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# Suzuki looks ahead – and introduces new models

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Kim Henson tells all...

In the company's centenary year, Suzuki is planning ahead with positivity, and in an online UK 'webinar' (press conference) yesterday (8<sup>th</sup> September 2020), the firm provided to motoring writers a summary of their plans as they currently stand. I was 'virtually' in attendance, and this is what I discovered...

## A little historical context...

It was in March 1920 when Suzuki started operations, building a weaving loom said to be ten times more efficient than existing contemporary types, and the firm continued



producing looms until the 'cotton crash' of 1950.



[The Suzulight saloon of 1954.](#)

Meanwhile, the company had built its first prototype car in 1937, although it was not until the mid-1950s that the production 'Suzulight' appeared, a two cylinder, two stroke front wheel drive four wheeler, offered in saloon, van and pick-up versions. Subsequent TL and Fronte models arrived in 1959 and 1962 respectively.

Through the years the firm became successful and famous due their development and production of innovative small cars and light commercials, and of course Suzuki motorcycles have been well-respected for many decades too.



## Fast-forward to 2020...

The company has moved from strength to strength, and in the pre-coronavirus days were producing 3.05 million vehicles a year, making Suzuki the eighth largest car brand in the world.

India is the largest single market for the firm, with 1.62 million cars sold annually, giving the company a 49 per cent market share.

The Maruti 800, introduced in 1983, remained the No. 1 best seller in the Indian market for 30 years.

By contrast, recent annual sales of Suzuki cars in Japan total 698,000, plus 769,000 of the firm's motorcycles (out of a total production of five million...).

Talking of motorbikes, Suzuki now produces a range of 22 different models, from 110cc to 1050cc.

In addition, the company has a line-up of some 32 marine engines, from a 2.5 hp unit to a 4.3 litre V6.

Suzuki ATVs ('All Terrain Vehicles') have also proved popular, especially for farm work, etc.

2020 marks 50 years since the first 4 x 4 Suzuki was launched in 1970, the 360cc LJ10, with an air-cooled two stroke engine. The first Vitara arrived in 1988.

These days every model within the Suzuki line-up offers four wheel drive availability. From 2016 this has been provided in three levels of 'ALLGRIP' technology, 'Pro', 'Select' and 'Auto', depending on the vehicle model.



## The 'New World'



*Facelifted Swift, September 2020.*

As with all motor manufacturers, Suzuki has faced very major challenges resulting from the Covid-19 virus, but during these recent difficult days the firm has continued to plan for the future and is set to tackle whatever may lie ahead.

Notably, it is keen to continue minimising CO2 and NOx emissions from its products, and now hybrid technology is incorporated into every car model within the range.

The company is also trying to give potential buyers confidence to invest in a Suzuki, for example by offering a seven day period within which a money-back return of the vehicle is available, and 0% finance is available to help buyers too.





The Ignis and Swift remain vital models within the Suzuki line-up, between them accounting for 60 per cent of sales volume.

The Ignis was facelifted earlier this year (and is available for buyers now), notably offering SUV styling and improved fuel economy, with the 1.2 litre Dualjet engine operating with a 12 volt hybrid set-up as standard, giving CO2 emissions of 114 g/km and a Combined fuel consumption figure of 55.7 miles per gallon.

The hybrid battery capacity has been improved, and a new continuously variable transmission (CVT) is now optionally available, replacing the automated manual gearbox previously offered for drivers needing/preferring two pedal driving.

Specification levels for the Ignis are SZ3, SZ-T and SZ5 (and four wheel drive 'ALLGRIP' optionally available on the SZ5).

Until the end of September 2020, Suzuki are offering the SZ3 for £13,999 and with 0% APR finance available on a PCP deal costing £139 each month, after payment of a deposit of £1,970.

A revised/facelifted Swift line-up has just been announced (and will be available in two weeks time from 8<sup>th</sup> September), with the 1.2 litre Dualjet engine used in conjunction with Suzuki's 12 volt hybrid system (now with a greater capacity 10Ah battery incorporated) fitted as standard (apart from the higher performance Swift Sport which is endowed with their 48 volt hybrid set-up).



CO2 emissions of 111 g/km and Combined fuel consumption of 57.2 mpg apply to the 'normal' versions.

High specification levels are built into all the new Swifts, including a new so-called 'entry level' model, designated SZ-L and priced from £14,749, and with a 0% APR PCP deal on offer until the end of September 2020. This is no trimmed-down 'base' model; indeed it is brimming with high tech features, including 'smart' connectivity, automatic emergency braking and a wealth of other standard-fit useful aids. It is also fitted with polished aluminium alloy wheels.

With two specification grades of the revised Swifts, buyers can opt for CVT transmission.



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Jimny





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Production of the very popular and capable 1.5 litre Jimny has been suspended temporarily, but just announced is a new two seater light commercial version, providing increased cargo space (with a protective barrier between the load area and the cabin), plus all the much-praised off-road ability of the four seater version recently discontinued.





Jimny chassis.

## More models...

As a result of a collaboration between Suzuki and Toyota, two new models are ready to be rolled out for UK buyers.

The 'Across' SUV was launched globally in July, and is due to arrive here in Britain in October. This will be the first Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV) Suzuki, and there will be just one, high specification level, version, with E-Four all wheel drive.

Suzuki stressed that the new model will be sold here in PHEV form only.

The newcomer will have a range on electric propulsion only of 46 miles (75 km), plus of course it has the petrol engine for long distances, it will produce CO2 emissions of just 22 g/km, and the claimed 0 to 100 km/hour acceleration time is only 6 seconds.

Pricing will be announced soon, but if you want one of these you will have to be quick as there will be fewer than 1,000 examples available in the UK...



Another new Suzuki model to be developed as a result of the link with Toyota will be a mid-size estate car, based on the Corolla estate and built in Britain, and this will be a self-charging hybrid. More details will be available soon.

I was interested to know whether Suzuki would be introducing a new small 'city' car (now that the Celerio has been discontinued), and asked the question. I was advised that there are no immediate plans (in 2020/21) for such a model, but that in the longer term this is likely to change. For now the Ignis remains the smallest car in the Suzuki line-up.

## Outlook

Looking ahead, Suzuki acknowledges that the future is uncertain in terms of coronavirus and the possible effects of Brexit, but the company aims to continue to increase its market share with its full range of up-to-the-minute, technically advanced models.

Recent new hybrid versions of the Vitara and S-Cross (offered with optional auto transmissions, for buyers who prefer this type of gearbox) are set to help in this quest, together of course with the hybrid Ignis and Swift models, and the new Jimny light commercial. The new models resulting from the collaboration with Toyota are also set to bring buyers in numbers to the Suzuki brand.

## Watch this space...

In due course we hope to bring you Wheels-Alive road-tests covering a variety of the latest Suzuki models.