

Now available in SA: the all new VW T-Cross

By  Naresh Maharaj

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The VW T-Cross was first shown to the media a few weeks ago at the Festival of Motoring at Kyalami. Before that, there was much talk of the T-Cross and this created a real buzz of excitement in the SUV industry. Now, after months of waiting, we were recently introduced to the T-Cross in George.



Image by Naresh Maharaj



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I drove the T-Cross 1.0 TSI 85kW Highline DSG from Port Elizabeth to Knysna on all road surfaces, including tar and gravel and the T-Cross handled with aplomb. Tried as I might, I could not find anything adverse with the SUV. In fact, if I was in the market for an SUV, the T-Cross will be my first choice. Let me tell you why.

Eye-catching T-Cross

There is a marked shift away from sedans to SUVs, so the timing of the launch of the T-Cross by Volkswagen SA is perfect, which joins the Tiguan, Tiguan Allspace and Touareg in the model range in South Africa.

It is a practical, cool and versatile addition to Volkswagen's fast-growing SUV range. The T-Cross is sophisticated, diverse

and, like all members of the brand's SUV family, has an eye-catching appearance. It has a carefully balanced combination of casual style, refined practicality, extreme cost-effectiveness and perhaps most importantly, fuel economy. It has already captivated the hearts of SA consumers who, without seeing or testing the SUV, placed their orders, well before launch. Now, that is saying something.

On the outside: first impressions

The T-Cross leaves a lasting impression at first sight. The striking front-end highlights the vehicle's family affiliation while the exterior emphasises the individuality of the new SUV model. Attractive highlights include the successful combination of a powerfully expressive front spoiler and a large, wide radiator grille, at the outer ends of which the headlamps are integrated. The light units are designed to be long and flat and extend far into the flanks. This arrangement gives the new T- Cross an unmistakable appearance from the front. The tail light clusters feature LED technology as standard.



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Dimensions, dimensions, dimensions

The T-Cross measures 4.2m in length, 182mm more than the Polo and 11cm shorter than the T-Roc (which will launch in South Africa in 2020). The difference in height is even more noticeable in that the T-Cross measures 1,584mm compared to the Polo's 1,461mm. The wheelbase of 2,551mm increases the space for seats and provides a spacious and roomy feel. The elevated seat position is typical of an SUV. That is 10cm higher than in the Polo, thus guaranteeing good visibility from all seats. Passengers enjoy a superior view and good all-round visibility thanks to the elevated seating position.

What's inside?

The interior is extremely spacious, giving the occupants the feeling that they are sitting in a larger vehicle. The 2,55m wheelbase is comparatively generous, allowing a spacious interior with enough room for five people. For the greatest possible versatility in the interior, the sliding rear seat can be adjusted by 14cm, allowing more passenger legroom or more luggage space. The luggage compartment holds between 377 and 455l. You can create a flat loading space with up to 1,281l of storage volume - unsurpassed by any other SUV in this segment.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

Digital, the way to go

The T-Cross provides discerning users with the highest level of networking and connection to the outside world. Even the operation and customisation of the on-board functions are intuitive. Up to four USB ports and the optional inductive wireless charging ensure optimum connectivity and sufficient power for smartphones.

The optional keyless locking and starting system keyless access makes access to the T-Cross more convenient. Another highlight is the optional sound system from renowned US brand Beats with a 300-watt, 8-channel amplifier and a separate subwoofer in the luggage compartment.

Driver assistance

The T-Cross' outstanding five-star rating in the Euro NCAP test and exemplary occupant protection, increases safety, reduces the risk of a collision and improves driving comfort. The Driver Alert System comes standard whilst optional equipment available on the T-Cross includes Front Assist area monitoring system, the lane-keeping assistant Lane Assist, Hill Start Assist, the proactive occupant protection system, automatic adaptive cruise control, Park Assist and the Blind Spot Detection lane change assist system with the integrated Rear Traffic Alert.

Safety

The T-Cross performed outstandingly in the renowned Euro NCAP (European New Car Assessment Programme) safety test. Independent testers awarded the new SUV top scores in all categories. This innovative crossover model meets the most stringent safety standards. Euro NCAP recreates the most common accident scenarios as part of comprehensive test procedures. The vehicle scored a compliance rating of 97% in the "Adult occupant protection" category. Very few vehicles have scored this value, demonstrating that small SUVs can keep up with larger models.

Equipment lines

The T-Cross, already equipped with extensive standard equipment, can be customised and upgraded further with optional equipment and several equipment trims. Trendline trim (available only with 70kW). The entry-level variant comes standard with 16-inch steel wheels, LED daytime running lights and taillights, split-folding rear seats, colour-coded handles and mirrors, electrically adjustable and heated side mirrors, electric windows at the front and rear, height and lumbar adjustable driver and passenger seats, tyre pressure monitor, 6.5-inch 'Composition Colour' display, combined front and side airbags.

Comfortline trim. The Comfortline trim expands on the Trendline and comes standard with 16-inch alloy wheels, black roof rails, front fog lights, leather multi-function steering wheel with multi-function display, Park Distance Control (front and rear), cruise control, Light and Sight Package and a front centre armrest.

Under the bonnet

The T-Cross is powered by two three-cylinder petrol engines. The Volkswagen's compact SUV will be available with the 1.0 TSI engine delivering 70kW and 85kW power outputs as well as the more powerful 1.5 TSI engine delivering 110kW. The 85kW engine is currently available. The 110kW engine will be available from the first quarter of 2020. The 70kW engine will be available in the second quarter of 2020.

The three-cylinder 1.0 TSI generates 85kW of power. The turbocharged direct-injection engine develops a maximum torque of 200Nm is available between 2,000 and 3,500 rpm. Claimed fuel consumption is 4.9l/100km. This engine is only available in 7-speed DSG transmission.

Verdict

The T-Cross is a welcomed entry in the small SUV market and I am predicting that it is going to be a very good seller. It will challenge the VW Polo and the Polo Vivo. Everything about the model I drove is faultless. It is ideally priced and VW

aficionados will like what they feel and drive. The fuel economy at 4.9l per 100km is impressive.

The entry-level T-Cross model which retails below R300,000 and will be available in South Africa from the second quarter of 2020. Early indications from VW SA are that there are over a thousand orders in the pipeline for the different versions of the T-Cross, which is fully imported from Navarra, Spain. Buyers will not be disappointed.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

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