

## A vehicle for all season - by Adri Bezuidenhout

Are you also of the opinion that a compact, multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) is meant to be a mom's taxi? I must admit, I used to be. Then I got to lay my hands on Mazda's new 5 and what a surprise. It is a vehicle for all seasons, offering bags of practicality, versatility and pure motoring enjoyment at a reasonable price.

Take the two sliding doors for instance. Not only is the Mazda 5 the only MPV in its class with sliding doors, but they are a major plus when parking space is at a premium at shopping centres.



Although not overly spacious, the interior of the 5 is as well-planned and comfortable as you will come across in this sector of the market. The dashboard layout is practical and user-friendly, something other manufacturers can take note of. It also offers lots of extras to make the ride – long or short – more enjoyable for all the occupants.

Believe it or not – and notwithstanding its MPV guise – the Mazda 5 has a sporty feel to it, offering a firm yet comfortable ride, excellent handling, a smooth five-speed gearbox and lively/nippy performance.

Another plus factor in favour of the 5 is the Mazda badge. Since the late 1970s no less than four Mazda products crossed my motoring path for extended periods. Models such as the very first rear-wheel drive 323, the rotary-engined RX-2 which pushed out no less than 97 kW (130 bhp), a sporty MX-6 and a front-wheel drive 323. Yes, there were the normal wear and tear expenses, but never ever did a Mazda let me or a member of my family down. I could find no reason why the 5 should change my mind regarding Mazda reliability.

If you are in the market for a car in this price range, do yourself a favour. Try the Mazda 5 for size. You will be pleasantly surprised. I was.

