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MAZDA CX-9

#1

TOP 25 MOST STUNNING CARS / 2022

AUDI Q7



PORSCHE CAYENNE



BMW X5



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Criteria for Choosing Top 25 Most Stunning Cars of the Year 2022



BY DR. HANNINGTON GAYA

With over 300 car models from small to compact to medium to large sizes and different trim levels is a magazine able to pick out only 25, without starring trouble? Which criteria can be used in comparing, choosing and ranking these cars against each other? Which car segments do you leave out and why? This is a big business risk which we should not have done and can not do. Yet, the team has, motivated by three knowns:

First, this act of courage, if not outright mischief, reminds me of a brainy quote by Thomas Carlyle, 'Permanence, perseverance and persistence in spite of all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities: It is this, that in all things distinguishes the strong soul from the weak'.

Second, the American aviator, Amelia Earhart (1897-1937) adds, 'The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is

merely tenacity. The fears are paper tigers. You can do anything you decide to do. You can act to change and control your life; and the procedure, the process is its own rewards.'

Third, most Kenyans do not actually read. They scantily scan and jump to react, mostly criticize and condemn. Here, the team is motivated once more, by an old adage, 'A tiger does not lose sleep over the opinion of sheep'.

The job was done and a list of 25 submitted. In the final list, we zeroed in on executive saloons, SUVs in all segments and double cab pickups, as these have multiple uses, including family transport.

The finalists are not based on market share, or popularity or preference by consumers. The main criteria are a car that stuns even those on the kerb or roadside, who may not even have a driving licence, but who may aspire to owning a car one day. It is ability to turn heads 90-120 degrees, as these cars pass by.

Even then, we tried as humanly as

possible to level the playing field, by listing down key criteria that each car in the chosen segments can be shortlisted on.

We did not exclude cars without official dealers in the country. As all cars these days are nearly the same, the criteria are highly subjective and tricky to execute:

Design

Here, we considered visually and from the brochures, the quality and styling, including the real use of materials.

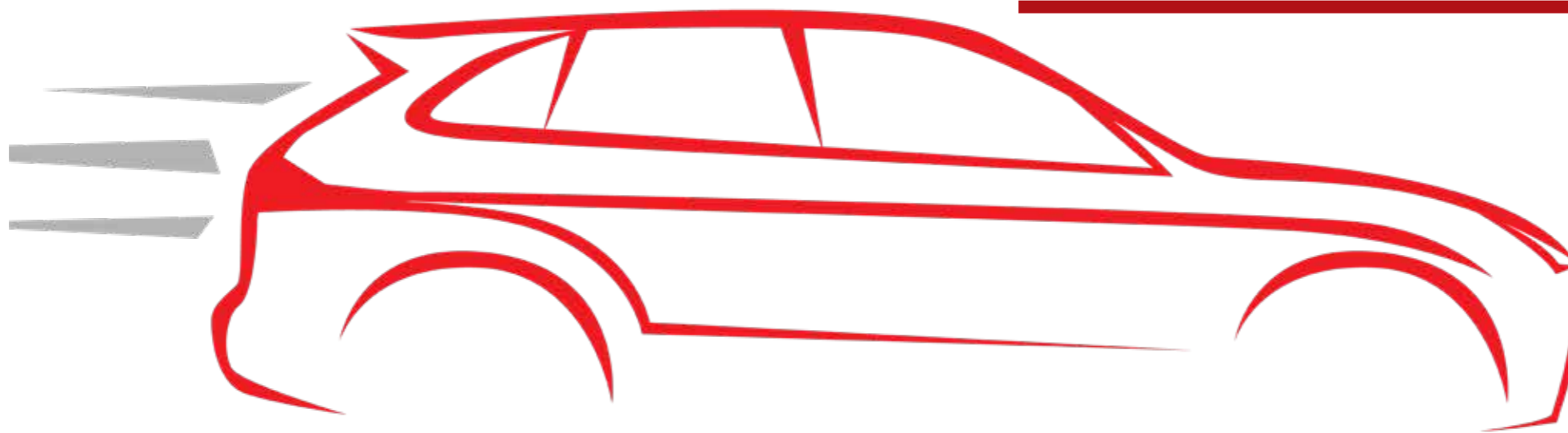
For example, genuine high-quality leather scored more than the faux leather that most of the car manufacturers often use. The finish or stitching is another example.

Engineering

Here, we compared the information from the brochure to the actual benefit of the feature or technology to the consumer, the positioning and ease of use, in all major areas including new technology internal combustion engines, to fuel systems, to

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- Dr. Hannington Gaya



suspensions and automatic transmission and steering. Interior cabin space, ease of entry and seating and practicality of infotainment systems were considered. We involved reputable car bloggers and columnists to help reach some consensus.

Safety

Presence of practical passive and active safety features was checked, including presence of features that assist the driver to minimise impact on collision or to outrightly avoid the collision in the first instance.

Performance

For those vehicles emphasizing on luxury, it was checked if indeed, the car rides like a luxury car and has quality trims, including leather trims that scream luxury. An off-roading SUV must surmount every obstacle. Here, we count the Land Rover in.

Value

Lastly, we compared the cost of the luxury trims and features incorporated in the car. It is at this point that we easily identified our number one, Mazda CX-9. It was that easy.

The Mazda CX-9 gives the consumer real value for money. For some of them, the model's name aided in case of a tie: Jaguar, Porsche, Lexus and Audi.

These models are usually reserved and hardly needs to sing, scream or throw tantrums, to draw attention.

Of course, we have others that nearly, nearly made the cut, but were one or two units shy of getting into the Top 25 mark: Kia Sportage and the Toyota Hilux Double Cab.

For those who may differ with our methodology, we respect your opinion. It is not an easy task for the faint hearted. We welcome your views on this list.

The Top 25 here are cool cars that can make their way as computer or smart-phone screens or even in teenage bedroom walls as posters, any time. ■

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#1

Mazda CX-9

BY DR. HANNINGTON GAYA

Since its introduction in 2016, the CX-9 has stood in time as Mazda's brand flagship. The CX-9 is a stand-up example of both Mazda's premium aspirations, and its technical merit in terms of engine and platform flexibility. While there have been no earth

shattering updates since the initial launch, the all-new Mazda CX-9 Signature shows the brand's knack for rolling out incremental annual improvements that keep the product fresh and the technology contemporary.

Mazda as a brand has been courting buyers since the introduction of the CX-9, charming the East African region since it arrived on the shores. Its unfussy

drive, comfortable surrounds and decent technology, leaves a more than favourable impression, and the Japanese manufacturer periodically uses well-spaced updates to keep the CX-9 spruced up and part of the motoring conversation among discerning car enthusiasts.

The All New 2022 Mazda CX-9 Signature represents the flagship of the range, with its new bold exterior badging



design, with signature all round chrome ascents. This flagship model comes with Mazda advanced keyless entry system as well as an automatic walk-away locking system.

Premium Interior

The 2022 Mazda CX-9 Signature model's interior comes in Dark Oriental Brown Quilted Nappa leather seating surfaces with premium white stitching.

Centre console and door panels come with the stylish Santos Rosewood trim and aluminium accents.

Both Front seats come with 10 position power adjust with 2-position memory settings for driver's seat with power lumbar support.

LED illumination on door-pockets and overhead interior lighting with intensity control form part of the premium interior finish.

Dashboard material and door panels comprise of quality soft leather touch materials. Wide high mounted center console with LED illumination houses the BOSE® Premium 294Watt 12-speaker audio system and 3D full Local Navigation maps controls.

Premium wide armrest with dual opening function with dual



The All New 2022 Mazda CX-9 Signature represents the flagship of the range, with its new bold exterior badging design, with signature all round chrome ascents. This flagship model comes with Mazda advanced keyless entry system as well as an automatic walk-away locking system.

USB and Auxiliary as well as SD slot card connections are part of the premium interior. Multifunction 9" color screen display panel with full 360-degree view camera.

The Mazda CX-9 Signature interior also features a power moonroof, an interior signature LED lighting on roof panels, front A/C ventilated seats, front and rear heated seats

and independent rear A/C control switches with full digital display.

One-touch front and rear power windows control system, rear privacy glass, with premium rear doors pull up blinders and a third row with seat belts, cup holders, USB outlets for maximum convenience complete the interior premium features.

>>

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>> Multifunction display

The 2022 CX-9 comes with the 9-inch MAZDA CONNECT™ infotainment screen. There is the new addition of Android Auto and Apple CarPlay compatibility together with Wireless phone charging system. Active Driving Heads Up Display with speed and navigation indication as well as traffic sign recognition. Six USB ports are available to accommodate all passengers and their devices including the 3rd row seats.

Performance technologies

These include smart city brake support (SBS), automatic emergency braking (AEB), lane-keep assist system (LAS), lane-departure warning (LDW), full-speed Mazda radar cruise control (MRCC), traffic sign recognition (TSR), rain-sensing front wipers and rear automatic wiper, dynamic I-Activ and Intelligent AWD system, dynamic stability system (DSC) and traction control system (TSC) for maximum stability control.



Signature lighting

This incorporates adaptive LED headlamps (ALH), automatic high beam control (HBC), front LED foglamps, rear LED lighting, LED turn indicators on side mirrors, front and rear chrome ascents and front and rear parking sensors.

Practicality

The all-new Mazda CX-9 offers the advanced foot-activated power liftgate with adjustable height control for ease of reach.

Both second and third rows can easily be folded forward to create a large boot space. Dual chromed exhaust pipes as well as signature rear chromed bumper further compliment the bold stylish look whilst enhancing feel of total performance.

Signature alloy rims

The 2022 CX-9 comes with the signature brushed aluminium 20-inch alloy wheels with an impressive 222mm ground clearance. The updated refined and retuned suspension offers a smoother, quieter and more natural ride and greater sound sup-

pression by way of a thicker headliner and thicker floor mats, which aid in ease of natural conversation and enjoyment.

The incorporated Skyactiv-chassis has strut suspension at front and multi-link suspension at the rear.

The CX-9 GT carbon edition

The new addition, the 2022 CX-9 GT Carbon Edition, comes with the following featured highlights:

- Blacked out Chrome grill styling.
- Blacked outer side mirrors styling with LED turn indicators.
- Signature Blacked out styling 20-inch Aluminium alloy wheels.
- Burgundy Red Leather 7-row seats.
- Red interior stitching on door panels, center console.

SKYACTIVE engine

Mazda's 2.5-litre four-cylinder turbo petrol engine delivers 170 kW at 5000rpm and robust 420 Nm of torque at 2000rpm peak outputs, partnered with a Skyactiv-Drive 6 speed automatic transmission. It's an engine designed more for effortless torque with a big body to lug around, capable of swiftly overtaking or ducking into a gap in traffic, with glee. The Mazda CX-9's Skyactiv-G 2.5-litre direct injection turbocharged engine offers driving excitement never before felt in a car of its size, when running on high Octane petrol (93)

The engine is smooth and with the silence of a church during the weekdays. The transmission is fluid with smooth changes in gears. If you plan to go upcountry, and cover gravel roads or wet areas often, the AWD all-new Signature is the choice.

The engine is smooth and with the silence of a church during the weekdays. The transmission is fluid with smooth changes in gears. If you plan to go upcountry, and cover gravel roads or wet areas often, the AWD all-new Signature is the choice.

Daily life

Inside the cabin is serene. Road and wind noise are well insulated for hassle and fatigue free. Drive. The ride is comfortable even on the 20-inch wheels. The ability to shrug off choppy gravel roads and smooth out speed humps on roughly designed road surfaces impressive.

When most of your day is a crazy merry-go-round, it is nice to step into a car that is both spacious and comfortable, and behaves on the road in the manner it proclaims on the tin. The Mazda CX-9 is a confident, capable drive, enhanced in this case by the premium feel of the top-spec Signature. All this in a package that, although obviously large, doesn't feel like one. Instead, the CX-9's sporting verve, tidy handling, and sterling performance is up to the task in luxurious motoring.

Verdict

In a nutshell, inside the all-new Mazda CX-9 Signature and Carbon Edition, premium design and luxury meets family. The Mazda CX-9 Signature is the ultimate blend of stunning sophistication and large family SUV, all at an affordable price.

Make your way to the Mazda Division of the giant Al-Futtaim Automotive CMC Motors Group on Lusaka Road, Nairobi, for a glance and a demonstration of the all-new Mazda CX-9 Signature or its sibling, the GT Carbon Edition and sample the stunning model that is turning heads on the roads, as it slips by. You will be stunned by the curves in the right places and its elegant and premium appearance in a choice of metallic or mica colours and a variety of seat covers in leather red, silk beige or black or the premium Nappa leather in oriental brown.

My choice is titanium flash or deep crystal blue mica body colours. All the leather seat colours look sumptuous. ■



Audi

GAYA JUNIOR

A thoroughly-revised Audi Q7 has been delivered to the world and it is unfortunate we do not have a dealer locally. Once more, the notable styling, mechanical and interior upgrades by Audi have propelled this premium SUV to the top of its segment. It is a pity the discerning motorists have to turn to the roadside auto-shops for this premium brand, with all the accompanying dust.

When Audi's 2nd-generation Q7 was launched in sub-Saharan Africa in 2015, it impressed four-ring fans with its modern and comfortable interior cabin, which featured impressive tech features and exemplary levels of refinement, not to mention superb on-road comfort.

However, when it comes to the exterior, the Ingolstadt-based brand's Premium SUV's understated styling isn't as convincing as its competitors.

With this latest and substantial facelift, the Q7 offers considerably more curb appeal and is notably more sophisticated than before. Moreover, the interior updates represent a major step forward, rendering Audi a formidable rival to other offerings in this segment, from Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Volvo and Land Rover.

Design

The revised single-frame grille makes this facelifted Q7 easily recognisable, which now features six (vertical) vanes - previously, they were (horizontal) slats. In S Line guise, a chrome blade runs the width of the front bumper, while the grille is finished in titanium black. The Q7's front-end styling is further enhanced by virtue of being equipped with Audi's Matrix LED technology, but it's an optional extra. Large 20-inch wheels are offered as stan-



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dard. At an extra cost, one can adorn their Audi with 21-inch, 5-double-spoke V-style alloys finished in Graphite Grey.

Interior

The updated Q7's cabin is deeply impressive. When you plant yourself behind the Audi's elegant steering wheel for the first time, you'd be forgiven for being overwhelmed by the sheer number of technology and luxury features in front of you. As you would expect for a vehicle in its

price range, perceived build quality is top-notch and the overall "look and feel" is decidedly premium. Perhaps the most significant upgrade is the dual digital screen setup, with the upper 10.1-inch screen dedicated to core functions - such as infotainment, navigation, telephony and key vehicle information, while the lower 8.6-inch screen provides easy access to the climate control system and also serves as a writing pad if one needs to quickly search for contacts or navigation destinations.

The screens effectively reduce the need

for physical buttons in the cabin, offering acoustic and haptic feedback, giving a feeling of one pressing physical button when you tap on the surfaces. The screens' menus are simple and easy to navigate, with functions such as Apple CarPlay and Android Auto being accessed wirelessly: You do not need to plug in a cable to access.

Thanks to an embedded sim card, the Q7 is capable of offering live traffic information, weather updates, Wi-Fi hotspot and full access to Audi's connected ser-

vices in particular markets.

What's more, Audi's Virtual Cockpit Plus (the digital instrument cluster, which is standard) can be easily configured using the mounted buttons on the Q7's multifunction steering wheel. It's a slick system and the graphic resolution is crisp and clear. The Q7 can also be fitted with a head-up display, but again, at an extra cost.

Buyers can also opt for Audi's Comfort Package, which includes features such as all-wheel steering, adaptive cruise >>

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>> control, swerve assist, efficiency assist and turn assist, as well as 3rd-row seating, which effectively turns the Q7 into a 7-seater. Overall, the Q7's interior execution is difficult to fault.

In terms of space and practicality, the Q7 has much to offer, with head, shoulder and legroom for 2nd-row passengers being more than adequate. On the optional 3rd row, legroom is a bit tight and the seating position a trifle awkward, especially for adults. The last row's legroom can be improved by sliding the trio of middle-row seats forward, which is useful. In truth, the 3rd row is best suited for children and prospective Q7 buyers need to consider just how often they're likely to utilise those 2 rearmost seats.

If the answer is "not very often", perhaps leave that option box unticked. Still, the pair of 3rd-row seats can be easily folded or flipped up electronically using the button in the load bay and when folded down, the load floor surface is flat and allows access to the full 865 litres of utility space.

Should you need to load longer or bulkier items, you can fold the middle row of seats down individually with a maximum load space of 2,050 litres becoming available, which is substantial.

Adaptive air suspension is standard and allows you to lower the vehicle using a load-bay button, which makes it easier to load larger/heavier items. The tailgate is electronically operated and features foot-activated gesture control.

Engine

Driving a thrusting turbo-diesel SUV leaves one somewhat satisfied, especially when it's as refined as this Q7. Under its long and wide sculpted bonnet lurks a 3.0-litre V6 workhorse - the only power-plant currently available for the Q7 in sub-Saharan Africa and it develops fairly healthy outputs of 183 kW and 600 Nm of torque. Those numbers are directed to the tarmac via a buttery-smooth 8-speed automatic transmission and Audi's quattro all-wheel-drive system. It is fair to note that other engines - especially the petrol, are available but only on grey imports.



The engine and transmission are superbly matched and the driver is always hard-pressed to notice the smooth gear changes. Steering-mounted paddles are used to actuate shifts manually on those spirited runs and you can select the appropriate driving mode using the Drive Select button in the centre console. The mod-

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els include Dynamic, Comfort, Allroad, Offroad, Auto and Individual, the latter of which allows you to tailor the steering, suspension and engine settings to your preference. With air suspension, the Q7 also adjusts the ride height according to the selected mode.

With a claimed zero to 100 kph time of 6.9 seconds, the Q7 is fairly quick for a Premium SUV that tips the scales at over 2.2 tonnes. The Q7 delivers its performance in such a pleasingly refined



manner. The Audi really is an utter pleasure to drive over long distances. The Q7 makes light work of overtaking and its in-gear acceleration - from 80 kph to 120 kph and beyond, if you must, is mightily impressive.

Ride

It's incredible how some manufacturers can make a big chunk of metal, plastic and rubber, of which the Q7 is a shining example, feel like something far lighter and more agile than it is.

The Q7 is surprisingly nimble and capable of attacking corners with a modicum of enthusiasm. This increased agility might very well be the result of Audi's advanced 4-wheel steering - offered as part of the Comfort Package, which the manufacturer claims to offer greater manoeuvrability at lower speeds - which shrinks the turning circle, while improving handling ability at high speeds. As for the Q7's ride quality, it's supremely comfortable on both tar and gravel and the Q7 arguably sets the benchmark for ride comfort in this segment...

Verdict

The Audi Q7 continues to meet expectations in more areas, over-deliver on most, and rarely puts a foot wrong. Expensive, sure, but it is one of the best choices you can make at this end of the market, regardless of the fuel type you prefer. Its styling might be a tad too conservative for some, but the latest updates have undeniably given the Q7 more curb as well as road presence.

The interior is spacious and practical and the cabin can be lavishly-equipped with Audi's latest technology, provided that you are willing to splurge on the Ingolstadt-based brand's extensive options list.

In terms of performance, the Q7 performs quite spiritedly - it definitely doesn't lack punch and, as for its day-to-day efficiency, that's the cherry on top.

The facelifted Q7 is definitely more accomplished than it was in 2015 and the latest updates have ultimately strengthened the Audi Q7's buying proposition. ■





#3

Jaguar F-Pace

BY GAYA JUNIOR

Jaguar announced the updated F-Pace. So, it's out with the old, in with the new, as the British manufacturer seeks to refresh its popular F-Pace range. The upgrade comes with new mild-hybrid powertrains, new interior, and extra tech.

With the facelifted F-Pace now in the local showroom at Inchcape Kenya showrooms, we delve into the marque's best-selling SUV.

The updated F-Pace is probably the last fossil-fuelled Jaguar model to paw its way out of the brand's Solihull fac-

tory. Since its introduction in 2016, the F-Pace has gone on to become Jaguar's best-selling model around the globe. The new model incorporates subtle exterior design changes, with the interior receiving a major overhaul that includes a new cabin layout and a bigger, faster-reacting infotainment system.

Exterior

There's an optional new Black exterior pack, which includes gloss black finishes to the bumpers, grille and badging. It ramps up the Jaguar's kerb- and road presence appreciably and the gloss black elements are complemented by matching

20-inch alloy wheels. I have to admit, the pack looks quite attractive on the new model, especially at night, when the new "J-shaped" LED lighting elements project an imposing glare down the road.

At the rear, a new bumper design houses new exhaust tips - trapezoid against the outgoing model's oval-shaped pipes - as well as a new tail-light design. These external changes are subtle. The F-Pace has always been a handsome and striking large SUV.

Interior

In recent years, new cars have become scarily expensive - especially in the local market, but the quality of interior materials - especially in premium cars, is not impressive. In fact, manufacturers have opted for gloss materials to make them look more expensive than they really are. From faux carbon fibre, fake aluminium trim and gloss-black plastic masquerading as the real thing rather than authentic materials. Suffice to say that Jaguar Land Rover and Volvo have not been as guilty of

this as the German brands and, as a result, the new F-Pace's interior really does instil a sense of luxury with thick leather seats, tightly quilted hide - on the dashboard and door panels, as well as a perforated leather-trimmed steering wheel.

Of course, the updated F-Pace's interior is not devoid of plastic - the buttons for the ventilation modes, seat heating and demister are gloss black plastic, while the climate control dials have a chromed-look finish. The steering wheel controls lack a nice tactile "push click" feel. One needs to prod squishy plastic panels on the spokes



to activate functions.

An 11.4-inch Pivi Pro infotainment system dominates the fascia. It's made from curved glass, so its user experience is close to that of a high-end tablet. The system reacts to inputs much quicker than before and is now fully compatible with Android Auto and Apple Carplay. The F-Pace also has over-the-air functionality, so buyers won't need to visit a dealer's workshop to receive software updates... it will download and install them from the internet - via a Wi-Fi connection, for example.

Pivi Pro represents a notable upgrade over the previous infotainment system, but it has so much functionality crammed into its submenus that one may jokingly run the Jaguar's battery flat while you sit in the car and attempt to figure it all out. One will definitely need to take some

time to set up favourite features. This will make the features much easier to use than regularly sifting through multiple menus.

All variants of the F-Pace get adaptive cruise control, blind spot monitor, rear collision monitor, rear traffic monitor, traffic sign recognition, and adaptive speed limiter as standard. When it comes to practicality, the F-Pace has a bigger load bay than rivals from Mercedes-Benz and BMW. There's more cargo space when the rear seats are fully folded down.

Engine

Four models are available in the range: the R-Dynamic S, R-Dynamic SE, R-Dynamic HSE, and the range-topping SVR. Buyers initially got a choice of four powertrains: the 2.0-litre turbo petrol four-cylinder 'P250' offering 183 kW on the power spectrum and 365 Nm of torque, a 3.0-

In recent years, new cars have become scarily expensive - especially in the local market, but the quality of interior materials - especially in premium cars, is not impressive. In fact, manufacturers have opted for gloss materials to make them look more expensive than they really are.

litre turbo petrol inline six-cylinder 'P400' with 294 kW and 550 Nm, a 3.0-litre turbo diesel inline six-cylinder 'D300' churning out 221 kW and 650 Nm, or a 5.0-litre supercharged petrol V8 'P550' with 405 kW and 700 Nm - the latter is only offered in the flagship SVR variant.

Jaguar announced that they commit to a fossil-fuel-free future from 2025, so they halted performance development from the current range of internal combustion engines. There's also a 2.0-litre turbodiesel engine available that produces 150 kW and 430 Nm of torque; the powerplant proves economical and pleasingly smooth in combination with the 8-speed automatic transmission. So, the Jaguar's performance is perfectly okay for everyday use.

All engines are fitted to an eight-speed automatic transmission, and >> all-wheel drive is now standard across



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>> the F-Pace range. The four-cylinder delivers the F-Pace to 100km/h from standstill in a claimed 7.3 seconds, while fuel consumption is reported as an average of 9.3 litres per 100 kilometres. The diesel powertrain does the 0-100km/h sprint in a claimed 6.4 seconds, with fuel consumption and emissions listed as 7.4L/100km. The 0-100km/h time drops to a claimed 5.4 seconds with the petrol six, with fuel consumption listed as 8.7L/100km. The V8, meanwhile, completes the benchmark sprint in a claimed 4.0 seconds, with fuel consumption listed as 11.7L/100km. The figures will increase slightly in real life rugged or urban driving depending on traffic levels.



Driving

Since its introduction, the F-Pace is one of the most satisfying models to drive in its segment, with Jaguar retaining its sharp, sure-footed handling attributes. It's a very neutral car to drive fast, which means that even if you turn into corners a little too quickly, the Jaguar won't do anything untoward – it remains poised and easily controllable. The standard all-wheel-drive shuffles power up and down the drivetrain to maintain the best possible traction, which, of course, aids stability. Body control is exceptional and agile for an SUV of its size.

Adaptive suspension is a standard feature on most F-Pace derivatives and it's a key contributor to the F-Pace's dynamic strength. Steering feel is reassuringly weighted – something all Jaguar owners find to be a strength on all models, and the pedal responsiveness is brisk.

