

Pajero Legend 11 is formidable

 By [Henrie Geysers](#)

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Whenever Mitsubishi South Africa produces a Limited Edition vehicle it is guaranteed to become a sell-out, as proved yet again by the Pajero Legend 11 launched in South Africa a few months ago. To date 40 of these expensive and exclusive SUVs have already been sold and Mitsubishi says they will limit the total production to just 50.



The Legend 11 builds on the success of its predecessor, the Pajero Legend 30-years LWB Special Edition launched in 2012 and the SWB that followed in 2013, in celebrating the Pajero's successes since its introduction in 1982, including 12 Dakar Rally victories of which seven were won back to back.

The latest Legend 11 is also available in three-door and five-door formats, both equipped with the top notch specifications of the Pajero flagship Exceed.

I recently had the pleasure of driving both variants back-to-back although sadly I didn't have the time or opportunity of putting their off-road prowess to the test in thick sand or along challenging mountain tracks.

Specialist off-roading

Mitsubishi describes the Legend vehicles as intended for specialist off-roaders and I am sure they will be snatched up by real enthusiasts who will use them for what they are designed to do, but no doubt these limited quantity vehicles will also spend considerable time on bragging duty in the reserved parking spaces of snobbish golf clubs and in parking bays outside expensive restaurants.

The two variants are hustled along by the same combination of 3.2 turbo-diesel engine that pushes out 149kW and a hefty 441Nm and automatic 5-speed two-wheel and four-wheel transmission set-up.

Pajero's main competitors can probably be narrowed down to an equally tough gang of dust busters such as the Nissan Patrol, Toyota Land Cruiser Prado and some of the Land Rover versions.

To sweeten the steep price of the Legend 11 variants, Mitsubishi has thrown in price-inclusive extras worth about R50,000 on the LWB and R40,000 on the SWB that include a heavy-duty protection plate as well as heavy-duty rock sliders under the engine and gearbox assembly, a chrome nudge-bar and Yokohama Geolander dual purpose tyres (265/60 R18 on the LWB and same make, but slightly smaller R17 on the SWB).

Both variants have a high-end Garmin with built-in dash cams and a Tracks4/Africa off-road map set for Southern Africa. Another standard feature is a full set of hard-wearing rubber mats.

In standard format both variants are already formidable off-roaders but there are also many optional extras to tempt owners with thick wallets. No doubt the new purchasers will find it difficult to resist the added appeal of big bore front and rear heavy-duty shock absorbers, slim line roof rack and the assortment of snazzy off-road ready extra equipment on offer.

Lots of the Pajero's standard fancy kit is retained in the Legend 11, including a multi-function steering wheel, touchscreen info system with Bluetooth and USB modules, a reverse camera with parking sensors and a glass sunroof.

Occupant safety also remains top priority occupant protection include six air-bags, ABS brakes with EBD, BAS and ATSC (Active Traction and Stability Control) and ISO-FIX child seat anchors.

Pajero is renowned for its capabilities when the going gets tough and as to be expected the Legend 11 has been dealt a full-house in this department, most of it too technical to go into detail here.

Of the two variants, I preferred the easier-to-handle SWB because crowded parking lots are an integral part of my daily routine and even with their high-riding, good all round visibility and rear camera, the two Legends are not easy to squeeze in and out of tight parking bays.

Enthusiastic off the mark

Having said that though, the steering is manageable and on the trot both the Legends are easy to drive. Both vehicles feel muscular and surprisingly enthusiastic off the mark with tons of low-down grunt. The auto shift is smooth, even at a foot-flat gallop and the brakes do a grand job of hauling the Legends to a halt.

My preference for suburban driving is the smaller one of the two Pajeros, in spite of its heavy tail-gate (with attached spare wheel) which is awkward to handle, particularly in a howling South-Easter. Boot space on this version is not exactly generous and the seats are not as easy to configure as other vehicles in this class.

However, in spite of lacking a bit in finer finesse Pajero has the long-established respect of veteran bush-whackers and even that of owners of "that other Japanese brand" that South Africans dote on.

The Legend 11 is eye-wateringly expensive and both models feel a tad less sophisticated than others in this segment, but one thing is for sure – the Legend 11 derivatives, like all Pajero variants, feel as indestructible as a British Challenger battle tank and as muscular as a tugboat.

As long as vast stretches of the African continent remain challenging the Mitsubishi Pajero fan club will continue to grow, particularly for the models that have Legend behind their name.

The Legend 11 models and prices (inclusive of a three-year/100,000km warranty and a five-year 100,000km maintenance plan) are:

Pajero Legend 11 LWB – R819,900

Pajero Legend 11 SWB – R719,900

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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