

The VW Touareg: A beautiful beast

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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The new 2018 Volkswagen Touareg is the third generation of the flagship SUV and it is undoubtedly the best that the car manufacturer has produced in this segment.

With worldwide sales of the previous two generations amounting to nearly one million units. Since its launch in the South African market in 2018, approximately 200 units of the third generation Touareg has been sold. It comes in top position as it is comfortably dynamic and the most technically advanced Volkswagen to date, with updated interior, tech, comfort and luxury, making this one of the best long-distance cruisers.

Here's why...

The new Volkswagen Touareg is equipped with connectivity for the modern era as well as a pioneering fusion of assist, comfort, light and infotainment systems, the all-rounder leads the way into the future, and is clear that the Volkswagen Group is going to lead the way in the luxury SUV segment.

From the outside

At first glance, the design of the new Touareg is based on the modular longitudinal matrix (MLM) of the Volkswagen Group. Compared to its predecessor, the third generation is moderately wider and longer, making it flatter.



The new dimensions: 4,878 mm length (+77 mm), 1,984 mm width (+44 mm) and 1,702 mm height (-7 mm). The increase in length and width in conjunction with the slightly reduced height leads to significantly more dynamic proportions, yet still looking classy as ever.

Volkswagen head designer, Klaus Bischoff and his team transferred the design of the Touareg to a new time and dimension, which is obvious that this is where the design team is heading. Design and technology go hand in hand here.

With the third generation Touareg, Volkswagen has refined the positioning of its flagship - an exclusive all-rounder that forms an alternative to the establishment with its pioneering, innovative technology, its versatility as well as its excellent comfort and dynamic properties. The expressive design of the Touareg reflects the new positioning and is sure to rival other manufacturers.



While the first generation SUV was characterised by a dominant off-road DNA, this direction increasingly changed from the second generation to the new Touareg towards a progressive, modern and exclusive all-rounder. Unfortunately, I never had the chance to take this beauty off-road onto the dirt tracks, but I have no doubt that it has the capabilities, even though the vehicle itself feels larger than life.

From the front end, the Touareg is particularly expressive and distinctive. The chromed solid grille appears to be machined from solid metal and seamlessly interwoven with the continuous lines of the signature light.



According to head designer, Klaus Bischoff, "We wanted to create something with this front end that had never been seen before. We combined the chrome elements of the front end and the new LED light system of the Touareg so that the transition between design and technology blended into a new entity. Innovative, expressive and impossible to imitate. This front end makes the new Touareg one of the most distinctive SUVs on the global market." To add to this, I must say that the blend is beautifully appealing.

From the sidelines, the Touareg body looks a bit stretched out. Its accentuated front wheel housings and well-formed rear shoulder edges highlight the superiority of the Touareg on any terrain. And if this was the goal of the design team, then they have achieved a superior SUV. The opposing window lines and character lines at the side are most stylish. And the roof line is striking.



The increase in dynamics is also reflected in the new range of Touareg rims. Each rim design harmonises with the design of the silhouette. The size of the alloy wheels now starts at 18 inches instead of 17 inches and ends with the 21-inch format. The wheels available include the 18-inch alloy wheels “Concordia”, the 19-inch alloy wheels “Esperance”, the 20-inch alloy wheels “Braga” and “Nevada” as well as the 21-inch alloy wheel “Suzuka”.

From the back-end, the wide shoulder above the rear wheels and the resulting indented greenhouse form a rear end with a strong presence. This superiority is emphasised by the LED taillight clusters. They not only highlight the large total width of the Touareg but also the LED graphic of the front end with its L-shaped signature light.

The aesthetics of the shape is by no means detrimental to functionality. To the contrary, almost the entire width is filled out by the boot lid – but it can hardly be seen; what remains in your memory is therefore unique and solely the dynamics of the Touareg. If I was driving behind the vehicle, I would definitely be admiring it.