Verdict

The update of the F-Pace came at a good time, because the Jaguar's revamped interior really elevates the luxurious feel of the cabin beyond those of its direct competitors. The new infotainment system and its interface are easier to use, faster-reacting and the former now features both Android Auto and Apple Carplay compatibility.

In terms of dynamism, the British marque's executive SUV remains one of



the better-handling offerings in its segment. The adaptive suspension added to the facelift – for certain derivatives, helps it to ride comfortably in most conditions. Practicality wise, it meets all the expectations of a luxury SUV of this size with a sizeable load bay, plenty of rear head and legroom.

Jaguar has added more standard equipment, tilting the price away from the average. That said, if quality and an engaging driving experience are high on your priority list than price, the F-Pace is the car for you. ■

Feel free to visit the Inchcape Kenya ultra-modern showroom situated at Westlands in Nairobi, Kenya, to take your own look and feel of the Jaguar F-Pace.



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#4

Porsche Cayenne

BY MARTIN O'NEIL

The 2022 Porsche Cayenne Turbo GT has been getting headlines because it earned the title of being the quickest SUV around Germany's famed Nürburgring Nordschleife, but one is sure to forget about the 'Ring after spending some time behind the super SUV's wheel. It doesn't matter where you drive it, the Cayenne Turbo GT conquers any kind of pavement you can find.

Based on the Cayenne Turbo Coupe, the new Turbo GT packs a powerful V8 engine, a quick-shifting transmission, and a bunch of enhancements that make it Porsche's fastest-ever production Cayenne. Its 471 kW four-litre biturbo V8 provides the basis

for superb driving characteristics. With 67 kW more than the Cayenne Turbo Coupé and maximum torque of 850 Nm - an increase of 80 Nm, the 0-100 km/h sprint is reduced to 3.3 seconds - 0.6 seconds less, and top speed is now 300 km/h - an increase of 14 km/h.

With even sportier lines and available exclusively as a four-seater Coupé, the Porsche Cayenne Turbo GT comes with all available chassis systems fitted as standard and performance tyres developed specially for this model. The powertrain and chassis also have a unique set-up

specifically tuned for the Cayenne Turbo GT. The result is a harmonious overall concept with superb racetrack capability. This has been proven by Porsche test driver Lars Kern, who lapped the 20.832 km Nürburgring Nordschleife with the Cayenne Turbo GT in a time of 7 minutes 38.9 seconds, setting a new official SUV record.

Compared to the Cayenne Turbo Coupé, the Turbo GT rides up to 17 millimetres lower. Based on this, both the passive chassis components and active control systems have been re-engineered and optimised for handling and performance. They also feature specific calibration to guarantee perfect interaction between them.

You don't need a monster racetrack to enjoy it, because this Cayenne model shines and gets your attention just as well on flowing country roads, as its inspired performance injects you with adrenaline.

Engine

The Cayenne GT's 4-litre twin-turbo V8 takes centre stage with its blitz worthy power and torque outputs. While these numbers don't match the Cayenne Turbo

S E-Hybrid's, make no mistake: the Turbo GT is Porsche's most performance-oriented SUV. In this case, Porsche's much-lauded GT team did not help with the car's development, but the Turbo GT proves its point all the same.

Exterior

In addition to the powerful engine, Porsche gave the SUV several enhancements to make it drive even more like a sports car. The air suspension is 15 percent stiffer compared to the Cayenne Turbo, with the system adjusted to handle the extra power. The power-steering setup and rear-axle steering are also re-tuned, and Porsche engineers said they were overall able to reduce body roll and increase the car's precision in corners.

The Cayenne Turbo GT's 22-inch Pirelli P Zero Corsa tyres were developed for the Turbo GT, and its carbon-ceramic brakes, distinguished by their yellow callipers, measure a massive 17.3-inches in the front and 16.1 inches back. The Cayenne Turbo GT's all-wheel-drive system includes a water-cooled transfer case to support the model's ultra-high performance.

Porsche thankfully also focused on reducing weight. The titanium sport exhaust and the SUV's wheels, for example, shaved some load. Other bits exclusive to the Turbo GT include a carbon-fibre roof, a unique front fascia with larger air intakes, a centre exhaust pipe, and an awesome-looking carbon-fibre fixed rear spoiler.

Interior

A sea of Alcantara is probably the first thing you'll notice once onboard the 2022 Porsche Cayenne Turbo GT. From the sport seats to the door panels to the steering wheel, the GT is covered in the suede-like material. Additionally, the bronze-like seatbelts, seat inserts, and contrast stitching match the Neodyme wheels and distinguish the Turbo GT from other Cayenne cabins. Black or red leather is available as an option.

Also helping to differentiate this version from other Cayennes are Turbo



GT logos throughout the cabin, a red button on the drive-mode selector, and the lack of metal around the air vents. Everything else, however, is very similar to the Cayenne Coupe, including the centre console's sporty handlebars.

People with Android phones will be delighted to know Porsche's new infotainment system, which arrives in the Cayenne Turbo GT, is now compatible with Android Auto. Other important updates include the integration of Apple Music and Apple Podcasts into the infotainment system itself, and the arrival of over-the-air-updates.

Drive

While the Cayenne Turbo GT's power figures raise eyebrows, its handling and steering are sure to impress. In every corner, the Cayenne Turbo GT promises balance and stability to rotate nicely on twisty roads while maintaining a composed posture. What's even more impressive is the degree of confidence one will feel behind the wheel as it will do everything so well, plus encourage you to try harder for the next corner, braking later and carrying more momentum through to the exits.

Like in a sports car, the GT's suspension is calibrated so you feel almost every bump or rut. Its tyres feel like tar, delivering massive traction, and its steering is as accurate as you'll find in an SUV. Simply aim the steering wheel's yellow centre stripe in the right direction, and you probably won't have to move your hands again.

Then there is the lightning-fast 8-speed transmission and the Turbo GT's power delivery. The transmission is so quick and so well calibrated, one pretty much doesn't need to ever use the paddle shifters for any reason other than you just enjoy doing so. Step on the throttle and you feel the torque get to the pavement with linearity and seemingly endless push. The experience makes you feel like a kid riding an infinite sugar rush.

The ride can feel a bit harsh on city streets, thanks to the wheels and tyres and stiffer suspension. You'll also note that the tyres are loud. Another thing to note: The loud exhaust note, even when the sport exhaust is switched on, doesn't make it into the cabin - as much as the target owners and drivers would like. Stand outside, though, and the roar is impressive.

Verdict

It's no surprise the Porsche Cayenne Turbo GT is fast, fun, and agile, words we've used to describe other Porsches in the past. The way it accelerates and brakes, combined with its magnificent grip and its lack of significant body roll, make this Cayenne worthy of the GT badge. Being the quickest SUV around Nürburgring is one thing, but delivering joy, confidence, adrenaline, and a raucous good time on real-world roads is what makes the Cayenne Turbo GT really stand out as special. ■

A visit to the Porsche Centre Nairobi is necessary for the well-to-do East African individuals to peruse the German manufacturers offerings.





#5

BMW X5

BY EVAN REDDY

BMW's foray into SUV territory started in 1999 with one model - the BMW X5. Currently in its third decade of production, the X5 is a compelling choice in the midsize luxury SUV segment. All X5 deriv-

atives offer impressive acceleration, a wealth of technology features, and a spacious, interior cabin. When necessary, one can add a third-row seat, although with a pinch. For a consistent need of a seven-seater, the larger BMW X7 is your choice.

The X5 is a solid choice, with rivalry from Audi Q7, Porsche

Cayenne and Mercedes-Benz GLE. The 2022 BMW X5 carries over with minimal changes beyond the arrival of an opulent Black Vermilion version of the xDrive40i, a well-appointed interior and a pleasurable driving experience in one handsome package.



The X5 has plenty of cargo space, with the rear seats in use, occupants can fit up to 11 carry-on suitcases behind the second row of seats. With the rear seats folded - an operation that can be done from either the side or the rear of the SUV, room for 26 cases is available. One wonders who needs that kind of cargo space.



The entry-level models are equally richly outfitted with modern technology and convenience features, not to mention silky-smooth inline-six-cylinder engine. Upgrading to the plug-in hybrid model gives the X5 the ability to drive solely on electric power for short trips while the optional twin-turbo V8 engine delivers seriously punchy acceleration for long hauls.

It might not be as plush inside as

some rivals, nor quite as athletic as the Cayenne, but when compared to SUVs such as the Q7 and the GLE-class, the X5's well-roundedness shines through.

What is new

The limited-edition Black Vermilion model is new to the line-up for 2022. This black-and-red beauty features unique styling cues as well as a host of high-end features such as Merino Black leather upholstery with red piping, a glass shift knob, a faux-suede headliner, a leather-covered dashboard, and a Harman/Kardon stereo system, to name a few. It's based on the xDrive40i model.

In the new line-up, the wireless smartphone charging pad is no longer offered and the convenience package (remote start, four-zone automatic climate control, Wi-Fi hotspot) has been eliminated from the spec sheet for 40i models. Two new colours are available for 2022 - Sparkling Brown Metallic and Dravit Grey Metallic, and buyers can now order the fancy glass shift knob and control buttons as a standalone option.

The xDrive40i is the X5 to buy. With an impressive zero-to-100-kph time of below 5.0 seconds, it's got sports-sedan acceleration, comes with all-wheel drive, and is a relative bargain in this pricey class. We'd recommend adding the premium package for its head-up display, four-zone automatic climate control, remote engine-start capability, and Harman/Kardon stereo system.

Engines

The 2022 BMW X5 is available in four trim levels. The sDrive40i has rear-wheel drive, while the xDrive40i, xDrive45e, and M50i include standard all-wheel drive. A high-performance X5 M is also available. The X5 is offered >>

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>> with one of three distinct powertrains, each associated with the above 4 main models. X5s wearing the sDrive40i or xDrive40i badge are powered by a 335-hp turbocharged inline-six. The plug-in hybrid xDrive45e comes with a turbocharged inline-six and an electric motor that combine for 389 horsepower. The M50i's 523-hp twin-turbo V8 enables it to rush to 100 kph in less than four seconds. All three powertrains are paired with an eight-speed automatic transmission, and none of them will leave drivers wanting for power in virtually any driving situation.

The X5's refined ride and stable handling is a big improvement compared with the previous-generation model, as is its steering, which feels more connected and direct, albeit slightly sporting in feel. Pitch the X5 into a fast corner, and it holds on reliably and rewards the driver with a predictability that's missing from its main competition.

Electric range

The xDrive45e model comes standard with a 24.0-kWh battery pack that BMW claims is good enough for up to 48 kilometres of electric-only driving. The X5 can use the battery to travel up to 135 kph without tapping the petrol engine. The battery pack can be charged at home on 110-volt or 220-volt outlets or at public charging stations.

Interior

For both the first and second row, interior space is generous for adults, but the X5's optional third row is only suited for kids. Once settled inside, occupants are treated to a cabin lined with high-quality materials, plenty of charging points for devices, and depending on the options chosen, a myriad of luxury features. Power-adjustable front seats with memory for the driver are standard. All models come with a power-adjustable steering column, heated front seats, a panoramic sunroof, dual-zone automatic climate control, a power rear liftgate, rain-sensing windshield wipers, and customizable ambient lighting. Massaging seats, remote start, soft-close doors, acoustic glass, a leather



dashboard, and heated front armrests and steering wheel which make the X5 feel like a high-end luxury SUV.

The X5 has plenty of cargo space, with the rear seats in use, occupants can fit up to 11 carry-on suitcases behind the second row of seats. With the rear seats folded - an operation that can be done from either the side or the rear of the SUV, room for 26 cases is available. One wonders who needs that kind of cargo space.

Twin 12.3-inch displays add a contemporary look to the otherwise restrained cockpit. One serves as a digital gauge display - a feature that's becoming increasingly common among luxury automakers, and the other provides access to the info-

Driving an X5 comes with a certain image - you could just lean into it and go for the raucous M version, or try and appease onlookers with the eco-friendlier plug-in hybrid. Whichever X5 you go for, they're all superbly powered and great to steer.



tainment system, which runs the latest version of BMW's iDrive software. Users can control the system using a variety of methods, including gesture controls, which are less intuitive than just touching the screen or using the centre-console-mounted rotary knob. Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are both standard.

Key safety features include standard automated emergency braking with pedestrian detection, standard lane-departure warning and standard blind-spot monitoring with rear cross-traffic alert.

Verdict

BMW has got to know SUV buyers well, and has built a really solid entry that effortlessly blends luxury, versatility, and performance - plus, offers some old-fashioned BMW driving magic. The basics in the X5 are right. The X5 is road competent, and most features and technology are offered as standard.

Driving an X5 comes with a certain image - you could just lean into it and go for the raucous M version, or try and appease onlookers with the eco-friendlier plug-in hybrid.

Whichever X5 you go for, they're all superbly powered and great to steer. It is good off-roading too, which can't be taken for granted in this class. ■

Visit Inchcape Kenya's BMW division at their Westlands showroom in Nairobi, Kenya for you to take a deeper dive into the version of the X5 that is officially available.



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BY JUNIOR GAYA

The fifth-generation Land Rover Discovery was a big deal when it came out, but for some reason everyone was too busy getting upset about the offset rear number plate. It was all the things a Discovery could and should be, with a lovely new interior, comfort galore, seven-seat option and lots of nifty interior tech. It also looked a lot less like a Lego car, which upset most car enthusiasts.

Recently, the Discovery's biggest competition has come from within its own stable in the form of the new Defender. Land Rover has, therefore, looked to further differentiate the 2 models by repositioning the Discovery as a more premium offering.

Upgrade

Land Rover may be enjoying the global success of the new Defender, but the Discovery is probably the model that has been hit hardest by the newcomer's rampant popularity.

Land Rover has applied a facelift to the model - one that ramps up the interior execution more towards Range Rover-like levels of luxury. The Solihull-based brand has also introduced air suspension as standard fitment, which endows the new-look Discovery with a composed - and eminently comfortable, ride quality.

To meet stricter European emissions standards, new straight-six turbo-petrol and turbo-diesel engines have been installed. However, it's the technology updates inside the Discovery that are easiest to spot, with the same Pivi Pro infotainment system - that's on current Jaguar's, taking centre stage on the premium SUV's fascia.

The hand that Land Rover has played here is logical, but the upgrade has pushed the Discovery price range into a new stratosphere, which means it comes at a premium over the likes of the Volvo XC90, BMW X5, >>



In terms of handling dynamics, the Land Rover is not as nimble as a BMW X5 or Audi Q7, but it's not a wallowing hippo on the tarmac either. It's more composed on-road than its Defender sibling.

Top 25 Most Stunning Cars of the Year 2022

>> Audi Q7 and even the Toyota Land Cruiser LC300. That said, Land Rover has always justified the Discovery's higher sticker price based on the model's brilliant versatility.

Road ability

There's no doubt that the Discovery offers genuine dual-purpose ability, even if this generation model looks a little softer-edged than its predecessors. It's the most capable SUV in its segment across varied surfaces; in truth, it's the only premium SUV that you would actually consider taking on extended off-road trips. By contrast, the standard air suspension enhances the model's on-road abilities too.

In terms of handling dynamics, the Land Rover is not as nimble as a BMW X5 or Audi Q7, but it's not a wallowing hippo on the tarmac either. It's more composed on-road than its Defender sibling. It's a big SUV, but the air suspension adapts nicely to minimise body-roll without compromising ride quality. Such lofty levels of on-road comfort make the Discovery well suited to undertaking long journeys.

Land Rover has made it its quest to make off-roading as hassle-free as possible with every new iteration of vehicle it produces. The Discovery has built-in Terrain Response - you activate it by pressing the rotary dial in the centre console, then waiting a second for it to raise up and then swivelling it to select the mode that matches the terrain you intend to tackle. Low range is easily selected with a simple press of a button beneath the rotary dial. The result is a luxuriously capable off-roader currently on the market; the new Range Rover - which debuted recently, finally eclipses the off-road prowess of the Disco.

Equipment

The introduction of the new 11.4-inch Pivi Pro touchscreen infotainment system in this facelifted Discovery yields improvements in connectivity options, as well as the speed with which the hardware responds to inputs. The glass screen and hi-res display lift the cabin ambience and make the fascia look more contemporary.



It would be nice if Android Auto and Apple Carplay smartphone-mirroring technology were available wirelessly - one will still require a cable connection, but with over-the-air software updates now available, such functionality could be "pushed" to the vehicle in the future without having to visit the dealer's workshop to update the system - locally that would be at Inchcape Kenya.

A wireless charger is provided - in the



The new D300 3.0-litre power unit proved impressively effective at moving the big Discovery around at a brisk pace. It produces healthy peak outputs of 221 kW and 650 Nm and it's allied with a 48V mid-hybrid system.

storage bay beneath the climate controls, but it's not a fast charger, to get an expedient charge-up you need to connect your smart-phone - or another digital device, to the USB/USB C points around the cabin. You can spec the Discovery with loads of them too, including convenient ones on the rear of the front seats that allow for tablets to be charged as well as docked in place.

The Discovery is billed as a 7-seater that can actually accommodate 7 adults, in absolute comfort. Seats are folded electrically via switches near the respective pews or via a cluster of switches located in the load bay.

The electric towbar and electrically deployable tailgate are useful with the latter capable of holding 300 kg, which is more than useful for having impromptu boot picnics. Speaking of the load bay, it's no less than massive and, with all the rear seats folded down, you have access to the largest utility space in the segment - 2,500 litres.

Engine

The new D300 3.0-litre power unit proved impressively effective at moving the big Discovery around at a brisk pace. It produces healthy peak outputs of 221 kW and 650 Nm and it's allied with a 48V mid-hybrid system, which recoups power when slowing down and then redeploys it as torque to assist

the Discovery when it accelerates from a standstill. It's a very quiet motor; in fact, all you really hear from inside the cabin is a hint of wind noise.

The D300 power unit propels the sizeable Disco with more than sufficient gusto courtesy of its strong low-down torque, which continues to be delivered in a linear manner throughout the turbodiesel's rev range. It makes for smooth progress and while the 8-speed automatic transmission isn't quite as sharp as that of the X5, it's still notably slick-shifting and effective at selecting the right gear at the right time.

An abundance of overtaking acceleration is a real strength of the new engine - you don't get that kick of low-down torque that tapers off quickly, which can leave you a bit exposed if you're overtaking at speed. The acceleration is consistent and it hauls along the big-rig Land Rover with impressive speed. It's easy to see how Land Rover claim a 0-100 kph time of 6.8 sec for this derivative.

Clients also have the option of ordering the petrol MHEV model, which utilises the P360 engine fitted with Mild Hybrid technology. The unit is capable of churning out 265 kW on the power spectrum and 500 Nm of torque. The British manufacturer claims an impressive 6.5 seconds for the 0-100 kph sprint.

Verdict

The new Land Rover Discovery is now an expensive proposition, but still represents one of the most luxurious ways to go off-road. The updates push it further up the premium ladder as it tries to make a case for itself above its Defender sibling.

If you're wearing your sensible cap and looking for a large family car that executes everything from on-road journeys to off-road excursions in a more comfortable, connected and practical manner than any other offering in the premium SUV category, you are likely to end up with a Land Rover Discovery every time. It's an expensive proposition, but it lacks for absolutely nothing. ■

The official dealer is Inchcape Kenya, situated in Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya. Pay a visit a sample what is officially on offer.



#7

Lexus LX

BY STAFF WRITER

The Lexus LX is a luxury full-size SUV based on Toyota's Land Cruiser - whose all-new model was launched in Kenya in December.

The Lexus LX is bulky and luxurious, with an impeccable off-road pedigree. The Lexus LX has always been offered with a single V8 powertrain over the years, with the full model's name - LX 460, LX 470, or LX 570, changing to coincide with the engine displacement at each step.

Changes to the 2020 model were limited to a new Sport Package on three-row models. In 2021 the LX changes were minimal. 2022 is here and Lexus didn't hesitate to debut its redesigned flagship LX SUV, sporting an upgraded interior and riding on a modernised platform powered by a twin-turbocharged engine.

The previous generation LX570 took off-road capability seriously but didn't skimp on the luxury, boasting a 409-hp twin-turbo V6. Four-wheel drive remains standard and the LX is equipped with a number of off-road goodies, including a height-adjustable suspension system.

Lexus enriched the new LX's interior to compete with plusher contemporaries - large luxury SUVs such as the BMW X7, the Land Rover Range Rover, the Mercedes-Benz GLS-class and the soon to be released Audi Q9.

What's New

Following the last generation's 13-year run, the 2022 LX600 receives a ground-up redesign. The LX trim levels are as follows: Standard (Base), Premium, Luxury, F Sport and Ultra Luxury, with the mid-range Luxury trim representing the best value, as it adds niceties such as semi-aniline leather upholstery, a Mark Levinson stereo system, and handsome 22-inch wheels, among other features.

If you're looking for luxury that rivals the Range Rover or top-spec models from BMW and Mercedes, you'll want to go with the Ultra Luxury trim, although at the expense of having only four seats, albeit very luxurious.



Engine

The LX600 is powered by a twin-turbocharged 3.4-litre V6 engine that churns out 305 kW (409 horsepower) and 650 Nm (479 pound-feet) of torque. This powertrain is also available in the new Toyota LandCruiser. For those who value fuel economy or have any desire to go off-road, the LX500d is probably a better bet. The 3.3-litre twin-turbo V6 diesel engine cranks out 227 kW and 700 Nm just like it does in the LandCruiser. Both engines pair seamlessly with a 10-speed automatic transmission and four-wheel drive as standard.

Exterior

Up front, there are new headlights, a bold new interpretation of the Lexus spindle grille, a unique bonnet and, of course, different front bumpers, depending on your taste.

The side profile comes with different alloy wheel designs, and a new rear quarter window sporting a more angular design.

The tailgate is less upright, and the tail-lights and rear bumpers are also unique. The LX rides on wheels that range between 20 and 22 inches depending on model.

Interior

On the inside, everything looks familiar yet subtly different, with the LX featuring its own dashboard and interior door panels. One is welcomed into the new LX by a modern and luxurious makeover, with a wide centre console between the front seats that creates a cosy cockpit environment. Quilted leather upholstery, a leather-wrapped dashboard, wood trim, and smoked-chrome accents gives the LX a high-end appearance and luxury ambiance.

>>

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Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are both expected to be standard and could even be offered with wireless connectivity. Wireless charging will be offered, and Lexus says audiophiles will be able to upgrade the stereo to a 25-speaker Mark Levinson surround-sound system.

>> Three standard displays grace the LX's dashboard and it starts with the 8-inch screen for the gauge cluster. Rising out of the dash is the 12.3-inch infotainment touchscreen that's housed in a unique skateboard-style section, including a Lexus-exclusive starter button with built-in fingerprint reader. Directly below is a LX-only 7.0-inch secondary touchscreen that's primarily for the Multi-Terrain Select system, but also features additional settings for the climate control setup.

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The entry-level Standard trim comes with room for five across in two rows of seats. The Premium, Luxury, and F Sport trims come with a third row of seats that increases passenger capacity to seven and features an "auto arrange" switch to lay

all the seats flat, and a "walk-in" mode that electronically folds the second row to make entry into the last row easier.

The top-spec Ultra Luxury model is only offered as a four-seat layout, with dual luxurious captain's chairs in the rear divided by a centre console housing a touchscreen for the climate control, plus rear-seat entertainment displays, wireless smartphone charging capability, and specially designed seats to maximise comfort. The rear seats can be reclined up to 48 degrees, and comfort for those in the back can be further enhanced by sliding and tilting the front passenger seat forward and deploying the built-in footrest.

Handling

Off-road aids include crawl control, downhill assist, Multi-Terrain Select, which offers the driver six driving modes - Auto, Dirt, Sand, Mud, Deep Snow and Rock, and a Multi-Terrain Monitor with cameras mounted at the front, rear and under the wing mirrors.

A suite of on-road driver-assistance features are standard on the LX and includes autonomous emergency braking with day and night pedestrian-and-bicyclist detection, oncoming vehicle detection during turns, emergency steering assist, radar-guided cruise control, dynamic high beams, and road sign recognition, lane-departure warning with lane-keeping assist, adaptive cruise control.

Verdict

For those who want a dash of extra on-road performance, there's now an F Sport option complete with 22-inch wheels, thicker seat bolsters, sportier shocks, a Torsen limited-slip rear differential, rear stabiliser bar, retuned steering, and adaptive suspension. ■

The Lexus brand unfortunately isn't officially represented locally. With the global market being accessible nowadays far much easier than decades before, one can purchase and ship in a zero-mileage Lexus and deal with the duty upon its arrival at the Mombasa Port or JKIA if ferried by air.



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#8

Range Rover

BY JUNIOR GAYA

Land Rover having fully revealed its new luxury land yacht. It is immediately recognizable as it stays true to the trademark profile and Range Rover DNA, continuing to refine driving luxury. Built around a new architecture which Land Rover calls MLA-Flex, the new Range Rover is available in standard- and long-wheelbase guises and buyers are able to choose from four, five and seven-seat interior configurations.



Engines

With the new platform, comes fresh engines, including a brand new 4.4-litre twin-turbo petrol V8 and two plug-in hybrid variants. The former is good for 390 kW and 750 Nm, as well as a 4.6 second 0-100km/h sprint, according to claims from the British come Indian manufacturer. The plug-in hybrid models are powered by a 3-litre straight-six Ingenium petrol engine paired with an electric motor, and the drivetrain is available in 323 kW and 373 kW guises. Thanks to a 38.2

kWh battery, the hybrid models are able to cover up to 100km on electric power alone, again according to claims from the shop floor. Kenyans will access a D350 3.0-litre, 6-cylinder turbo-diesel model, boasting outputs of 257 kW and 700 Nm. A 375 kW Plug-In Hybrid (PHEV) version will be offered.

