

# Chinese giant GWM to launch Tank brand locally in 2023

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Chinese giant, GWM will be launching its Tank brand locally in early 2023 and its arrival is likely to ruffle a few feathers and fling mud at the more established offroad brands such as Ford and Toyota. Here's what you can expect.



A decade ago, GWM was very much a fringe player in South Africa with the budget-orientated Steed bakkie range being the firm's bread-and-butter model. But GWM's wishy-washy era ended in 2017, when its SUV brand, Haval, was launched locally and Haval has since firmly established itself as a major rival to traditionally popular SUV brands such as Volkswagen, Toyota, Kia and Hyundai.

Then, late in 2020, GWM took square aim at the highly competitive leisure double-cab bakkie segment with the arrival of the P-Series which has also been a huge success thanks to its loaded standard features list and hard-to-ignore value offering. GWM was back in the game.

## GWM Tank and Ora for SA in 2023



Tank will take on established offroad brands such as Ford and Toyota

Now, with 2023 looming large, GWM is preparing to unleash the next phase of its product offensive on the South African market with the introduction of not one, but two new car brands.

The first new brand to come from GWM is Tank, an offroad vehicle brand that means serious business, not only in South Africa but across the globe.

Tank's goal is simple. As clearly stated, by 2025 GWM Tank aims to sell no less than 500,000 vehicles worldwide to ultimately become the world's top off-road SUV brand in terms of market share. That's an ambitious goal.

South Africans generally love exploring the outdoors and Mzansi is therefore regarded as a key market for any offroad brand.

However, Tank will be entering a highly competitive market where offroad juggernauts such as Toyota and Ford dominate the market. Will Tank succeed? We will soon find out!

The second new brand to come to South Africa is ORA, GWM's electric car brand which will finally bring the Ora Cat electric car to South Africa which will likely be the country's cheapest EV when it arrives in the second half of 2023.

## **What GWM Tank Products are coming to South Africa?**



The Tank 300 is expected to reach South Africa early in 2023

Local buyers can expect to see the Tank 300 introduced in South Africa early in 2023.

Specification for South Africa has yet to be confirmed but in China, the Tank 300 is sold in three different trims to appeal to different buyers including the standard Tank 300, Tank 300 City with emphasis on urban appeal and the more hardcore Tank 300 Border which is kitted for the serious offroad enthusiast.

The Tank 300 is a medium-sized body-on-frame SUV that measures 4,760mm in length, 1,930mm wide and stands 1,903mm tall with a generous wheelbase of 2,750mm.



The Tank 300 stands wider and taller than a Toyota Fortuner



To put those dimensions into perspective, the Tank 300 is just 35mm shorter in length than a Toyota Fortuner but it stands wider and taller while also having a longer wheelbase compared to the Fortuner. Standard ground clearance for the Tank 300 is 224mm with a wading depth of 700mm while the offroad-biased Tank 300 offers 249mm ground clearance and 900mm wading depth.

All iterations of the Tank 300 are powered by a 2l, four-cylinder, turbocharged petrol engine offering 167kW and 389Nm of torque and come mated with an eight-speed automatic transmission as standard.



The Tank 300 will offer offroad capability to fight its tough rivals

As far as offroad capability is concerned the Tank 300 is unlikely to disappoint with its new generation all-terrain control system that offers no less than nine driving modes. Furthermore, depending on the specification, the Tank 300 can be equipped with up to three locking differentials (front, centre, rear) and is able to execute a close-quarter “Tank Turn” while a creeping function is also offered for steady offroad progress in difficult terrain.

As standard, the Tank 300 offers an approach angle of 33 degrees, breakover angle of 23.1 degrees and a departure angle of 34 degrees. The Tank 300 rides on 17-inch wheels.

## **What’s the interior of the Tank 300 like?**



The Tank 300's cabin is loaded with technology

If you're thinking that the Tank 300 is a budget offroaders, you are very wrong. The interior of the Tank 300 is lavishly equipped with comfort and luxury features. Leather upholstery is standard with an eight-way adjustable driver's seat and note the large integrated 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster and 12.3-inch infotainment system as well as the aviation-style transmission lever. Very smart, indeed...

In terms of driver assistance technology, the Tank 300 is loaded with useful features such as a 360-degree camera, 3D navigation, adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning, lane keeping assist, lane centring keeping, intelligent speed assistance, traffic jam assist, intelligent cruise assist, fatigue monitor, tyre pressure monitoring, hill hold control, hill descent control and front and rear parking sensors, to name but a few,

It remains to be seen what specifications will be offered in South Africa.



The larger and more luxurious Tank 500 is also a possibility for introduction in South Africa

Following the introduction of the Tank 300 in South Africa, there's also the possibility that the larger Tank 500 will also be offered locally to take on offerings such as the new Ford Everest and Toyota Land Cruiser Prado and the new Land Rover Defender.

The seven-seater Tank 500 is a large, luxurious SUV that's powered by a 3.0-litre twin-turbocharged V6 engine that offers 260 kW and 500 Nm and comes paired with a 9-speed automatic transmission.

Pricing of Tank products will be critical to the success of the brand on local soil. If you consider Haval's strategy of offering highly specified products at competitive prices then you can expect Tank to adopt the same strategy.

We will keep you updated as official information regarding the introduction of Tank in South Africa becomes available.

From what we can gather, Tank looks to be a legitimate alternative to mainstream brands such as Toyota and Ford and it will be interesting to see how South Africans will respond to a new Chinese offroad brand in a market that is not only conservative but also brand sensitive. A few interesting conversations will be had around the braai, that's for sure!

Are you looking forward to the introduction of Tank in South Africa?

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gero Lilleike is a published writer and photographer with most of his work appearing in the fields of travel and motoring. Gero has worked as a motoring journalist for Cars.co.za for the past 8 years and takes every opportunity to go on an adventure whether it be offroad or in the ocean. For Gero, a car's worth is measured by how many surfboards it's able to carry.

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