

Toyota Corolla Cross GR-S review: An impressive crossover with a sporty edge

 By Imran Salie

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In September 2022 Toyota South Africa introduced a new derivative to its locally-built Corolla Cross range. This model is the GR-Sport, or GR-S, which makes it one of the few Toyota cars in the country to get the company's Gazoo Racing (GR) treatment. The hybrid electric vehicle version of the GR-S derivative was also added to the range in February this year.







Since the Corolla Cross launched here in late 2021 it has been successful in terms of sales and it has also won the 2022 South African Car of the Year title. I had the opportunity to test the Corolla Cross GR-S over a period of seven days, and my overall opinion of it is that it is a good car.

What my time with the GR-S sport was like

I drove the GR-S for roughly 450km and the majority of this driving was done to and from the suburb of Salt River in Cape Town and the seaside area of Sea Point. I also did school runs with it in the morning and in the afternoon.

When driving to Sea Point from Salt River in the mornings and in the afternoons, I always experience moderate to heavy traffic, which means that more fuel is consumed. With the GR-S I averaged 7.7l/100km, a decent figure for a naturally aspirated 1.8l petrol engine.

The GR-S drove smoothly on my trips and it had enough power to ensure that I do overtakes without accelerating heavily. Going uphill is where I experienced minor trouble though, and I must stress that it was minor. It's here where the CVT transmission seemed to struggle a bit with providing enough power to the wheels to get the GR-S moving the same way it does on a straight road. On the other hand, the steering was light and accurate. The suspension seemed to soak up much of the vibration caused by the road, thanks to new shock absorbers and revised coil springs.

When it comes to practicality the GR-S was able to provide enough leg and headroom for myself and my wife, who sat in the passenger seat during my test drives. My children, aged six and three, were well accommodated as well in the rear seats. The boot space was more than big enough to fit in grocery bags and school bags at the same time.

I have no complaints about the quality of the interior, it felt up to standard and did not feel cheap or tacky.

When in its reverse, the GR-S does a good job at making a repetitive beeping noise, which was distracting at times when I had to focus on my surroundings. I tried turning this feature off eventually. I also found that looking through the rear window can be slightly difficult due to its size.

What's different on the exterior of the Corolla Cross GR-S

The front grill and lower apron on the Corolla Cross GR-S are in gloss black with black finishes that include the exterior mirrors, the roof, and the roof rail.

The rear has a black roof spoiler as well, and it has a black tailgate trim and a blacked-out rear diffuser. The GR badge is on the rear of the Corolla Cross GR-S. On the instrument panel, there is a red stripe.



What's different on the interior of the Corolla Cross GR-S

The Corolla Cross GR-S has red stitching on the inside along with a black leather trim throughout and GR embossing.

Facts about the Toyota Corolla Cross GR-S

- Engine: 1.8I2ZR-FXE Atkinson cycle petrol engine
- Transmission: CVT
- Power output: 90kW and 163Nm

Features

- Keyless entry
- Power-adjustable and auto-retractable exterior mirrors
- All-round one-touch power windows
- LED lighting units
- Cruise Control
- TFT Multi-Information Display (MID)
- Dual-zone climate control
- Reverse camera
- Park Distance Control (PDC)
- Rain-sensing wipers
- LED interior illumination

- Touchscreen infotainment system with CarPlay/Android Auto and USB

Final word

The Corolla Cross GR-S gets the exterior treatment of Toyota's GR, but it doesn't come equipped with the performance offered by the sub-brand. This is not a terrible thing, there's still plenty of bang for your buck, such you get a quality ride with good fuel consumption, ample space for a family, and a modern sporty design.

Price

Corolla Cross 1.8 CVT GR-S - R 466, 800

The Corolla Cross GR-S is sold with a six-services/90,000km service plan (intervals set at 15,000 km) and a three-year/100,000km warranty. The Hybrid battery carries an eight-year/195,000 km warranty provision.

ABOUT IMRAN SALIE

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