

# Suzuki Vitara gets an upgrade

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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First introduced in 1988 in South Africa, Suzuki has built quite a reputable and reliable name, offering quality cars. Recently, Suzuki boosted its very popular Vitara range with the launch of a range-topping Vitara Turbo in both manual and automatic.

The Vitara range boasts an impressive heritage of over three decades, from the introduction of the first generation. The Vitara has proven very popular, with over 1,700 models sold since its introduction in South Africa in 2015. Through the years it has evolved into a slightly larger compact SUV in the form of the first generation Grand Vitara.

## Power and efficiency

At the heart of the exciting new model is Suzuki's 1.4-litre Boosterjet engine that delivers 103 kW at 5,500 rpm and a healthy 220 Nm in a completely linear way from 1,500 to 4,000 rpm. By comparison, the Vitara 1.6-litre GLX delivers 86 kW at 6,000 rpm and 156 Nm at a peak of 4,400 rpm.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

Power is delivered to the front wheels via a six-speed manual gearbox or a six-speed automatic gearbox, with the latter offering manual shifting via steering-mounted paddles. The compact SUV segment has grown tremendously over the past few years and the smaller, yet extremely practical Vitara was relaunched in 2015 as the successor to the original pioneer of this compact SUV segment.

Suzuki's Boosterjet-engine technology combines a range of engineering advancements to offer an engine with a very strong and linear torque delivery and low fuel consumption. Indeed, the engine delivers 220 Nm for a full 2,500 revolutions without wavering and its tested fuel consumption in a combined cycle is 5.8 litres for the manual model and 5.9 litres for the auto.

"The Vitara has always offered an exciting drive, thanks to its low weight and very rigid TECT platform. With the added power from the Boosterjet-engine, we can now let the Vitara's sporty handling truly shine," says André Venter, divisional manager for sales and marketing at Suzuki South Africa.

### **Sporty profile**

The Vitara has a very sporty profile and to achieve this, Suzuki's engineers added a trapezoidal lower front intake, which opens towards the road, a clamshell bonnet with a power bulge, a sloping roofline ending in thick C-pillars and an accentuated rear hipline with a kicked-up character line that runs over the rear fenders.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

The Vitara Turbo vaunts the same specification and equipment levels of the range-topping GLX grade. These include 17-inch alloy wheels and the choice of five solid colours and seven dual-tone combinations, where the body colour is contrasted by the choice of a black or white roof, depending on the colour chosen. The Vitara Turbo is also equipped with LED daytime running lights and, in this configuration, LED head- and brake lights, with a set of silver roof rails and chrome detailing in the front grille and under the fog lamps.

### **Luxury a plenty**

The long list of luxuries includes steering mounted controls for the audio and cruise control systems (which also feature

speed limiting functionality), park distance control both front and rear, automatic climate control, a 4.2-inch multi-information full-colour display in the instrument console and electric windows and mirrors. Suzuki has also added its very popular 7-inch touchscreen infotainment system with smartphone connectivity and reverse camera to the Turbo, which offers complete mobile phone integration.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

The Vitara Turbo further offers a reverse camera with image display on the system, unique yet very comfortable leather and suede upholstery combination and automatic LED headlamps, with LED daytime running lights, and automatic rain-sensing wipers.

## Class leading safety

All models in the Suzuki Vitara range are fitted with a comprehensive list of active and passive safety features. Active safety features include electronic stability control (ESP) with traction control, ABS brakes with electronic brake-force distribution (EBD) and a brake-assist system (BAS).

Passive safety features include seven airbags (dual front, front side, side curtain and driver knee airbags) on all models, as well as Suzuki's Total Effective Control Technology (TECT) body-design, which features side and cross-body impact zones, ultra-high-strength steel and additional bracing for a body that is both highly rigid and impact absorbing.

## Verdict

I had the pleasure of driving the 6-speed manual derivative for a week. I found the Vitara to be very responsive and economical on fuel. The Vitara literally runs away on a straight stretch of road and turned into and out of corners effortlessly. Shifting the gearbox into the 6th speed really brings down the engine revs which relaxes the engine, which means fuel consumption is also reduced. Ample space in the boot and there is plenty of room for three passengers at the back. The back seats also fold down in a 60:40 split adding more space when required. **Price**

- 1.4 Turbo GLX 6MT: R378,900 incl.
- 1.4 Turbo GLX 6AT: R397,900 incl.

The Suzuki Vitara Turbo is sold with Suzuki's promotional 200,000 km/5-year mechanical warranty and a full 6-year/unlimited kilometre warranty against corrosion. Suzuki has also added a 24//7 roadside assistance plan for the same

period as the warranty and a comprehensive 4-year/60,000 km service plan.

## ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

Naresh Maharaj is a petrol head who loves cars and writing about them. He is also a Member of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists. Naresh is also an international sports correspondent and an acclaimed corporate MC and voice-over artist. Naresh is a sports/news producer for community radio stations and also an award-winning sports journalist. Contact Naresh on [nmaharaj321@gmail.com](mailto:nmaharaj321@gmail.com)

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