

Space and pace in the new Toyota Yaris -by Liana Reiners

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It's a question potential vehicle buyers are faced with every day. How do you consolidate the principles of durability, reliability, versatility, contemporary styling, efficiency and safety without breaking the bank? With the arrival of the new Yaris, Toyota might have supplied the answer.

The new Yaris looks bolder and sharper than its predecessor, boasting a more masculine demeanour that will hopefully increase its appeal to young male drivers. It is also the first vehicle to feature the distinctive new face of the Toyota family.

There is an equally fresh approach to the interior, with the main focus on creating a fun-to-drive environment. The main instruments and switches have moved from the centre of the dashboard to sit directly in the driver's line of sight, behind the steering wheel, which itself has a more upright angle for a more engaging driving position.

Thinner seatbacks for the front seats mean more knee room for those sitting in the rear. A similar design treatment for the rear seats has helped increase load space, while overall luggage capacity has grown by 49 per cent to 347 litres (to roof line) with the rear seats in place and 768 litres when they are folded flat.



As with the previous generation model, the Yaris is available with 1-litre and 1,3-litre petrol units – but with substantial improvements and in the case of the 1 300 cc variants, a new engine.

Toyota's three-cylinder 1-litre VVT-i petrol powerplant generates 51 kW at 6 000 r/min and maximum torque of 93 Nm at 3 600 r/min. Sprint time from standstill to 100 km/h is 15,3 seconds, while fuel consumption is a claimed 5,1 litres/100 km in the combined cycle. It is mated to a five-speed manual transmission.

With the 1,3-litre dual VVT-i engine, 73 kW is produced at 6 000 r/min and peak torque of 125 Nm at 4 000 r/min. Acceleration from zero to 100 km/h takes 11,7 seconds. Fuel consumption is claimed to be 5,6 litres/100 km. A six-speed manual transmission is standard on all 1,3-litre variants.

The other news on the transmission front is the option of a CVT transmission. This high-tech gearbox features a manual override, sequential seven-step mode that the driver can operate using either the gearshift lever or paddle shifts on the steering wheel.

The new Yaris is equipped with up to seven airbags, including a driver's knee airbag. It also boasts a comprehensive list of active safety systems, including ABS, a brake assist system (BAS) and electronic brakeforce distribution (EBD). An ISOFIX child restraint system, seatbelt warning buzzer, a follow-me-home headlamp system and ToyotaCare's Microdot anti-theft system are standard.

The new Yaris, in both three- and five-door body shapes, will be offered in South Africa in three specification levels – X_i, X_S, X_R.

Prices range from R124 000 for the entry-level 1.0 X_i three-door model to R157 900 for the Yaris 1.0 X_R five-door. With the Yaris 1.3 line-up, prices range between R157 000 and R200 600.

