

THE BUYERS GUIDE

Thursday, February 6 2014
www.BDive.co.za

RATING THE CLASS • USED & BEST BUYS

Taking the market by complete storm

A crossover option in the line-up is de rigueur for most motor manufacturers these days

THE automotive segment that is crossovers has taken the market by storm and, in recent years, almost every manufacturer has an advocate or two in this ever popular market. While SUVs can be credited with giving birth to this part of the market, not many people have the wherewithal to stretch that far, hence the advent of crossovers. Below is a selection of these models which, as the category suggests, cross the line between family hatchbacks and small SUVs.

A to Z Crossover models

MN Top 5

1. Nissan Qashqai
2. Subaru Forester
3. Audi A4 Allroad
4. Volvo V40 Cross Country
5. Ford Ecosport

MN Top Pre-Owned Pick

1. Nissan Qashqai
2. Subaru Forester
3. Audi A4 Allroad
4. VW Tiguan
5. Nissan Juke



TOP PICK

AUDI A4 ALLROAD **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Audi's A4 Allroad, much like most crossovers, melds pseudo off-road styling with the space capabilities of a station wagon and that extra ride height. Both 2.0l turbo-charged petrol and turbo diesel engines offer good overall performance, with the latter the pick of the two. The Allroad adds a desirability factor although decide carefully if you really need to spend the extra money for what are mainly a few extra bits of plastic over the already superb A4 Avant.

CO₂ emission: 159g/km **Power:** 130kW
Consumption: 73l/100km **Torque:** 380Nm
Price range: R465,000-R470,000
Our pick of the range: 2.0 TDI



AUDI Q3 **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Perhaps not what one might deem the most beautiful model in the company's Q range, the Q3 feels more like an A1 on stillets, rather than an A3. Nonetheless, being the current baby model of Audi's Q range, it is a great springboard for those looking to buy into the next segment. Interior space is fair if not good, but the boot is a touch compromised, thanks to the truncated rear end. Both petrol and turbo diesel engines on offer have a good blend of power and economy.

CO₂ emission: 137g/km **Power:** 103kW
Consumption: 6.2l/100km **Torque:** 320Nm
Price range: R385,000-R485,000
Our pick of the range: 2.0 TDI SE



BMW X1 **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Much like its four-ringed rival, the X1 is also an entry-point into the company's X model range and it too offers adventure lifestyle appeal without stretching too far. Based on the previous generation 3 Series Touring platform, it offers decent luggage space. The interior is sombre in the style of BMW, yet is functional and offers reasonable passenger space. Both petrol and diesel engines offered have strong performance and fuel economy, save for the entry-level normally aspirated model.

CO₂ emission: 129g/km **Power:** 135kW
Consumption: 5.9l/100km **Torque:** 380Nm
Price range: R358,656-R495,425
Our pick of the range: sDrive20d Steptronic



CITROEN C4 AIRCROSS **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Derived from the Mitsubishi ASX platform, the Aircross offers buyers something of a lifestyle vehicle. Under the skin is a Mitsubishi sharing similar ancillaries such as engine and running gear yet you get that distinct French flair in styling while both utility and passenger space are more than average. The petrol offers decent performance and economy, provided you opt for the manual gearbox as the CVT option is, quite honestly, atrocious. A new diesel variant is now on offer.

CO₂ emission: 178g/km **Power:** 113kW
Consumption: 9.0l/100km **Torque:** 198Nm
Price range: R291,900-R391,900
Our pick of the range: 2.0i Seduction



DAIHATSU TERIOS **MN verdict** ★★★★★

It offered great value when it was launched in 2006, but the model has become expensive and quite long in the tooth in recent years. Boasting both short and long wheelbase models – the latter seating up to seven passengers – the model makes for an excellent daily runabout. The 1.5l engine may feel a little inert when asked to rev, but it manages to haul the body along reasonably well. Space is typical of B-segment sized vehicles, which is ultimately not bad for singles and small families.

CO₂ emission: 179g/km **Power:** 77kW
Consumption: 8.4l/100km **Torque:** 140Nm
Price range: R234,995-R289,995
Our pick of the range: 1.5 4x2 manual



TOP PICK

FORD ECOSPORT **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Arguably the Daihatsu Terios's main rival, the Indian-built Ecosport will appeal to those individuals who would like something with a more lifestyle bent, but without stretching as far as the Kuga, for instance. Offering similar interior space and architecture as the Fiesta, there is a great deal of familiarity for most Ford owners. The 1.0l turbo charged engine and diesel variants are the ones to go for, although sales are likely to lean more towards the former.

