

Honda launches new Elevate SUV to drive local sales



By [Imran Salie](#)

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Honda has launched a new offering in the local market to replace the WR-V: a compact family SUV called Elevate. This follows the local launch of the latest iteration of the manufacturer's mid-sized CR-V SUV that now carries a R1m price tag on its highest-specced model. The local arm of the Japanese car brand has also quietly updated its Ballade sedan.



The Honda Elevate in its Elevate guise comes with 17-inch alloy wheels. Credit: Imran Salie

The updated CR-V and Ballade and the introduction of a new car to a tightly contested segment in our market suggest Honda is making an attempt to freshen its model lineup to address its lacklustre sales figures of the past year. The Elevate is an attractive product that ticks the boxes of what made Honda a car brand synonymous with affordability and quality in our country, which in turn will hopefully lead to an uptick in local sales despite a dwindling new car market.

At the local launch of the Elevate, Honda Motor Southern Africa's president Hideki Shinjo didn't dwell too much on what Honda's plans are, its commercial output, and its strategy for the new fiscal year. He, however, confirmed that the Elevate is what the company thinks will align with the company's brand philosophy that has brought it success in the past.

The Elevate, which is built in India and based on the Ballade platform, is up against formidable players in the small SUV segment, such as the Toyota Urban Cruiser, Volkswagen T-Cross, Kia Seltos, and others to name a few. And with an asking price of 369,900 for its base model the Comfort, I think it will do well to entice customers who can no longer fork out more for less despite the stiff competition. Its ranger topper is the Elegance model, which is priced at R429,900, is more premium and packed with the necessary features of a modern-day family SUV.

Then there's the factor of fuel consumption, which South Africans have rightfully become more aware of in the past years thanks to rising fuel costs. The Elevate in its Elegance guise did really well in this department during our drive at the local launch, displaying a decent figure of 6.3l per 100km from Honda's 1.5 Dohc engine and CVT transmission. Both models of the Elevate come with the same naturally aspirated engine. The Comfort, however, is driven with a six-speed manual gearbox. Power outputs are measured at 89kW and torque of 145Nm. Using fuel-saving driving techniques with this vehicle can surely bring the overall fuel consumption figure down.

Styling wise I think Honda has gotten it right. At the moment there's a healthy demand for cheaper cars with an SUV look, and I think the Elevate nails the SUV styling with a robust front and ride height of 199mm. Its width is measured at 1,790mm, its height at 1,650mm, and its wheelbase at 2,650mm.

The interior of the Elevate Elegance strikes a good balance of hard plastic and quality material. The seats and steering wheel are wrapped in leather that Honda calls eco-friendly. The cabin is also well-insulated and space for occupants is aplenty.

Honda is offering a four-year/60,000km service plan for the Elevate with service intervals at one-year/15,000km. A five-year/200,000km warranty and a three-year AA road assistance are also part of the Elevate aftersales plan.

To sum things up, Honda has delivered a good product at the right time. The Elevate slots into an area where most car buyers are currently throwing their money at and with its all-round quality and aftersales plan it is safe to say that it will perform well and bring back to life what made the Japanese car maker a success in South Africa. It would, however, be interesting to see what new energy vehicle plan the brand plans on introducing to its local operations in the future.

Comfort features

- LED headlights
- LED daytime running lights
- 8-inch infotainment system with Android and Apple CarPlay
- Four speaker system
- Rear parking sensors with camera
- Dual front SRS airbags
- Keyless entry
- 16-inch steel wheels
- 458l boot space for both models

Elegance features

- Electric sunroof
- LED foglights
- Gloss black grille
- 8-inch infotainment system with Android and Apple CarPlay
- Roof rails
- Chrome door handles
- Auto headlight function
- Walk-away locking system
- Wireless smartphone charger
- Front, side, curtain SRS airbags
- Six-speaker sound system
- Multi-view parking camera
- Seven-inch digital cluster
- USB connectivity

When it comes to safety the Elegance model incorporates vehicle stability assist, Isofix child seats, hill start assist, electronic brake-force distribution, and ABS braking.

ABOUT IMRAN SALIE

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