



**TOW
TEST**



Mazda CX-7

"SUV sports car"

By Godfrey Castle.
Photos by Mark Samuel

Stylish SUVs are ideal for lovers of the great outdoors because they are just so versatile for holidays, having oodles of space for all your camping gear. Mazda's new five-door CX-7 with its powerful turbocharged and intercooled 2.3-litre four-cylinder petrol engine is no exception.

Marketed as a cross-over sports utility vehicle that has the "soul of a sports car" but the practicality of an SUV, we found the new Mazda CX-7 to be a rather pleasant newcomer to the towcar market. We liked the high degree of passenger comfort, its styling and the quality of the build, and we found it to be well appointed. Mazda certainly deserves to stand up and be noticed.

What is special on this vehicle is Mazda's newly developed Active Torque Split All-Wheel-Drive system that transfers the engine power beautifully to the road when towing a caravan such as the big Penta. The engine develops 175 kW at 5 000 rpm and 350 N.m at 2 500 rpm – all engine characteristics that are suited to towing.

The drive train is front wheel drive under normal driving conditions, but up to 50% of the power is transferred to the rear wheels

when accelerating hard. On slippery surfaces power is sent to the wheels with the most traction. In towing terms this means having the most traction when it is needed, be it pulling away from a wet, grassy campsite, on a gravel hill or just towing in bad weather.

As a towcar

We chose a Jurgens Penta with a GVM of 1 380 kg for the CX-7, largely because this car has a Tare weight of 1 760 kg - reasonably heavy for a vehicle today. It performed well, accelerating from zero to 100 km/h in 16.66 seconds and having a top speed of 140 km/h. Mazda, however, advises a maximum towing capacity of 1 000 kg, provided the vehicle is equipped with their Towing Pack option.


Our standard mountain pass test was well within the national average, clocking 1 minute 33 seconds over the 2 km hill climb. Tail drop with

the Penta on the rear was 30 mm and the towball height remained at 425 mm, which is excellent for towing purposes.

For a car of this size we felt it had a small petrol tank, only 69 litres, and with a fuel consumption of 17.3 l/100 km while towing, this gives you a rather limited range.

Priced at R377 990 you can expect all the bells and whistles – ABS brakes, EBD (electronic brake-force distribution), EBA (emergency brake assist), DSC (dynamic stability control) and ETC (electronic traction control), all of which add to stability and better driving control.

This vehicle carries a three-year/100 000 km warranty and a five year/100 000 km MazdaMotion Maintenance plan. Service intervals are 10 000 km.

Mazda currently has a great range of towcars; it's just a pity that they seldom get the recognition in the marketplace that they deserve. 

Towing performance

Mazda CX-7

Engine	2.3 DISI Turbo
Displacement	2 261 cc
Max power	175 kW @ 5 000 rpm
Max torque	350 N.m @ 2 500 rpm
Tare	1 779 kg
GVM	2 265 kg

Caravan towed	Jurgens Penta
Licence weight	1 120 kg
GVM	1 380 kg

Performance

Acceleration	
0-60 km/h	7.21 sec
0-80 km/h	10.54 sec
0-100 km/h	16.55 sec

Overtaking ability

60-80 km/h	4.11 sec
80-100 km/h	7.21 sec
100-120 km/h	7.32 sec

Top towing speed	140 km/h
Hill climb	1 min 33.12 sec

Speed in gears

1st	50 km/h
2nd	90 km/h
3rd	130 km/h
4th	140 km/h

Fuel consumption

At steady 100 km/h	17.3 l/100 km
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Towball height	425 mm
Price	R377 990