Land Rover says it will launch a fully electric variant of the Range Rover in 2024. Although the EV hasn't been officially confirmed for the Kenyan market, given the strides JLR has made in electrification in South Africa, its introduction here is likely.

Kenya Power (KPLC) has already announced plans for electric car charging stations along major highways, at parking lots, in malls et al plus lobbying for the State to lower import taxes for non-fuel driven cars; a push in the right direction.

Technology

The chassis on the new Range Rover benefits from advanced technology in the form of electronic air suspension, integrated chassis control with dynamic response pro and standard all-wheel steering, which results in a turning circle of under 11 metres for this behemoth of a car.

The new Range Rover is whisper quiet on the road, thanks to a third-generation active noise cancellation system that gen-

erates a cancelling signal, which is then played through the 35 speakers of the meridian signature sound system.

With preference and depending on the model and options selected, well-heeled owners can also look forward to power assisted doors with integrated hazard detection, a new rear seat entertainment system with adjustable 11.4-inch HD touchscreens and a tailgate event suite that features special lighting, audio features and tailored cushions for picnicking or tailgating at events like the Safari Rally or the Rhino Charge if they're willing to take their prized possessions out into the natures elements.

A new 13.1-inch curved, floating infotainment screen is the centerpiece in the cabin, which provides haptic feedback for the first time. This new Pivi Pro system works in tandem with a semi-floating 13.7-inch digital instrument cluster with new high-definition graphics.

Other available features that grace the new Range Rover include remote park assist, which allows owners to manoeuvre the car from their smartphones - giving one a cool party trick when trying to park in all these malls with questionable pillars, as well as adaptive cruise control with steering assist. The flex list also includes a cabin air purification pro system, which reduces bacteria and allergens.



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Design

The new Range Rover is available in HSE and Autobiography trim grades in the first instance, followed later with a First Edition liquid cash to flash. Those seeking a bit more individuality will also be able to order a bespoke, ultra-luxurious SV model, featuring various exclusive features and design themes. Developed by special vehicle operations (SVO) the simply-named Range Rover SV is the first model to wear a ceramic SV roundel which will also be used on future products developed by SVO.

The SV model is available in either short- or long-wheelbase guise with 2 distinct design themes including SV Serenity or SV Intrepid. Customers are able to not only choose from a wide selection of colours, including 14 colours from >>

>> the SV bespoke premium palette, but can create their very own colour via the SV bespoke match to sample service.

The SV Serenity features Corinthian bronze exterior accents as well as an optional Corinthian Bronze contrasting roof. Optional 23-inch diamond turned dark grey gloss alloy wheels with Corinthian Bronze Satin inserts is optional. Specific interior details include duo-tone mosaic-pattern embroidery which differentiates the front from the rear cabin. Clients can match the light semi-aniline perlino rear seats with either liberty blue, sequoia green or caraway near-aniline leather for the front seats.

As for the SV Intrepid, it's identified with its anthracite metal plated and graphite atlas exterior finish for a stealthy appearance. This look is enhanced with a narvik black contrast roof and 23-inch dark grey satin alloy wheels with narvik black gloss inserts and optional red brake calipers. Specific interior details include Black Satin ceramic elements and a semi-aniline Ebony leather which can also be combined with near-aniline Rosewood front seats and semi-aniline Ebony rear seats for a duotone interior look.

The optional SV Signature suite takes passenger comfort to the next level. The luxury touches continue with a continuation of the smooth ceramic finishes found on the gear lever, terrain response and volume controls, combined with anonymised metal finishes and a selection of fine wood trim. Near-aniline leather and sustainable non-leather ultra-fabrics (SV Intrepid) can be specified by customers which combine with kvadrat remix textile for a dual-tone look.

For ultimate rear passenger comfort, buyers can opt for the optional SV Signature suite which provides ultra-comfortable seating for 2 passengers with 24-way



The new Range Rover is available in HSE and Autobiography trim grades in the first instance, followed later with a First Edition liquid cash to flash. Those seeking a bit more individuality will also be able to order a bespoke, ultra-luxurious SV model, featuring various exclusive features and design themes.



adjustment - long wheel base (LWB) only, and incorporates a convenient deployable club table. All Range Rover SV derivatives are also equipped with large 13.1-inch rear-seat entertainment screens and SV-specific headphones.

In terms of engines, the Range Rover SV is available in petrol, diesel and hybrid guise. A powerful 390 kW /750 Nm 4.4-litre twin-turbocharged V8 petrol engine hides under the bonnet as well as a 3.0-litre, 6-cylinder diesel engine with 257 kW and 700 Nm. A 375 kW Plug-In Hybrid (PHEV).

Verdict

The new Range Rover's modernist design makes an incredible and powerful statement, while cementing its segment leading position with its 50 years of evolution, pedigree, new levels of sophistication and aesthetic grace. ■

Do feel free to walk into Inchcape Kenya's showroom in Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya, for a look and feel moment of silence, as you admire what belongs to the few with tremendous



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BY MARTIN O'NEIL

Range Rover's mid-size luxury SUV, the Velar - which sits between the Evoque and Sport in the family line-up is now even more desirable, sustainable and intelligent. The 2022 model is Land Rover's style-focused compact SUV, earning its place alongside its luxurious brethren with a high-class ambience. It's offered with either a turbocharged four-cylinder, a turbocharged-and-supercharged inline-six and 2022 sees the introduction of an electric plug-in hybrid option.

New

For 2022, Range Rover made only minor changes to the Velar. Heated front seats are now standard across the line-up and a new cabin air-filtration system with ionisation is available as an option. New and optional, is an updated adaptive cruise control feature that offers both steering assist for highway driving and an off-road mode. Ostuni pearl white and Lantau bronze metallic join the available colour palette.



Engine

The new 2.0-litre four-cylinder P400e plug-in hybrid offers a smooth and refined drive, producing a combined 404PS and 640 Nm of torque from its 300PS petrol engine and 105kW electric motor, with an impressive 0-100km/h in 5.4 seconds. A 17.1Wh lithium-ion battery, located under the boot floor, can be charged to 80 per cent in just 30 minutes using a fast DC charge point, or 1 hour 40 minutes using a standard 7kW wall box. With zero tailpipe emissions in electric mode, an impressive real-world all-electric range of 53km, fuel economy of up to 2.2 litres/100km, the Range Rover Velar is now even more sustainable by design.

A new family of 3.0-litre straight-six Ingenium engines is introduced for the first time. The latest generation of smooth and efficient petrol and diesel engines are available with 48-volt mild hybrid electric vehicle (MHEV) technology for reduced fuel consumption, heightened refinement and efficient performance. The new straight-six engines, developed in-house, are available as D300 (300PS diesel) and P400 (400PS) petrol all-wheel drive variants, each fitted with air suspension as standard for signature Range Rover comfort.

The MHEV system uses a Belt integrated Starter Generator (BiSG) in the engine bay to harvest energy usually lost under deceleration, which is then stored in a 48V lithium-ion battery located beneath the rear load space. It is able to redeploy the stored energy to assist the engine when accelerating away, while also delivering a more refined and responsive stop/start system.

The new P400 straight-six engine generates 550 Nm torque and delivers an impressive 0-100km time of 5.5 seconds. The engine features an electric supercharger supported by a twin scroll turbocharger and Continuous Variable Valve Lift (CVVL), for refined performance.

The D300 diesel generates 650 Nm torque, 0-100km/h in 6.5 seconds with fuel economy of up to 6.3litres/100km. Series sequential turbos and an advanced after-treatment system make it one of the world's leading clean diesel engines.

The new in-line Ingenium diesel engine designs meet Real Driving Emissions Step 2 (RDE2) standards and Euro 6d-final real-world driving compliance with 48V MHEV technology boosting responses and fuel economy. As a result, the new Ingenium diesel unit - also now available in the Range Rover and Range Rover Sport - is one of the world's leading clean diesel engines.

Additionally, the next generation four-cylinder Ingenium D200 (204PS diesel) is introduced on the Range Rover Velar, offering more power and improved fuel economy. The engine is offered with the same 48-volt mild hybrid technology as the rest of the range, with fuel economy of up to 6.3 litres/100km.



Much like the Velar's acceleration, its handling is by no means sporty. The suspension competently controls the SUV's body motions and keeps body roll in check while returning a firm, well-managed ride. Models equipped with the available air suspension can raise and lower their ride height for either more dynamic moves on-road or greater dexterity off it.

Interior

Do you like modern architecture? You'll probably like the Velar's simple interior, rendered largely from horizontal lines and bold rectilinear forms. Oh, and the materials used throughout are high quality and deployed in interesting ways. Take the door trim: Instead of using a spear of wood or carbon fibre inlaid into the upper part of the door panels, Land Rover adds the owner's choice of wood or metal into the section of the door between the upper and

lower panels - every Velar has excellent detailing throughout. The Velar's generally boxy shape and visually pleasing rear overhang - bodywork that extends behind the rear wheels - combine to swallow more carry-on suitcases than its immediate competitors with its rear seats up or folded. One can fit 10 carry-ons behind the rear seats and 23 with all seats folded.

Of course, we'd be remiss if we discussed the interior without tipping our caps to the wildly futuristic-looking dual dashboard-touchscreen displays. These dual 10-inch displays run Land Rover's new Pivi Pro infotainment interface, which is both easier to use and more responsive than last year's InControl Touch Pro system, but it's not without its quirks. Bluetooth phone and audio connectivity, voice control, eight speakers, in-dash navigation, and Apple CarPlay/Android Auto integration are all standard. A better audio system with more speakers and SiriusXM satellite radio requires additional options or a move up through the Velar's trim levels.

Land Rover makes available the latest driver-assistance technologies such as automated emergency braking, blind-spot monitoring, lane-keeping assist, and adaptive cruise control on the Velar. Key standard safety features include automated emergency braking with pedestrian detection, lane-departure warning and lane-keeping assist and adaptive cruise control with steering assist.

Verdict

The Range Rover Velar's drop-dead gorgeous looks give it undeniable curb appeal. The generously sized cargo space and high-class interior add to its attractiveness.

According to the manufacturer, the Range Rover Velar leads the way in reductive design. Clean, elegant and distinctive, the Range Rover Velar has a striking, contemporary presence.

The car is beautifully balanced, with optimised proportions. Its proud Range Rover lineage is instantly recognisable: from the formal, powerful front end, through a flowing, continuous waistline, culminating in a taut and elegantly tapered rear. ■

The new 2.0-litre four-cylinder P400e plug-in hybrid offers a smooth and refined drive, producing a combined 404PS and 640 Nm of torque from its 300PS petrol engine and 105kW electric motor, with an impressive 0-100km/h in 5.4 seconds.



BY STAFF WRITER

Toyota's luxury brand - Lexus, sells some sporty, fun-to-drive cars, but the 2022 RX isn't one of them. Despite its aggressive styling and available F Sport model, the RX is a big softie that delivers a creamy ride and two fuel-efficient powertrain offerings. A 3.5-litre V6 is standard, but you can upgrade to a hybrid powertrain that makes 308 horsepower. The standard RX is a two-row, five-seat affair, but there's also an extended-length L model that seats up to seven passengers across three rows.

Inside, the RX offers a plush cabin with plenty of technology features and premium finishes appropriate for this segment of compact luxury SUVs. If you're looking for smooth-riding luxury with a practical twist, the RX is a great option.

New

The RX receives only minor changes for 2022, including newly standard fog lamps and a trio of new colours: Cloudburst Grey, Iridium, and Grecian Water. The Black Line special edition models return for 2022 with another 2,500 limited examples all sporting darkened exterior trim, black wheels, and a matching Zero Halliburton luggage set. Unfortunately for Kenya and East Africa, Lexus isn't represented officially by a local distributor, so customers have had to contend with grey market imports, of which I must say the RX is one of most popular - just as its Japanese Toyota Harrier cousin.

The RX offers a plush cabin with plenty of technology features and premium finishes appropriate for this segment of compact luxury SUVs. If you're looking for smooth-riding luxury with a practical twist, the RX is a great option.

The F Sport models look the coolest, with the lightly optioned RX350 F Sport. Of the RX's many option packages, Navigation package which features a larger 12.3-inch touchscreen infotainment display, in-dash navigation, a DVD/CD player, and a 12-speaker audio system, is a show stopper.

Engine

As aforementioned, buyers can have their RX in two distinct flavours. The popular models badged RX350 are powered by a 3.5-litre V6 while the RX450h comes with the V6 plus two electric motors. If you're an urban dweller and probably go off the beaten track never so often, the best option is the RX350 with all-wheel drive. The RX450h is one of the segment's few hybrids, but is also as popular as the former. Both offerings are mated to an eight-speed automatic transmission.

What the RX does best is ride comfortably - it irons out rough stretches of road and delivers a compliant ride. The cabin remains quiet and well isolated from the road noise, making the RX an excellent long-distance cruiser. Fuel efficiency is where the RX450h shines, and not just because it's offered with an optional hybrid powertrain. Both the RX350 and the RX450h will outperform their factory numbers so long as your right foot isn't too heavy on the gas pedal.

Interior

Lexus never skimps on materials unlike its sibling, so for the RX's interior, fine materials have been chosen, including soft leather, textured metallic or wood trims, with no or few soft-touch plastics. The driving position is comfortable and easy to settle into, with the infotainment system operated by controller just after the shifter.

Luckily, Lexus adds touchscreen capability to the RX's infotainment system.

While it's not quite the cargo-hauling champion, the RX comes close when it comes to space for carry-on suitcases behind its rear seats. With its second row folded - a process done either from the side door or from the cargo area - the RX will manage to pack in the segment's record of 24 cases, although folding the rear seats does not yield a completely flat load floor.

The Enform infotainment system is easy to tune and comes standard with many of the automotive world's most modern and sought-after features. Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, and onboard Wi-Fi are all included. An 8.0-inch infotainment touchscreen comes standard. Upgrading to the 12.3-inch display not only provides a wider viewing screen, it also adds in-dash navigation, a 12-speaker audio system. A nine-speaker setup is standard, as is a DVD/CD player, and access to the Lexus Enform App Suite. This collection of apps provides access to internet connectivity from the infotainment system.

A 15-speaker Mark Levinson premium audio system is optional, as is a rear-seat entertainment system with wireless headphones and dual 11.6-inch monitors. It is wise to note that the grey market imports will differ slightly when it comes to these options so it is well advised to source carefully and wisely in order to receive all that you desire from the Lexus RX.

Standard driver-assistance features add more incentive to buy, but a more comprehensive offering of standard driver aids could move the RX higher in this segment. Key safety features include standard automated emergency braking, standard lane-departure warning with lane-keeping assist and standard adaptive cruise control.

>>

#10

Lexus RX





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>> Verdict

The Lexus RX is surprisingly fuel efficient given the engine capacity, has plenty of standard safety technology and has a very comfortable ride, from its sporty appearance and aggressive styling. The fact is it's slower, but one doesn't buy the RX to win drag races, but to look great hauling kids from school, cruising on road trips and on your daily urban jaunt, all whilst in an eye-grabbing, efficient and luxurious state. Skip the L's cramped rear row, the stock RX suits five well.

With age comes benefits. Lexus' traditional spin on luxury motoring does, in many eyes, have its charm and makes for an alternative to the glitz-filled modernisms favoured by the German marques that the Japanese brand wishes to be measured against.

There's also the Lexus mantra of continually honing and refining a model line throughout its lifecycle even if some of it is inconspicuous and somewhat hidden from plain sight, a sort of corporate 'honour' that its vehicles deserve a sense of innate solidity that lines such as RX have become renowned for.

Also, and quite importantly, buyers might be drawn to Lexus in search of value. Where Euro contemporaries like to charge extra - and handsomely so, for finery and frills, it's something of Japanese hallmark to load in more kit for your coin as a measure of premiumness. ■

Visit any of the myriad of car yards that dot Nairobi and you're sure to get a line into importing a recent or even brand new - zero mileage, Lexus RX.



WHO WE ARE

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#11

Audi Q5

BY EVAN REDDY

When it comes to rings, I prefer four, when it comes to aisles, I prefer flooring it all alone, and when it comes to my chosen partner, I prefer gorgeous German models. With the popularity of SUVs showing no signs

of abating, the Q5 is Audi's most popular model across the globe.

The facelifted version of the executive SUV arrived in Africa last year, sporting a sharper design and revised cabin, but unlike overseas models the Q5 does not receive the company's new 2-litre diesel engine due to the quality of the fuel.



The Audi Q5 model line-up has been reduced from 11 variants to five, but all three previous engines carry over.

Thanks to its new bumper designs, the overall length of the Audi Q5 has grown by 19mm. Upfront, the SUV receives a wider and more angular grille as well as redesigned headlights, which are optionally available with new generation digital OLED light diodes.

Moving to the back end, Audi's new 'digital' rear lights with OLED technology are available for the first time. These taillights are split into three tiles of six segments each, which allowed designers to create variable light designs that can change in accordance with the driving modes.

Although the cabin of the Audi Q5 retains its familiar look, the old rotary-controlled MMI interface has made way for a new touch-screen infotainment system, measuring 25.6cm across the range. The car's infotainment hub features ten times more computing power than the previous system, including an advanced voice control system that can access the cloud, putting drivers in touch with a wide array of services and information.

New

First of all, it's only a mild facelift. Much of the Q5's exterior update is focused on the designs of the grille and the lighting signature. Meanwhile, a Q5 Sportback variant has been added to the line-up for the first time; it offers buyers who are looking for a design-oriented SUV another option in the vein of the BMW X4 and the Mercedes-Benz GLC Coupe.

But, to come back to the front-end of the facelifted model, the grille has much more of an RS model design to it, replete with blacked-out hexagonal elements. The headlamps have a new lighting signature



and the front air intakes have been revised. The Q5 Sportback, in turn, features a unique grille design so that it can be distinguished from its sibling from the front - not just by the sloping tailgate.

The interior's updates mostly pertain to the updated infotainment system and revamped centre console, but more on that later...

Engines

As aforementioned, all 3 engines that are offered in the Q5 line-up have been carried over from the pre-facelift Q5. The range begins with '40 TDI' models powered by the familiar 2-litre turbo-diesel unit that produces 140 kW and 400 Nm of torque. Incidentally, there seems to be a consensus between the German premium brands that 140 kW is exactly the right amount of power that a 2.0-litre turbo-diesel

motor should produce. That peak output - 140 kW, is identical to that of the BMW X3 and the Mercedes-Benz GLC only produces 3 kW more.

The second engine in the line-up is the '45 TFSI variant boasting a 2-litre turbo-petrol motor with 183 kW and 370 Nm of torque on tap. Both four-cylinder engines are mated with a 7-speed S tronic dual-clutch automatic transmission - which remains deeply impressive, and quattro all-wheel drive is standard.

The final engine in the line-up is the SQ5's 3.0-litre V6 turbo-petrol. It produces 260 kW and 500 Nm of torque; peak power is slightly down on the BMW X3 M40i - 285 kW and Mercedes-AMG GLC 43 - 287 kW.

Interior

The screen that sits atop the dashboard has new software and hardware, which allow it to process requests much faster.

The major update to the interior is the new infotainment system. The new 10.1-inch infotainment system's interface feels similar to that of new models. It's faster-acting too - 10-times faster, Audi says, and offers acoustic feedback when you select options from the menu.

The touch integration has meant that the rotary dial that used >>

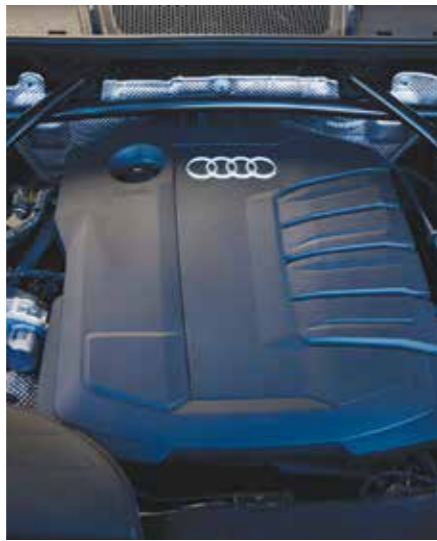
The Q5 Sportback, in turn, features a unique grille design so that it can be distinguished from its sibling from the front - not just by the sloping tailgate. The interior's updates mostly pertain to the updated infotainment system and revamped centre console, but more on that later...

Top 25 Most Stunning Cars of the Year 2022

>> to sit in the centre console has been removed and replaced with a small storage bin that's just big enough to accommodate the Q5's key fob.

You can order your Q5 with a head-up display and OLED lights, which are probably the best lights you can specify - for any car! The OLED lights have a unique display at the rear when you toggle between drive modes. When you select Dynamic, the rear lights display a sportier graphic. Meanwhile, a proximity sensor will cause the brake lights' illumination to brighten as vehicles draw closer to the Q5's tailgate.

In terms of practicality, the Q5's load bay is capacious in both the standard model and its Sportback sibling - 520



In 2014 Jas expanded his manufacturing beyond Kenya by entering Uganda, becoming active in the Cotton Textile Apparel (CTA) sector, adding value to 10% of Uganda's cotton production "from field to fashion".



and 510 litres, respectively, while the rear seatbacks can be reclined for passenger comfort - or folded completely flat, to free up 1-520 litres of utility space in the Q5 and 1,480 litres in the Q5 Sportback.

Drive

If you're a strictly urban dweller, the first optional extra you should strongly consider, is the adaptive air suspension. It allows the Q5 to smooth out bumps - to the benefit of ride comfort, yet still feel appreciably agile when its driver tasks it to corner quickly. If you like big wheels - the Q5 can be specced with 20-inch alloys, where you get optimal aesthetic appeal without the crunchy ride associated with low-profile rubber.

All Q5 derivatives come equipped with quattro all-wheel-drive, which provides peace of mind when driving on wet roads or going slightly off-road and, with the air suspension, you can raise the ride height to keep clear of any obstacles that might catch on the bumpers. The quattro system also has the ability to decouple from the engine and, by only driving the rear wheels when required, the Q5 uses less fuel.

The Q5 is great for long journeys with a supple ride and confident, stable road holding. You can also specify adaptive cruise control and lane keep assist to make your journeys less taxing on your mind.

Verdict

The arrival of the facelifted Q5 on African soil truly pains, as Kenya still doesn't have a local Audi dealership, yet the brand has become so popular on our roads from the grey market.

Quattro all-wheel-drive is standard on all Q5s, which is an advantage with our terrain, but the updated model's standout feature is the pliant ride quality that it delivers in conjunction with the optional air suspension.

It gives buyers the chance to specify bigger alloy wheels, which we know African motorists are rather fond of doing, but without suffering the penalty of a harsh ride quality that usually comes part and parcel with the fitment of low-profile tyres. ■



WHO WE ARE

Amref International University (AMIU) is a premier pan African university of health sciences fully owned by Amref Health Africa. AMIU is founded on the experience and intellect of Amref Health Africa, which is reputed with over 60 years of quality and innovative public and community health interventions in over 35 countries in Africa.

AMIU's focus is on training, research and extension in health sciences with emphasis on promotive, preventive, rehabilitative and palliative health.

The University offers Postgraduate, Undergraduate, Higher Diploma, Diploma, Certificate programmes as well as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses that prepare human resource for health to serve throughout the health system.

AMIU has two intakes every year, the April intake and the August intake.



MY AMIU EXPERIENCE



I speak for the entire class of 2019 when I say that our experience at AMIU was an unforgettable one. We will remember the serene learning environment, the flexible (and blended) study mode and essential learning resources,

including well-equipped skills lab and competency-based training and assessment methodology at AMIU.

This class of 2019 will remember the relationships we built, the people we met and the entrepreneurial and professional training we received through practical sessions, which sharpened our technical, research, managerial and leadership skills and prepared us for successful professional careers.

Walter Owate (Kenya) | Valedictorian, 2019



As an international student I felt at home the moment I set foot at AMIU, having been attracted by the warm and compelling learning environment at the University. The interactive and flexible learning mode has made it possible for

me to progress my studies remotely during the Covid19 pandemic. I will be graduating in 2021.

I relish my time at this great institution where I was granted vast opportunities that have positively defined me: I served in the Students Council, participated in the Work Study Programme and most notably was a beneficiary of the Vice Chancellor's scholarship fund.

I have had impactful and life changing interactions that have influenced and strengthened my resolve of Inspiring Lasting Change wherever my profession leads me.

Tertioury Nyarugwe (Zimbabwe) | Health Systems Management & Development Final Student, 2021





BY SUAVE OTIENO

If one is looking for distinctive style or grand times behind the wheel, they shouldn't look at small crossover SUVs. These are vehicles that emphasise the "utility" in SUV and wring maximum space for people, personal effects and pets nowadays in a quest for daily-driven competence.

Mazda has given its popular CX-5 SUV a mild update for 2022 and it has managed to rise to the top of the class with its tight rear quarters and cargo space. The CX-5 delivers joy to its driver. Not mere satisfaction for a job well done, but the same pleasure you might get from a small sports saloon and open highway, with the added benefit of room for supplies from the home improvement store.

Visually, the updated CX-5 gets a revised headlight cluster that now features rectangular LED lights and a new-look front grille.