CO₂ emission: 131g/km **Power:** 92kW
Consumption: 6.8l/100km **Torque:** 170Nm
Price range: R199,000-R249,000
Our pick of the range: 1.0T Titanium



TOP PICK

JEEP COMPASS **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Serving the sole purpose of getting more people into the brand, the Compass, launched in 2007, was a good move by the company. Offered initially with both petrol and turbo diesel engines, the latter has been dropped from the line-up citing a low uptake and slightly more inflated sticker price. Boot space is somewhat compromised and the overall finish of the interior lags behind competitors. In its defence though, it makes for an excellent cross country and gravel road traveller.

CO₂ emission: 175g/km **Power:** 115kW
Consumption: 9.1l/100km **Torque:** 190Nm
Price range: R304,990-R314,990
Our pick of the range: 2.0 Limited manual



JEEP PATRIOT **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Built on a similar platform to the Compass, the Patriot looks a little more upmarket by comparison. Its 2.4l engine may not be the most powerful nor the thriftest around, but it manages to cope with the rigours of daily driving. Boot space, much like in the Compass, is on the tight side. However, it manages to pull off the junior Jeep adage with better zest. A diesel engine would be a welcome addition, though.

CO₂ emission: 208g/km **Power:** 125kW
Consumption: 8.2l/100km **Torque:** 320Nm
Price range: R329,990-R341,990
Our pick of the range: 2.4 Limited manual



MINI COUNTRYMAN **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Built on the BMW X1 platform, the towering Countryman is not what one would deem a cute car. In its defence, it does offer acres of interior space while the raised suspension makes access and gravel roads an absolute cinch to drive over. Non-turbo engines in the Cooper models are decidedly under powered, so the Cooper S variants are the ones to opt for. Dynamically the vehicle does tend to lean more around bends, but it is more in its element on dirt roads and the like.

CO₂ emission: 154g/km **Power:** 135kW
Consumption: 7.9l/100km **Torque:** 380Nm
Price range: R303,283-R469,590
Our pick of the range: Cooper S manual



MITSUBISHI ASX **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Being the platform donor to the Citroen C4 Aircross and Peugeot 4008, the Mitsubishi ASX remains a good, if a little bland, buy. It recently received specification updates, which has seen more kit being added to the range without hiking the price. While there are no prospects of a turbo diesel variant yet, the current petrol engine can hold its own, provided that it is mated to the five-speed manual transmission. That said a six-speed manual would be more appropriate.

CO₂ emission: 175g/km **Power:** 110kW
Consumption: 9.0l/100km **Torque:** 197Nm
Price range: R284,900-R339,900
Our pick of the range: 2.0 GLX



USED BEST BUY

NISSAN JUKE **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Still a bit of an oddball in the design stakes in my view, there is simply no denying the success that the model continues to enjoy. Solidly built and offering a good level of specification, particularly at the price, it is no surprise the model continues to flourish. The turbo-charged engine in the top spec Tekna model is a hoot, while the recently introduced turbo diesel engine is perhaps the more sensible option. Boot space, unfortunately, is at a premium.

CO₂ emission: 159g/km **Power:** 140kW
Consumption: 8.2l/100km **Torque:** 240Nm
Price range: R219,200-R327,300
Our pick of the range: 1.6T Tekna



TOP PICK

NISSAN QASHQAI **MN verdict** ★★★★★

The Qashqai is the founder of the modern crossover market, having the SUV looks while being not much bigger externally than a large family hatchback. A seven-seater version, the Qashqai+2 is available but the five-seater is the better looking. Equipment levels are good and the 1.5l dCi turbodiesel engine is one of the best in the business. A new model was unveiled last year and will be in SA by mid-year so there should be good bargains on the outgoing model.

CO₂ emission: 135g/km **Power:** 78kW
Consumption: 5.1l/100km **Torque:** 240Nm
Price range: R269,900-R394,100
Our pick of the range: 1.5dCi Acenta



PEUGEOT 3008 **MN verdict** ★★★★★

The styling is certainly not to everyone's taste, but that lies beneath is a refined, well specified vehicle with a versatile luggage compartment. Thanks to the adjustable boot floor, the model is ideal for small families, particularly with toddlers. Whether you opt for the impressive 1.6l turbo petro or the thrifty turbo diesel, the drive is equally enjoyable. It also offers excellent damping over rutted roads. A facelift is in the wings, so take your bargaining cap along if you want the current model.

