

Ciaz up against a gang of toughies

 By [Henrie Geyser](#)

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Suzuki has been churning out new vehicles during the past year with a three-model Ciaz sedan following close behind the local arrival of the Splash, Erigo and Celerio to push the Japanese automaker's local line-up to 36 vehicles.

The Ciaz ranges in price from R179 900 for the entry-level GL to R214 900 for the flagship GLX Auto version, with our test car, the GLX manual, slotting in between them with a price tag of 199 900.

The Ciaz moves a notch closer to the premium end of the market, particularly the GLX which has leather upholstery and leather steering wheel wrapping, chrome gear shift knob and reading lights for the rear seat passengers, 16-inch alloys and fog lights.



Suzuki has been fairly generous with ample cabin and luggage space (including a full-size spare wheel) and living quarter fancies include keyless start, rear sunblind, trip computer, electric windows and mirrors, remote central locking, a multi-function steering wheel, automatic climate-control with rear vents and a quality six-speaker audio system with CD player and integrated Bluetooth, USB, Aux and a 12V socket.

The latest Suzuki sedan steps into a highly contested segment of the market where Chevrolet Sonic, Honda Ballade, Toyota Corolla Quest, VW Polo sedan/Vivo Hyundai Accent and the Kia Rio have all established strong footholds with good sales records. However, the Ciaz measures up quite well in this company. It dishes up a pleasant enough ride on smooth surfaces but it does become a bit thumpy when the tarmac is patchy or worn. Cabin insulation is also not the best in this class. But in its favour, the steering is fairly responsive and the car sits confidently through the corners.



All three models are powered by a 1.4-litre naturally aspirated petrol engine that churns out 70kW and 130Nm. It sounds and initially feels as though it is keen to trot but it does run out of pep quite easily, particularly with a full load aboard along undulating stretches.

The five-shift manual transmission is a tad sticky and the clutch is sensitive (in the same way as in the Splash which we tested recently) and it takes a while to get used to it. We didn't do any combined cycle fuel test runs but Suzuki claims 5.4l/100km although this could be blown out the window by the high revs the engine needs to get up steam.

Safety features include ABS with electronic brake force distribution (EBD) and emergency braking assistance (EBA). Also standard are dual front airbags, inertia reel seatbelts front and rear, and integrated alarm/immobiliser and childproof rear door locks. However, a rather strange omission is child-protection ISOFIX anchors for the rear seats, an absolute must-have for family cars these days.



The Ciaz is a pretty-looking, affordable family sedan with generous interior space and a number of fancy touches and it is not out-classed in this segment. But this is a tough end of the market where sales are swinging away from sedans towards crossovers and zippy hatchbacks and the Suzuki brand also carries a little less gravitas than Toyota, Hyundai, Kia, VW and Honda. However, this is market dominated by budget-conscious buyers who attach more value to reliability, value for money, safety, practicality and good dealer service than which badge is on the hood so the Ciaz could well carve a fair a slice of the market for itself.

The models and prices (which include a three-year/100 000km warranty and a three-year/60 000km service plan) are:

1.4 GL Manual	R 179 900
1.4 GLX Manual	R 199 900
1.4 GLX Automatic	R 214 900

ABOUT HENRIE GEYSER

Henrie Geyser joined the online publishing industry through iafrica.com where he worked for five years as news editor and editor. He now freelances for a variety of print and online publications, on the subjects of cars, food, and travel, among others; and is a member of the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists. henrieg@africa.com

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