

New Tucson is tough to beat

 By [Henrie Geyser](#)

16 Mar 2016

Hyundai has resurrected its popular Tucson model and it certainly won't struggle to find grip in the SUV market which it dominated with 22,716 sales between 2005 and 2010 before its name changed to ix35 and it continued to boost the brand's Top Dog status by notching up a further 33,692 sales between then and now.



According to Stanley Anderson, marketing director of Hyundai in South Africa, the latest arrival from the Korean manufacturer is again aiming at the top position in this competitive segment of the local market. After driving two of the five derivatives in the new model range, I have no doubt that competitors are going to struggle to keep this champion-in-the-making from donning the segment crown again.

The new Tucson offering varies from the entry-level 2.0 Nu Elite with a choice of six-speed manual or automatic transmission up to the range-topping 1.6-litre TGDl Elite derivative with 7-speed dual-clutch transmission (7DCT) and All-Wheel Drive. In between sits the 2.0 NU Elite, also with the 2-litre petrol engine and six-speed transmission, but with a high level of standard features. With fewer nice goodies comes the 1.6 TGDl, powered by the same new turbo-charged 1.6-litre petrol engine, but with a manual shift. The Executive level of comfort and standard features slots in between Premium and Elite offerings.

An inevitable favourite

At the media launch I drove the manual and the automatic versions powered by the all-new turbocharged engine and it didn't take long to convince me that this new Tucson is going to become an overnight favourite in this segment.



Even though I am not really a fan of auto transmission it works really well on the Tucson with a pleasing, perfectly mated engine and gearbox combination. The engine delivers maximum power of 130kW at about 5,500rpm with torque peaking at 265Nm. The dual-clutch transmission (7DCT) offers a choice between fully auto drive or manual gear changes, as well as Eco or Sport mode. By the end of our stint at the wheel my co-driver and I both favoured the auto mode by far.

For those seeking extra grip, the range-topping 1.6 TGD_i Elite comes with a 4WD system that gives 100% of the torque to the front wheels during normal road driving, with up to 50% transferred to the rear wheels automatically, depending on conditions. The system also has a Lock mode for a 50/50 power split at speeds up to 50km/h.

Our trip took us through smooth tarmac stretches of undulating, winding Cape country-side where the Tucson was quick to display how cleverly it balances comfort with driving dynamics. SUVs are not really designed to be flung through corners but even when under the whip this new Tucson never loses its composure and feels safe and planted through the corners – thanks mainly to its Advanced Traction Cornering Control (ATCC) and motor-driven Power Steering (MDPS) system. Tuned to please the European market, it offers quick and direct response to the driver's requirements.



Attractive design

The cabin is comfortable and well insulated, decorated with soft-touch, good quality materials. The central console looks top notch and the seats are big and comfortable, with the front seats electrically adjustable. Other nice-to-haves include a panoramic sunroof (on the Elite derivatives) and a good sound system with Bluetooth connectivity that enable music to be streamed from a smartphone or iPod and cell phone connection, operated by steering wheel controls.

The Elite models have a large display screen for the new-generation navigation system (available as a R15,000 option on all derivatives). A new seamless DAB+ digital radio with six speakers is standard across the range, as are connections in the central console for USB and AUX. The clever white coats at Hyundai's design studios have clearly spent some quality time at their designer boards to come up with its attractive hexagonal grille, attractive LED headlamps, smartly-shaped bonnet and sleek roofline, with the rear skid plate and twin exhaust outlets adding a sporty touch.



The Tucson is an attractive, well-built, comfortable and safe vehicle with lots of on-board goodies and great safety features, plus an engine-transmission pairing that is difficult to beat. I reckon it has all the makings of a segment champion! The new Tucson range's prices vary from R359,900 to R499,900 which are inclusive of a five-year/150,000km warranty (enhanced by the new seven-year/200,000km drivetrain warranty), as well as roadside assistance for five years or 150,000km as well as a 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>