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SsangYong Musso Saracen+ Double Cab Pick-up – Road Test

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The SsangYong Musso Saracen+ – if size matters

Our road tester Robin Roberts (with Miles better news Agency) thinks it does...

The SsangYong Musso has just extended its appeal, literally.

We tested the Musso double cab pick-up back in late 2022 and were impressed with its room and practical points and as we were giving it the once over, SsangYong Motor UK announced a little extension to the range.

Actually it added 12-inches to the loadbed of the top specification Saracen, adding a + sign to denote its growth.

Some may think that 12-inches is hardly worth adding but for those who really use the pick up as intended it transforms the Musso Saracen+ into a model with the greatest payload in its class and when you are working to a budget that really adds up to efficiency and practicality. It also been given double wishbone rear suspension with double coil springs which have transformed the handling and ride comfort.



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The multi award-winning Musso pick-up range is now available in four specifications - EX, Rebel and Saracen in the standard bed length and the new Saracen+ in the longer length bed. Plastic lined and with a sturdy rear tailgate, the extended load area is capable of carrying greater loads whilst the double cab's spacious interior can still seat five adults in comfort.

As well the extra 12-inches in length, its exterior styling has been upgraded with black finished door mirrors, beltline and tailgate finisher. More dramatically, SsangYong has added new, stylish, black 18" alloy wheels and 255/60 tyres, sharpening its road presence.



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Under the bonnet all Musso variants are powered by an e-XDi220 turbo diesel engine delivering 202 PS at 3,800 rpm and maximum torque of 441 Nm (325 lb.ft) at 1,600 to 2,600 rpm. This unit is combined with either a 6-speed manual or automatic transmission depending on the variant chosen.



An addition to the Musso Saracen+ upgrade, it now comes with double wishbone suspension and dual coil springs, ensuring impressive towing and payload capabilities. SsangYong claim the Musso Saracen+ is the only truck to legally tow 3.5-tonnes and carry



more than 1-tonne simultaneously. It comes with an autobox as standard and there is no manual choice.

The Saracen+ also boasts an upgraded instrument panel, projection headlamps, LED daylight running lights, triple LED fog lights, dark tinted rear privacy glass, Blind Spot Detection (BSD), Lane Change Assist (LCA) and Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA).

For the driver, the engine packs a useful punch when towing or hauling a heavy load even though it is not brisk unless you select the sporting mode and then it becomes more respectable.

Gear changes were smooth under light throttle pressure but became more pronounced as power was applied and the four-cylinder diesel engine and six-speed transmission noise became louder as well. Deceleration was generally very even between downshifts.

The gear ratio range change was simply achieved through a rotary selector wheel to the left of the gearstick and that was commendably brisk but not really meant for tarmac use, rather for deep mud and slopes of the countryside.

The steering would be improved with a tighter turning circle but the brakes were well up to their task and just modest pressure brought about strong retardation, with a manual handbrake to hand.

Secondary switches around the column covered lights and wipers and the blades cleared the screen but I found the weak, short-range and narrow beams not up to the task in county lanes or if you went off-road.

Instruments were big and clear in front of the driver but the infotainment display in the console centre was small, looked cluttered and relied on working with a mobile phone.



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Climate controls were simple, comprehensive and worked very well to fill the big cabin, all backed up by powered windows all round.

Oddments room was good for a workhorse with family responsibilities and the tailboard easily dropped level for access.

Climbing into or out of the cabin needed a foot on the running board and some dexterity with surprisingly small door apertures but the room was very good inside for legs, heads and shoulders whether in front or back.



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The seats were comfortable and provided excellent support under the thighs if needed.

The raised ride height of the Saracen+ gave additional and welcome visibility to the sides and front, but it was restricted over the shoulder with the wide rear pillars and you need the safety sensors fitted and I was thankful for the wide-screen reversing camera and parking assistance lines.

On road handling was good for a pick-up but it was down to those double wishbones, although the steering was not very communicative, but it did hang on well through corners thanks to its independent springing all round.

Most bumps were absorbed without complaint but some big potholes did shake up occupants and speed bumps needed respect.

VERDICT

It's only a small change but the addition of the extra foot in loadspace has added to its appeal where it matters and it has not compromised anything that I could pick out.

You might say that the SsangYong Musso Saracen+ has put its better foot behind it.

For: Extremely roomy with massive loadbed and high towing capacity, surprisingly smooth ride, low personal company car tax costs and long warranty.

