

Creta will rattle opposition cages

 By [Henrie Geyser](#)

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Hyundai has extended its local fleet lineup with the addition of a three-model Creta compact crossover that is not only going to cause opposition jitters but might even pinch a portion of the substantial sales being notched up by its bigger boet Tucson.

It certainly has all the makings to ensure good sales in South Africa's popular SUV segment: it is good-looking, generously spec'd and offers the choice of petrol and diesel engines and manual and automatic transmissions.



Copes with gravel tracks and farm roads with poise

The newcomer has even better ground clearance than the Tucson as well as most of its competitors and it is not just to create an illusion of its off-tarmac capabilities because it copes with gravel tracks and farm roads with poise.

I drove the manual petrol and the automatic diesel versions at the media launch on a route which included country gravel roads, minor tar roads and slick motorways and it didn't take long to warm to the Creta's sure-footed handling.

The steering has a pleasantly solid feel to it and the adaptable suspension provides a smooth, confident ride on dirt and tar, even during liberal right foot applications.

Two petrol variants

The two petrol variants (one automatic and the other manual shift, both six-speed) are powered by a 1.6 engine that produces 90kW and 150Nm. The diesel engine churns out a more robust 94kw and 260Nm and with the smooth support of auto shift, the R50,000 more expensive of the two is noticeably livelier than the stick-shift petrol version.



The spacious cabins of all three Cretas share the same long list of standard convenience features that include a smart, user-friendly infotainment system with navigation, plus MP3, Aux, iPod and USB connection. Integrated Bluetooth is also standard along with aircon, electric side mirrors, rear park camera and electric windows.

One of Hyundai's strong brand appeals is the fact that its vehicles are generally fully-furnished by the time they get to showrooms, unlike most other brands that charge quite steeply for "optional extra".

Both Creta variants I drove spin dust on the windscreens of their competitors which, in the case of the auto box petrol model, include the Opel Mokka, Jeep Renegade 1.4, Nissan Qashqai, Mazda CX-3, Honda HR-V 1.6 GLX 5-door CVT and Suzuki SX4 1.6 GLX 5-drCVT.

The diesel-powered Creta AT is also a step or two ahead of the Chevrolet Captiva 2.2 5-door, Qashqai 1.6 Dci Acenta, Mazda CX and Renault Kadjar 1.5 dCi Dynamic.

Safety features

The Creta's list of safety features across the range include ABS with EBD, driver and side passenger side and curtain airbags, rear spoiler stop lights, central locking, child locks on rear doors, Isofix and daytime running lights.

The Creta's eye-pleasers are its high-riding stance, wide grille, rising shoulder line, "floating" roof, wrap-around rear lights, 16-inch alloys (including the spare wheel), leather-wrapped steering wheel and headlights that turn during cornering.

This Korean wagon is not just another wannabe cross-over hatchback on steroids but rather a down-sized version of Hyundai's much more expensive Santa Fe -- and it is going to boogie out of the dealer showrooms at a rate of knots of

between 350 and 400 a month.

The models and prices (including a five-year/150,000 warranty, additional two-year/50,000km powertrain warranty, roadside assistance for five years/150,000km and a five-year/90,000km Service Plan), are:

- Hyundai Creta manual petrol – R319,900
- Hyundai Creta Auto petrol – R339,900
- Hyundai Creta auto diesel R369,900

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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