

Duster with automatic appeal

By  Henrie Geysers

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Renault has enhanced its popular Duster range with the introduction of a new EDC (Efficient Dual Clutch) model which is guaranteed to further boost the popularity of this ruggedly cute SUV range.



The new six-speed automatic variant is linked to a 1.5-litre turbo diesel engine that produces a punchy 80kW and 250Nm yet delivers an impressively frugal fuel consumption of only 4.8 litres/100km.

The newcomer joins the current Duster lineup of two manual 1.5 diesel variants and two 1.6 manual petrol models.

On the road, the newcomer feels solid and it handles with the confidence of a larger, much more expensive SUV, just like the rest of the Duster clan. The high-riding driving position and acres of glass surrounds make for excellent viewing.

The new automatic responds eagerly off the line when you stab the fun pedal and it slips smoothly through the double-clutch, six-speed transmission.

Features

Other than its auto transmission the new addition has all the same appealing features of the current range such as a spacious, comfortable, and well-insulated living quarters, user-friendly touch screen, reverse camera, satnav, cruise control and logical positioning of switches, dials and buttons. It also has the same generous 475-litre loading bay as the others. Duster competes with Ford EcoSport, Suzuki Vitara, the Honda BR-V and now also the Hyundai Creta, which is the only other vehicle in this segment that offers a diesel-automatic combination.



The multi-talented French range of Duster fun-wagons has notched up 12,000 sales since its local launch four years ago and the addition of an automatic is going to push this figure up by a good few notches because of the growing local swing to automatic transmissions (particularly by the daily commuting sufferers), the newcomer's frugal use of expensive forecourt juice, and its appealing styling.

Safety

Aside from cheeky good looks such as trendy 16" black alloys, snazzy front and rear light clusters and satin chrome roof rails, all the Duster variants offer substantial occupant protection such as ABS, emergency brake assist and driver and passenger airbags (front and side) plus ESP with traction control on the 4x4 & 4x2 EDC models.

For those seeking an affordable yet capable and versatile family SUV with automatic transmission, the Duster auto presents a cool combination of funky styling, advanced features, impressively low fuel consumption and a spacious cabin at an attractive price.

The models and prices (including a five-year/150,000km mechanical warranty and three-year/45,000 Service Plan), are:

- Duster 1.6 Expression 4x2 petrol: R239,900
- Duster 1.6 Dynamique 4x2 petrol: R259,900
- Duster 1.5 dCi Dynamique 4x2 diesel: R279,900
- Duster 1.5 dCi Dynamique 4x2 EDC diesel: R299,900
- Duster 1.5 dCi Dynamique 4x4 diesel: R304,900

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

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