

Thrill seeker

No power boost on offer, but Kizashi's street cred climbs with Sport AWD



By JAMES STANFORD in NEW ZEALAND
SMALL-CAR specialist Suzuki has continued its mid-sized expansion with a sportier, all-wheel-drive version of its just-released Kizashi sedan, designed to appeal to younger customers interested in the thrill of the drive.

The Kizashi Sport AWD – a competitor for the Subaru Liberty – was part of the Kizashi model plan from the start.

"It is not a racecar," explained Suzuki Australia general manager Tony Devers. "What it does is set a new driving benchmark for the brand."

The Kizashi Sport AWD slots in at the top of the model line-up with a list price of \$39,990 with a standard automatic transmission. That means it comes at a \$5000 premium over the XLS model it is based on – and is a considerable distance from the entry-level XL model at \$27,990.

As the name indicates, the Sport is positioned as the most dynamic model of the range, but Suzuki has resisted the temptation to increase the performance. The Sport AWD model runs the same engine



as other Kizashis, which means a 2.4-litre four-cylinder with 131kW at 6500rpm and 230Nm at 4000rpm.

This is the same variable intake camshaft timing engine that can be found in the Vitara 4WD. It is also available only with a continuously variable automatic transmission.

The AWD system takes the proven on-demand system of the SX4 hatch but uses a raft of electronic programs to deliver optimum torque.

The i-AWD system operates in front-drive mode for optimum fuel consumption, but can send up to 50 per cent of the drive to the rear wheels in response to inputs from sensors that are also used to alert the electronic stability control.

These sense wheel movement, steering wheel input, yaw movements and lateral Gs to determine if the vehicle requires more torque at the rear wheels, to a maximum 50 per cent under heavy acceleration.

It uses an electronically controlled wet-type multi-plate clutch coupling that is regulated by an electrical current.

Interestingly, Suzuki has also included a dashboard-mounted switch to allow the driver to turn off the AWD system and have the car run as a front-driver and save more fuel.

The i-AWD system adds about 70kg to the weight of the vehicle, meaning the Sport model now tips the scales at 1600kg. Fuel economy and emissions do not suffer greatly, moving up

from 7.9 litres per 100km of the XLS model to 8.4L/100km and 198g/km.

In terms of performance, the Sport AWD's extra weight is cancelled out by its traction advantage off the line and achieves the same 0-100km/h time as the 2WD CVT Kizashi, 8.8 seconds, which is one second slower than the base manual model.

The Sport AWD looks like the XLS, but sits 10mm lower, has 10-spoke 18-inch alloy wheels, a deeper front bumper with mesh lower grille, chrome side strips and foglight surrounds, side skirts and unique badges.

The interior is largely the same, but there is a sporty steering wheel with metal-look accents and the leather seats and gearshift leather surfaces feature silver stitching. This steering wheel also has controls for the Bluetooth wireless system that is unique to the Sport AWD model.

As it is based on the XLS model, the Kizashi Sport AWD also comes with leather sports seats with front heating, dual-zone climate-control air-conditioning, a 425-Watt Rockford Fosgate sound system, rain-sensing windscreen wipers, an auto-dimming rearview mirror, keyless entry and start, automatic HID headlights and a sunroof.

All Kizashi models come standard with ABS brakes, ESC and six airbags.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)
DRIVE IMPRESSIONS: [CLICK HERE](#)