Inside, there are some trim material updates with woodgrain and Nappa leather, while the cabin has been enhanced ergonomically with redesigned seats and a new drive select switch.

Under the skin, the 6-speed automatic transmission has been updated to be more responsive and deliver smoother acceleration. The suspension has been enhanced to reduce vibrations and road noise. All-wheel drive is now standard across the range, which will please those who enjoy driving off the beaten track and provide additional stability in slippery conditions.

The international line-up has changed with the 2.5-litre turbocharged model replacing the base derivatives.

This will be the final update from Mazda for this generation of CX-5 as the all-new model will be built on a brand-new rear-wheel-drive platform that's estimated to be production-ready in 2023. Along with this upmarket platform will be straight-6 engines, fuelling rumours that Mazda will be going even more upmarket with its next-gen offerings.

The new-gen motors feature SkyActiv-G petrol and SkyActiv-D diesel technology, as well as the new SkyActiv-X compression ignition hybrid petrol engine. One of the new motors will have a displacement of 3.0 litres and given the size increase, it is clear Mazda is pushing hard into the premium space. It's not confirmed yet for the sub-Saharan market, but rumours are strong the CX-5 name will be dropped in favour of a CX-50 badge, which brings it in line with the current naming convention.

The CX-5's base four-cylinder engine was a good introduction, but the car comes alive with its optional turbocharged counterpart.

For 2022, the turbo engine gets a slight boost, up 6 horsepower from the previous model. The CX-5 has always deftly balanced ride comfort and responsive handling, but this year's minor suspension updates aim to reduce road noise and vibrations and tighten up control.

Finally, subtle revisions to the front and rear bumpers, the aforementioned headlights and sundry panels give the CX-5 a dose of fresh style.

Rivals such as the Honda CR-V, Hyundai Tucson and Nissan X-Trail offer more rear legroom and cargo volume, but the CX-5 is unmatched when it comes to combining performance and refinement in such an affordable package when also compared to the Toyota Rav-4 and Volkswagen Tiguan.



As aforementioned, the CX-5 is at its best when equipped with its turbocharged engine. Unfortunately, you can only get it with the pricey Turbo or Turbo Signature trim. If you need a value pick, consider the Preferred trim. It comes with just about everything you'll need from a small SUV, including a few premium upgrades, such as leather upholstery.

Model Range

The 2022 Mazda CX-5 is a five-passenger SUV sold in eight trim levels: S, Select, Preferred, Carbon Edition, Premium, Premium Plus, Turbo and Turbo Signature. As of time of press, we were still awaiting confirmation from CMC Motors Group which trim levels will be available for the local market for 2022.

The standard engine makes 187 horsepower and 186 lb-ft of torque, while Turbo and Turbo Signature trims get a boost with 227 hp and 310 lb-ft on regular petrol. With high performance petrol - such as V-Power from Shell, those numbers rise to 256 hp and 320 lb-ft.

Every CX-5 comes with a comprehensive set of driving aids, which include forward collision mitigation - which warns you of an impending collision and applies the brakes in certain scenarios, blind-spot monitor with rear cross-traffic alert - that warns you if a vehicle is in your blind spot during a lane change or while reversing, lane departure mitigation - which warns you of a lane departure when a turn signal isn't used and can automatically steer >>





to maintain lane position and adaptive cruise control - that maintains a driver-set distance between the Mazda and the car in front.

The Select model adds a handful of convenience features, such as proximity keyless entry, dual-zone automatic climate control, power-adjustable driver's seat, heated front seats, simulated leather upholstery, rear air vents, rear armrest and six-speaker audio system.

The Preferred trim adds auto-dimming rear-view mirror, sunroof, power liftgate, driver's seat memory settings, power-adjustable passenger seat, leather upholstery and Carbon Edition. This trim simply adds a few cosmetic touches, such as 19-inch black-painted wheels, exclusive grey exterior paint, gloss black side mirrors and trim plus black or red leather upholstery.

The Premium trim enhances the CX-5's performance and infotainment offerings with 19-inch wheels, adaptive headlights - they swivel as you turn the steering wheel for better illumination in curves, heated mirrors, transmission paddle shifters, adjustable drive modes, upgraded driver

information display, satellite radio and 10-speaker Bose audio system.

The Premium Plus raises comfort and convenience with power-folding mirrors, head-up display - which displays important information in your sight line onto the windshield, ventilated front seats, heated rear seats and heated steering wheel.

Moving up the Turbo gets you the aforementioned turbocharged engine 227 hp and 310 lb-ft (256 hp and 320 lb-ft with performance fuel), black-painted wheels, special exterior and interior trim plus a wireless charging pad.

The range-topping Turbo Signature goes all in on luxury appointments, including upgraded leather upholstery, wood trim, ambient interior lighting, navigation system, 360-degree camera system - that gives you a top-down view of the CX-5 and its surroundings for tight parking situations, parking sensors - that alert you to obstacles that may not be visible in front of or behind the vehicle when parking and rear automatic braking - that brakes if sensors detect an imminent collision with an object behind the vehicle.

Verdict

Mazda was truly keen on improving the handling and steering to make the CX-5 enjoyable to drive. The cabin is attractive and upscale, further emphasising Mazda's aim to offer a premium experience.

The optional turbocharged engine provides plenty of power and is surprisingly quiet at highway speeds.

The downsides to note is that the ride is a little firm for the class and rear legroom and cargo room is less than most competitors.

Do feel motivated to visit the Mazda Division of the giant CMC Motors Group showrooms on Lusaka Road for a closer look. One thing is for sure, the Mazda CX-5 is probably the best looking - in terms of exterior design, in its class when put next to its competitors thanks to its updated front and rear styling.

All-wheel drive now comes standard which is great for the Kenyan rugged terrain, coupled with improved suspension and power output for increased performance. ■



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ISUZU

#13

Isuzu MU-X

BY EVAN REDDY

Isuzu probably couldn't believe its luck with the old MU-X (which oddly stands for Mysterious Utility - eXtreme). Despite being as old as folklore and having to labour with its association to the Chevrolet Trailblazer, it forged a far more devoted fanbase than its American cousin could.

This year, Isuzu's smash-hit MU-X reaches second generation, with some big improvements for the family SUV.

After much speculation and anticipation, Isuzu has launched their new seven-seater MU-X, taking direct aim at the Toyota Fortuner, Ford Everest and Mitsubishi Pajero Sport. It's a significant improvement on the outgoing model in every respect. Being an Isuzu, you know exactly what you're getting in terms of reliability and longevity, and in East Africa, a very reliable after sales service.

Fresh off the boat from the Thai factory from whence the D-Max and Mazda BT-50 also spring, the bare spec sheet is now covered with a lot more meat. It is now ready and poised to take on its competition head on.

Exterior

Imported from Thailand, it's based on the all-new D-MAX pickup platform. While the D-Max is fitted with leaf springs at the back, the MU-X is coil sprung, which adds to ride comfort and handling.

There are three variants in the form of the MU-X LS in 4x2 and 4x4, the mid-range LSE with only 4x2 and the range-topping ONYX in 4x4.

It's a completely new design with the new "World Crossflow" grille and arrow-shaped Bi-LED headlamps, connected by a signature line to the rear, linking the headlamps with the rear light 3D winglets. Overall, it's a pleasing look with no big talking points or anything that will offend prospective owners.

After much speculation and anticipation, Isuzu has launched their new seven-seater MU-X, taking direct aim at the Toyota Fortuner, Ford Everest and Mitsubishi Pajero Sport. It's a significant improvement on the outgoing model in every respect.



White, Dolomite White, ONYX Black, Mercury Silver, Obsidian Grey, Red Spinel, Santos Brown, and Sapphire Blue.

Interior

The interior cabin is a vast improvement with piano-black surfaces, chrome highlights, aluminium and soft leather in what is a very spacious space. There's quite a bit of plastic that's not too obvious or intrusive except inside the glove compartments and centre console where it looks.

The new 7- or 9-inch touchscreen infotainment system has good resolution, with improved functionality when connected to the Apple CarPlay or Android Auto.

All three variations are fitted with alloy wheels with the ONYX on 20-inch, the LSE models on 18-inch and the LS, 17-inch wheels. Where you opt for the ONYX, you have the option of a rim diameter that fits a higher profile off-road tyre to suit the rugged terrain.

The colour choices include Splash

As you would expect from a modern car, the new Isuzu MU-X is loaded with technology paired with active and passive safety features, including their Intelligent Driver Assistance System (IDAS) in the ONYX model. This monitors the surroundings with a windshield-mounted stereo camera to act autonomously to avoid a crash or minimise collision damage. This model also features the first middle airbag that prevents the driver's and passengers' heads colliding in an accident.

With the third-row seats in use, boot space is up by 25 litres to 311, which is larger than many SUVs. Folding the third-row seat is easy - pull the tapes on the seatbacks and they flip forward and hinge down to create a flat floor and 1,119 >>



>> litres, 68 more than before. There is also a storage box under the aft section of the floor at the loading lip, which is afforded by the spare wheel being slung underneath.

The new dashboard architecture is far more appealing, with signature air vents on either side of the touchscreen remain that look more contemporary and adventurous, to say the least.

Engine

Under the bonnet is the trusted 3.0-litre turbo-diesel that has been refined and tweaked to produce less groan even on full load.

Power is up by 10 kW to 140 kW - arriving at 3,600rpm, while torque is up by 20 Nm. There's already 300 Nm at 1,000rpm, 400 Nm at 1,400rpm - and it doesn't fall below that figure until 3,250rpm, while peak torque of 450 Nm is available from 1,600 to 2,600rpm.

The six-speed auto gearbox quickly runs through the gears to get you into top gear and sipping as little as 9.5 litres per



The interior cabin is a vast improvement with piano-black surfaces, chrome highlights, aluminium and soft leather in what is a very spacious space. There's quite a bit of plastic that's not too obvious or intrusive except inside the glove compartments and centre console where it looks.



100 kilometres, in the Onyx. Isuzu claims that the MU-X consumes as little as 7.6 litres per 100 kilometres, with less pressure on the accelerator pedal.

Driving

On the entry level LS 4x2, the first thing one notices are the incredibly comfortable seats with superb lumbar support that allow you to frolic around corners without being thrown around. The steering wheel is smaller, allowing for a more comfortable and direct drive.

On urban roads, the engine



smoothly purrs through the transmission with no fuss, getting up to speeds that you wouldn't ordinarily want to do with the family on board. Interior noise levels is not intrusive, testament to the improved door-sealing structure and the areas surrounding the A-pillar.

Handling for a big SUV is top notch with very little body roll around corners and sharp bends. Behind the wheel of the ONYX, the advantage of four-wheel drive, easily done with a turn of a dial on the centre console, is apparent with a more sure-footed drive over loose gravel and rocks.

For a standard SUV, the Isuzu MU-X is impressive with its off-road prowess with decent articulation and minimal fuss over some fairly difficult obstacles. With diff lock engaged and the right lines, you have a lot of fun on a weekend 4x4 outing, with the added bonus of 800mm wading depth.

The new MU-X has a lot going for it, including a braked towing capacity of 3.5 tonnes as the brand focuses more on its leisure market vehicles.

Verdict

In East Africa, the all-new MU-X come with excellent brand and after sales reputation that its rivals can only envy. With all that extra safety gear, improved cabin and dead-set ruggedness, the all-new Isuzu MU-X is a compelling proposition.

Standard across the range is a five-year/120,000km warranty and five-year/90,000km service plan, with service intervals pegged at 15,000km. ■

Feel free to visit Isuzu East Africa show room, off Mombasa Road in Nairobi or one of the myriad dealer networks spread across the entire East Africa to sample this luxurious SUV that gives you the best of the two worlds: ruggedness and luxury. This is the luxury SUV for Africa roads.





#14

BMW X3



BY BM EA COLUMNIST

The BMW X3 is a small luxury SUV that offers more room than BMW's extra-small SUV - the X1, without being as large as its midsize X5. The X3's mix of practicality, fuel efficiency and performance has made it a class favourite since its introduction in 2003.

For 2022, the X3 gets a light styling refresh featuring slimmer headlights, a larger grille and revised front and rear bumpers. The rear of the X3 also gets a new look via restyled tail lights.

BMW has also fiddled with the X3's engines. It has discontinued the plug-in hybrid model - the xDrive30e, so all that's left is the four-cylinder in the sDrive30i and xDrive40i and the six-cylinder in the M40i.

Serious competition can be found in everything from the Mercedes-Benz GLC to the Audi Q5 to the subtle Volvo XC60 to the stirring Alfa Romeo Stelvio.

While delivering luxury and practicality, the 2022 BMW X3 SUV also channels sports sedans from BMW's past to blend driving fun into the equation. Its balanced chassis and well-tuned steering make it a surprisingly willing partner on twisty roads. The X3's cabin is comfortable and upscale if conservative in its design. It's a nice place to spend time.

While delivering luxury and practicality, the 2022 BMW X3 SUV also channels sports sedans from BMW's past to blend driving fun into the equation. Its balanced chassis and well-tuned steering make it a surprisingly willing partner on twisty roads.

BMW has incorporated plenty of technology into the X3, including two digital dashboard displays as well as a host of driver-assistance features. Overall, the X3 is well-rounded, but it's the agile handling and gutsy turbo engines that make it one of this magazine's favourite BMWs.

New

The 2022 BMW X3 receives a styling refresh which includes new wheel designs and tweaked exhaust tips. The base X3 is available with an M Sport appearance package which dresses it up to look similar to the racier M40i model. Speaking of the M40i, it gains a 48-volt mild hybrid system for 2022, but combined horse- >>

Top 25 Most Stunning Cars of the Year 2022

>> power remains the same 382-hp as the 2021 model. This system features an upgraded starter-generator and an additional battery to assist with engine acceleration, making the stop-start system run smoother and allowing for more efficient engine operation in heavy traffic.

Inside the front cabin, the centre console has been reworked, with a number of controls repositioned. While a 10.3-inch infotainment display and a matching digital gauge display are standard, BMW additionally offers 12.3-inch upgrades in both.

Regardless of the exact power output, all BMW engines exude similar strong and refined character. While the M40i's 382-hp six-cylinder motivates it to 100 kph in just over 4 seconds, the standard 248-hp four-cylinder is plenty powerful enough and saves on the dear fuel.

The turbocharged four-cylinder collaborates with the excellent eight-speed automatic transmission to make easy passes in traffic and sip fuel on the highway. The entry X3 sDrive30i only drives the rear



BMW's iDrive interface provides everything a modern luxury car's infotainment system should. The 10.3-inch infotainment display is standard and features in-dash navigation as well as Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.



One option that is not available locally is the adaptive suspension. Called dynamic damper control, it adds comfort, sport, and eco pro driving modes to the xDrive30i. An adaptive M suspension, available on the M40i, lowers the chassis 0.4 inch. But, again remember, this is Africa - furthermore Kenya. This option is big problem down the road. You are likely to more often than not, find your prized Bavarian on a

flat-bed truck than on the new Express way between JKIA and the end of Waiyaki Road.

Interior

The X3's stylish interior comes well equipped before you check a single option box. 10-way power-adjustable front seats - which include adjustable side bolsters, make it easy to find a comfortable posi-

tion. Rear-seat occupants are treated to reclining seatbacks, and the cushioning on all seats is plush enough for long journeys.

The rest of the X3's cabin is handsome and well put together, with well-chosen materials and tight panel gaps. The glossy wood grain trim looks and feels real despite being plastic. The stitched faux-leather dash and door coverings add an extra element of luxury, as do the nickel-finish metal trim.

The X3 is about average for the segment in the carry-on suitcase contest. Seven carry-ons will fit comfortably behind the second row - enough for each occupant to have one, with room left over for two extras - and 20 fit in total with the rear seats folded, in case you want to go on an extra-long holiday with your companion.

BMW's iDrive interface provides everything a modern luxury car's infotainment system should. The 10.3-inch infotainment display is standard and features in-dash navigation as well as Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. A larger 12.3-inch infotainment display is optional. Bluetooth phone connectivity, a Wi-Fi hotspot, and one USB port are standard. Every other infotainment feature is offered as an optional extra; for those looking to juice two devices at once, a second USB port is optional as is a wireless smartphone charging pad.

A full suite of driver-assistance features is available on the X3 but BMW offers the basics as standard equipment. Key safety features include automated emergency braking with forward-collision warning, lane-departure warning and adaptive cruise control.

Verdict

The updated BMW X3 has surprisingly agile handling, a gutsy optional inline-six engine and more fuel efficiency than expected.

So, while BMW sport saloons have lost some of that old-fashioned BMW driving verve, the X3 SUV still delivers those thrills - with the added benefit of practicality. ■

Make your way to Inchcape Kenya's state of the art Westlands showroom and take a peep at what should be your luxury small SUV of choice. You will not be disappointed.



#15

BMW 4 Series GC

BY JUNIOR GAYA

At first glance, this Bavarian oddball surely does turn heads, whether it deserves the attention it draws, warrants this review. BMW's new 4 Series Gran Coupé (GC) probably fully deserves the 'Gran' in its title but, it first shifts a position in the Munich, Germany brand that will also be appreciated by car buyers.

For this generation, BMW has stepped away from the myriad - and sometimes confusing, array of options and moved closer to a what-you-see-is-what-you-get specification approach across the launch range of three derivatives, the 420i, 420d and 440i xDrive.

Although it is closely linked in family terms to the 3 Series, the GC is very

much its own car and is bigger than the saloons, measuring 4,783mm in exterior length, 1,852mm in width and 1,442mm in height. The model has distinctive proportions combined with stretched coupé lines.

Compared to its predecessor, it is 143mm longer, 27mm wider and 53mm taller, while the track widths have also grown - to 1,595mm at the front (+50mm) and 1,623mm at the rear (+29mm). The wheelbase too is longer by 46mm coming in at 2,856mm and 5mm more than the 3 Series saloon.

As a model available in Africa, the BMW 4 Series GC remain difficult to comprehend. It is on the roads and now in 2nd-generation guise.

What is a 4 Series Gran Coupé?

BMW split the 3- and 4 Series a little while back - odd numbers for saloons, even numbers for coupés - most of us got on board with that, well, eventually. But then they took the coupé and added back its rear doors, and thus the 4 Series Gran Coupé was born.

The GC derivatives make up 50% of all 4 Series sales. It seems customers want what customers want and BMW is happy to give it to them. Hence, the svelte profile and, as a soon to be father, appreciate that practicality has been restored to some extent. And then there are the visuals. The 4 Series GC benefits from a lower centre of gravity, is wider, longer and looks arguably meaner than its predecessor.

Engines

As aforementioned, the 4 Series GC comes in three derivatives: a 420i - 2.0-litre 4-cylinder turbo-petrol, expelling 135 kW and 300 Nm, a 320d - 2.0-litre 4-cylinder turbo-diesel discharging 140 kW and 400 Nm and then the flagship version, which is propelled by a 3.0-litre-twin-scroll- turbocharged inline-6 in combination with xDrive all-wheel drive, the BMW M440i xDrive.

With peak outputs of 285 kW and 500 Nm mated to the 8-speed Steptronic automatic transmission - which is standard across the 4 Series GC range, the M440i xDrive's powerplant is said to catapult the top-of-the-range derivative from 0 to 100

kph in just 4.7 seconds. That's not M car quick, but it is right on the money for a "40i" designated car...

Similar to how the 4 Series GC's styling is a perfect compromise between coupé and saloon, the performance is also a delicate dance between all-out ferocity and everyday usability. A car with turbo-boosted agility, but also ISOfix points to accommodate multiple baby seats. And a hatchback that will swallow the debris of family life, plus a bicycle and surfboard for Mombasa bound young family.



Imagine being inside a very well-appointed cockpit. Slide into the leather-trimmed cocoon and encounter one loaded with oodles of standard features. It's all there.

Drive

Imagine being inside a very well-appointed cockpit. Slide into the leather-trimmed cocoon and encounter one loaded with oodles of standard features. It's all there.

When alone, one would simply thumb the start button to fire up the Bimmer's powerplant, shift the transmission lever into Drive and immediately select Sport mode. It's a must, especially when you're about to embark on a multiple hour road trip out of the city limits and beyond. For example, to reach our evocative flowing Kenyan roads, you first have to traverse rather pockmarked urban and rural roads.

Back inside the cockpit. Start in Comfort mode from your home, then get onto one of the Bypasses around Nairobi. This is when you have the opportunity to point the M440i xDrive's curvaceous bonnet along some pristine sweeps and bends, after selecting Sport mode and give this German machine, also known as the sweet Bavarian six, an opportunity to sing, and sing alongside a Msanii Gospel beat.

And singing sonorously is what an inline-6-engined BMW does best. And

one doesn't need an M car to appreciate this, thanks to the Bavarian brand's legacy of producing full-bodied, throaty and, of course, potent straight-six motors. Here, boosted to the heavens, the M440i xDrive's heart revs cleanly and with enthusiasm, the cogs swapped just so by the Steptronic transmission.

BMW boasts of providing the 'Ultimate Driving Machine and Experience', and yes, the secret to a driver's car resides in its helm. A communicative steering setup - one that imparts sufficient feel and feedback through the steering wheel. Even with power being sent to all four wheels, the M440i xDrive feels agile - plus, when the road surface affords less than ideal purchase, the muscular Bimmer is unquestionably aided by that extra mechanical grip afforded by xDrive, which allows you to get on the power earlier - and flatters less experienced pilots.

Verdict

Buy the 420i if you're just after the model's aesthetics. Buy the 420d for the same reasons, but if you want to visit the petrol stations less often - that extra whack of torque is welcome too. Spice either up with the M-Sport kit if you favour show over go but, the chasm of performance between these and the M440i xDrive is enough to park an M3 or M4 in. Sideways.

There's such an exhilarating drive to be had here, and better still, you can approach the 4 Series Gran Coupé flagship's limits without fear of exceeding your own. In other words, one doesn't really need to fork that much more for an M car because the M440i engine offers more than sufficient performance.

As a bonus, when you purchase any BMW new from Inchcape Kenya, all prices include a 5-year/100,000 km maintenance plan. Feel free to visit their Westlands, Nairobi showroom to get more acquainted with the staff as you option up your BMW 4 Series Gran Coupé.





#16

Mazda CX-3

BY STAFF WRITER

Launched globally in 2015, the Mazda CX-3 represent a benchmark for a new type of crossover SUV that transcended notions of vehicle class and segment. Its development focuses on an entirely human-centric approach, resulting in a superbly ergonomic, heads-up cabin and human-machine interface, safe and easy-to-use smartphone connectivity, and a vast array of active safety technologies.

Unsurprisingly, this approach - combined with responsive yet efficient SKYACTIV technology, exceptional car-like handling, and the choice of front or intelligent all-wheel drive as well as manual or automatic transmissions, has seen the CX-3 become one of the best-selling new vehicles in the current Mazda

model range globally – and more so, in the grey market locally.

The new Mazda CX-3 responds to customer feedback with design and technology advances in several key areas. In a design which raises the standard of radical styling and eye-catching elegance, Mazda's compact SUV combines a flexible, driver-oriented interior with superb engineer-

ing and painstaking attention to detail, making it a more compelling proposition than ever before.

A new SKYACTIV-D 1.8 litre diesel engine makes its first appearance in the new Mazda CX-3, offering drivers both enhanced responsiveness and improved emissions performance. Two SKYACTIV-G 2.0 litre petrol engines now feature the innovations first adopted in the current Mazda CX-5, including edge-cut piston heads and high-dispersion injectors. These technical developments ensure ample torque throughout the entire rev range and contribute to better real-world fuel efficiency.

Exterior design enhancements include an updated front grille, the adoption of LED rear combination lamps, new alu-



minium alloy wheels. Making its premiere in the new CX-3 line-up, is Mazda's unique colour, Soul Red Crystal.

On board, a higher quality interior is free of non-essential elements in keeping with the Japanese aesthetics of eliminating excess to create beauty. A redesigned centre console with an electric parking brake and a multi-box centre armrest enhance comfort and reduce fatigue.

A new special edition model is available, featuring deep red Nappa leather upholstery and 18" bright silver alloy wheels.

The adoption of the latest developments in Mazda's next-generation SKYACTIV-vehicle architecture has significantly evolved the CX-3's driving performance from the human-centred perspective of vehicle-total optimisation. Further suspension system tuning, newly developed tyres and the use of higher-damping urethane in the front seat construction provide a quieter and more comfortable ride, and an even more engaging driving experience.

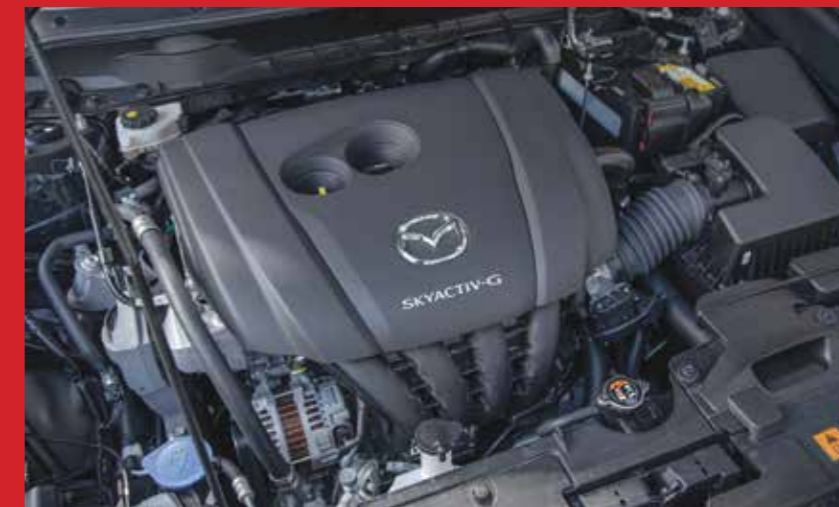
Exterior

A renewed focus on traditional Japanese design that strips away ornamentation to reveal beautifully honed forms has enabled Mazda's designers to explore a striking evolution of the company's KODO-Soul of Motion design philosophy.

