

Juke is a very kissable frog

 By [Henrie Geyser](#)

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Some think it looks foxy, others think it looks like a frog peering out of a marshy pond but love it or hate it, you cannot ignore the re-styled Juke cross-over.

The Juke is one of Nissan's top-selling and most popular lines in this country and for very good reasons - it is one of the most pleasant vehicles in its class and serves up a family-friendly combination of practical and comfortable with a good dollop of driving pleasure.



Although Nissan has stuck to the successful formula of "if it ain't broke don't fix it" by not fiddling too much with its looks in the past, the latest incarnation is a rather drastic step away from its unassuming, boxy looks which nevertheless pulled more than 500 000 buyers worldwide since its launch.

As if it's bulbous frog-eyed daylight running lights, revised front and rear ends, reshaped derriere and bigger alloys are not eye-catching enough our test vehicle was painted in screaming canary yellow. Enough for a young lady to pop her head out of her black BMW at the traffic lights and say with a smile: "That thing you are driving is the ugliest vehicle I have ever seen on the road..."

But so what, you don't have to kiss this frog for it to turn into a very likeable prince because the transformation happens as soon as you slide in behind the wheel.

It is delightful to drive and the longer you drive the Juke the more you like it. What really impressed me about the new vehicle was the willingness of its new-to-the-range turbo-fed 1.2-litre engine Nissan shoved under the stubby bonnet of the

new Acenta model. It kicks out 85kW and 190Nm which is good for a top speed of 178km/h. This makes it zip quickly off the mark because power kicks in low down in the rev range.

However, the gear ratios of the six-speed box are widely spaced (clearly intended to translate into sip-sip fuel usage) but it does mean quite a bit of soup spoon stirring with the left hand and energetic right foot exercise to keep up the revs, particularly along undulating stretches of black top, which tend to negate its frugal fuel claims.

The Juke handles as well as can be expected from its upright stanch and its speed-sensitive electric power steering is light and fairly direct and particularly pleasant on the open road and when squeezing into tight parking bays. The suspension is on the taut side and the new look Juke now also rides on bigger takkies so with only the driver aboard it does lean towards being a tad jumpy along rougher patches (this does improve with four aboard and a full load).

Speaking of loads, the clever white coats at Nissan took heed of customers complaining about lack of packing space in earlier models and have lowered the space saver spare wheel to increase the luggage space from 251 litres to 354 litres. This applies to all models, except the 4WD model, which has to house a rear differential and multi-link rear suspension system.



Nissan hasn't re-arranged the furniture in the living quarters dramatically and wisely so because it spacious enough, even for four biggies. However, the entire range has received a specification upgrade and even the entry-level Acenta model has Bluetooth phone integration, cruise control with speed-limiting capabilities, Stop/Start technology and full climate control. All models in the range also have vehicle dynamic control (VDC) and six airbags, key elements to the Juke's five-star Euro NCAP rating.

Because of its new funky cool, sportier looks and interior improvements the Juke moves up in status in the growing segment of zesty newcomers such as the Opel Mokka, Ford EcoSport, Peugeot 208 and Kia Soul.

However, this very kissable frog is not for the conservative, introverted types because it **will** attract attention wherever it goes, particularly when it is dressed in a bright yellow party frock!

All Juke models come with a three-year / 45 000 kilometre service plan and a three-year / 100 000 kilometre mechanical warranty.

The models and prices are:

1.2 DIG-T Juke Acenta	R 254 900
1.2 DIG-T Juke Acenta+	R 277 900
1.5 dCi Juke Acenta+	R 299 900
1.6 DIG-T Juke Tekna	R 325 900
1.6 DIG-T Juke Tekna with Sunroof and NissanConnect	R 354 900
1.6 DIG-T 4WD XTronic Juke Tekna with Sunroof and NissanConnect	R 364 900

ABOUT HENRIE GEYSER

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