

Fortuner is a capable good-looker

 By [Henrie Geyser](#)

24 Jun 2016

The much improved new Toyota Fortuner is destined to strengthen its position as South Africa's favourite family SUV with predicted sales of more than 1,000 a month.



Not only does it have all-new 2.4 and 2.8 diesel engines under the hoods of its eight diesel variants, but the ride is much improved over its predecessor, the cabin is far more sophisticated, comfortable and better insulated, and the shapelier exterior is miles better than the ugly box-on-wheels look of the previous model.

Clearly the white coats at Toyota saw the looming threat of the easy on the eye Trailblazer, Everest and others that have their sights – and sales targets – firmly set on the lucrative SUV market in this country where the Fortuner has been the dominant player for some time.

New-look overhaul

The seven-seater Fortuner, close relative of the blue-bearded Hilux, has been around for 10 years or so, so the complete new-look overhaul comes at the right time. The front end has benefitted from a prominent grille flowing into slit-eyed headlight clusters, the rear passenger windows are smaller and the frame reshaped to make it look lower and faster.



Although there is a liberal application of chrome, particularly at the front end, Toyota wisely surrounds the wheel arches and the sides with more bush-practical plastic trim. Although the same size as the outgoing model, the living quarters have been considerably smartened up and the seats are much more comfortable – with the top models even bragging with leather seats.

A large touch screen is logically designed for sound and settings adjustments. Steering wheel adjustments are easy and finding a convenient driving position is no problem. The rear two passenger seats can be folded flat or easily removed to increase packing space (pity they don't fold away into the floor like those of some of its competitors).

Cabin insulation is good particularly noticeable when the engine is working at a high rate of knots. Piloting the Fortuner is easy, even in congested city traffic because all-round visibility is excellent and the steering is light enough to make for easy parking, even in tight mall parking lots.



Power factories

But to me the most outstanding feature of the new range is the power factories up front, particularly the 2.8-litre 4x4 model we had on test. Linked to a six-speed manual box (an auto version is also available) the big wagon is quite enthusiastic off the mark, now pushing out 10kW and 107Nm more than the previous 3.0-litre engine. (Toyota claims top speed of 180km/h.)

Unfortunately we did not have an opportunity to take the Fortuner on any challenging off-road excursions, but general reports of its capabilities have mostly been favourable. On gravel roads the new Toyota certainly feels steadier on its feet than the previous model, mainly due to the use of coil units instead of ye olde worlde leaf springs.



Another marked improvement is the use of a knob on the facia to select low range instead of the outdated short gear lever of the previous model. Ground clearance is 225mm and approach and departure angles are 29 and 25 degrees. One of the biggest criticisms of the previous Fortuner was the fact that it was so closely related to its work-horse Hilux brother, both in appearance and ride. The new Fortuner spins all that away into history.

The four models equipped with the new 2.8 engines vary in price from R513,400 to R589,400. All Fortuner versions come with a price-inclusive five-year/90,000km service plan.

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@iafrica.com

- Lexus F-Sport: Winning hearts and wallets - 13 Mar 2018

- Kia Sportage gains Extra appeal - 20 Feb 2018

- Jaguar F-Type thrills with topless fun - 9 Feb 2018

- Elegant but pricey Discovery - 31 Jan 2018

- Sexy Aygo goes topless - 27 Nov 2017

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>