

SsangYong's Rexton 2.7 XDi

Beware the underdog! It shares a Mercedes-Benz heritage and it offers a big package in standard features yet is considerably cheaper than most SUVs. It's also got the best brakes we have tried out this year!





Launched onto the South African market at Auto Africa two years ago, the well-appointed Rexton – SsangYong's entry into the luxury SUV market – has a waiting list and priced at only R379 800 odd it is obvious why.

Standard features

The styling is a personal choice – love it or think again – it attracts a lot of attention from all and sundry. But let's look at the list of standard features:

- three row air-conditioning with full temperature control.
- electric windows
- electrically adjustable folding side mirrors
- CD player with six speakers, stereo RDS sound system
- digital multi-metre with on-board computer
- rain-sensing wipers with mist control function
- electrochromatic rearview mirror
- auto light sensor
- battery saving device
- central locking (automatic door locking on movement of the car).

Exterior styling

Subtle refinements have been made to

upgraded. This is evident in the wide body mouldings around the wheel arches, large centre wheel boss, and what is now SsangYong's familiar three-chrome horizontal slats now span the entire length of the radiator grill.

A new integrated front bumper and "nudge" bar adds the 4x4 dimension to the overall look.

The rear of the car sports a new tailgate spoiler to reduce dust accumulation on the rear window while a handy component is the rear tailgate flip up window which also incorporates the antenna (out of the way for when driving off-road in the bush).

And if this is not enough to complement the black leather and wood grain interior, then for caravanners there are those brakes.

We crash stopped from 100 km in 3.11 seconds and we weren't even holding the steering wheel. There was no need to – no shudder, no brake locking, no pulling to the side, no tyre smoke just an impressive – and sudden – almost dead stop by both the Rexton and our long-term test Gypsy caravan that left our test team impressed.

Equipped with an improved ABS braking system, plus EBD (electronic

braking device), four dual stage airbags, Pyro pre-tensioner safety belts with force limiters, side impact protection beams and a rigid frame construction, the Rexton is undoubtedly built with occupant safety in mind.

As a towcar

The new 270 XD_i CRD engine was created with the assistance from Mercedes-Benz engineers and turns out 121 kW at 4 000 rpm and a healthy 430 Nm of torque from 2 400 rpm. This improvement comes from the third generation common-rail system with Mercedes' CAN bus engine management system, and even loaded with extra passengers it towed the Gypsy like a train.

The Rexton is one of the latest entrants into the growing Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) 4x4 market and even though it is in its second year in our market it features some technology which is only being introduced on new vehicles. Take the push button 4x4 selector, for instance – no more having to engage a second gear lever – it's as easy and simple as pushing a button on the upmarket and well-appointed dashboard to go from rear-wheel drive to 4x4 in both high or low range! Easy as that.

SsangYong previously had a big following with the Musso – remember that rear window sticker exclaiming "Powered by Mercedes Benz"! The new Rexton promises that same value

TOW TEST

for money package but now features a more stylish body with aerodynamic front and rear end with lavish side panels.

We initially thought the ride to be a bit sloppy or too soft, but bearing in mind that most big 4x4s spend just about their entire life on tar we soon got used to, and comfortable with, its ride characteristics.

Towing, the weight of the caravan settled the rear suspension to a firmed up ride, we liked the big side mirrors that gave us a clear vision down the sides of the caravan, we liked the driver's seating position and visibility, the quietness of the diesel engine (we were asked by an interested passenger, "Is this petrol or diesel?")

But to touch on those seats – there is seating for seven adults, with an eight-way power adjustable driver's front seat and a three-driver memory system (three different drivers can programme their favourite seat position into the seat computer and when getting into the driver's seat after it has been driven by someone else all they need to do is push their button and the seat will move back into their preset position. And to quote a popular phrase... "and that's not all" – the front seats are electrically heated!

But, out of a possible 10 we think the Rexton scores a healthy eight in terms of towing stability.

Upgraded gearbox

The new Rexton T Tronic five-speed auto transmission features five forward and two reverse gears with manual mode. It also features a lock-up torque converter which links the transmission directly with the engine rather than via a fluid coupling and so eliminating performance loss.

Top speed while towing was 125 km/h and a nought to 100 km/h acceleration was 23.01 seconds, which is good enough.

It is a bit slow off the mark, though, as can be expected from turbo lag in a diesel engine, but once the engine is awake it accelerates smoothly and briskly.

The point to remember with the Rexton is value for money – it is a good all-rounder and whether you decide on using high- or low-range 4x4 in your search you'll have to go a long way to find better at the price!



SSANGYONG REXTON 270 XDi

CARAVAN: GYPSEY RAPIER (LICENCE MASS 860 KG : GROSS 1100 KG)

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

CYLINDERS/CAPACITY	5 / 2 696cm ³
FUEL SUPPLY	Common Rail injection,
BORE/STROKE	86.2/92.4 mm
Compression Ratio	18:1
FUEL REQUIREMENT	diesel
POWER I.S.O. (kW/revs)	121 @ 4 000
TORQUE (Nm/revs)	340 @ 2 400

TRANSMISSION

SHIFT TYPE	5-Speed, auto
1ST GEAR	3.951 to 1
2ND GEAR	2.423 to 1
3RD GEAR	1.486 to 1
4TH GEAR	1.000 to 1
5TH GEAR	0.833 to 1
DRIVE WHEELS	4x4

CONTROLS

STEERING TYPE	Variable rate rack and pinion
TURNS LOCK-TO-LOCK	3.2
TURNING CIRCLE	15.6 m

BRAKES (ABS ASSISTED)

FRONT	ventilated discs 300 mm
REAR	disc 260 mm

MEASUREMENTS

TOWCAR LENGTH	4 720 mm
TOWCAR TARE MASS	1 950 kg
GVM	2 550 kg
GCM	N/A
TOWING CAPACITY UNBRAKED	650KG
TYRE SIZE	
TOWBALL HEIGHT	460 mm
TOWBALL DROP (80 kg load)	55mm
DROP PLATE NEEDED	no
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	- /

SUSPENSION

FRONT	double wishbone front with coil spring
REAR	five link rear suspension and coil springs.

TOWING PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION

(SECONDS)

0-60 km/h	7.39
0-80 km/h	16.2
0-100 km/h	23.01

OVERTAKING ABILITY

(SECONDS)

60-80 km/h	5.29
80-100 km/h	7.91
100-120 km/h	16.9

SPEEDS IN GEARS

(KM/H)

1st gear	50
2nd gear	80
3rd gear	125
4th gear	127
5th gear	127

BRAKING ABILITY

(SECONDS)

60-0 km/h	1.74
80-0 km/h	2.14
100-0 km/h	3.11

FUEL CONSUMPTION

(LITRES/100 KM)

80 km/h	13.2
100 km/h	15.4

OPTIMUM FUEL RANGE

(KM/TANKFUL - 80 LITRES - TOWING)

80 km/h	606 km
100 km/h	519 km



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