Let's go inside

The forward-thinking designed Touareg offers a model whose “Innovision Cockpit” is already providing the blueprint for the digital interior of tomorrow. Perhaps car manufacturers will take note of this as we head into the digitalisation era.

The integration of the assist systems bring a new level of safety and comfort; challenging situations like driving through narrow motorway construction sites are made easier using automatic driving functions if required. This is something that I felt confident in. What seems challenging, became a lot easier with its assist functions.

The new running gear systems such as 4-wheel steering provide a level of agility that sets standards in the Touareg segment. As one of the most technically and visually progressive SUVs of its time, the new Volkswagen has the potential to impress drivers of any type of luxury class model with an affinity for technology and design. I was certainly impressed with its agility as I took the bends while driving through the Cape mountains.



Features

Going back to the Innovision Cockpit, which makes its debut in the new Touareg, the digital instruments (Digital Cockpit with 12-inch display) and the top Discover Premium infotainment system (with 15-inch display) come together to form a digital operating, information, communication and entertainment unit that hardly needs any conventional buttons or switches, making it easy to use for any driver.

Drivers can use the Innovision Cockpit to adapt the assistance, handling and comfort systems specifically to their personal tastes; somewhat an extension of ourselves. This opens up a new world in which the driver and onboard passengers no longer have to adapt to the car but rather let the car adapt to them. What I particularly liked was the high level of connected systems and programmes controlled via digital interfaces and the multifunction steering wheel.

There's more...

The new Touareg has launched with its largest range of assistance, handling and comfort systems to date. These include technologies such as the optional Night Vision assistance system, part of the Advanced Safety Package: Lane Assist & Side Assist with Night Vision and Head-up display, detects people and animals in the darkness via a thermal imaging camera, active 4-wheel steering (makes it handle like a compact car) and 'IQ.Light Matrix LED headlights', which is particularly helpful when driving when there are no street lights. All these systems are interconnected via a new central control unit working imperceptibly in the background and making travel safer, more convenient and more intuitive than ever.

I mentioned the Head-up display, something that I believe is a great feature. The information of the head-up display is projected directly onto the windscreen. The display is in the direct eye-line of the driver – therefore not take your eyes off the road looking for any other information. The head-up display has a virtual screen size of 217 x 88 mm making and the following information can be shown: Current driving speed, Speed limiter, Navigation information, Adaptive Cruise Control, Lane Assist and Side Assist. This is definitely of great assistance if you are driving alone in an unfamiliar place.

Compared to its predecessor, the third generation Touareg is moderately wider and longer and you don't really feel it due to comfort. For those travelling long distances with family or friend on that holiday road trip, there is an increase in luggage capacity, from 697 to 810 litres (with the rear bench seat up). Despite its increased length and width, the car body is surprisingly 106kg lighter because of its mixed material construction of aluminium (48%) and high-tech steels (52%).

There are 2 levels of trim available for the new Volkswagen Touareg: Luxury and Executive. Luxury does exactly what it says, luxury, whereas Executive leans towards the more sportier side of things. There are only two models on offer, both powered by a 3.0-litre turbodiesel engine producing 190kW and 600Nm of torque.

How much?

New Touareg retail price (VAT and emissions tax included)

3.0 V6 TDI 190kW (Luxury): R999,800

3.0 V6 TDI 190kW (Executive): R1,088,200

The new Touareg comes standard with a 5 year/100,000km Maintenance Plan, 3 year/120,000km warranty, 12-year anti-corrosion warranty and space saver spare wheel. Service Interval is 15,000km.

My thoughts

The new Touareg definitely goes about doing its business. It's definitely a beauty on the road and certainly a looker. What's most important are the many safety features and also the comfort of being behind the wheel. After driving it for a few days, I really got comfortable driving this beautiful beast. Unfortunately, it carries a heavy price tag, but I can understand that a lot of design and thought has gone into the new Touareg. It's elegant, the tech is unbelievable and I think there will be other rivals in this market.

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