Against: Big turning circle and little steering feel, very modest performance and thirsty engine, transmission and road noise intruded.



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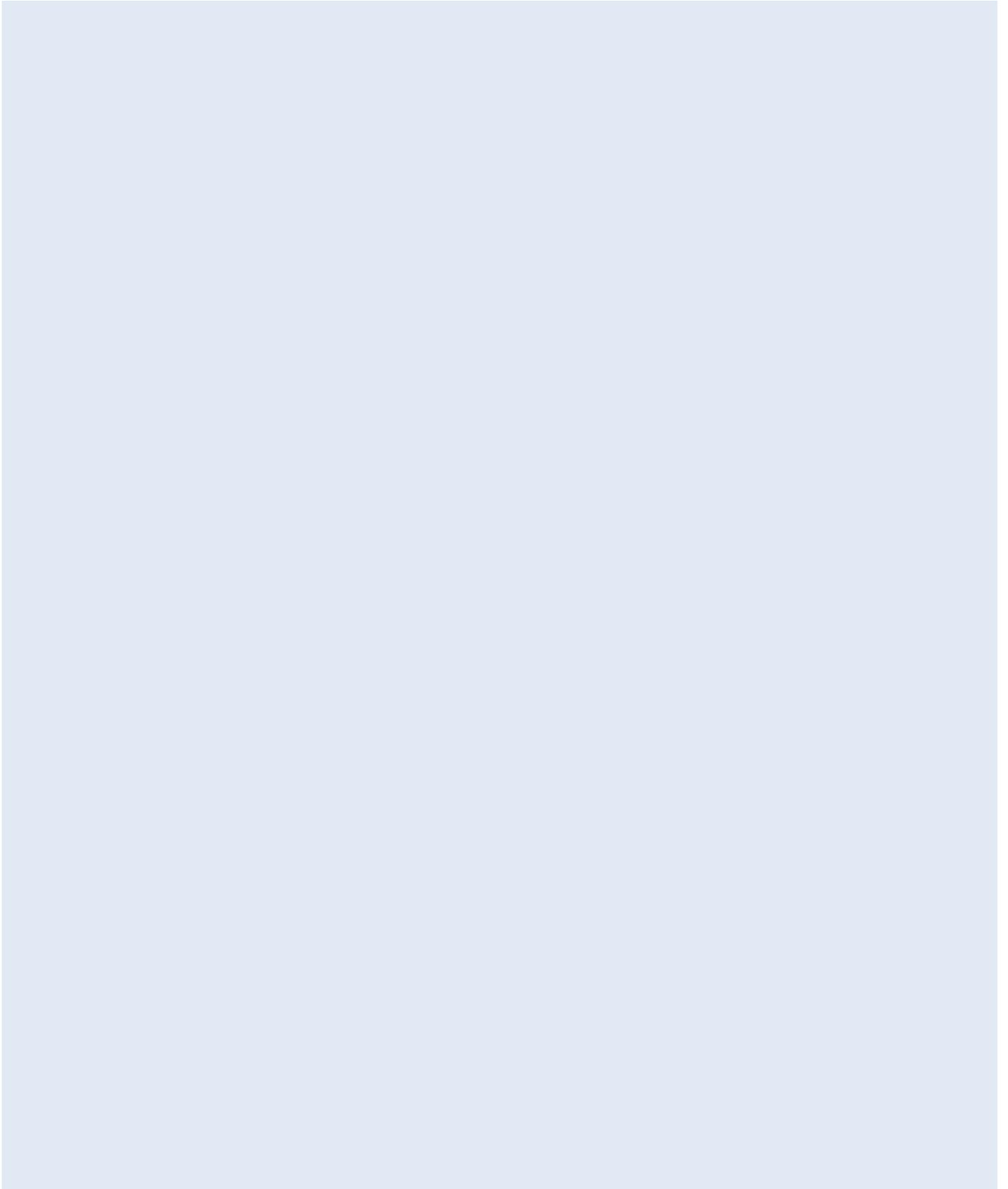
FAST FACTS