The visual connection of the chrome front bumper and side garnish decorative mouldings emphasise the CX-3's broad, stable stance, and - in connection with a new gloss black finish to the fog lamp bezels, pillar garnishes and side garnish mouldings, give the new Mazda a higher-quality, premium appearance.

To the rear, new LED lamp clusters adopt a ring shape combined with horizontal lines. The mechanical precision and depth of this design marries a more refined, mature appearance with high quality illumination, whilst ensuring the lamps stand out more clearly against the rich, new Soul Red Crystal body colour.

Featuring multi-faceted spokes, the powerful, sculpted design of new 18-inch aluminium alloy wheels provides a sense of depth, speed and increased size. The



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metallic sheen of the machined surfaces works with the CX-3's chrome side-cladding to enhance the overall impression of speed.

Interior

The adoption of an electric parking brake has allowed for the centre console to be redesigned in a more elegant form which visually flows into the dashboard. Its comfort and functionality have also been improved: a padded armrest with a console box beneath has been added and the Mazda Rotary Commander moved forwards for improved usability.

High grade models feature genuine leather seats with vertical pleating on the seatbacks and high-gloss piping at the shoulders for a premium look and feel. Soft padding for the armrests and the extensive use of soft surface coverings throughout the cabin have increased both comfort and quality to new levels for vehicles in this class.

The new Mazda CX-3 comes with an optional smartphone control update for all vehicles equipped with the company's

human-centred MZD Connect multimedia system. The connectivity update will enable customers with iPhones to enjoy Apple CarPlay integration - letting them make phone calls, send messages, listen to Apple Music, and get directions with Apple Maps through Siri or the MZD Connect system safely whilst on the move. Android Auto integration is also available as an optional update, offering a similar range of features for customers with Android smartphones through the Google Voice User Interface or the MZD Connect system.

SKYACTIV Engines

The new Mazda CX-3 is available with a choice of three engines: a 115 PS SKYACTIV-D 1.8 litre diesel engine and both 121 PS and 150 PS variants of a SKYACTIV-G 2.0 litre petrol unit. All three powertrains target responsiveness and speed control that match driver inputs as closely as possible to enhance Mazda's uniquely involving 'Jinba Ittai' - car and driver as one, driving experience.

The power plants may be mated >>

>> to a choice of six-speed manual or six-speed automatic transmissions. The SKYACTIV-D 1.8 further features a choice of front-wheel or all-wheel drive powertrains, whilst the 121 PS SKYACTIV-G 2.0 unit has a front-wheel drive powertrain and the 150 PS SKYACTIV-G 2.0 variant is equipped with all-wheel drive.

Safety

The Mazda CX-3 combines a light-weight, high-rigidity SKYACTIV-Body with a wide range of advanced i-ACTIVSENSE safety technologies. Based on Mazda's proactive safety philosophy, the latter help drivers identify potential risks and reduce the likelihood of damage or injury.

Adaptive LED Headlights in the CX-3 incorporates the following features: Auto-controlled Glare-free High Beams, Wide-range Low Beams that illuminate a wider area, and Highway Mode, which automatically raises the headlamp beams when driving at high speeds.

The new Mazda CX-3 also benefits from all the passive safety features of the previous model, which include a high-strength SKYACTIV body, Supplemental Restraint System (SRS) air bags, seat belts with pretensioners and load limit-



The new Mazda CX-3 comes with an optional smartphone control update for all vehicles equipped with the company's human-centred MZD Connect multimedia system.

ers, front seats which mitigate shock to the neck, rear seats that prevent luggage from entering the cabin, an impact-absorbing steering column, and ISOFIX child seat fastening points.

Verdict

If you're shopping with a clear budget in mind, or considering stretching from a used mid-sized alternative, there are plenty of reasons to buy the new Mazda CX-3 from the local franchise holder - CMC Motors Group. Aside from getting a brand-new car, it also offers a great drive, affordable ownership, and pretty design.

Its price point will likely draw the crowd, as the drive-away price keeps it close to that magical mental price barrier, without pushing over the way some cars in the class have. That's especially so when you consider the size and segment we're talking about here. ■

Feel free to visit the Mazda Division of the CMC Motors Group showroom on Lusaka Road, Industrial Area for a closer look at the new Mazda CX-3. Alternatively, take time off and sample the offerings in a number of direct import open air yards that dot the City's major roads and choose for yourself what represents value for money.



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#17

Nissan Qashqai

BY STAFF WRITER

Nissan has revealed its third-generation Qashqai crossover SUV. The Qashqai heralded the era of the modern crossover. It went on to become not so much Qashqai, and more like Qashcow- as many motoring journalists have come to refer to it over the years-selling millions worldwide and opening up the floodgates to dozens of rival crossovers and compact SUVs. One could even argue that the global domination by SUV's is the Qashqai's doing.

The new Qashqai is offered with a 12 V mild-hybrid system comprising a turbo-charged 1.3-litre petrol engine and a lithium-ion battery, in a 102-kW form with a six-speed manual gearbox and in 115 kW guise with a continuously variable transmission (CVT). There is an option of a 1.5-litre version with the Japanese firm's latest "e-Power" drive system, which uses what Nissan terms a "world-first" variable compression ratio petrol engine as a dedicated electricity generating unit - basically an electric motor that turns the wheels receiving its power from a petrol engine that acts as a generator.



Nissan in Africa is excited to welcome the new edition to the Qashqai family. Having created the crossover segment back in 2006 when the first-generation was revealed, Nissan's marketing teams all around South and sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) are confident that this new model is a game changer, as Nissan takes the plunge to claim its rightful place as the market leader in the region.

The Qashqai expects to take the brand fight for market share directly to the door step of rivals such as the Kia Sportage, Peugeot 3008 and Toyota Rav4, by leading the way when it comes to style, driver enjoyment and technology, with this third generation.

Like the generations before it, this all-new Qashqai is styled by Nissan's London studio, developed at its Cranfield Technical Centre and assembled in its Sunderland factory. It is slightly larger than before, being 35-mm longer, 32-mm wider and 25-mm taller, while its wheelbase - the distance between the front and rear wheels, is 20-mm longer.

Up front, the new Qashqai features a completely redesigned front end emblazoned with the now-familiar V-Motion grille along with full LED matrix headlights and signature boomerang-shaped daytime running lights. Deep creases along the full waistline of the car and lower down on the doors enhance the styling improvements. It arguably looks conservative next to the new Hyundai Tucson, and steals admiring glances from drivers of other rival family cars, including the BMW X1, the segment's luxury brand.

The new Qashqai incorporates a look that, according to designer Matthew Weaver, is all about conveying the sense that it is a more dynamic model. It's now a more premium car, with diamond-cut alloy wheels and an interior that features a bit of what Weaver calls Japanese DNA, in elements like the wood trim and leather upholstery. Japanese DNA seem obvious, seeing as Nissan is a Japanese car company, as much as the Qashqai is actually far from being Japanese. It's designed, engineered and manufactured in the UK, making it a more British car than most British cars.

>>



>> The new models are powered by a 1.3l petrol turbo engine with the addition of electrification. It's not much though, just a 12V system that provides an additional 6Nm of torque and power for things like the start/stop and highway coasting functions.

The more powerful versions boast of 260 Nm in the six-speed manual and 270 Nm in the xTronic CVT auto. Surprisingly, it is the xTronic that impresses the most, providing smooth and progressive power on demand compared to the manual which need constant gear changes to keep it in the best rev-range.

Comfort levels are good, with lots of effort having been paid to making the ride quieter and removing vibrations. The higher spec models excel here, courtesy of having multilink rear suspension and the feeling that the additional weight from the xTronic gearbox and premium comforts provide a more balanced ride.

The comforts features include lots of technology, such as the nine-inch infotainment system with Apple CarPlay, a 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster and safety systems from blind spot assist to the full ProPilot driver assistance package. There's also the option of sumptuous Nappa leather to further bolster the feeling of premium luxury. That feeling also comes from more cabin space.



Verdict

The new Qashqai is definitely a vastly improved package, with a more fashionable design, more tech and more comfort. The electrification might seem like a token gesture, but it's hard to criticise Nissan, a company that pioneered the modern electric car impetus with its Leaf.

The new Qashqai itself is no longer be

Riding on the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance's latest Common Module Family (CMF) C-platform, the new Qashqai employs more lightweight material than before. The rear hatch, for instance, is fashioned from a composite material.

the pioneer it once was, although remaining well equipped to deal with the multitude of upstarts that are now challenging it in the market.

Nissan should hope that this new Qashqai continues the global success of its predecessors and there is little reason to suppose that it won't.

The manufacturer has updated its phenomenally successful formula with sharper styling, a much more modern infotainment system and a ride quality so refined it arguably belongs in a higher and more expensive, class of car.

Yes, the new, 3rd-generation Qashqai is the best it's ever been. Of course, the competition is throwing everything at it, while what matters most is that the millions of people who love the Qashqai will love this one even more. ■

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#18

Jaguar XF

BY JUNIOR GAYA

As the world increasingly turns away from saloons, some manufacturers are doubling down. The facelifted and updated Jaguar XF range has been unveiled, with the brand bringing only a single variant for the sub-Saharan markets. Jaguar through the local dealer – Inchcape Kenya, is only offering the new XF saloon in R-Dynamic HSE specification.

Exterior

The XF's major mid-life update includes a facelifted exterior, new interior, and upgraded technology. Most notable is the refreshed front end, which sees new, slimmer all-LED headlights with 'double-J' daytime-running lights and directional indicators, together

With new seats and steering wheel, redesigned digital instruments and various bits of haptic switchgear, it's no exaggeration to say that the changes have dramatically improved the case for the XF.

with a revised front grille and redesigned bumper.

African specifications lead to the sportier R-Dynamic HSE exterior with new 20-inch wheels. Buyers can choose to option a Black Exterior Pack, gaining a gloss black grille, intake surrounds, badging, or other black highlights across the body.

Interior

While the exterior changes are subtle, the interior is all-new for the XF - and echoes the interior seen on the recently-updated Jaguar F-Pace SUV. Jaguar has given a lot of attention to the cabin design, paying particular attention to materials, colour palettes, and a new 11.4-inch curved infotainment screen as the car's centrepiece.

The design is clean, uncluttered, and not particularly minimalist. There's a judicious use of materials and finishes giving the XF a premium look and feel.

Jaguar's spiffy new 'Pivi Pro' infotainment system boots up quickly thanks to a dedicated power source, while users can enjoy Apple CarPlay and Android Auto capability, dual Bluetooth connections, Spotify, wireless smartphone charging, and a dual-SIM modem ensuring media streaming isn't interrupted by over-the-air software updates. The outgoing XF's plasticky heating and ventilation buttons have been binned for upmarket rotary controllers reminiscent of those fitted to Range Rover models. Jaguar's trademark pop-up rotary gear selector has also gone, and

replaced by a more traditional lever selector, with Dynamic mode selection now done by a smaller dial to the right.

Together with a Meridian sound system, Jaguar has fitted the XF with active noise cancellation – a segment first, according to the brand - while an air ionisation system with filtration helps improve air quality inside.

Ahead of the driver is a 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster with three-dimensional map display, the driver benefits from new safety technology, with 360-degree cameras, a clear exit monitor - for doors opening into traffic, adaptive cruise control, and a driver condition monitor. A ClearSight Interior Mirror can also be optioned, which can be used as either a traditional centre mirror, or can be switched to a video feed from a camera mounted at the rear of the car, if the view is obscured by passengers or luggage.

With new seats and steering wheel, redesigned digital instruments and various bits of haptic switchgear, it's no exaggeration to say that the changes have dramatically improved the case for the XF. There's a warmth to the cabin and a simplicity to the much-improved Pivi user interface that the more tech-heavy German alternatives don't have.

Optional equipment in this car includes wireless phone charging, privacy tint, Jaguar's activity key wristband, panoramic sunroof and head-up display. Space is generous all round. There's plenty of room in most dimensions. Front seat >>





Jaguar has given a lot of attention to the cabin design, paying particular attention to materials, colour palettes, and a new 11.4-inch curved infotainment screen as the car's centrepiece.

>> passengers sit low, but not awkwardly so, while at the rear, width and legroom are impressive.

Engine

The new XF features the marques 2.0-litre 'Ingenium' turbo petrol four-cylinder producing 221 kW and 400 Nm. Referred to as 'P300', the engine aids the car to every corner utilising an eight-speed torque-converter automatic transmission and all-wheel drive, helping the vehicle hit 100km/h from a standstill in a claimed 6.1 seconds. This is the first-time all-wheel drive has been made available on the XF,

locally, and could help steal sales away from the dominant Germans - Mercedes-Benz E-Class, BMW 5 Series and Audi A6, in the luxury saloon car segment.

When it comes to the engine, the four-cylinder petrol Ingenium does an excellent job - especially in comparison to the brawnier inline six that isn't coming to the XF.

Verdict

It really feels like Jaguar has hit its sweet spot with the revised XF. It's beautifully presented, well equipped, and softly comfortable in a way that a lot of luxury saloons seem to have

forgotten. While Jaguar often talks about dynamism and performance, the XF P300R-Dynamic HSE isn't a member of that club - which is great news for anyone seeking a crisply styled modern saloon that places comfort above posturing.

There is more to like about the XF. The cabin stays tranquil at cruising speeds, the active noise-cancellation system that it shares with the facelifted F-Pace helping to reduce road and tyre noise. The Jaguar's chassis copes well with the abrupt crests and steep slopes - those Kenyan roads throw frequently to luxury cars.

The steering is good, direct and with some proper sensation, and the XF is easy to place on the road and keen holding on its line. Even in wet and slippery road surfaces, the all-wheel-drive system never runs short of traction.

Jaguar has admitted it is unlikely to directly replace the XF - or the smaller XE - so this version will likely live on for as long as there is any demand for it. Jaguar has been building saloons for much longer than it's been making SUVs, and the revised XF is one of the better ones. ■

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#19

Audi S8

BY DR HANNINGTON GAYA

A quick look at the local roads or global trends, most luxury car buyers are leaning to bulky SUVs. However, for more discerning, comfort-craving car buyers - especially those who seek enthralling driving experiences and sheer pleasure, a rapid first-class saloon holds special appeal. If you're one such an individual, then read on, because the Audi A8 is the best of the breed.

In true Ingolstadt manner, the S8 offers sophistication and style in an understated manner. With that said, the S8 is quite unique in the local market - even though grey market dealers have to import



it for buyers. It's a high-performance limousine not only in terms of "trim", but also outright capability, appealing to a select few buyers who demand the best possible combination of sizzling performance and exquisite luxury.

Design

The standard A8 is a handsome machine, but Audi's designers have discreetly endowed the sportier model with its own visual character. The S8 is immediately familiar in terms of the interior as it mirrors many other Audis. It is, however, the trim treatment on the doors and seats that lift the feel of the cabin. When finished in sinister black and riding on optional anthracite black, diamond cut, 10-spoke 21-inch wheels, the Audi S8 immediately reminds any movie junkie of the fast Audis featured in action movies such as Ronin and The Transporter. The sizeable wheels fill the saloon's arches with purpose and the body appears to be stretched low and tight over its corners.

True enthusiasts describe the S8 as an infinitely more elegant and desirable solution to high-performance luxury motoring. It's particularly attractive from the rear, where the OLED rear lights - part

of an optional lighting package, illuminate in a mesmerising sequence when the car is unlocked.

Open the door and you'll probably notice that the car lifts slightly on its active suspension to make ingress easier. That is providing you're not distracted by the visual delight that is the current-generation Audi S8 cabin. This is one of the most striking cabin in its segment, which says a lot, given the strength of the competition.



In true Ingolstadt manner, the S8 offers sophistication and style in an understated manner. With that said, the S8 is quite unique in the local market - even though grey market dealers have to import it for buyers.

Build quality, as expected from Audi, is superb. It is, overall, a technology-laden cabin, which is awash with digital displays and touch-sensitive panels. Gone are the days when "luxury saloon" equated to burr walnut trim and piped cream leather upholstery.

The S8 is a big car with a roomy cabin - with more than sufficient rear legroom. That said, if you're looking at an Audi S8 specifically in the first place, we're quite confident that the tighter rear confines - as opposed to its competitors that offer their cars in Long Wheelbase (LWB) versions, won't be a deal-breaker. You do still get a 505-litre boot should you need to, er, transport stuff.

Performance

Housed under the S8's bonnet is a very powerful 4 litre twin-turbo petrol V8 capable of 420 kW and 800 Nm. It is significantly more powerful than its homeland rivals from Mercedes-Benz - S500 L and BMW - 750Li. Audi claims a blistering 0-100 kph time of 3.8 seconds, which is quite something, given the S8's not-insignificant kerb weight in excess of 2.2 tonnes! A speed limiter is in place keeping the top speed to 250 kph which is way more than enough for this motoring hippo.

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>> While the German limousine's powerplant does emit a pleasing roar when tasked to deliver full or near-maximal acceleration - courtesy of automatically actuated flaps in the exhaust system, the most impressive aspect of the S8's performance is just how effortless it feels. It's a very smooth engine, which, coupled with active noise cancellation technology, facilitates relaxed - yet devastatingly fast, progress.

The 8-speed automatic transmission is also very well matched with the engine, delivering buttery-smooth, but eminently precise, shifts.

Ride

For a car with such a long wheelbase and hefty kerb weight, its ride management systems do an amazing job of keeping it comfortable yet engaging to drive.

The S8 features what Audi calls "predictive active suspension". With this system, each wheel can be independently lifted or pushed down via electromechanical actuators. According to Audi, this makes it possible, for the first time, to actively control the trim of the body, in any driving situation, which greatly reduces pitch and roll. Add a front camera that scans for the road surface ahead for larger irregularities, and the Ingolstadt-based firm's standard-bearing saloon is said to be capable of altering its suspension settings "predictively".

Another boon to the S8's dynamic abilities is the fitment of dynamic all-wheel steering, which is claimed to improve steering response and facilitate a tighter turning circle. A standard sport differential actively transfers torque between the rear wheels during cornering, countering the tendency to understeer that, to reiterate, plagued fast, big, all-wheel-drive Audis in the past.

Comfort

If one is willing to specify a lot of optional extras, the S8 doesn't lack any features or convenience offerings. Most of the controls have now been integrated into the pair of touchscreen panels that dominate the centre console.



The lower section houses the climate control functions, while the rest of the car's infotainment and setup controls are located in the upper display.

Audi has mastered combining slick, clutter-free touch panels with the tactility of haptic feedback.

Given the S8's market positioning and price, it goes without saying that it would take a considerable amount of time to stipulate all the saloon's standard features, but it's worth noting that an extensive optional extra list is available.

The S8 has standard features that truly stand-out, including the individually contoured comfort sports front seats with

Given the S8's market positioning and price, it goes without saying that it would take a considerable amount of time to stipulate all the saloon's standard features, but it's worth noting that an extensive optional extra list is available.

adjustable side bolsters and heating/ventilation - a massage function is optional.

The standard infotainment package offers Apple CarPlay and Android Auto functionality, as well as a charging pad and a Bang & Olufsen audio system, but more extravagant features can be specified at extra cost.

Buyers will appreciate the Intelligent Park Assist, an excellent 360-degree camera system and a head-up display.

Verdict

The saloon segment appears to be slowly fading away, but there are some great cars to be had if you don't want an SUV. The S8 is one of them.

There's an air of good taste, sophistication and "class" about the Audi S8, which many find highly desirable.

The discerning buyers who do take the plunge will slide in behind the 'wheel of the best large luxury, high-performance Audi they'll ever experience. If this is the last hurrah of the high-performance limousine, it's a rousing welcome accolade. ■



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MAKE LIFE A RIDE



#20

Porsche Panamera

BY STAFF WRITER

With a fresh sport saloon in the Porsche range, is the Panamera's time up? For a vehicle that oozes drive appeal, it's a good thing the Panamera doesn't catch feelings, otherwise it might be feeling emotional and neglected like the forgotten member of the Porsche family. While the 911 remains the evergreen hero, the Cayenne and Macan the popular sales darlings and the new Taycan the exciting newcomer, the Panamera simply plays its role.

It fills an important but small role for the brand, giving Porsche an executive sedan - and wagon, to compete against the big players from the other German brands - Mercedes-Benz CLS, BMW 8-Series Gran Coupe and Audi A7 Sportback.

However, while it may have been overshadowed of late, that doesn't mean Porsche has forgotten about it. The current generation - launched back in 2017, has been given a mid-life update.

The changes are subtle in isolation but add up to some big improvements across the range, most notably extra power has seen the previous range-topper - the Panamera Turbo, become the Turbo S. There's also a new hybrid model and

tweaks to the air suspension and related systems to improve the handling.

Exterior

Styling has been subtly tweaked, with a revised front bumper, side cooling openings, and lights - but few will notice the differences in the real world. Three new 20- and 21-inch wheels have been added to the Panamera's option catalogue, making a total of ten-wheel designs available to clients. All Panamera models come with a three-year/unlimited kilometre warranty, and the 4S E-Hybrid gets an additional eight-year battery warranty.

Interior

Sinking behind the wheel of a Porsche Panamera is a good feeling. The seating position is low in the hull, with stacks of adjustment offered by the standard-fit heated and cooled sports seats. The same goes for the controls, with the wheel offering large amounts of height and telescopic adjustment. The facelifted range benefits from an updated infotainment system with live traffic information and wireless Apple CarPlay. The GTS gets an Alcantara interior as standard - unavailable in other models, while V6 models get embossed leather in black or grey. Smooth leather, while standard

on the Turbo S, can be optioned on V6 models in an additional two colours for more dollars.

All sub-Saharan models including those available for the Kenyan market come standard with lane keep assist, radar cruise control, and park assist with 360-degree camera. While standard on higher-end models previously, all Panamera variants now also gain speed-sensitive steering, front ventilated seats, lane change assist, adaptive LED headlights, head-up display, and soft-close doors. The 4S E-Hybrid and variants above gain an air purifier, and the Turbo S gets 18-way electric sports seats - another extra cost option in other trim levels.

Directly In front of the driver sits a fantastic gauge cluster uniting analogue with the digital. In the centre is a large, classic-looking tachometer, which is flanked by a pair of customisable screens. As for more basic amenities, there's a decent-sized pair of cupholders, a small covered storage area, narrow door bins, and a shallow armrest centre console complete with one USB-C port. The second row is spacious, with a smart notch carved into the first-row seat backs and B-pillars allowing your knees to swing freely. It may sound minor, but it greatly assists ingress and egress.

Once in and sitting behind a front driv-

Sinking behind the wheel of a Porsche Panamera is a good feeling. The seating position is low in the hull, with stacks of adjustment offered by the standard-fit heated and cooled sports seats.

er's seat adjusted to suit my 6ft-tall frame, space is fantastic for fully grown adults. There's more room on offer in the back of a Panamera than a Taycan, so if you're looking for a reason to justify the internal combustion engine, think about doing it for your kids.

Boot space is 467 litres, which is decent enough in isolation, but small given the size of the vehicle. It's a well-proportioned area, with the second row dropped, space increases to 1,306 litres, and under the floor lies a tyre repair kit and air compressor.

Engine

It's under the bonnet where the most attention has been given to the Panamera range, with V8 and hybrid models enjoying healthy power upgrades. The Turbo S doesn't quite match the previous Turbo S E-Hybrid it replaces, with the 4.0-litre twin-turbo petrol V8 delivering 463 kW and 820 Nm, compared with the 500 kW/850 Nm of the previous flagship. However, it is quicker in a straight line. The 0-100km/h time for the Turbo S comes in at a claimed 3.1 seconds - hurling this behemoth towards its class lap record at the iconic Nurburgring racing circuit.

Sitting below the Turbo S is the GTS, using a detuned version of the 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8. Its 353 kW and 620 Nm gets the car from zero to 100km/h in 3.9 seconds - 0.2 seconds slower than the 4S E-Hybrid, despite sitting above it in the model range.

The base Panamera and Panamera 4 models change from a 3.0-litre twin-turbo V6 to a 2.9-litre twin-turbo V6 - all while maintaining the same 243 kW and 450 Nm as the previous engines. The rear-wheel-drive Panamera does the 0-100km/h sprint in a claimed 5.6 seconds, while the all-wheel-drive Panamera 4 does it in a claimed 5.3 seconds.

The Panamera 4 can also be optioned in a long-wheelbase Executive spec, which adds 15cm to the body length, and 0.1 second to the claimed acceleration time. Those needing more practicality can choose a Sport Turismo - a svelte wagon version of the Panamera - in either Panamera 4 or GTS specifications.

Verdict

If you walk into a Porsche dealership wanting a saloon, the mental war is deciding between a Panamera or Taycan. The Panamera - once ground-breaking in 2009 as the brand's first four-door (plus a tailgate) passenger car, has undergone a facelift on its second generation. The Taycan, equally as trailblazing, is Porsche's first-ever electric vehicle. The latter even happens to be a similarly sized four-door saloon.

