

Driven: The all-new Honda Ballade



By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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They say that you have to continually re-invent yourself, or something for that matter. So with that in mind, it's no real wonder that the Honda Ballade has reached its eighth generation of production.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj

The original Honda Ballade was launched in South Africa in 1982. I remember it well as it stood apart from other cars at the time. I remember saying to myself that if I ever bought a car brand new, it would be the Honda Ballade. That's exactly what happened a good few years later when I purchased the Ballade 160i Auto.

Metallic green in colour and it just went on and on right up to around 160,000kms, when I reluctantly traded it in a few years later. The Ballade grew quickly to become one of Honda's most iconic models and has competed well above its class in terms of both style and performance. And then there's quality, durability and reliability. What more could one ask for?

Decades later, the Honda Ballade remains one of South Africa's most recognisable brand names. Now, enter the all-new Honda Ballade. Whilst there has been a significant shift towards the SUV market, buyers who are looking to buy a family sedan car will not be disappointed with the Ballade. I was fortunate to have the Ballade for two weeks during the festive season enjoyed the long and short drives.

Exterior design

The exterior design is unmistakably Ballade with an athletic and dynamic appearance. The new striking styling creates an overall sleek and sporty appearance. This is the result of its clean and sculpted body shape emphasised by a lower and wider stance, along with a longer bonnet and short front overhang.

The new model is also larger than the outgoing model: 110mm longer, 55mm wider, and 10mm lower. This translates into a lower centre of gravity for greater on-road stability, boosting cornering confidence and improving overall driving pleasure. All models come standard with LED daytime running lights and distinctive LED taillights that wrap around the side of the body to accentuate the vehicle's aerodynamic design throughout.

Interior comfort

Driver orientation is the key focus area of the all-new Ballade, offering a comfortable seating position with intuitive access

to the various vehicle controls. A new slim A-pillar and repositioned side-mirrors provide an excellent field of view for the driver while also minimising blind spots.

The interior depicts a modern, driver-oriented design which achieves the perfect combination of functional ease of use, high-quality materials and beauty. The minimalistic fascia of the interior depicts Honda's latest design philosophy, featuring attractive soft-touch and accent materials of premium quality.

Soft touch

Another exciting addition to the Ballade is the high-resolution eight-inch touchscreen display which has been neatly integrated into the instrument panel. The brand-new infotainment system comes standard on the Elegance and RS models and grants the user full Apple CarPlay and Android Auto functionality.

The unit also features Bluetooth and steering wheel controls. Electrically operated side mirrors and windows, cruise control, automatic air-conditioning and auto headlights are all standard features across the range.

Under the bonnet

The new version improves on the 1.5L Sohc I-Vtec engine featured on the outgoing model with the introduction of a 1.5L Dohc engine with i-Vtec technology. The new and improved powertrain achieves improved efficiency and reduced emissions, without compromising on performance. It now generates a slightly higher power output of 89kW at 6,600 r/min.

The Ballade is quite economical for both short and long trips. I managed to achieve a combined fuel consumption of just 5.5l per 100km, which is commendable.

Pricing

- Ballade 1.5 Comfort CVT - R336,500
- Ballade 1.5 Elegance CVT- R366,900
- Ballade 1.5 RS CVT- R396,900

The Honda Ballade range comes standard with Honda's five-year/200,000km warranty, as well as a four-year/60,000km service plan with 15,000km service intervals. Customers also have the reassurance of three-year AA Roadside Assistance.

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 nimaharaj321@gmail.com

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