

# Suzuki are taking on 'big boys'

**BIG IMPACT:** Brand makes presence felt

**Bobby Cheetham**

**S**UZUKI is one of those brands in South Africa that quietly goes about its business with not much fanfare. But that's not to say that Suzuki is not making its presence felt in the hurly-burly of the motor industry.

The small, dedicated staff, who run the company and their dealers who sell their cars, are doing a sterling job.

It's always tough to take on the "big boys" of the motor industry, but Suzuki's latest Naamsa sales figures for passenger cars show that they are making inroads quietly but confidently.

Their top-selling model is the Swift which chalked up 134 units last month out of a total of 412 the brand sold, which is a creditable performance.

And now they are adding the Suzuki Swift Sport to their top-selling range.

Launched earlier this month in Gauteng, the Sport is powered by a lively 1.6 litre motor.

**What is it?**

The Suzuki Swift was one of two models that spearheaded the launch of Suzuki Auto South Africa in June 2008. The latest generation of Suzuki's award-winning world car arrived in South Africa during 2011, and now the range is being further expanded by the addition of the flagship Swift Sport 1600.

It is a decidedly sporty hatch, with ride and handling characteristics that set this compact vehicle apart from its peers.

**How does it look?**

Very, very sexy and cute!

From the front, the vehicle's intent is clearly defined by large foglamp bezels with distinctive fins, that convey a sense of aggression.

The large grille hints at an engine with significant performance, and the high-intensity (HID) headlamps are sharply styled with

metallic grey coatings.

The overall design of the front conveys both aggression and exquisiteness.

Side underspoilers help to create the Sport's low-slung look and also promote smooth airflow along the underbody. Multi-spoke alloy wheels of 16 inches, shot with 195/50R16 rubber further complement the car's stylish look.

**What's it like to drive?**

The launch drive started at the Cradle of Humankind just outside Johannesburg following mainly urban roads, then on to the Swartkops race track outside Pretoria.

But at the track there was a surprise waiting; we were to use the tight go-kart instead of the track!

The Sport was put to the test by having the drivers complete a gymkhana type event, with the quickest time the winner.

The small lively car was very exciting to drive on the tight circuit.

Just the thing to demonstrate the very good handling and braking characteristics.

The new Sport sits 10mm closer to the road than the previous generation, resulting in improved and more composed handling.

To ensure high stability even under sporty driving conditions and at high speeds, Suzuki designed the rear suspension specifically for the new Sport.

There's enough space in the front but the seats in the rear are very cramped.

**Any special features?**

Passenger safety is one of them.

The Sport received a five-star Euro NCAP rating – the world's highest vehicle safety rating which is commendable in a vehicle of this size.

**Should you buy one?**

If you are a young blade looking for a sporty car that's going to impress your peers at an affordable price (R213 900) then look no further than the Suzuki Swift Sport.



**BOLD LOOK:** Dual exhaust mufflers and a metallic-grey diffuser give the new vehicle a bold look from the rear, aided by the striking roof-end spoiler

**BETTER ENGINE:** The new Suzuki Swift has an improved 1.6-litre engine with variable intake-valve timing



**SPORTIER:** The new vehicle has a sportier interior with bespoke stitching, sport seats and aluminium-clad pedals

## THE SPECS

**Suzuki Swift Sport 1600**

- Engine:** 1.6 litre VVT
- Power:** 100kW at 6 900rpm
- Torque:** 160Nm at 4 400rpm
- 0-100km/h:** 8.7seconds
- Top Speed:** 195km/h
- Fuel Consumption:** 7.68/100km (claimed combined)
- CO<sub>2</sub>:** 147g/km
- Price:** R213 900
- We like:** The spirited performance at the price.
- We do not like:** The cramped rear seats.



**HEADS UP:** The head lights add to the attractive styling of the new Swift