If you're working with a moderate luxury budget, you're going to be looking at the entry points to either range. If we compare both, the Taycan is millions of shillings cheaper. The same car continues to be better on paper, too, getting to 100km/h from a standing start two-tenths faster. Here's the kicker - the quicker, cheaper one is bloody good, where does that leave the Panamera?

Well for sub-Saharan Africa, the new Porsche Panamera makes sense because of a lack of infrastructure to run a fully electric car confidently. ■

It's available on order now, so a stroll into your bank to make sure your zeros and commas are in order then a visit to Porsche Centre Nairobi showroom on Mombasa Road for a perusal and selection of model and thereafter a ticking of all your tailored options is a sure way to spoil oneself with a German engineering marvel.





#21

Ford Ranger



BY JUNIOR GAYA

The American blue oval firm has gone and put the global pick-up world on notice by revealing the smartest, most versatile and most capable Ford Ranger ever - delivering an even more desirable pick-up partner for customers.

Using years of Ford pick-up expertise and deep understanding of pick-up customers, the company collaborated with customers around the globe to create a vehicle and ownership experience that next-gen Ford Ranger owners can rely on for their businesses, family lives and adventure.

Ford has really packed a lot into the next-generation Ranger to inspire owners to do more of what they love to do, with features that encourage them to explore new horizons. Ultimately, Ford wants their customers' experience with the pick-up to enable and enhance their lifestyles. Ford calls this "Living the Ranger Life," and it's something shared by every designer and engineer involved in creating the next-generation Ranger.

Looks

Customer input was key to developing the next-generation Ford Ranger's rugged new look. Ford spent a lot of time with owners around the globe, conducting more than 5,000 interviews and dozens of customer workshops to understand how customers used their pick-ups and what they wanted and expected in the new Ranger.

Visually, the new-generation Ford Ranger is bold and confident, with a purposeful exterior that shares Ford's global pickup design DNA. The design features a defined new grille, and signature C-clamp headlight treatment at the front while a subtle shoulder line down the sides incorporates bolder wheel arches that gives Ranger a sure-footed stance. For the first time, Ford Ranger offers matrix LED headlights. At the back, the taillights are designed in harmony with the signature graphics on the front. Inside, the car-like cabin steps up, using premium soft-touch materials, and prominent portrait-style centre touchscreen with Ford's signature SYNC™ 4 connectivity and entertainment system.

Beneath the new bodywork is an upgraded chassis riding on a wheelbase 50 mm longer and a track 50 mm

wider than the prior Ranger. A hydro-formed front-end structure creates more space in the engine bay for the new V6 engine and helps future-proof the Ranger for other propulsion technologies. It also opens up the front of the pick-up to allow more airflow to the radiator, which helps keep running temperatures low when towing or carrying heavy loads.

Wheel sizes range from new 17-inch alloys up to 20-inch machine-face multi-spoke alloys - a first for Ranger. Eight different exterior colours have been introduced into the line-up.

First things first, and what everyone wants to know, is that yes there is a diesel V6 and no, it won't be a VW engine. The new Ford Ranger is in three variations; XLT, Sport and Wildtrak.

Engines

First things first, and what everyone wants to know, is that yes there is a diesel V6 and no, it won't be a VW engine. The new Ford Ranger is in three variations; XLT, Sport and Wildtrak.

Customers wanted a choice of more power and torque for towing heavy loads and extreme off-roading, so the team added Ford's proven 3.0-litre V6 turbo-diesel - that's found in the F-150, and developed it for the Ranger. It is one of three turbo-diesel engine options that will be available in sub-Saharan Africa from launch.

The next-gen Ford Ranger also come with a choice of proven Single-Turbo and Bi-Turbo 2.0-litre in-line four-cylinder diesels. The Single-Turbo comes in two different performance levels and delivers power, torque and fuel economy, which is important to small business owners or commercial vehicle fleets. The Bi-Turbo engine is a more sophisticated, performance variant for customers who want more power but need to maintain fuel economy.

The engines are mated to an updated 10-speed automatic transmission, six-speed auto or six-speed manual gearbox.

>>

Top 25 Most Stunning Cars of the Year 2022

>> Day-to-day

Since Ford has a really wide spectrum of customers, in order to develop the ride and handling expected of a pickup owner's use for a wide range of work, family and play - engineers focused on the fundamentals. On one end, they have small business owners looking for very work-oriented transportation. They want traditional two-wheel drive with a single cab and a load box to transport their goods. At the extreme other end, they have the serious off-roaders who really push their Rangers to the limit with endurance races like the Dakar Rally. The next-gen Ranger will meet the needs of both types of customers and everyone in between.

Engineers moved the front wheels forward by 50 mm for a better approach angle and outboard for better off-road articulation, both of which improve the off-roading experience. They also shifted the rear suspension dampers outboard of the frame rails to give drivers and passengers a better ride both on- and off-road, no matter if they're carrying heavy cargo for work, or just taking the family out for dinner.

They have also increased the tuning range to give our customers the best of both worlds - think of this as Built Ford Tough Plus - so you've got the capability, toughness and durability that Ford pickups are known for, plus comfort and a more car-like ride that Ranger is known for.

Built to do

Customers wanted a flexible, modern cockpit that caters to both work and family duties. So, Ranger needs to serve as both a workspace and a haven, providing smart and connected features with more comfort and storage options than ever before.

The heart of the Ford Ranger's connective experience is the large 10.1-inch or 12-inch touchscreen in the centre stack. It complements the fully digital instrument panel and is loaded with Ford's latest SYNC™ 4 system, which comes customer-ready with its voice-activated communications, entertainment and information systems. Additionally, there's an



embedded factory-fitted FordPass Connect modem, allowing connectivity on the go when linked with the FordPass™ app, so customers can stay connected to their world. FordPass enhances the ownership experience with features like Remote Start, Vehicle Status, and remote lock and unlock functions via a mobile device.

The screen also is linked to a 360-degree camera to make parking a breeze in tight urban spaces or to assist when negotiating particularly tricky terrain while out exploring. In addition, customers can control Ranger's new exterior zone lighting system via the touchscreen or the FordPass app, which means they don't have to work, camp or do anything in the dark. Ranger technology will also be future-proofed to accept Ford Power-Up wireless software updates thanks to the embedded FordPass Connect modem.

The design team also created clever storage and useful features for owners. There are not only places to store your

Customers wanted a flexible, modern cockpit that caters to both work and family duties. So, Ranger needs to serve as both a workspace and a haven, providing smart and connected features with more comfort and storage options than ever before.



the box. In addition, the Ranger team worked to ensure that a wider variety of cargo could fit and stay secure in the load box.

Widening the track by 50 mm may not seem like a lot, but it makes a huge difference, especially in the cargo box. It means that customers will be able to load flat, some pretty fundamental items - such as a sheet of building plywood or a full-size pallet

In addition, the new Ford Ranger offers a new cargo management system designed with dividers to hold various sized items - like timber or toolboxes. Owners also can create smaller compartments to store objects, which would otherwise have to go in the cab, using a system of ultra-strong spring-loaded cleats that clip into rails bolted to each side of the cargo box. The tailgate can also double as a mobile workbench with an integrated ruler and clamp pockets to measure, grip and cut building materials.

Zone lighting - controlled via the in-cab-in SYNC™ screen or through the FordPass app - provides 360-degree lighting around the truck to help give customers better visibility around the vehicle. Load box lighting is provided under the left- and right-hand rails and provides plenty of light for finishing up jobs in low light or finding things in the cargo box at night.

Verdict

With so much focus on customer needs, Ford has become a lot more customer centric and depending on the market they will provide a suite of services such as being "always on" - whether you have questions about the vehicle or need assistance. They have Ranger Concierges in key markets that will walk you through whatever you need to know, the FordPass App, or if you have a question or want to learn more about how to best use the Ranger's hi-tech features, such as the Ford Pass app, it's covered with its "Master your Ranger" virtual or hands-on education. ■

Ford saw a big improvement opportunity when they met with customers and observed how they climbed up to the load box. There were people stepping on the tyre and then going over the side of the pickup or hoisting themselves onto the open tailgate.

That was the inspiration for creating an integrated side-step behind the rear tyres of the next-generation Ranger, to create a strong, more stable way for them to access

The next-generation Ford Ranger is built at Ford's plants in Thailand and in South Africa for the sub-Saharan market at Silverton, Pretoria.

ISUZU

#22

Isuzu D-Max X

BY JUNIOR GAYA

The flagship X-Terrain is the top-spec variant in Isuzu's wildly successful D-Max pickup range. As part of a refresh for 2022, this pickup has had a few updates from the 3rd Generation model that debuted in Thailand in 2019. While hardly amounting to wholesale changes, it justifies us taking another look at this double-cab. Do note that Isuzu in East Africa are yet to confirm what will be available for the region.

The D-Max is a reliable workhorse that offers buyers plenty of choice and value. This latest version features a substantially improved interior and driving dynamics while adding class-leading levels of safety equipment.

Compared with the previous model - the second-generation D-Max, this is a significant step-change in all-round usability, achieved without compromising the core attributes that make it such a successful working horse in Africa and market leader in East and Central Africa.

The new Isuzu D-Max X is capable of towing 3.5-tonnes - 3,500kg, and every

version easily hauls more than 1.0 tonne - 1,000kg, in payload, from its higher-spec versions and saloon car luxury, with the family travelling with you in greater comfort.

The X-Terrain is Isuzu's answer to the Ford Ranger Wildtrak, in other words a load-lugger with all the fruit and some styling add-ons, designed for the lifestyle crowd rather than those who want a no-frills workhorse.

Exterior

A closer look at the exterior to lure potential customers in, include 18-inch dark

grey metallic alloy wheels encased in 265/60R18 highway tyres, automatic wipers, heated door mirrors, remote engine start, proximity keyless entry, walk-away locking, automatic Bi-LED headlights, auto-leveling and automatic high beam, LED daytime running lights, LED fog lights, LED combination tail lights, under-rail tub liner, tow bar receiver, matte black roller tonneau cover, aero sports bar/sailplane, front and rear underbody spoilers and front and rear parking sensors.

Interior

When one gets into the D-Max cabin, they are ushered in with leather-accented seats, auto-dimming rear-view mirror, vanity mirror lights, 9.0-inch touchscreen centre console display, digital radio, sat-



The X-Terrain is Isuzu's answer to the Ford Ranger Wildtrak, in other words a load-lugger with all the fruit and some styling add-ons, designed for the lifestyle crowd rather than those who want a no-frills workhorse.

ellite-navigation, wireless Apple CarPlay, wired Android Auto, eight speakers - roof included, voice recognition via phone and dual-zone climate control.

The D-Max has fantastically supportive front seats with ample bolstering - as well as heating, power adjustable driver's seat with lumbar support.

The D-Max is brimming with clever storage areas, which is something you really come to appreciate. There are cupholder drawers in the dash next to the outer air vents, a lidded console atop the dash, two stacked gloveboxes, 1.5-litre bottle-friendly door bins, central cup-holders - sans teeth, a phone area under the fascia, and a sunglasses holder in the roof.

The 9.0-inch centre touchscreen has a landscape orientation and helpful shortcut buttons running below to head straight to the home screen or the embedded navigation.

The series of rocker switches to control the climate control are all highly intuitive and fool-proof. The D-Max has one of the better back seats in the double-cab pickup market, with headroom and legroom for a 6-foot 1 frame behind the driving position, wearing boots.

Safety

When it comes to safety, Isuzu is not messing around. Dual cameras mounted near the rear-view mirror provide information to power the active safety systems.

All variants come standard with the following safety features: Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) with junction assist, forward collision warning, blind-spot monitoring, driver attention monitoring, lane departure warning, lane-keep assist with centring, rear cross-traffic alert, traffic sign recognition, automatic high-beam, reversing camera, wrong-pedal accelerator >>



>> ation warning and adaptive cruise control.

Additionally, eight airbags are standard, including a central airbag designed to mitigate the passenger and driver's arms and heads crashing into each other in a serious side-impact crash.

Drive

The electric-assisted power steering is feather-light at urban speeds, which makes the big beast feel less unwieldy. The only gripe is the active lane-keeping aid, which tends to tug on the wheel a little more than many customers might like, and only picks up road lines some of the time. Hence why that new shortcut 'off' switch is so welcome especially on Kenyan roads.

The suspension comprises double wishbones with coils at the front and rear leaf suspension. If you regularly carry heavy loads, then opt for the D-Max SX and LS-M with bouncier but heavier-duty rear leaf



Offroad

In off-roading terms, the D-Max defaults to 2H (rear-wheel drive), with high-range 4x4 (4H) for unsealed surfaces and low-range (4L) with a switchable rear locking diff to stop an airborne wheel just spinning aimlessly.

springs. The overall ride quality is really quite good, with supple bump absorption and decent body control at the rear even when unladen and barrelling over corrugations.

In off-roading terms, the D-Max defaults to 2H (rear-wheel drive), with high-range 4x4 (4H) for unsealed surfaces and low-range (4L) with a switchable rear locking diff to stop an airborne wheel just spinning aimlessly.

Some pickups are coming with



full-time on-demand AWD on the road with low-range for off-roading these days, but the D-Max relies on its electronic aids on wet tarmac instead.

In terms of engine braking and traction, the D-Max walks over most mid-level trails and is every bit as talented as most. That said, you'll



In terms of engine braking and traction, the D-Max walks over most mid-level trails and is every bit as talented as most. That said, you'll need to switch out the highway tyres, and you might expect those side steps to take some damage. Ditto the side flares.

need to switch out the highway tyres, and you might expect those side steps to take some damage. Ditto the side flares.

The tailgate isn't counterbalanced like a Ranger's, so it's leftier to lift, but the tub itself has an excellent plastic bed liner fitted as standard.

If one actually needs the pickup to carry big things, the X-Terrain probably isn't the best choice, since the - rather fiddly latch, sliding solid tonneau's stowage area robs you of space, and the plasticky sailplane and cosmetic tub toppers look pretty easy to scuff. This D-Max is more of an urban fashion statement than a load-lugging brute.

However, having a lockable sliding hard cover is godsend for someone carrying valuable power tools or what have you. It's horses for courses.

Were it me buying a D-Max, I'd go for a lower grade model and allocate my savings to new tyres, a steel front bar, rock rails on the side, and some additional underbody armour. But buyers looking at the X-Terrain probably know what they're getting.

Verdict

Those who want a 'lifestyle' pickup should look at this D-Max grade, but those who want to head into the bush or worksite might find the cosmetic add-ons don't cut the mustard.

Those buyers should kick the tyres on the new D-Max LS-U+ grade instead.

The D-Max remains one of the best workhorses in its class, and deserves its popularity across the East African market, even if inevitable price hikes will strike me as cheeky at best. ■

Visit Isuzu East Africa showrooms and the regional wide distributors and dealers for exacting information, option availability, time frame and pricing.



The BT-50, though, is sourced from Thailand for sub-Saharan markets and it comes to the party with a bold new look and a far more modern cabin. Fully redesigned for the first time in nine years, the BT-50 is globally supplied by Isuzu on an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) basis.

#23

Mazda BT-50

BY EVAN REDDY

When it comes to pick up manufacturing, very few car brands go at it alone and instead opt for partnerships, and not surprisingly, we've seen a switching of allegiances in recent years. The outgoing Mazda BT-50, for instance, was based on the Ford Ranger platform, but since the Mazda-Ford dissolu-

tion, the Blue Oval is now building the second-generation Amarok for Volkswagen and the all-new BT-50 that you see here is in fact built by Isuzu and based on the new-generation D-max platform.

The BT-50, though, is sourced from Thailand for sub-Saharan markets and it comes to the party with a bold new look and a far more modern cabin. Fully redesigned for the first time in nine years, the BT-50 is globally supplied by Isuzu on an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) basis.

The previous BT-50's exterior design drew criticism for its curvy front end and strange looking tail lights. On the positive side, its sporty and powerful design, exceptional driving performance capable of taking on all kinds of driving situations, and functionality have all been highly regarded by drivers who actively drive pickups.

The second fully-redesigned model aims to bring customers pleasure and enjoyment during their time spent inside the vehicle. Since it's based on Isuzu pickup platform, special care has gone into the vehicle's design, ease of use and into creating peace of mind for the occupants. It seems to get the balance right by adopting a persona that reminds us of the Japanese carmaker's latest line of SUVs.



Basically, the all-new BT-50 expresses the unique beauty of Mazda's Kodo-Soul of Motion design theme with power, toughness and utilitarian functionality suited to a pickup.

The visual attitude is attractive nonetheless and the design team has done a good enough job of distinguishing it from the Isuzu. The vehicle's driving performance, functionality and safety meet the active needs of the wide range of situations in which customers may use double cab pickups.

Mazda aims to become a brand that can create strong bonds with customers by focusing on the pure essence of cars - the

joy of driving - and committing themselves to preserve the beautiful earth, enrich people's lives and make a bountiful society that lifts everybody's spirits.

Engine

Under the bonnet you'll find an upgraded Isuzu 3.0-litre turbo diesel power plant that produces 140 kW at 3600rpm and 450 Nm from 1600-2600 revs. This is paired exclusively with a six-speed automatic transmission and Mazda offers a choice between 4x2 and 4x4.

There's also a more affordable 1.9-litre turbo diesel 4x2 model, which is good for 110 kW and 350 Nm. >>



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>> Interior

The cockpit, with its stitched leather dash top trim, makes for a classier vibe than you'd expect in a pickup. It really feels like a premium vehicle inside, right down to the piano-key ventilation controls beneath the infotainment system. On that note, the cabin architecture strikes a good balance between analogue and digital.

The aforementioned climate controls look great, and they're simple enough to use. Mazda hasn't simply thrown all functionality onto the central screen, although it does have a very decent 9.0-inch infotainment system with eight speakers. The system is simple to use and the graphics are easy on the eye. Navigation is easily solved by connecting to Android Auto or Apple CarPlay.

It's easy enough to get comfortable behind the wheel of the Mazda BT-50 and unlike rivals such as the Ranger, the steering wheel adjusts for both height and reach. A curious omission in this range-topper is leather seat upholstery.

In terms of spec, the Mazda BT-50 3.0 Individual comes with



The BT-50 behaves better than expected on dirt roads that form most of African rural roads, coupled with improved road-holding and steering response.

dual-zone climate control, auto headlights and wipers, front parking sensors, reverse camera and a leather-wrapped multi-function steering wheel. For the record, the cheaper 3.0 Dynamic model has the same cabin spec, but loses the four-wheel drive.

Drive

In a combination of highway and dirt road driving, the fuel consumption proved decent enough for a vehicle of this size and stature, averaging around 8.3 litres per 100km mostly on tarmac roads.

Performance is good, with the vehicle delivering relatively effort-

less performance, with enough power to overtake when needed.

The BT-50 behaves better than expected on dirt roads that form most of African rural roads, coupled with improved road-holding and steering response. Cornering exudes confidence for a pickup of its size and weight, which offers drivers great expectations while behind the cockpit of these work horses.

Handling

The road trip also highlighted an impracticality that exists with all pickups on the market, barring a few special edition models.

The BT-50 locks itself as soon as you've exited for driver safety, away from the security in the very pleasant interior cabin.

Verdict

Many including industry heavyweights assume that being a motor journalist means criticising a vehicle and outing its weak points. Much like Jeremy Clarkson and the likes do. Well, that's partly true, but reporting on a vehicle is a two-way street. Rather than rip it apart, approach it justly and objectively, thus, giving a fair opinion. With the all-new Mazda BT-50, the approach was simple: evaluate the vehicle for what it is and give a fair and objective verdict on it.

With its striking design, classy cabin and decent all-round performance and dynamics, the Mazda BT-50 is a pickup that is likeable and adds to lift the Mazda's profile with Kenyan pickup buyers. It makes for an interesting and refreshing alternative, and is rightly expected to give the segment leaders a real run for their money. ■

A visit to the Mazda Division of the CMC Motors Group's showrooms will let one get up close and personal with the all-new Mazda BT-50. Let's hope they're a tad aggressive with their pricing approach to lure customers from Toyota, Ford, Isuzu and Nissan.



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#24

Nissan Navara



BY JUNIOR GAYA

Crown Motors under its Nissan Kenya subsidiary officially launched the 2021 Nissan Navara. The Nissan Navara is built in Africa and is designed and equipped to tackle Kenya's rugged terrain. What most are and will ask is whether it can take on the competition in a market that Toyota dominates with its Hilux, Isuzu is fighting for with its D-Max and Ford is captivating a followership with the indomitable Ranger.

Having been introduced slightly over thirty years ago with a bulky face and somewhat surprising 4x4 capability with competitive pricing, the Navara has always been a viable option in the pick-up segment where durability, reliability and versatility are key but also safety, comfort and driving pleasure are expected features.

Design

The all-new Navara includes something Nissan calls V-Motion identity, redesigned wheels and increased bed height, and new LED headlamps and foglamps - all built to allow for increased drive ability and ease of use.

With an athletic stance that is immediately noticeable with its bonnet creases and bulging fenders, the all new Navara boasts an edgy and very appealing design theme. This is enhanced with matte black details around the edges of the grille, front bumper, side mirrors and side steps and not forgetting the orange accents.

The two-tone styling also makes its way into the cabin. On the high spec model, contrast stitching is visible on the highly supportive leather seats, using orange inserts, which is also the theme on the steering wheel and door trim.

Interior upgrades would not be complete without an update to the multimedia interface and Nissan made sure to include Android Auto and Apple CarPlay support to meet all the needs of the would-be drivers and passengers opting for the Navara. No interface would be worth its salt without access to Google Maps - which in today's world comes quite in handy whilst traversing Nairobi's ever-growing road network or attacking the bundu's upcountry, at the touch of a button.

To make it all better and safer, the system also features voice recognition plus Bluetooth, USB and SD Card support.

Particular models come with up to four USB ports, including two quick-charging ports, and three 12V power outlets - so your devices never run out of >>

Top 25 Most Stunning Cars of the Year 2022

>> juice. Two devices can be connected to Bluetooth at once, which is handy if you carry a phone and a tablet or have kids who like to take audio control from the rear.

The Navara also gains dual-zone air-con, with additional vents for rear passengers in the double cab, meaning that everyone on board should be satisfied with the cabin's temperature. Meanwhile, heated side mirrors and rain sensors ensure visibility remains uncompromised even in extreme conditions.

Engine

Powering the all new Navara is Nissan's tried, tested and very reliable 2.5 litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine, which Nissan says caters to its customers' requirements for low running costs, reliability and performance. It churns out 140 kW of power and 450 Nm of torque on higher grade models: the LE and PRO-4X models, whilst partnered with a 7-speed automatic transmission with Tiptronic.

For the labour yearning drivers, a 6-speed manual gearbox is available for the local market. The Navara is available in three models in Kenya: PRO-4X, LE and XE. The mid-spec workhorse on the XE delivers 120 kW and 403 Nm, which Nissan claims to be the most powerful engine in the entry and mid grades pick-up segment. In addition, the Navara engine line-up includes a 2.5-litre naturally-aspirated petrol engine that punches out 118 kW and 233 Nm, as of time of press, word whether or not this engine would make its way into the Kenyan market was still a matter to be decided.

Power is directed to all four wheels via Nissan's 4x4 on the fly system that has several modes to keep one moving no matter the terrain, especially now with the unpredictable weather. Making things better, the system comes with rear differential lock for easy off-road driving. For manual transmission models, a new 1st gear ratio improves acceleration response and eases uphill starts, they say. When four-wheel drive mode is engaged, traction is distributed evenly (50:50) to all four wheels to prevent tyre slip in severe conditions.



Safety

The Navara comes loaded with an array of safety technology from ABS (Anti-Lock Braking System) with EBD (Electronic Brakeforce Distribution), VSC (Vehicle Stability Control), 6 airbags and a 5-Star EuroNCAP safety cabin that will keep occupants very safe and comfortable from the elements. Hill Start-Assist is an additional offering plus Hill Descent-Assist.

The inclusion of Nissan Intelligent Mobility (NIM) makes this range the most technologically advanced Navara yet - and the safest too, they say. Intelligent driving aids can be paired with additional driver assistance tools that help you see more, sense more and take swifter action, a sub-Saharan marketing blurb reads. One particular feature is Intelligent Forward Collision Warning, which monitors sudden

movements of up to two vehicles ahead and alerts the driver of potential collision risks. This complements the Intelligent Emergency Braking feature, which will activate the Navara's brakes autonomously in case of no brake pedal input from the driver to avoid collisions.

For road trips and lengthy commutes, the Navara's Intelligent Driver Alertness supports safety and convenience with both visual and audible alerts that encourage

For road trips and lengthy commutes, the Navara's Intelligent Driver Alertness supports safety and convenience with both visual and audible alerts that encourage the driver to take a break when it detects changes in driving style.



the driver to take a break when it detects changes in driving style. For night driving, Intelligent High Beam Assist automatically switches headlights to low beam from high beam when it detects an oncoming vehicle. Further features warn drivers if they stray outside their lane without signaling and detect vehicles in the blind spot area when changing lanes.

The Navara's Intelligent Around View Monitor uses four cameras to help drivers spot people and cars surrounding the vehicle, and is also useful for trailer hitching. The Rear Cross Traffic Alert warns drivers of potential collisions when reversing too. Rounding out this emphasis on safety are additional side and curtain airbags - bringing the total to seven on High-Spec models.

