPE			
	V6	$ 155,000	
	V6S	$ 177,222	
	V8S	$ 199,444	
VOLKSWAGEN			
	CC 1.8 DSG SPORTLINE	$ 63,600	
	TIGUAN 2.0 MT Trend&Fun	$ 52,200	
	TIGUAN 2.0 DSG Track&Field	$ 57,100	
	TIGUAN 2.0 DSG Sport & Style	$ 62,600	
	TOUAREG NG 3.6 V6	$ 108,250	
	AMAROK DC 4x4 MT 103kW BASELINE	$ 58,800	
	AMAROK DC 4x4 MT 103kW TRENDLINE	$ 61,500	
	AMAROK DC 4x4 MT 103kW CANYON	$ 73,500	
	T5 VAN 2WD LWB 2.0 Tdi 75kW	$ 43,400	
	T5 VAN 4WD LWB 2.0 Tdi 103kW	$ 49,450	
RENAULT			
	DUSTER (Manual, 2WD, steel rims)	€ 23,210	

CAR PRICING

	DUSTER (Manual, 2WD, alloy rims)	€ 23,780	
	FLUENCE (Automatic)	€ 25,520	
	KANGOO (Manual)	€ 22,040	
	KOLEOS (Automatic)	€ 40,600	

MODEL DESCRIPTION	RSP LESS VAT 16% (KES)	VAT @ 16% (KES)	RSP VAT INCLUSIVE (KES)
FORD			
FORD FIGO 1.5L TREND	2,150,862	344,138	2,495,000
FORD ECOSPORT 1.5L TREND A/T	2,840,517	454,483	3,295,000
FORD ECOSPORT 1.5L TITANIUM A/T	3,185,345	509,655	3,695,000
FORD FOCUS TITANIUM 1.6L	3,185,345	509,655	3,695,000
FORD FUSION TREND 1.5L SE	3,788,793	606,207	4,395,000
FORD FUSION TITAN 1.5L	4,478,448	716,552	5,195,000
FORD KUGA 1.5L PANORAMIC ROOF	4,995,690	799,310	5,795,000
FORD EVEREST 2.2L XLS	5,168,103	826,897	5,995,000
FORD EVEREST 2.2L XLT	5,857,759	937,241	6,795,000
FORD EVEREST 3.2L XLT	6,892,241	1,102,759	7,995,000
FORD EVEREST 3.2L LTD	7,323,276	1,171,724	8,495,000
FORD EVEREST 3.2L LTD TITANIUM	7,581,897	1,213,103	8,795,000
FORD MUSTANG COUPE 2.3L AT	8,185,345	1,309,655	9,495,000
FORD MUSTANG GT COUPE 5.0L	9,047,414	1,447,586	10,495,000
FORD RANGER 4X2 S/C BASE	2,926,724	468,276	3,395,000
FORD RANGER 4X4 S/C SAFETY PACK	3,443,966	551,034	3,995,000
FORD RANGER 4X4 D/C SAFETY PACK	3,788,793	606,207	4,395,000
FORD RANGER 4X4 XL+ D/C MT	4,133,621	661,379	4,795,000
FORD RANGER 4X4 RAP CAB XLT 2.2D AT	4,478,448	716,552	5,195,000
FORD RANGER 4X4 D/C 2.2 XLT	4,650,862	744,138	5,395,000
FORD RANGER 3.2L XLT MT	4,909,483	785,517	5,695,000
FORD RANGER 3.2L XLT AT	5,168,103	826,897	5,995,000
FORD RANGER 4X4 WILDTRAK	5,857,759	937,241	6,795,000
FORD TRANSIT CUSTOM	4,392,241	702,759	5,095,000
FORD TRANSIT CUSTOM (TOP)	4,650,862	744,138	5,395,000
SUZUKI			
MARUTI OMNI MPI CARGO	797,414	127,586	925,000
MARUTI OMNI MPI 5 STR	857,759	137,241	995,000
SUZUKI SUPER CARRY	1,288,793	206,207	1,495,000
MARUTI GYPSY ST	1,547,414	247,586	1,795,000
MARUTI GYPSY HT	1,633,621	261,379	1,895,000
CIAZ AT	2,064,655	330,345	2,395,000
JIMNY JLX M/T	2,150,862	344,138	2,495,000
VITARA 2.0L MT	3,271,552	523,448	3,795,000
VITARA 2.0L AT	3,443,966	551,034	3,995,000
MAZDA			
CX-5 2.0L AT 4X2	4,047,414	647,586	4,695,000
CX-5 2.5L AT 4X4	5,168,103	826,897	5,995,000
MAZDA 3	3,012,931	482,069	3,495,000
MAZDA 6	3,961,207	633,793	4,595,000
BT 50 SC 4X2	2,840,517	454,483	3,295,000
BT 50 SC 4X4	3,185,345	509,655	3,695,000
BT 50 DC 5MT 4X4	3,616,379	578,621	4,195,000
BT 50 DC 6MT 4X4 2.2L	4,306,034	688,966	4,995,000
BT 50 DC 6AT 4X4 3.2L T43181	5,081,897	813,103	5,895,000









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frequently asked QUESTIONS

Kenya Power

NEW CUSTOMER SERVICES SYSTEM

Following the successful launch of the new Integrated Customer Management System, the below information is meant to further empower you, our esteemed customers as you start to use the new system.



1

Do I get a NEW account number in the upgraded customer management system?

Yes, you will have a NEW account number sent to you via SMS. To query your new account number, send the word **STATUS** with your existing account number to **95551.** E.g. if your existing account is 1234567-01, send **Status1234567** ***(Don't include the suffix 01, 02) to 95551.***

2

Will I use my NEW account number to make payments?

Yes, going forward, your NEW account number will be used to make payments and will be used to access your details for all other enquires. It is therefore important to have it on easy reach.





3

Did I need to register NEW E-billing details for the NEW account number given?

No, we migrated all billing data from the old system, however if you would like to make any changes, visit our Customer Care Offices or send SMS to 95551 for registration.

4

If I need to query my bill through my cell phone, which are the steps to follow?

Send a message with **your NEW account number** to **95551** and feedback on your bill status will be sent to you.





5

How do I access my bill via Self Service Module?

The new system has a Self Service Module which can be accessed via the Internet and on a Mobile App for the following services:

- *Bill or Token Query*
- *Application for Power Supply*
- *Change of Contract Name*
- *Reporting of Power Outages*
- *A listing of Power Interruptions (Planned and Unplanned)*

For more information: Send SMS to 95551 | Tel: 95551 or 0703 070707, 0732 170170 | E-mail: incmsinfo@kplc.co.ke
Twitter: @KenyaPower_Care @KenyaPower | Facebook: @KenyaPowerLtd