

Launched: The Suzuki Grand Vitara. Two and four-wheel drive options



By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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The Outeniqua Mountains. Arguably a breathtaking mountain range that runs parallel to the southern coast of South Africa. It has seven mountain passes and off-road, some of the most rugged and unforgiving 4x4 trails. What an ideal destination to launch the all-new Suzuki Grand Vitara, which brims with new technology, luxury features and an eye-catching and improved design.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj



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Driving on tarred roads was a smooth synch. But the real tester was negotiating the 4x4 trail as the convoy wormed its way from the bottom until we got right to the top for a spectacular view. The trail was challenging and rocky, with deep 'dongas'.

I have driven on many other mountain passes but this one pulled out the best in our driving capabilities. And the Grand Vitara was very much equal to the task. As I levelled off on the top, I did feel that sense of satisfaction.

Unmistakable Suzuki design

Viewed from the outside, the new Grand Vitara has a modern interpretation of its forebear's clamshell bonnet which, in this case, is more sculpted, with the large and imposing wheel arches housing its large alloy wheels. Iconic roof rails round off this sculpted design.

Among the many unique features that make this a stand-out design are the multi-level grille, which has an imposing centre section with metallic surrounds, a thin top section to neatly frame the S-badge, and an inverted lower section that links with the bottom strike plate.

The multi-level grille is flanked by three-point LED daytime running lights on either side, which are uniquely positioned

higher than the headlamps. The headlamps, which function automatically on all versions, are recessed in their own dark polycarbonate surrounds.

Below the headlamps is a deeply sculpted lower bumper. The line created by this bumper follows through to the doors and terminates in a kick-up to the rear wheels.

LED

At the rear, a thin and imposing LED light bar stretches the width of the car. This is also fitted with three-dimensional LED lights. Reverse and turn signal lights are fitted in a deep, sculpted section at the very edges of the lower bumper. All models feature roof rails and 17" alloy wheels.

Flagship luxury and technology

I was greeted by plush seats that have been designed especially for this model range. The seats, along with the suspension system and electric steering, have been created specifically for the most comfortable ride on rough and uneven surfaces. The dashboard has been designed with multiple layers to create a sense of spaciousness.

In the centre console, a large digital display takes centre stage. On the GL models, this touch-sensitive display measures 7" and also hosts the reverse camera. The Heads-Up Display displays vehicle speed, engine speed, gear selection, the instant fuel consumption figures, vehicle alerts and even climate control settings.

All models also have keyless access, keyless start/stop, electric windows, wireless connectivity for Apple CarPlay and wired Android Auto, automatic climate control, cruise control, a leather covered steering wheel with remote controls for the audio, cruise and phone features and a powerful audio system.

GLX-versions of the Grand Vitara further receive a full leatherette interior, wireless charging tray, ambient lighting (including in the footwells), and additional USB-charging sockets for rear passengers.

Under the bonnet

There are two versions offered with the choice of two versions of Suzuki's K15 engine. The first engine is the K15B, a naturally aspirated four-cylinder petrol engine that delivers 77 kW at 6,000rpm and 138Nm at 4,400rpm. The second engine on offer, and a first for Suzuki in South Africa, is the K15C petrol engine with mild hybrid electric power (code-named SHVS or Smart Hybrid Vehicle by Suzuki).

In the Grand Vitara Hybrid, this system lowers the average fuel consumption from 6ls/100km to 5.6ls/100km, despite the additional 125kg of the all-wheel drive system.

The K15C-powered mild-hybrid version of the Grand Vitara has a six-speed automatic transmission with switchable all-wheel drive.

Final words

"The previous-generation Grand Vitara was very popular and had a particularly long life cycle in South Africa thanks to its popularity. The new model is a reinterpretation of the Grand Vitara concept and has been completely redesigned from the ground up, with a focus on style, technology and ride comfort," says Brendon Carpenter, Brand Marketing Manager of Suzuki Auto.

Grand Vitara pricing

- 1.5 GL manual: R339,900

- 1.5 GL auto: R359,900
- 1.5 GLX manual: R397,900
- 1.5 GLX auto: R417,900
- 1.5 GLX Hybrid AllGrip: R529,900

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

Naresh Maharaj is a petrol head who loves cars and writing about them. He is also a Member of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists. Naresh is also an international sports correspondent and an acclaimed corporate MC and voice-over artist. Naresh is a sports/news producer for community radio stations and also an award-winning sports journalist. Contact Naresh on nmaharaj321@gmail.com.

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