

Toyota Aygo – a little beaut for first-time buyers by Adri Bezuidenhout

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OK, it has the Toyota badge on its cute little snout, but once inside it looks and feels more French than Japanese. Then the penny drops. This is the baby that Toyota and PSA Peugeot Citroen developed jointly. The idea was to use the same body but for each manufacturer to bolt in its own little engine under the equally small bonnet.

The most amazing thing about the Toyota Aygo – pronounced i-go – is the roomy interior they were able to squeeze into those small exterior dimensions. Finish is good and solid

while the materials used give the impression that it will stand the test of time. All-round visibility is very good. Interestingly enough, the rear windows are of the click-open design. Can't remember when last I have seen those.



Controls are basic, easy to understand and easy to use, while the air conditioning and heater score full marks. The instrument panel – for lack of a better word --is as basic as they come. The speedometer has the numerals 10, 30, 50, 70, 90, 110, 130, 150 and 170 on it. This is rather confusing because our speed limits are mostly 60-, 80- or 120 km/h. The little cluster for the fuel gauge and trip meter is half the size of a matchbox, which necessitates bi-focals for the not so young in years.

Boot space is minimal, but sufficient enough for first-time buyers.

The little one litre, three-cylinder engine is a gem. It boasts such things as variable valve timing, 12 valves and double overhead camshafts. It pushes out 50 kW at 6 000 r/min and 93 Nm of torque at 3 600 r/min.

There is enough oomph for town driving and it is only on hilly sections on the open road that one realises that the Aygo was designed and developed for city use. The open road isn't its sparring arena.

Mind you, claims made by Toyota are good for a little one like this; zero to 100 km/h in 14,2 seconds and a maximum speed of 157 km/h. Fuel consumption is its strongest point though. Only 4,6 l/km on the combined cycle.

Ride and handling is surefooted, the steering is light and precise and the small turning circle comes in handy in town, especially while manoeuvring the Aygo into small parking spots. Pity about the somewhat vague gear lever for the five-speed gearbox though.

All-in-all a great little city dweller for first-time buyers. And, it has that Toyota badge on the bonnet. That in itself says a lot.

