

Five value-for-money SUVs

By  Ané Theron

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Manufacturers are pulling out all the stops to ensure that people keep on buying cars, because the customer wants a car that can do it all, go anywhere and doesn't cost the earth. Here are five SUVs that make for an attractive, feature-filled package.

1. Renault Kadjar (from R359,900)

A Wesbank/SAGMJ COTY 2017 finalist, The Kadjar is specced comprehensively with safety and convenience features, and boasts user friendliness second to none. The four-wheel-drive derivative (Kadjar 96 kW DCi Dynamique 4WD, R545,900) is surprisingly capable on sand, proving you don't need a Mitsubishi Pajero for the dunes (I won't go rougher than that, though). You can switch to 4x2 mode for everyday family activities and urban driving.

The 1.5 and 1.6 dCi diesel models are fantastically frugal. The Kadjar offers a huge boot as well as a full-size spare and is supremely comfortable, forming the ideal balance between handling and ride quality.

2. Volkswagen Tiguan (from R378,000)

The Tiguan has also been a firm favourite amongst SA buyers, but its lack of cabin and boot space was always its Achilles' heel. Volkswagen has addressed that issue in the new Tiguan with a bigger platform that helps create 50 litres more boot space, so families can fit in all their holiday luggage. It has new safety features too, such as adaptive cruise control and a pedestrian-friendly Active Bonnet, to reduce the damage to the unlucky individual.

The entry-level Tiguan 1.4 TSI 92 kW Trendline 2WD BMT Manual, gets ABS with ESP as well as a 5-inch touchscreen, Bluetooth and fatigue detection, to name a few. The Tiguan is also a 2017 COTY finalist.



3. Hyundai Tucson (from R369,900)

The Hyundai Tucson, replacement to the ix35, is selling in big numbers. The ix35 was good, and a garage staple for many families, but the new Tucson is in another league. It's every bit as good as its German rivals, with a long list of standard features to boot. Even the entry-level Tucson 2.0 NU Premium Manual (R369,900) has Bluetooth, six airbags and a rearview

camera.

The new 1.6-litre T GDI turbo-petrol engine is smooth, refined and super quiet - so much so that you don't even hear it running. The new Euro 6-compliant turbo-diesel Tucsons are coming our way too and launching locally in November 2016. The Tucson is also a COTY finalist for 2016.

4. Renault Duster SUV MY16 (from R239,900)

The trusty Duster has been tweaked just in time for summer. The refreshed Duster enjoys a host of improvements, including a new streamlined centre console, new seat fabric, as well as a leather option in all Dynamique-variants. Cruise control and the 7" MediaNav touch screen will also be available in every derivative. Known for its advanced off-road capabilities, the range-topping Duster 1.5 dCi Dynamique 4x4 goes for a pocket-friendly R304,900.



5. Suzuki Vitara (from R261,900)

The Vitara is a tough little critter - even the front-wheel drive derivatives are happy to go where other crossovers fear to tread. And it's good-looking too - there's no denying its Evoque-inspired front end. Built on the platform of the Suzuki SX4, you can choose between front-wheel or AllGrip all-wheel drive derivatives - both are powered by naturally aspirated 1.6-litre engines.

The All-Grip system offers four driving modes via the Drive Mode Select rotary dial: Auto, Sport, Snow and Lock. (Lock mode makes use of a limited slip differential to transfer torque to the wheel with more grip.) Vitara AllGrip variants also have Hill Descent Control. Every variant features stability control and seven airbags, as well as a five-star EuroNCAP rating.

ABOUT ANÉ THERON

Ané Theron started her career in motoring journalism at Rapport, and moved over to City Press after a few years, before settling into a full time career at AutoTrader SA. She's at her happiest driving along twisty coastal roads, or crawling across rugged terrain in a beefy 4x4, or driving through the desolate Karoo. And taking photos along the way, of course.

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