Verdict

What captures the most attention is the Navara's 3 year/100,000 Km warranty plus a 2 year/50,000 Km service plan as standard to give any potential buyer peace of mind and push them in the right direction to purchase. With the Navara's proven chassis, strong engines, high safety features and Nissan's pedigree over the decades, this all new Navara has made a great leap to take on the three dominant models in a segment that is growing in popularity locally and in a market where a sizeable of motorist also use pickups, especially double cabs, for saloon motoring.

To round up this impressive package, Nissan's engineers have included the Follow Me Home feature on the new LED headlamps, Door Puddle Lamp to help you see the ground when you step out of this beautiful workhorse at night and auto door locks on the high-end models. ■

Visit Nissan Kenya for more details on the versions available locally, both in single- and double-cab iterations.





#25

Land Rover Defender

BY STAFF WRITER

Car manufacturers and dealers the world over took quite a knock ever from the Covid-19 pandemic which has engulfed the entire globe since 2020. Surprisingly, this has led to

a keen interest in the premium segment of rugged cars.

The eagerly awaited and heavily anticipated new Defender finally landed in Kenya in the second half of 2020 after it was reintroduced to the line-up after a lengthy hiatus. If you are one of those people

who mourned the demise of the old Defender, then you will appreciate the effort of the designers at Land Rover in bringing the new Defender to the Land Rover line-up

The Land Rover Defender offers well-rounded performance abilities, both on- and off-road. It is a proficient off-roading choice, with standard four-wheel drive, comfortable and composed even on tarmac jungle. It has intuitive infotainment controls, and its standard two-row seating setup offers plenty of space. An optional third row seating and a homely cabin are add-ons.

Land Rover debuted the 2020 Defender in six main trims and one body style: Defender 110 - a four-door model. The two base trims have a turbocharged four-cylinder engine, and the other trims upgrade to a mild-hybrid six-cylinder. The base is fine, but if you want the inline-six engine, it's worth upgrading to the SE.

Update

The 2021 Land Rover Defender has tremendous off-roading capability and is sure-footed when it comes to handling whilst offering a smooth ride, making it a good SUV. The seats are comfortable and support-

ive - especially on long drives.

Plenty of features come standard, including a user-friendly infotainment system, the Land Rover Defender feeling quite as posh as it should for a luxury midsize SUV.

You should consider this Land Rover if you want a luxury SUV with unparalleled off-road ability and a nice, but not overly opulent, interior. It's reasonably priced for the class, so it's a decent value overall.

Supercharged

The 2022 Land Rover Defender has off-road prowess and good on-road manners making it formidable and second to none SUV when the rubber touches any terrain. The cabin is a touch of luxury. It is also blessed with new supercharged V8 engines, new trims plus special editions and a newly optional 11.4-inch infotainment touch screen.

The Defender succeeds most at its primary objective, which is being

one of the most capable off-road vehicles available. On road, it exhibits its pleasant handling and a comfortable ride while offering potent acceleration from two optional engines. It is also available in four-door and two-door configurations; the former has a spacious second row, a cavernous cargo hold, and an optional third row that raises seating to seven. All Defender models are loaded with latest technology and have a user-friendly infotainment system.

The Land Rover Defender provides more value – more than anything else – with its niche appeal as the real and the original luxury off-roader.

Styling

Everything is new from the ground up; gone is the old steel ladder-frame chassis and in its place is an aluminium D7 monocoque chassis derived from the Land Rover Discovery, as well as aluminium body panels. >>



2021

The 2021 Land Rover Defender has tremendous off-roading capability and is sure-footed when it comes to handling whilst offering a smooth ride, making it a good SUV.



Top 25 Most Stunning Cars of the Year 2022

>> Some nods to previous models are items like the side-hinged rear door and the spare wheel mounted to the rear door. New technology such as Matrix LED headlights and LED tail-lights bring the new Defender up to modernity.

Befitting the Land Rover marque, the Defender's cabin has plenty of top-notch materials, making it a good place to be - like hard-wearing surfaces, supple leathers and wood-grained trim, leather and cloth seats that are heated across all three rows, easy-to-clean surfaces, and open fasteners make it a remarkable place to adventure from.

As the brand's ultimate off-roader, it has cool, rugged touches such as exposed rivets and a structural-looking beam that spans the dashboard.

Engineering

Underneath, the well-known solid axles are gone, replaced with air suspension and an E-Diff system that makes utilising the 4x4 system across all types of terrain a cinch. The range of Ingenium engines fitted to the Defender ensure that you can have as little or as much power as you wish.

When it comes to electrical technology, Land Rover has not shied away and has crammed as much of their current technology into the Defender as they could.

Up-front in the open dash, there is a 12-inch touchscreen that controls the Meridian Audio infotainment but also hosts the 3D camera system, 4x4 control system and clear sight system. If the rear observation is obscured you can turn on the rear-view camera that appears in the rear-view mirror to get a view of what's behind you.

Lifestyle

One can spec their Land Rover



Defender with a selection of four accessory packs, with each catering to a specific lifestyle element that will gear the vehicle to its owner's needs. There is the Adventure pack, the Country pack, the Explorer pack and the Urban pack.

Adding the various packs and specifying one to your exact liking will see that price climb.

Land Rover debuted the 2020 Defender in six main trims and one body style: Defender 110 - a four-door model. The two base trims have a turbocharged four-cylinder engine, and the other trims upgrade to a mild-hybrid six-cylinder.

Verdict

The 2022 Land Rover Defender is capable of venturing where few other SUVs can, and it makes a decent case for an everyday on-road companion too. Comfortable seating and plenty of technology are just a couple of its positives, and four-door models of this luxury midsize SUV offer large cargo holds. The interior quality is fit for purpose. ■

Visit Inchcape Kenya Limited at the Jaguar Land Rover Centre, located at the Oracle Tower, Westlands, Nairobi for an intensive chat with their sales team and brand managers to comprehensively guide you on the new Land Rover Defender and the exact specifications officially available.



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Tanzania is getting a **political remake** as President Hassan **eyes the 2025** polls

Like Magufuli, Hassan was considered a party outsider. She has been careful not to completely upset the old guard. She seems to have the goodwill of former president Jakaya Kikwete. She appointed Kikwete's son in the last cabinet reshuffle.

NICODEMUS MINDE

Adjunct Lecturer, United States International University – Africa (USIU-A)

The sudden death of Tanzania's populist president John Pombe Magufuli on 17 March 2021 catapulted his then little-known vice-president, Samia Suluhu Hassan, to the helm of political leadership. In one year, President Hassan has reversed her predecessor's policies, from COVID control to media freedom and foreign relations. Nicodemus Minde has studied political dominance and democratisation in Tanzania. We asked him to assess the president's first year in office.

How did Hassan get to the helm?

The constitution of Tanzania provides for power sharing between the mainland and Zanzibar. If a presidential party candidate comes from mainland Tanzania, the running mate should be from Zanzibar, and vice versa.

The party picks a presidential candidate through a politburo style nomination. As the 2015 ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party's presidential candidate, John Magufuli, was from Tanzania's mainland, Zanzibar's Samia Suluhu Hassan was the running mate.

Does Hassan have the mettle for national politics?

The role of vice-president in Tanzania is largely a ceremonial one. But Samia Suluhu Hassan, who was the country's first woman vice-president, executed her role well.

President Magufuli rarely made foreign trips. He only visited a few African countries and attended the African Union Summit once. He never attended the annual United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York.

On many occasions, Hassan represented the pres-

ident. This exposure is evident from the way she has embraced the international community and the drastic change from the COVID-19 denialism of her late predecessor. Magufuli had overseen a period of international obscurity and isolationism.

In the year since she assumed office, President Hassan has made many international visits and welcomed high-level foreign dignitaries to Tanzania. They include former British prime minister Tony Blair, World Bank managing director Mari Pangestu and African Development Bank president Akinwumi Adesina.

At the domestic level, she has navigated the political terrain at the national and political party levels. Previously viewed as a naive CCM outsider, she has tactfully >>

Hassan has championed women's rights. Nine of her cabinet ministers are women, which represents 36%, a six-percentage point rise from the previous cabinet. She has also been able to put Tanzania back on the international map after a period of isolation.





Hassan has championed women's rights. Nine of her cabinet ministers are women, which represents 36%, a six-percentage point rise from the previous cabinet.

>> manoeuvred the party factions.

The way she dealt with rebellion from the speaker of parliament, Job Ndugai, for instance, shows her maturing political statecraft. The speaker was forced to resign in January after he questioned the president's external borrowing.

The president has carefully built her political base by gradually discarding Magufuli loyalists like Medard Kalemani, who had served as energy minister, Palamagamba Kabudi, who was minister for constitutional and legal affairs, and Bashiru Ally, who served as the chief secretary and was Magufuli's last political appointee.

Is Hassan's regime transitional?

Hassan has on a number of occasions admitted that she was aware of the political undercurrents that described her as a transitional president.

In September 2021, she announced she would be running for president in 2025. This was seen as a response to critics, especially from the ruling party. The purge

of Ndugai was interpreted as the flexing of political muscles and consolidating her base.

She has reshuffled the cabinet twice, both times excluding perceived Magufuli loyalists and bringing in new people.

Her approach so far has been to consolidate her authority within the party by appeasing the faction that was sidelined by Magufuli. Her handling of the opposition, especially the case of Party for Democracy and Progress (Chadema) chairman Freeman Mbowe, was seen as a tacit ploy to win the hearts of the CCM faithful. Mbowe's party has been the biggest threat to CCM and has been demanding democratic reforms and a new constitution.

How would you compare the president to her predecessor?

President Hassan has undone most of the excesses that characterised her predecessor. She inherited a deeply divided country at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which her predecessor had responded to

by calling for national prayers.

Magufuli came in as a relatively unknown candidate in the 2015 elections. He benefited from factional divisions to win the presidential nomination. Gradually, he was able to build a political base within the party.

Like Magufuli, Hassan was considered a party outsider. She has been careful not to completely upset the old guard. She seems to have the goodwill of former president Jakaya Kikwete. She appointed Kikwete's son in the last cabinet reshuffle.

Magufuli had an abrasive approach in dealing with government officials and international investors. Hassan's approach has been more of candour and civility.

What's your assessment of the first year under Hassan?

Hassan has championed women's rights. Nine of her cabinet ministers are women, which represents 36%, a six-percentage point rise from the previous cabinet.

She has also been able to put Tanzania back on the international map after a period of isolation. The country is now attracting foreign investment and goodwill.

Last year, her government reversed the heavily criticised policy of banning pregnant schoolgirls from attending school, initiated by Magufuli.

The government has recently ended the ban on four newspapers, signalling a positive turn in media freedom.

On the downside, the president has ignored the demands for a new constitution, terming it a non-priority. She promised political dialogue with the opposition when she assumed office. She still has not had these talks.

In February this year, she met exiled Chadema party leader Tundu Lissu in Belgium. But a few days later, the court trying Chadema chairman Mbowe ruled that he had a case to answer. On 4 March, the director of public prosecutions dropped the terrorism charges against Mbowe and his colleagues. The case was seen by many as politically motivated.

Despite the shortcomings, political dialogue is now possible in Tanzania under President Hassan. ■

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The story of how Swahili became Africa's most spoken language

The roll of Swahili enthusiasts and advocates includes notable intellectuals, freedom fighters, civil rights activists, political leaders, scholarly professional societies, entertainers and health workers. Not to mention the usual professional writers, poets, and artists.

JOHN M. MUGANE

Professor, Harvard University

Once just an obscure island dialect of an African Bantu tongue, Swahili has evolved into Africa's most internationally recognised language. It is peer to the few languages of the world that boast over 200 million users.

Over the two millennia of Swahili's growth and adaptation, the moulders of this story—immigrants from inland Africa, traders from Asia, Arab and European occupiers, European and Indian settlers, colonial rulers, and individuals from various postcolonial nations—have used Swahili and adapted it to their own purposes. They have taken it wherever they have gone to the west.

Africa's Swahili-speaking zone now extends across a full third of the continent from south to north and touches on the opposite coast, encompassing the heart of Africa.

The origins

The historical lands of the Swahili are on East Africa's Indian Ocean littoral. A 2,500-kilometer chain of coastal towns from Mogadishu, Somalia to Sofala, Mozambique as well as offshore islands as far away as the Comoros and Seychelles.

This coastal region has long served as an international crossroads of trade and human movement. People from all walks of life and from regions as scattered as

Indonesia, Persia, the African Great Lakes, the United States and Europe all encountered one another. Hunter-gatherers, pastoralists and farmers mingled with traders and city-dwellers.

Africans devoted to ancestors and the spirits of their lands met Muslims, Hindus, Portuguese Catholics and British Anglicans. Workers (among them slaves, porters and labourers), soldiers, rulers and diplomats were mixed together from ancient days. Anyone who went to the East African littoral could choose to become Swahili, and many did.

African unity

The roll of Swahili enthusiasts and advocates includes notable intellectuals, freedom fighters, civil rights activists, political leaders, scholarly professional societies, entertainers and health workers. Not to mention the usual professional writers, poets, and artists.

Foremost has been Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka. The Nigerian writer, poet and playwright has since the 1960s repeatedly called for use of Swahili as the transcontinental language for Africa. The African Union (AU), the “united states of Africa” nurtured the same sentiment of continental unity in July 2004 and adopted Swahili as its official language. As Joaquim Chissano (then the president of Mozambique) put this motion on the table, he addressed the AU in the flawless Swahili he had learned in Tanzania, where he was educated while in exile from the Portuguese colony.

The African Union did not adopt Swahili as Africa's international language by happenstance. Swahili has a much longer history of building bridges among peoples across the continent of Africa and into the diaspora.

The feeling of unity, the insistence that all of Africa is one, just will not disappear. Languages are elemental to everyone's sense of belonging, of expressing what's in one's heart. The AU's decision was particularly striking given that the populations of its member states speak an estimated two thousand languages (roughly one-third of all human languages), several dozens of them with more than a million speakers.

How did Swahili come to hold so prominent a position among so many groups with their own diverse linguistic histories and traditions?



The rise of Swahili, for some Africans, was a mark of true cultural and personal independence from the colonising Europeans and their languages of control and command. Uniquely among Africa's independent nations, Tanzania's government uses Swahili for all official business and, most impressively, in basic education.

A liberation language

During the decades leading up to the independence of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania in the early 1960s, Swahili functioned as an international means of political collaboration. It enabled freedom fighters throughout the region to communicate their common aspirations even though their native languages varied widely.

The rise of Swahili, for some Africans, was a mark of true cultural and personal independence from the colonising Europeans and their languages of control and command. Uniquely among Africa's independent nations, Tanzania's government uses Swahili for all official business and, most impressively, in basic education. Indeed, the Swahili word uhuru (freedom),

which emerged from this independence struggle, became part of the global lexicon of political empowerment.

The highest political offices in East Africa began using and promoting Swahili soon after independence. Presidents Julius Nyerere of Tanzania (1962–85) and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya (1964–78) promoted Swahili as integral to the region's political and economic interests, security and liberation. The political power of language was demonstrated, less happily, by Ugandan dictator Idi Amin (1971–79), who used Swahili for his army and secret police operations during his reign of terror.

Under Nyerere, Tanzania became one of only two African nations ever to declare a native African language as the country's official mode of communication (the other is Ethiopia, with Amharic). Nyerere personally translated two of William Shakespeare's plays into Swahili to demonstrate the capacity of Swahili to bear the expressive weight of great literary works.

Socialist overtones

Nyerere even made the term Swahili a referent to Tanzanian citizenship. Later, this label acquired socialist overtones in praising the common men and women of the nation. It stood in stark contrast to Europeans and Western-oriented elite Africans with quickly—and by implication dubiously—amassed wealth.

Ultimately, the term grew even further to encompass the poor of all races, of both African and non-African descent. In my own experience as a lecturer at Stanford University in the 1990s, for instance, several of the students from Kenya and Tanzania referred to the poor white neighbourhood of East Palo Alto, California, as Uswahilini, “Swahili land”. As opposed to Uzunguni, “land of the mzungu (white person)”.

Nyerere considered it prestigious to be called Swahili. With his influence, the term became imbued with sociopolitical connotations of the poor but worthy and even noble. This in turn helped construct a Pan African popular identity independent of the elite-dominated national >>

>> governments of Africa's fifty-some nation-states.

Little did I realise then that the Swahili label had been used as a conceptual rallying point for solidarity across the lines of community, competitive towns, and residents of many backgrounds for over a millennium.

Kwanzaa and ujamaa

In 1966, (activist and author) Maulana Ron Karenga associated the black freedom movement with Swahili, choosing Swahili as its official language and creating the Kwanzaa celebration.

The term Kwanzaa is derived from the Swahili word ku-anza, meaning "to begin" or "first". The holiday was intended to celebrate the matunda ya kwanza, "first fruits". According to Karenga, Kwanzaa symbolises the festivities of ancient African harvests.

Celebrants were encouraged to adopt Swahili names and to address one another by Swahili titles of respect. Based on Nyerere's principle of ujamaa (unity in mutual contributions), Kwanzaa celebrates seven principles or pillars.

Unity (umoja), self-determination (kujichagulia), collective work and responsibility (ujima), cooperative economics (ujamaa), shared purpose (nia), individual creativity (kuumba) and faith (imani).

Nyerere also became the icon of "community brotherhood and sisterhood" under the slogan of the Swahili word ujamaa. That word has gained such strong appeal that it has been used as far afield as among Australian Aborigines and African Americans and across the globe from London to Papua New Guinea. Not to mention its ongoing celebration on many US college campuses in the form of dormitories named ujamaa houses.

Today

Today, Swahili is the African language most widely recognised outside the continent. The global presence of Swahili in radio broadcasting and on the internet has no equal among sub-Saharan African languages.

Swahili is broadcast regularly in



Under Nyerere, Tanzania became one of only two African nations ever to declare a native African language as the country's official mode of communication (the other is Ethiopia, with Amharic).

Burundi, the DRC, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland and Tanzania. On the international scene, no other African language can be heard from world news stations as often or as extensively.

At least as far back as Trader Horn (1931), Swahili words and speech have been heard in hundreds of movies and television series, such as Star Trek, Out of Africa, Disney's The Lion King, and Lara Croft: Tomb Raider. The Lion King featured several Swahili words, the most familiar being the names of characters, including Simba (lion), Rafiki (friend) and Pumbaa (be dazed). Swahili phrases included asante sana (thank you very much) and, of course, that no-problem philosophy known as hakuna matata repeated throughout the movie.

Swahili lacks the numbers of speakers, the wealth, and the political power associated with global languages such as Mandarin, English or Spanish. But Swahili appears to be the only language boasting more than 200 million speakers that has more second-language speakers

than native ones.

By immersing themselves in the affairs of a maritime culture at a key commercial gateway, the people who were eventually designated Waswahili (Swahili people) created a niche for themselves. They were important enough in the trade that newcomers had little choice but to speak Swahili as the language of trade and diplomacy. And the Swahili population became more entrenched as successive generations of second-language speakers of Swahili lost their ancestral languages and became bona fide Swahili.

The key to understanding this story is to look deeply at the Swahili people's response to challenges.

At the ways in which they made their fortunes and dealt with misfortunes. And, most important, at how they honed their skills in balancing confrontation and resistance with adaptation and innovation as they interacted with arrivals from other language backgrounds. ■

This is an edited extract of the first chapter of The Story of Swahili from Ohio University Press

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Uganda takes another step on **e-payments** path: five things you should know

With the advent of Covid-19 and ensuing restrictions on physical contacts, e-payments have been widely embraced.

MERCY MUENDO

Lecturer, Information Technology and the Law, Daystar University

Long periods of limited physical contact under COVID-19 lockdowns triggered new interest in alternative payment methods beyond existing options. The Bank of Uganda is among institutions that have taken steps to promote a shift towards a cashless economy. It recently ordered commercial banks to reduce by 50% the maximum amount customers can transact by cheque – from an upper limit of US\$5,500 to US\$2,750 – starting January 15. This move reflects a slow-rolling process across East Africa towards electronic payments. Mercy Muendo has studied information technology and law. We asked her to unpack five key points in the Bank of Uganda’s move.

1. What is e-payment?

These are electronic payments for transactions made on the Internet. From a legal standpoint, it’s any form of payment made on the internet and conveyed via the internet.

With the advent of Covid-19 and ensuing restrictions on physical contacts, e-payments have been widely embraced. This has become a key catalyst in the ongoing shift towards a ‘cashless society’, a state when the economy no longer relies on notes and coins.

Traditional electronic payments entail the use of cards, real-time gross settlement system and electronic funds transfer (EFT). These require linking of transactions to physical bank accounts. Modern forms of e-payments include mobile money, and use

of third-party platforms.

Thanks to the invention of mobile money, many people have embraced e-payments. Third party platforms such as Pesapal, PayPal and Stripe, have also offered people alternative to the use of debit or credit cards.

2. Is Uganda still very cash-dependent?

A study revealed that, by 2018, only 28 per cent of Ugandans had bank accounts. The rest were literally unbanked and dependent on cash and barter. This had made transition away from cash much harder.

In 2020, Uganda passed the National Payments Systems Act that governs electronic payment services. The Act seeks to safeguard consumers from harm that may arise from use of e-payment platforms.

It requires all electronic service providers to apply for licences, and have a physical trust account or minimum account balance. It also provides for regulatory sandbox framework for new entrants into the industry.

A sandbox is a temporary licence that allows a new entrant to test innovative payment before meeting all the market operation requirements. If the central bank feels that the product is harmful to the public, it can revoke such a licence.

It’s still too early to say what effect the law has had.

In December 2020, the Ugandan mobile market reached US\$46 billion. The Bank of Uganda data indicates that commercial banks accounted for 58% of the mobile transactions (US\$93 trillion or US\$26.7 billion), a growth from zero in 2010 and US\$12.5 billion (US\$43 trillion) in 2016.



This is a clear indication that the segment is fast expanding in the economy.

In neighbouring Kenya, the transition away from cash is well advanced. The country is the e-payment revolution leader in East Africa. Official data shows a heavy reliance on mobile money during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Total mobile money payments (transfers and e-commerce) almost tripled, from US\$5.1 billion (Ksh5.1 trillion) in 2016 to US\$14.6 billion in 2020.

3. Why are central banks encouraging the switch?

Central banks have the role of maintaining trust in the financial sector, overseeing transactions and curbing crimes such as money laundering. E-payments make it easy for banks to keep trail of transactions. Cash transactions traditionally involve a lot of paper work, and have to be verified through a number of entry documents.

For e-payments, the transactions are recorded in real time. One can also trace

them via data interchange, commonly known as the mobile money or bank money transfer.

Another driver is financial inclusion. This means mass access to affordable products for transactions, payments, savings,

credit and insurance. According to the World Bank Group, e-platforms have the potential to lower costs by maximising economies of scale. This increases speed, security and transparency of transactions. It also allows for evolution of tailored financial services that serve the poor.

In Kenya, a Central Bank report shows that access to formal financial services and products expanded, from 26.7% in 2006 to 82.9% 2019. That growth was mainly due to innovations like mobile money and mobile banking, states the report. It adds that access to formal financial services went up to 83.7% in 2021 “as a result of the effects of the evolving Covid-19 pandemic”.

Banks are also increasingly turning to electronic platforms as a cost-cutting measure. Costs such as staffing, maintaining ATMs and security that go with physical branching, are avoided.

4. How have other countries promoted the switch?

The quest for e-payment—and a cashless society—has gained momentum in Africa. A number of countries have introduced policies that discourage cash transactions and drafted regulations that protect e-platform users from overcharge, fraud and cyber-attacks.

Rwanda, has a national payment system strategy that seeks to achieve a cash-

less economy by 2024. I would say that Rwanda is on the right track after it brought the private sector on board. The value of Rwanda’s mobile payments grew nearly seven-fold, from US\$1.78 billion (FRw1.8 trillion) in 2018, to US\$7.085 billion (FRw7.1 trillion) in 2020.

Elsewhere, South Africa has already banned cheques, and has a policy to guide its steps to becoming a cashless society by 2030.

5. What are the risks?

The shift to e-payment platforms comes with a whole network of intermediaries that act as facilitators of transactions. These parties rely on embedded chips, magnetic stripes and touch pads, which are vulnerable to hacking and other forms of cyber-attacks.

The involvement of many intermediaries also exposes users to crimes such as fraud and money laundering, especially where the market is not regulated properly.

For instance, Interpol Uganda reported that Ush14.4bn was lost in the year ending December 31, 2021, due to cyber-attacks.

Most of these were insider attacks, arising from hacking and siphoning of mobile money from double SIM (subscriber identity module) cards. These are classified as insider attacks because they normally originate from the phone SIM card industry.

- To mitigate risks, governments need to:

- regulate the issuance of SIM Cards and mobile money accounts
- take an active role in determining unaccounted for accounts and finances
- apply preventive and proactive measures to curb risks
- use of directives and regulations to reduce likelihood of risks arising from new finance technologies
- introduce diverse enforcement measures that are proportionate to the risks, but fostering growth at the same time
- enforce know-your-customer-better requirements
- adopt international financial standards that incorporate cybersecurity best standards. ■



In 2020, Uganda passed the National Payments Systems Act that governs electronic payment services. The Act seeks to safeguard consumers from harm that may arise from use of e-payment platforms.



For workers in Africa, the digital economy isn't all it's made out to be

Increasing use of algorithmic management for surveillance and control of workers and the labour process is making digital workers even more vulnerable.

