

Kadjar is a new SUV challenger

 By [Henrie Geyser](#)

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Following in the tracks of its popular Duster and Captur, Renault has launched a new three-model Kadjar in this country to take on some of the leading contenders in the tough C-segment SUV market.



The Kadjar takes over the baton from the rather grey Koleos and is a much more eye-catching, edgy vehicle (both in looks and performance), thanks to the platform it shares with Nissan's Qashqai and X-Trail SUV's. Its looks are a good balance between tough bush kit and sophisticated city garb, although the tough outdoorsy pose is more pretend than reality. This was underlined when Renault let loose a group of motoring scribes on the high, soft-sanded dunes of the 4x4 track at Atlantis on the West Coast.

Urban dweller

It didn't do the Kadjar any favours because several vehicles got bogged down and had to be dug out of embarrassing situations, very similar to a launch event in the Namib Desert in Namibia recently when a German luxury carmaker chose challenging terrain to introduce its SUVs and their capabilities in the rough... with embarrassing results.

As with the Renault situation, the organisers were over-optimistic about the vehicle's capabilities (and that of some of the scribes piloting them) and it only served to underline the fact that SUVs are urban dwellers, perfect for family holidays on gravel roads and moderately sandy and muddy tracks, but not designed, nor intended for real challenging situations.

On the tarmac where the Kadjar really is at home, it dishes out a very pleasant ride. We only got to drive the top of range Dynamique model (the only one fitted with All-Mode 4x4 system with a lockable centre diff).

This model is powered by a 1.6-litre dCi turbo-diesel which kicks out 96kW and 320Nm (the same engine you will find under the hood of the X-Trail), and although it is no hot hatch, it doesn't feel lethargic and will clock 188km/h and the 0-100km/h sprint in 10.7. It handles the corners with lots of confidence and the steering is fairly direct and on the light side. The six-speed manual shift has a smooth, short throw and the stick is conveniently situated close to hand.

The two other options have identical front wheel-drive 96kW/205Nm 1.2 turbo-petrol engines and the only difference between the Expression and Dynamique are trim levels, (which are fairly high in any case). Even the entry-level Expression comes with goodies such as cruise control, aircon, electric windows and audio system with Bluetooth connectivity and an 18-inch instrument screen.



Practical and comfortable

Both the 1.2 and the 1.6 Dynamique models stride on large 17-inch alloys and have all-wheel drive and their kit includes a touch-screen infotainment system with satnav, parking sensors front and back, plus automatic lights and wipers. Optional extras for both models include leather seats, reverse camera and more.

The Kadjar also scores well in the safety department with ABS with EBA, ESP, hill-start assist, side and curtain airbags, 3-point safety belts for rear seat passengers, ISOfix child seat anchorage and Euro NCAP 5-Star rating

The new Renault strikes a good kerbside pose and presents a solid case for employment as mum's school run taxi, dad's golf transport with his buddies and their bags and everyday commuter duty, but particularly for service as a practical, comfortable, all-round family car. For the sporty, outdoorsy types additional options include a bicycle carrier, load box, retractable tow bar and a trunk-liner

The Kadjar is pleasing, competitively priced, and good-looking enough to grab a slice of a crowded and highly competitive market segment where it will go up against established and respected rivals such as Toyota Rav4, Mazda CX-5, Ford Kuga and Hyundai Tucson.

The Kadjar models and prices (inclusive of a five-year/150,000km warranty and a five-year service plan) are:

Expression 1.2 – R359,900 turbo petrol
Dynamique 1.2 – R384,900 turbo petrol
Dynamique 1.6dCi 4x4 – R449,900

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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