

The more the merrier in Toyota's Innova - by Liana Reiners

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Toyota has extended its local vehicle line-up with the introduction of the Innova people mover, available with one engine derivative, but as a seven- or eight-seater model.

The Innova is a product of Toyota's so-called Innovative International Multipurpose Vehicle (IMV) project, but although it shares some similarities with other IMV models like the Hilux and Fortuner, it was specifically designed as a passenger vehicle, with the ride and handling characteristics that are required of vehicles in this segment.



Inside the cabin of the Innova is where the main difference between the two models becomes apparent. The eight-seat version features two tone luxury cloth trim, while the more upmarket seven-seater boasts leather trim on the seats, steering wheel and shift lever.



The seven-seat model is fitted with individual captain seats in the middle row with slide and recline functions, while the eight-seat model has a bench in the middle row. The middle seats can be folded flat and tumbled forward, while the third row of seats folds sideways in a similar fashion to those on the Fortuner.

Both versions of the new Innova offer a long list of luxuries as standard equipment. This includes a multi-information display, electric windows, wireless door locking with alarm and immobiliser, built-in steering wheel controls for the audio, Bluetooth and multi information display system and a dual automatic air-conditioning system with clean air filter and a digital display input that shows inlet mode, vent mode and set temperature. The system features vents for all three rows of occupants.

Both versions of the Innova are equipped with a driver and passenger airbags and seat belts for all passengers. In addition, the Innova features a specially designed impact absorbing body, frame and steering wheel boss. All models are equipped with ABS brakes.

Under the bonnet of the Innova is Toyota's 2,7-litre VVT-i four cylinder petrol engine. This powerplant is fitted with dual overhead camshafts, sixteen valves and intelligent adaptable variable valve timing (VVT-i) to deliver 118 kW at 5 200 r/min and 241 Nm of peak torque at 3 800 r/min. Fuel consumption is rated at 11,2 litres/100 km in a combined cycle and CO₂ emissions are rated at 265 g/km.

Under the skin the Innova is equipped with double wishbone independent front suspension with stabiliser bars and four-link rear suspension offering stable handling and a good ride quality. The Innova has an impressive ground clearance of 168 mm.

Both models are sold with a 5 year/90 000 km service plan, 3 year/100 000 km warranty and service intervals of 15 000 km.

The eight-seat Innova has a price tag of R249 700, while the seven-seat Innova retails for R265 500.