SsangYong Musso Saracen+ double cab pick-up



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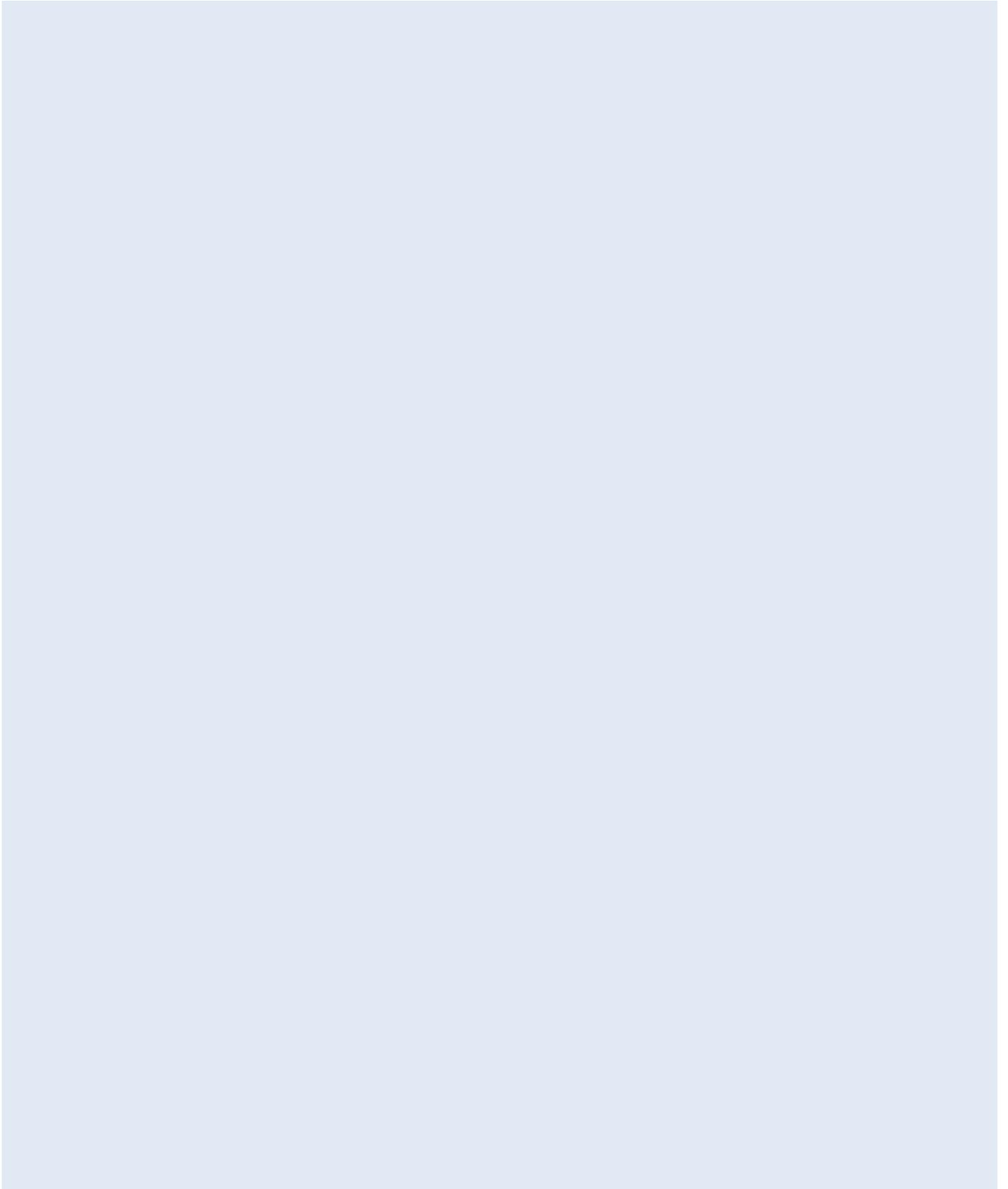
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Price: £40,473

Mechanical: 202 PS 4 cyl 2.2 litre turbo-diesel engine, 6 sp automatic 2/4WD

Max Speed: 113 mph

0 - 62 mph: 11.9 sec

Combined MPG: 30.4

Insurance Group: 50 D



CO2 emissions: 241 g/km

Tax costs CV rates: VED road tax £320 annually, BiK £66 per month 20% payer, £132 per month 40% payer

Warranty: 7 years/ 150,000 miles

Size: L 5.41 m (17.75 ft), W 1.95 m (6.40 ft), H 1.89 m (6.20 ft)

Loadbed: 1 tonne, braked towing weight 3.5-tonnes (3,500kg)

Kerbweight: 2,260 kg (4,982 lb)