CO₂ emission: 182g/km **Power:** 115kW
Consumption: 9.4l/100km **Torque:** 240Nm
Price range: R299,900-R367,750
Our pick of the range: 1.6T Allure



PEUGEOT 4008 **MN verdict** ★★★★★

As the third model in the platform-sharing strategy with Mitsubishi and Citroen, the Peugeot is arguably the best looking of the lot. Its Achilles heel though, is that it is offered in only one specification, meaning there are no cheaper variants to choose from. Also the CVT gearbox, which as mentioned before with the Citroen, is not great and is yet another thorn in its side.

CO₂ emission: 191g/km **Power:** 110kW
Consumption: 9.7l/100km **Torque:** 190Nm
Price: R430,000
Our pick of the range: Only one model



RENAULT DUSTER **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Arguably one of the best value for money propositions in the segment, the Duster does what it says on the box, by offering an unpretentious crossover for the mass market. Priced to rival medium sedans, it offers excellent space for up to five passengers. Plastics and overall architecture of the interior is, admittedly, dated and somewhat justifies the relatively low capital outlay. The diesel derivative with its 1.5l engine is all you will need as it offers excellent driveability and fuel economy.

CO₂ emission: 143g/km **Power:** 80kW
Consumption: 6.0l/100km **Torque:** 240Nm
Price range: R194,900-R239,900
Our pick of the range: 1.5dCi Dynamique 4WD



TOP PICK

SUBARU FORESTER **MN verdict** ★★★★★

One of the stalwarts and founders of the segment, the Forester has with each incarnation grown in stature and overall capability. The current model, although not the best in terms of design, offers excellent interior packaging with ample passenger and storage compartments. The CVT transmission is easily the most acceptable of the genre, while the turbo petrol XT model still offers stonking pace. A diesel variant mated to the transmission would be a welcome addition.

CO₂ emission: 187g/km **Power:** 126kW
Consumption: 9.7l/100km **Torque:** 235Nm
Price range: R329,000-R529,000
Our pick of the range: 2.5XS



SUBARU XV **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Capable of tackling some of the worst roads in SA with aplomb, it is reasonably capable of dispensing with some mild off-road driving. The XV may not be to everyone's taste and the 2.0l engine could do with a bit more poke while its fuel economy is a letdown. While interior space and ergonomics are good, the shallow boot space means family holiday sojourns require strategic packing of the luggage. A diesel engine, in my opinion, would do the model better justice overall.

CO₂ emission: 189g/km **Power:** 110kW
Consumption: 9.6l/100km **Torque:** 198Nm
Price range: R299,000-R345,000
Our pick of the range: Manual



SUZUKI SX4 **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Hugely underrated, but immensely capable, the SX4 ticks all the right boxes when it comes to an affordable family crossover. The AWD variant is a cinch to drive on slushy gravel roads, and overall build quality and versatility are commendable. The 2.0l engine offers decent performance, although a manual transmission seems to be the one to go for as the CVT version exacerbates engine noise and blunts performance. It is a great package overall, if a little meek on the image front.

CO₂ emission: 178g/km **Power:** 112kW
Consumption: 9.1l/100km **Torque:** 190Nm
Price range: R247,900-R269,650
Our pick of the range: AWD



USED BEST BUY

VOLKSWAGEN TIGUAN **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Not the most attractive proposition in the market, but the VW badge houses excellent build quality, high-tech turbo engines and reasonably thrifty drinking habits. Pricing does err on the dear side, particularly when you start ticking the options list. Even so, it offers a cossetting ride. Rear passenger space is a little cramped, while boot space is reasonable for a small family's luggage. The DSG transmission option offers seamless gear changes, while residuals are usually good.

CO₂ emission: 152g/km **Power:** 90kW
Consumption: 7.8l/100km **Torque:** 200Nm
Price range: R304,400-R351,300
Our pick of the range: 1.4TSI Trend&Fun



TOP PICK

VOLVO V40 CROSS COUNTRY **MN verdict** ★★★★★

Essentially a V40 with raised suspension, the Cross Country adds a dimension of versatility to an already impressive package. Pandering to an audience looking for a more lifestyle designed vehicle without stretching into SUV territory, the model is a welcome addition to the range. Turbo petrol engines offer good performance while the diesel is perhaps the more sensible choice in this application.

CO₂ emission: 137g/km **Power:** 110kW
Consumption: 6.2l/100km **Torque:** 350Nm
Price range: R326,400-R415,100
Our pick of the range: D3 Excel