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New Suzuki Jimny – on its way

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'The one-and-only small, lightweight 4WD 'hatch', as Suzuki describes it, will soon be available here.'

Kim Henson reports.

The first Jimny made its debut in April 1970, and has always been widely regarded as a compact yet competent showcase of Suzuki's 4WD technology. For the last 48 years the model has been an authentic off-roader that is small and lightweight, but providing the on and off-road performance desired by owners and professional drivers.

Early examples have long ago gained 'classic' status, and interest in them is high.



Amazingly, two decades have passed since the third generation model arrived in 1998, and the Jimny has now evolved to its fourth generation in its half a century of history.

Suzuki's aim with the all-new Jimny has been to provide even more functionality and practicality, in terms of both its appearance and performance, while still fully embodying the spirit of its much-loved predecessors and its core concept of being the "one-and-only, small, lightweight 4WD vehicle".

All-new Jimny highlights

Practical exterior

Simple, and intended to be beautiful (says Suzuki), the all-new Jimny has been developed to express off-road functionality. Its deliberately square-shaped body is said to realise better situational awareness and the flat clamshell bonnet enhances visibility. The vehicle has been engineered for professionals, and, refreshingly in an age of computer-aided conformity, there is no compromise in its exterior design.

Functional interior

In the all-new Jimny, again the concept is deliberately basic and functional, with little to distract from driving. Its black interior is humble yet said to be stylish and handsome, and the controls are designed for quick and easy operation, even when wearing gloves. In every detail the approach has been to support serious off-roading.

Uncompromising performance

As with its illustrious predecessors, the all-new Jimny stays true to its character, inheriting four core characteristics: Separate ladder frame, "three angles", 3-link rigid axle suspension with coil springing, and four-wheel drive incorporating a low range transfer gear. Designed for professionals, it features ALLGRIP PRO, which is Suzuki's 4WD system designed for high off-road ability.



In addition, the engine capacity has been increased to 1.5 litres (from 1.3 litres), delivering greater torque across the rev range, compared with its predecessor. Strong torque output at low engine revs is handy for normal on-road driving but especially useful for serious off-road use.

The new engine, which is smaller and lighter (by 15 per cent) than the previous 1.3 litre unit, drives all four wheels via an improved five speed manual gearbox or four speed automatic transmission, which has been redesigned to minimise friction and optimise performance and economy.

VERDICT

I am looking forward to test-driving the new Jimny, which promises to do exactly what it says on the tin, and is expected to reach these shores in 2019.



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Having been impressed by the tough character and competent dynamic abilities of previous generation models (the first of which I drove both on and off-road in the early 1980s), I expect the latest version to be a similarly useful, dependable and practical machine. Watch this space!