

# A sign of what has arrived

John Floyd recently tested Suzuki's latest Samurai in the form of the new Kizashi



BELLS, WHISTLES: The Kizashi has plenty of executive appeal in the looks department, left. The rear has rather out-of-place tailpipes, below. The interior has one of the highest specification levels in the business, top right.

**H**AVE to confess, as many of you will probably have guessed, that I am a bit of a Suzuki fan. It is a brand where I can honestly say that I have enjoyed testing every model in the range.

I have my favourites, of course, and cannot say I am overly keen on the CVT automatic transmission versions, but then that is my feeling on all makes of CVT — it is just not my scene. So I was extremely keen to try the latest entry from the Japanese manufacturer, the Kizashi.

Kizashi marks the first time that the company has entered the medium sedan market with a product that offers style, performance, economy and a high specification level, all at an affordable price.

The styling is distinctive and certainly fits the European mould.

The only area that shows its Japanese origins would be the rear of the car, particularly the exhaust outlet treatment with the rather odd-shaped, highlighted large apertures. So that is my gripe regarding the Kizashi and it is a personal view — and this is the only thing that I do not like about the vehicle.

Fit and finish both externally and internally is very good. The cabin is extremely well appointed, with the seats and door panels carrying real leather, as does the steering wheel, gear lever knob and the handbrake grip. Instrumentation is a refreshing change to most, being a truly classic simple analogue design reminiscent of cars of yesteryear but supplemented by enough digital displays to satisfy your needs.

The front seats are both electrically adjustable, the driver's seat also offering three memory settings.

A keyless engine start button fires up the 2.4l petrol engine, which delivers a healthy 131kW at 6 500r/min, with torque of 230Nm at 4 000r/min. My particular test vehicle employed a six-speed manual transmission and the box provided very smooth and slick shifting throughout the range.

Although there is a big engine under the bonnet the Kizashi is not a road-burner but does offer good performance. Acceleration is claimed at 7.8 seconds up to the 100km/h figure and a top speed of 215km/h. Claimed



## SUZUKI KIZASHI 2.4 SDLX MANUAL

**WE LIKE:** What's not to like!  
**WE DISLIKE:** Exhaust outlet design (that's being picky though)  
**VERDICT:** A great car at an equally great price

fuel consumption is 7.9l/100km. I did not succeed in obtaining that but did average an overall of 8.7l/100km, and that was over a mix of freeway and town traffic. Most of the Kizashi's time with me was in heavy traffic and it still delivered.

While pushing the car hard through some of the Western Cape passes it remained very sure-footed in all circumstances. I found the seating a little firm but not enough to affect the overall comfort of the ride. A small complaint that both my wife and I experienced initially was the lack of immediate acceleration when in traffic — it just seemed a little sluggish — but adjusting driving technique overcame that.

The amount of goodies on this car is quite amazing, particularly when you look at the price.

Every now and again you receive a test car that you just do not want to return and that was definitely the case with the Kizashi.

This is a car that will satisfy the needs of the most discerning driver and show its versatility as a perfect family vehicle.

It is certainly a benchmark model

for the company.

**MARK SAYS:** I also spent time with the manual version and I am not surprised at all that it is a 2012 South African Car of the Year finalist.

Up against the Volkswagen Jetta, Honda Civic, Toyota Corolla and Ford Focus, not only is its specification at the price hugely impressive but it is a great car to drive.

It has unique looks that set it apart and many of my media colleagues see it as more of a competitor to the likes of the VW Passat and Honda Accord, such is the illusion of size and of course the large engine that it boasts over its true rivals.

On the road it handles like a proper executive, soaking up bumps and undulations with ease, and it really surprised me how well it handled being plunged into tight corners.

The interior is not only spacious but the ergonomics and the equipment level shames the likes of the Toyota Corolla, which needs to go and hide in Buddy's kennel.

It has everything you could need and more, while offering a level of build quality that surpasses many of its other Japanese competitors.

Obviously it remains to be seen how the fit and finish stands the test of time to truly compare it truly, but we have seen no problems with other Suzuki models that would make us question its longevity.

Overall, the Kizashi is not what I would regard as a sign of things to come — it is a sign of what has arrived and in that respect the competition needs to take note.

## TECH SPECS

### ENGINE

Type: 4-cylinder DOHC 16 valve petrol with multipoint sequential injection

Capacity: 2 393cc

Power: 131kW at 6 500r/min

Torque: 230Nm at 4 000r/min

### TRANSMISSION

Type: Six-speed manual

### DRIVETRAIN

Type: Front-wheel drive

### BRAKES

Type: Ventilated discs front, solid at rear

Traction Aids: ABS, EBD, BA and ESP

### PERFORMANCE (Claimed)

0-100km/h: 7.8 seconds

Top Speed: 215km/h

Fuel Consumption: 7.9l/100km

Emissions: 183g/km

### STANDARD FEATURES

Sunroof, remote boot opening, 18-inch alloy wheels including spare, HID projector headlights with washers, automatic lights and windscreen wipers, fog lamps, electric door mirrors, tinted windows, auto dimming rear-view mirror, side indicator repeaters, leather covered height and reach adjustable steering wheel with satellite controls for audio, cruise control and info display. Integrated information display panel, electric windows, remote central locking, keyless ignition, dual zone automatic climate control, radio/CD/Mp3 audio system with USB socket, cruise control, leather upholstery, driver's seat 10-way power adjustable with 3-position memory, passengers seat 4-way power adjustable, rear seat 60:40 split, dual front airbags, side and curtain airbags, Isofix mountings, front and rear park sensors, high level stop light and immobiliser.

### COST OF OWNERSHIP

Warranty: Three-year/100 000km. Three year roadside assist package

Service Plan: Six-year/90 000km

Price: R295 900

Lease\*: R6 507 a month

\* at 11.5% over 60 months no deposit