

The all-new Renault Duster is value for money

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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I am going to say this right up front: If you are looking for a tough and no-nonsense SUV, then look no further than the revamped Renault Duster. Priced at R249,900 at entry level, this is as far as "value for money" in the SUV segment, that you will get. Renault has redefined 'tough', in this much anticipated and affordable release of the Renault Duster.

Seven years since its introduction to the South African market, the Duster has been revamped quite impressively. Exterior styling is immediately noticeable giving the SUV an assertive and robust look. This SUV is both versatile and comfortable for everyday driving. Good for the city life and those weekend adventures.

The Duster has seen increasing sales over the last five years from 2012 and with so much on offer at a reasonable price, it's no wonder that more people in South Africa are increasingly taking to this SUV.



The Duster has proved to be extremely popular in the SA market with over 15,000 units sold to date since its initial launch. And in an increasingly competitive SUV market, that is saying something.

Whilst building on an already successful model, the DNA of the Duster remains at the core; i.e. an extremely capable SUV, which is tough, simple and reliable, yet accessible based on the rand for rand.

Features

Some of the main features in this unstoppable SUV includes:

- All-new exterior styling that matches its more robust character
- Totally enhanced interior design with high-quality finishes and added equipment to ensure an extremely comfortable driving experience
- Class-leading ground Clearance of 210mm, with approach and departure angles suited for all-terrain driving
- New smart features demonstrating next level technological advancement, with the likes of a multi-view camera, hill descent control and blind spot detection.

What more can one ask for?

Visually more muscular, the design tone is set by the more aggressive lines, and a more expressive and 'Renault recognisable' front and rear, heightening the impression of stability. The Duster's rugged stance is emphasised by its bold, more horizontal lines, 16" or new 17" wheels. The aluminium roof bars and front and rear skid plates are also in sync with the SUV that supports its adventurer credentials.



The ground clearance, with an impressive 210mm, ensures that the driver sits high up in the cabin and adds to the off-road capabilities, with approach and departure angles suited for all terrain driving. The ground clearance is a big plus for me as you sit up quite high once inside the cabin.

Quality and comfort

The cabin is bright, spacious and uncluttered. The upholstery features a high-quality finish. Travelling comfort is further heightened by the newly designed 'figure-hugging' seats.

The New Duster also offers a modular interior layout to easily adapt to needs, with the rear bench seat featuring a 1/3 – 2/3 split-fold function, while the boot boasts record loading capacity of up to 478l. Enough for golf bags, golf kits and just about anything else you would want to throw in, luggage included.



Keyless entry does it for me. A hands-free card automatically unlocks the doors as the driver approaches the vehicle and automatically locks the car as you walk away. A handy stop-start button allows for the convenience of just pressing a button to start or stop the vehicle without necessitating the direct use of the key card.

I found the blind spot warning to be probably the most noticeable addition. Even when you are in your lane and a car passes on the right or left, the warning lights in the door rear-view mirror lights up and you know straight away not to change lanes at that precise time. A great safety feature.

Going further

Hill descent control is a wonderful feature that certainly helps when taking off from steep inclines. And when reversing, the multi-view camera allows for easy visibility of the front, rear or side terrain, ensuring that you don't knock into anything. Rear park distance control enables easier parking manoeuvres by warning the driver of obstacles situated behind the vehicle by a sequence of beeps which speed up the closer you are to them.

Powerful, yet economical

The Duster comes with two fuel options and three engine options.

There is a choice between the 1.6L 16V and two versions of the 1.5 dCi turbo engine.

For greater comfort and pleasure, the 6-speed Dual-Clutch EDC Automatic gearbox is now available with the 1.5 dCi Diesel engine. Upshifting is fast and smooth, with no jerking or loss in acceleration, with fuel consumption is comparable to that of the Manual from only 4.8L/100km. Impressive.

Road test passes with flying colours

Honestly, as hard as I tried, I could not fault this vehicle's performance both on tarmac and on gravel roads with deep pot-holes and really rugged terrain.

On tar, it was an expected smooth ride with the engine and gearbox in complete synchronisation with one another. Press down on the accelerator pedal and you get that surge of power. Press on the brake pedal and the vehicle grinds to a halt, rather effortlessly. But both my driving partner and I put the SUV through its paces in more ways than one. Sharp turns on gravelly and dusty paths, going over deep pot-holes with aplomb, racing up inclines with the vehicle staying right on its course and coming down on steep declines with no problems at all. And then that quietness when you return to tarred roads.



As is standard across Renault's entire product range, the All-New Renault Duster Model ranges comes standard with a 5-year/150,000km mechanical warranty and a six-year anti-corrosion warranty. Services take place at 15,000km intervals, and a standard 3 year/45,000km service plan applies.

Asking price

The recommended retail pricing are as follows:

- New Renault Duster 1.6 Expression 4X2: R249,900
- New Renault Duster 1.5 dCi Dynamique 4x2: R282,900
- New Renault Duster 1.5 dCi Dynamique EDC 4x2: R316,900
- New Renault Duster 1.5 dCi Dynamique 4x4: R321,900
- New Renault Duster 1.5 dCi Prestige EDC 4x2: R334,900

Options include:

- Metallic paint: R2,522
- Leather seats: R10,088

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

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