

# Mazda BT-50 is designed for fun

 By [Henrie Geysers](#)

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Smartened up for the city, cool enough to be enjoyed and admired by the leisure crowd, and tough enough for the rough and tumble of a challenging off-road meander – that's the face-lifted Mazda BT-50.

With its cosmetically enhanced looks and fancy additions, the latest version edges lot closer to its blood brother, the Ford Ranger, with which it shares underpinnings. The BT-50's smartened up make-up now includes a revamped front-end, strongly-lined hood, a shimmering black grille, embedded fog lights and a much more attractive set of rear light clusters.

## Clear target

With its tastefully darkened rear window, sporty alloys and black and chrome side steps, the latest BT-50 is clearly targeted at the younger, pleasure-seeking segment of the market.



Top-of-the-range models are now armed with a full arsenal of bragging rights including leather seats, a reverse camera,

cruise control, satellite controls on the steering wheel, Bluetooth connectivity, powered seat adjustments, auto-dimming mirror and, on our test vehicle the flagship 3.2-litre SLE 4x4 Auto, a central control switch to select 2-wheel high, 4-wheel high or 4-wheel low drive mode. It also has load adaptive control, trailer sway mitigation, rollover mitigation, hill launch assist and hill descent control.

As with the pre-face-lifted range, the BT-50 comes with a choice of two turbo-diesel engines - a 2.2-litre four-cylinder which produces 110kW and 375Nm and a more muscular 3.2-litre that churns out 147kW and 470Nm.

## A pleasant partnership

With the bigger-engined 4x4 model the six-speed auto transmission box forms a pleasant partnership, particularly in crowded, stop-start city driving. The dressed-up BT-50 feels peppy and full of beans when hustled and the ride quality has also been pleasantly improved.

The spacious living quarters are well insulated against outside noises and the suspension serves up a smooth ride, even on choppy surfaces and with the load bay empty.



## Neat, practical

Mazda has stayed with its neat and practical cabin finishes although the overall look and feel is more upmarket than the previous model. Mazda says the quality has been upped a good few notches now that the BT-50 is being produced in Thailand.

The latest BT is currently only available in double cab body style but a single cab will supplement the range in the not too distant future. In its latest guise, Mazda has moved much closer to competitors such as Ford Ranger, Mitsubishi Triton,

Nissan Navara and VW Amarok.

Prices range from R441,600 to R555,700 and include a three-year warranty and service plan.

## 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](mailto:henrieg@iafrica.com)

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