

Driven: Does Honda's new HR-V SUV tick all the boxes?

 By [Imran Salie](#)

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At the end of last year, I tested the new Honda HR-V for seven days, where I was able to get a feel of the type of drive it offers and to judge whether or not it's worth its price tag. Right off the bat, I will say that what I liked most about it was its exterior, especially the long rear light that extends from one end to another. And judging by the onlookers that turned their heads as I passed them, it's safe to say that the new HR-V is quite the looker to most people.



A notable exterior change to this updated HR-V, besides the rear light, is the grill. The people close to me that got to see it were not overly joyous about the grill, but I liked the design. The car has a slant at the rear that gives the vehicle a coupe look, and a low-looking ride height which makes it look compact and sporty.



Source: [QuickPic](#)



On the inside of the new HR-V there are comfortable leather seats with solid build quality all around. Adding to that there is ample legroom and headroom for tall people.

It has two USB charging sockets in the front and two in the back, and a wireless charging pad that is located in the lower section of the centre console.

The top-of-the-range Executive model, which is the one I tested, has a big panoramic glass roof, which Honda says has new Low-E technology that reduces the intensity of infrared, ultraviolet, and solar heat rays entering the cabin by 75%.



Source: [QuickPic](#)

Some facts about the new HR-V

- Under the bonnet sits Honda's 1.5l i-Vtec petrol engine that generates a power output of 89kW at 6,600rpm and torque of 145Nm at 4,300rpm.
- The engine is mated to a CVT transmission that sends power to the front wheels.
- The wheels for the Executive model are black 18-inch alloys, and the lower-spec Comfort model has 17-inch black/silver diamond-cut alloy wheels.
- Apple CarPlay and Android Auto come standard with Honda's new infotainment system.
- Hill Descent Control, available for the first time in South Africa on the HR-V, operates from a minimum speed of just 3km/h.
- A claimed fuel consumption of 6l/100km, which is not factual as I experienced just over 7l with moderate driving.
- Electronic brake systems include Vehicle Stability Assist, Brake Assist System, Hill Start Assist and Automatic Brake Hold.
- Honda offers the following colours for the new HR-V: Opal White (Pearl), Coffee Cherry Red (Metallic), Meteoroid Grey (Metallic), and Brilliant Sporty Blue (Metallic).

Some safety features

The HR-V features front, side and curtain SRS airbags. The Executive offers six SRS airbags whilst the Comfort derivative offers four SRS airbags.

Honda's Sensing safety technology is available on the Executive model.

Other safety features on both models include Collision Mitigation Braking System, Adaptive Cruise Control, Lane Keeping Assist System, Road Departure Mitigation, and Auto High-Beam.

Verdict

The new HR-V looks stunning, there's no arguing with that. However, Honda has missed the mark when it comes to the performance of this vehicle. And by performance, I mean how well it is able to offer a nippy drive when required.

The drivetrain is unengaging, and there's no oomph once your foot is hard down on the pedal, which makes driving the HR-V a bit underwhelming. Don't get me wrong, there's enough up its sleeve to keep up with other cars and to do overtakes on highways in urban areas, but its engine and gearbox don't do enough to make it move freely and swiftly as it should.

I found this to be the major gripe with the new HR-V during my seven-day stint with it, which at the time was disappointing because the interior, the exterior, and the tech were all up to standard.

The drive comfortability was decent though, I don't recall the suspension letting me down when I traversed on bumpy roads that were riddled with pot-holes.

For its asking price of R469,000 for the Comfort model and R554, 500 for the Executive model, I'd say Honda has done a good job to offer quite a bit, but there's work to be done for it to keep up with its competitors in this vehicle category, as it's reported that [only one HR-V was sold in South Africa in December 2022](#).

ABOUT IMRAN SALIE

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