MOHAMMAD AMIR ANWAR

Lecturer in African Studies and International Development, University of Edinburgh

Today more than half of the world's population is connected to the internet. In Africa, there are over 590 million internet users and over 800 million mobile phone subscribers.

Some observers note that such diffusion of digital tools and connectivity is bringing political, economic, social and cultural transformations on the African continent.

One such change is that workers from Lagos to Johannesburg to Nairobi are carrying out various forms of digital work.

These are activities which involve manipulation of digital data using tools such as mobile phones, computers and the internet.

Examples are transcription, article writing, image tagging, search engine optimisation, and inbound and outbound customer services, which can be done for clients anywhere.

As a result, governments, development organisations and civil society look towards digital work as a fix for African countries' development problems, including unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

For our new book, *The Digital Continent*, we conducted a five-year study

to investigate call centre work and the remote gig work and its implications for workers in five African countries: South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Ghana.

We argue that job quality in digital work remains questionable.

We show that while digital work can bring some forms of freedom and flexibility into the lives of workers in the five countries, it can also contribute towards their precarity and vulnerability.

Employment insecurities

We conducted in-depth interviews with call centre workers and remote gig workers to understand their experiences of digital work, income, working hours, employment relations, and algorithmic management of their labour and body.

A majority of those we interviewed noted new digital jobs as one of their important sources of income. But this should be read with caution.

Call centres are notorious for contingent employment relations—that is, flexible and short-term contracts.

Firms' use of temporary staffing agencies to cut labour costs is also common. Call centre agents can be hired and fired

easily. For example, an agent in Nairobi told us that in April 2016 his firm fired 70 workers.

Companies also relocate with relative ease. Though in South Africa call centre operations have grown in recent years, several have closed down in Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. Some companies moved to destinations with cheaper labour. Unfortunately, exact data on this is hard to come by.

Similarly, workers on the continent see the digital gig economy as a new opportunity. While technological barriers may have been reduced, they face various hurdles to earning a living in the global gig economy. A worrying trend is that few actually earn an income on platforms where flexible digital work is made available.

Upwork is the world's largest platform in terms of registered workers and the most popular among workers on the continent. But our estimates suggest that less than 6 per cent of the Africans registered on it ever earn a single US dollar. In the case of Ghana and Uganda, these figures are as low as 3.1 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively.

There is an oversupply of labour on the gig economy platforms. Respondents also told us that some clients do not want to give contracts to workers on the continent.

On platforms, work is primarily short-term. Some tasks (like image tagging) take as little as a minute to complete; others can last longer (like virtual assistant work). The short-term contracts mean that workers have to constantly search for work on platforms to earn an income. Yet compensation can be low.

Because some platforms pay as little as \$0.10 per task, workers resort to working on multiple contracts, which means longer and unsociable hours. Some of those in our study spent up to 80 hours a week working.

Platforms also give employers access to a planetary workforce, so workers have become more expendable than ever. Workers we spoke to noted that clients preferred lower-cost labour destinations, such as India and the Philippines.

Managed by algorithms

Increasing use of algorithmic management for surveillance and control of workers and the labour process is making digital workers even more vulnerable.

In call centres, technological tools like customer relationship management and workforce management are used to maximise workers' time on call. Call centres are known as "assembly lines in the head" for this reason.

In the gig economy, workers face similar pressures with algorithms keeping track on them by taking a screenshot of their laptops.

While some platform workers can

dozens of stories of workers in our sample who never got paid for work done. Wage refusal or withholding pay is considered forced labour by the International Labour Organisation.

Lack of career opportunities

Call centres are considered flat organisations with very few opportunities for internal progression within a firm. A majority of the agents we interviewed did not consider their work at call centres as a long-term career option. We met workers who had been in the sector for over five years with no real progression in salary or working conditions.



While some platform workers can schedule the time and place of work the way they want, this flexibility isn't available to everyone. Only experienced gig workers were able to achieve some form of flexible working.

schedule the time and place of work the way they want, this flexibility isn't available to everyone. Only experienced gig workers were able to achieve some form of flexible working.

Surveillance and algorithmic control result in loneliness and social isolation. Complaints about mental and physical stress, including sleep deprivation, were common among our respondents.

Some gig economy platforms openly state that clients do not have to pay if workers fail to meet the target or if clients are not satisfied with the work. There were

Platform companies and organisations such as the World Bank have built a rhetoric around the gig economy as enabling self-employment or entrepreneurship. Our book shows a less positive reality. Digital work opportunities don't always translate into good quality jobs, and may not be sustainable.

We see a need for research and activism that exposes how digital work is done. We also call for government action to uphold worker rights. And we advocate for building worker solidarity in digital economy networks. ■

The legacy of iconic singer **Miriam Makeba** and her art of **activism**

There's nobody in Africa who made the world more aware of what was happening in South Africa than Miriam Makeba. This was because of the way in which she described the songs...unwittingly she educated African American artists.

NOMFUNDO XALUVA

Lecturer, South African College of Music, University of Cape Town

South Africa's world famous singer and activist Miriam Makeba (1932-2008) would have turned 90 on 4 March 2022. Born Zenzile Miriam Makeba in Johannesburg's Prospect township, she had a life of remarkable global impact. She contributed to black people's struggle for liberation and defended the integrity of African identity and artistry while living in a land absent of her ancestry.

Despite being banned from her home country for her outspokenness and resistance to apartheid, Makeba went on to build an illustrious international career, performing on some of the world's most prestigious stages. She would be celebrated – and persecuted in the US and invited to perform at the independence celebrations of numerous African countries before eventually returning to South Africa later in life.

In commemorating what would have been Makeba's 90th birthday, it is fitting to pay tribute to her legacy of activism not only as a black African woman often living in exile in a western society but also as an artist who used her craft to teach and conscientise the world about Africa.

Early years

Her musical beginnings in the 1940s were at Kilmerton College, a Methodist elementary school where she sang in the school

choir. The school's alumni include South Africa's former chief justice Dikgang Moseneke, Professor Khabi Mngoma, a hugely influential figure in music education, as well as struggle icon Lilian Ngoyi.

Makeba's break into the professional circuit was with the singing group the Cuban Brothers. She later joined the well-established Manhattan Brothers. They sang vernacular verses over what was a predominantly American swing and ragtime sound.

She was a founding member of the famous all-woman singing group the Skylarks. In 1952, she was cast in Alf Herbert's African Jazz and Variety production showcasing black talent. It was presented mainly to white audiences except on Thursdays when black audiences were allowed. This is where film producer Lionel Rogosin spotted Makeba and persuaded her to feature in his controversial documentary film, Come Back Africa.

This film depicted the harsh conditions under which black South Africans were forced to live by the apartheid government. Makeba's short appearance attracted attention, including an invitation to attend the film's premiere in Italy. Naturally, she agreed, never imagining that because of her role in the movie she would be banned by the apartheid state from returning home, not even to bury

her own mother. This marked the beginning of her exile.

Promoting the film in London, Makeba met African American folk singer and activist Harry Belafonte. He would play a significant role in her career in the US, forming half of the duo on their Grammy-winning album An Evening with Belafonte & Makeba.

Art as activism

Her artistry extended beyond the stage, beyond her impeccable vocals and her sophisticated interpretations of international and South African repertoire. Her very presence in the United States stood as a form of activism against the apartheid government who had attempted to silence her and erase her from the consciousness of her people.

Makeba's life in the US coincided with the parallel experiences of black people in America and South Africa suffering immense injustice, marginalisation, racism and inequality. Like the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, the Civil Rights Movement in the US was a vehicle

through which black Americans protested. Academic Barber-Sizemore describes Makeba's voice as being "a surface onto which Americans projected their own narratives about Africa and American race relations".

Her artistry, always informed by the circumstances in South Africa, served as a razor-sharp awareness tool. In journalist Gwen Ansell's book Soweto Blues, the late Hugh Masekela concurs that

There's nobody in Africa who made the world more aware of what was happening in South Africa than Miriam Makeba. This was because of the way in which she described the songs...unwittingly she educated African American artists.

Makeba would describe life in apartheid South Africa when introducing her songs and would use every opportunity to address inequality. As analysed by academic Louise Bethlehem, Makeba's work resisted the apartheid state's threat to dismantle the very place of African art and culture in the world.

African Americans saw in Makeba not only what they were but also the possibilities of what they could become, expressed through song, dance, dress, language and ideology. Makeba found commonality with artists such as Nina Simone and Abbey Lincoln, who historian Ruth Feldstein referred to as "an emergent collective of black women performers who combined their music with civil rights activism".

Aesthetic as activism

What I appreciate most about Makeba is the way in which she not only embraced but leaned into her sexuality and sensuality. The way she moved her body on stage was often provocative, drawing the audience into her world. She understood acutely the power of her black body and its curvature.

Her aesthetic of natural hair and minimal make up (if any at all) communicated eloquently her strong sense of self, rooted in her African identity free from the expectations of western notions of beauty and acceptability.

In remembering Makeba, we must guard against confining her activism to the anti-apartheid speeches she delivered at the United Nations in 1963 and 1976. Her activism was far more nuanced than that. It was interwoven in her music, her delivery of melodies, lyrics and artistic sentiment. Her artistry was a lantern that burnt vigorously through one of the darkest eras in history.

A legacy spanning generation

Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, believes that Africans singing in their native language is an international act of decolonisation and a marker of Pan African identity. Academic Aaron Carter-Enyi acknowledged Makeba's influence on other African singers to sing in their mother tongues. Like Benin's Angélique Kidjo who sings in Yoruba, Mali's Oumou Sangaré who sings in Mandinka and Nigeria's Onyeka Onwenu who sings in Igbo.

Makeba's influence transcends generations to reveal itself in contemporary cultural practices. We are because she was. Makeba's legacy is too often suffocated by the complexity surrounding her intellectual property as well as her relationships with the men in her life.

Makeba was not just the wife of musician Masekela or Black Panther leader Stokely Carmichael. She was not Belafonte's "discovery from South Africa". She arrived in America a consummate professional fit for purpose.

The role of these male figures in Makeba's life may have been meaningful but it is also grossly overstated. Makeba's legacy is strong enough to stand on its own two feet. Her name needs no co-anchor. She fought more with her "artivism" than many a man did with their armed weaponry.

It's time to move beyond her widely-adopted nickname "Mama Africa". Makeba was a stalwart and an icon of African liberation and identity. Her legacy carved the way for future generations to live a life of authenticity, fearlessness and bravery. ■

Makeba's influence transcends generations to reveal itself in contemporary cultural practices. We are because she was. Makeba's legacy is too often suffocated by the complexity surrounding her intellectual property as well as her relationships with the men in her life.

How drug companies are sidestepping the WHO's technology transfer hub in Africa

Moderna's decision to continue making the vaccine itself, though on the Kenyan site, is a signal that the company (at least for the moment) is not considering licensing its technology to a third party for local manufacture.

DAVID RICHARD WALWYN

Professor of Technology Management,
University of Pretoria

Pharmaceutical company Moderna announced on 7 March 2022 that it would develop a site in Kenya to manufacture Covid-19 vaccines. The company holds much of the key intellectual property relating to the messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines. Due to their higher efficacy, mRNA vaccines are the preferred option in developed countries. They account for 92 per cent of all vaccinations to date in the US and European Union.

Moderna's decision to continue making the vaccine itself, though on the Kenyan site, is a signal that the company (at least for the moment) is not considering licensing its technology to a third party for local manufacture. In this way, the company keeps closer control over who has full knowledge of, and is able to use productively, its technology. Licensing is an arrangement which has lower cost but greater vulnerabilities for licensors.

The decision is significant for the mRNA Technology Transfer Hub in Cape Town, South Africa. The hub was established in June 2021 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other parties. The idea was to develop a mRNA vaccine manufacturing technology platform. This would initially be for Covid-19, but eventually for a range of infectious diseases including TB and HIV.

Once the platform has been fully developed and tested in Cape Town, it will facilitate technology transfer to at least 12 low- and middle-income countries. This will considerably expand global mRNA manufacturing capacity.

Africa's first mRNA vaccine

The hub has already made significant progress towards producing a vaccine candidate based on the research published by Stanford University, which forms the backbone for the Moderna Covid-19 mRNA vaccine.

Much of the development work is happening in the South African company Afrigen Biologics and at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. The achievement has been reached through innovation using the team's own knowledge and competence, combined with knowledge that's in the public domain.

Afrigen's managing director, Professor Petro Terblanche, recently outlined the status of the work on the Afrigen mRNA Hub Vaccine. The company has developed a lab-scale batch of the vaccine and expects to complete initial manufacture of large-scale trial batches, to be tested in clinical trials, by November 2022.

There are still many hurdles to cross before its work will be complete. The direct participation of either of the pharmaceutical giants Moderna or BioNTech in the initiative would have been beneficial to its programmes, particularly to guide the hub



Compulsory licensing is permitted under the international agreements on trade and intellectual property when countries consider it necessary to access patented drugs for a public health emergency such as a pandemic.

in the technical details of formulation and process conditions.

BioNTech, which has even been accused of undermining the activities of the hub, announced earlier in 2022 plans to build vaccine manufacturing sites in Rwanda and Senegal. Then Moderna stated its intention to invest in Kenya, noting that the investment will "fill the gap" in terms of manufacturing capacity.

The Cape Town hub is supported by a range of partners who bring expertise, experience and resources, all of which are essential for a successful technology transfer. The idea of reproducing these key inputs at other sites seems counter-intuitive.

Patents and profits in pharmaceuticals

The decisions of the drug manufacturers are reminiscent of the struggle over patents for HIV drugs which took place in South Africa during the early 2000s. At the time, HIV drugs were unaffordable in the country, priced at \$10,000 per person per year for an effective treatment. Pharmaceutical companies pursued an aggressive strategy to protect their intellectual property and their prices, even at the cost of many thousands of lives in developing countries, including South Africa. Compelled by a court case, the companies eventually backed down and licensed generic companies to make and market their antiretroviral products at a fraction of the cost.

Moderna holds a patent in South Africa which may be troublesome for the hub in the medium term. The patent includes a claim covering the local manufacture of any vaccine which contains mRNA. This claim could be used to prevent any scale-up of the platform technology being developed by Afrigen. Already a number of public-interest organisations are calling for Moderna to abandon its pat-

ent claims or grant a royalty-free licence to Afrigen.

The actions of the patent holders can be understood on the basis that they wish, at all costs, to avoid the prospect of compulsory licensing. Compulsory licensing is permitted under the international agreements on trade and intellectual property when countries consider it necessary to access patented drugs for a public health emergency such as a pandemic. Now that the hub has demonstrated it can reproduce the technology, it's likely that a compulsory licence would be granted, should an application to the World Trade Organization be made.

The companies also appear to be eroding the business case for the hub by establishing competing facilities. Biovac and Afrigen, key partners in the hub's plans, may struggle to raise finance or sell product into those markets where Moderna and BioNTech are now establishing a presence. Market volumes are essential for the viability of vaccine manufacture, and every new site diminishes the prospects for a competitor to build its own business.

Public health

Vaccines are mostly public health products. They protect whole populations with minimum expenditure. It is acceptable that companies which develop and make these products should do so at reasonable margin. This is typically in the region of 14% net earnings as a percentage of revenues.

But leading mRNA companies are now reporting extreme profits.

Public health should not be held ransom by private gain, nor should it be bankrupted by necessary life-saving interventions. The actions of BioNTech and Moderna will prolong the social and economic costs of the pandemic. ■



Wins, missteps and lessons: African experts reflect on two years of Covid response

The fact that two years into the pandemic, the North-South disparities and unequal power structures in global health are still intact is a huge cause for concern

CATHERINE KYOBUTUNGI

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DOYIN ODUBANJO

Executive Secretary, Nigerian Academy of Science

MICHELLE J. GROOME

Head of the Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, National Institute of Communicable Diseases

On 11 March 2020, just months after the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus was first identified in China, the World Health Organization declared Covid-19 to be a public health emergency of international concern. Over the next two years Covid-19 would go on to infect nearly half a billion people, killing over 6 million around the world. Governments introduced strict lockdowns with stay-at-home orders that shut down the global economy. Now, most of the world is opening up. The Conversation

Africa spoke to public health experts based in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa to get their take on the biggest lessons so far. The themes that recur are about breaking down boundaries: sharing, communicating, and valuing people equally.

Early days

Catherine Kyobutungi, Kenya: After the first few cases were confirmed, most countries followed a similar script. This involved lockdowns, social distancing and hand hygiene. A few months later, differences started emerging between countries. There are countries like Uganda and Rwanda that took a more public health approach, focusing on trying to stop infection at all costs. And those, like Kenya, that took a more economic approach, focusing on minimising the effect of lockdowns. Of course, Tanzania was in a league of its own when it stopped all public health measures that were recommended at the time.

Once differences emerged, they were quite stark and often led to misunder-

In spite of intense pressure from civil society, many rich countries rebuffed all requests for temporary intellectual property waivers and voluntary technology transfer that would unlock vaccine manufacturing in more facilities and regions of the world.

standings between countries. For instance, while Uganda and Rwanda were testing all arrivals at their land borders (mostly truck drivers), for several weeks, Kenya and Tanzania were not.

These differences are a symptom of a larger issue: the near absence of a harmonised regional pandemic response. This was a global pandemic. But countries crafted individual responses – even in situations where a regional approach would have been more appropriate.

Michelle Groome, South Africa: The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of providing up-to-date data as well as national and global data sharing. When SARS-CoV-2 first appeared, we did not have a lot of data on which to base clinical and public health decisions. This led to fear, uncertainty and decisions which could not initially

be driven by science. As the pandemic unfolded, more and more data became available and this made decision-making easier, with reliable scientific data to back up these decisions.

I think there is still room for improvement when it comes to critically assessing public health measures and their benefit in real-time. Some measures introduced early on in the pandemic, for example temperature screening, did not prove to be effective in detecting infections, yet are still being used as part of the response.

Global nature of the pandemic

Catherine Kyobutungi, Kenya: The global power system was unshakable in the midst of a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. Countries retreated inwards and even when they had an upper hand over the pandemic

within their borders, they were unwilling to look outwards and address the pandemic from a global perspective.

In spite of intense pressure from civil society, many rich countries rebuffed all requests for temporary intellectual property waivers and voluntary technology transfer that would unlock vaccine manufacturing in more facilities and regions of the world. Rather than decisively address vaccine supply issues that would have enabled everyone to be vaccinated quickly, those rich countries were more concerned about maintaining the status quo – about who has power, who has influence, who donates, who receives, who is benevolent and who is the recipient of benevolence.

The fact that two years into the pandemic, the North-South disparities and unequal power structures in global health are still intact is a huge cause >>



2020

The World Health Organization declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020, and a pandemic on 11 March 2020.



Since African countries do not always have such a wide range of experts, they relied on very good guidance and then used their own experts to adapt and refine it.

>> for concern. This unequal system has failed to adequately deal with the current pandemic and will struggle to deal with future pandemics and other global challenges like climate change.

Michelle Groome, South Africa: The benefits of global data sharing became evident through this pandemic. A good example of this was the early data on severity of the omicron variant that South Africa provided towards the end of 2021. This was one of the busiest times of my life, as we battled a fourth wave of infections in South Africa while fielding innumerable questions from across the globe on how the omicron wave was unfolding in our country. Our scientists were able to actively engage with the WHO, public health institutions in many countries and international media outlets, which enabled data to be shared quickly and assisted with the omicron response in other countries. Lack of data sharing can really hamper the ability to provide robust data for action.

Communication gaps

Catherine Kyobutungi, Kenya: Public health communication failed. Even in the face of an assault of misinformation and disinformation, government communicators stuck to old methods of communicating health messages. As a result, misinformation took hold and it became difficult to convince the public about why certain measures were important and what everyone needed to do.

The sudden avalanche of all sorts of information created an environment where complex concepts and knowledge that have traditionally been the preserve of academics and other experts became common place and hence open for gross misinterpretation. Public health communicators failed to adequately respond to this challenge.

They also failed to adequately communicate simple information like where people could get tested, vaccinated and report vaccine side effects. Many people who were willing to be vaccinated had to hunt for information on where to get the jab. It just shows how much more we need

to do as a community of public health practitioners to communicate effectively now and in future.

Michelle Groome, South Africa: The Covid-19 pandemic has also underscored the need for transparency – on an international and local level, and in dealing with academics, health professionals and the public. Scientific terminology and outputs are no longer restricted to scientists and academics, but are readily available to the general public. However, misinformation and conspiracy theories about Covid-19 can end up dominating.

As scientists we need to ensure that data is shared in a way that is easily understandable, that epidemiological terms are correctly interpreted and that the rationale behind public health decisions is clarified. Lack of transparency and misinformation have led to lack of public trust in government decisions and non-acceptance of public health interventions. Scientists, health professionals and politicians also need to acknowledge uncertainty when this exists and quickly address any misconceptions in order to ensure credibility and trust.

Takeaways

Catherine Kyobutungi, Kenya: Countries acted fast and most African countries relied on WHO guidance. This is guidance produced by large teams of experts. Since African countries do not always have such a wide range of experts, they relied on very good guidance and then used their own experts to adapt and refine it.

Doyin Odubanjo, Nigeria: The health workforce in Nigeria, and indeed Africa, has to be seen as critical to national development. Better strategies for retaining them must be implemented. There must be better welfare packages for health workers. Even countries with better health workforce to population ratios were readily overwhelmed and will now replenish or strengthen their health systems by drawing on the undervalued workforce of places like Africa. We must guide against this.

It's time to build strategically, build strong systems that also engender trust from the populace. ■

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Why big firms are rarely toppled by corporate scandals – new research

Only certain scandals tend to have significant negative effects on corporate reputations and performance. One apparently vital element is a company being found liable in a court of law.



IRINA SURDU

Associate Professor of International Business Strategy, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick

Everyone makes mistakes. And that includes the world's biggest companies, which are reliably prone to gaffes, errors of judgment and wrongdoing.

Some of these moments could even be labelled as corporate scandals – the kind of incident which shoves firms into the spotlight and places their activities under detailed public scrutiny.

But do these events do lasting damage? Does an oil spill, fraudulent activity or other unethical behaviour really affect highly valued reputations, sales and market value?

Our research suggests not. In fact, our analysis of the effects of a wide variety of business scandals shows that only rarely is the effect as severe as we might imagine.

Instead, it seems the public has a strong tendency to

forget and move on. And even initial unplanned (and at the time unwanted) attention can lead to greater brand awareness, proving the old adage that any publicity is good publicity.

Take the recent furore over Spotify. In early 2022, the world's largest music streaming service was accused by science and health professionals of offering a platform for misinformation about Covid.

So, what happened next? At first, there was a dip in the stock market price of about 12% when artists including Neil Young, Joni Mitchell and Graham Nash announced they were withdrawing their music from the service. This financial hiccup was followed by an immediate stock price rebound that is likely to climb beyond pre-scandal levels. Spotify went on to add disclaimers to its Covid-related content and removed some content.

So, in the long term, this will probably turn out to be nothing more than a slight bump in the road for Spotify. As a business, it provides a hugely popular service and boasts 172 million premium subscribers around the world, 28 million of whom joined in 2020. How many of them will cancel their subscriptions and forgo access

to their carefully curated playlists because Young and Mitchell have decided to walk?

And while it is true that the company's business model relies on musicians and other content providers, the reality is that most artists cannot afford to not be on the platform. Giving Spotify the benefit of the doubt, it's entirely possible it made an honest mistake and underestimated how sensitive some people have become to discussions about the pandemic. Customers will probably make peace with this.

Likewise, Netflix will doubtlessly survive recent controversies over some of its content, such as the British comedian Jimmy Carr's comments about the Holocaust. With so many subscribers around the world attracted by the service's wide range of content, Netflix is another example of an industry giant that can shrug things off.

And remember Facebook's market col-

Without corporate culpability determined by the court of law, very few accusations stick, even in the face of media scrutiny. Without clear evidence of harm caused to a group of people, there is very little in the way of measurable negative impact.

lapse after it was linked to the personal data of millions of users being collected by the political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica? Don't feel bad if you don't, it lasted about seven seconds (OK, maybe seven days). The company then recovered all of the US\$134 billion (£102 billion) it

had previously lost in market value.

Law and disorder

So, what makes some scandals stick? In our research, we found that only certain scandals tend to have significant negative effects on corporate reputations and performance. One apparently vital element is a company being found liable in a court of law. The legal process gives weight and depth to a scandal that might otherwise have quickly disappeared.

The Volkswagen emissions scandal for example, started in 2015. Seven years later, the company is still negotiating settlements in class action lawsuits brought against it for cheating on emissions tests.

The company's share price dropped 30 per cent immediately after the scandal (it has improved since the move towards electric vehicles) and Volkswagen's reputation is still tarnished by the event, as it continues to attract significant regulatory scrutiny, affecting its status among investors.

Similarly, years after being found responsible for the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, BP is still paying the price of its negligence, as it continues to be embroiled in many lawsuits. And following regulatory intervention, German financial services provider Wirecard is not even around anymore to tell the story of how €1.9 billion (£1.6 billion) disappeared from its balance sheet.

Yet without corporate culpability determined by the court of law, very few accusations stick, even in the face of media scrutiny. Without clear evidence of harm caused to a group of people, there is very little in the way of measurable negative impact, or demand for compensation for the damage caused.

As consumers, we often like to signal moral superiority and enjoy some of the drama provided by the corporate discomfort of a juicy scandal. But our research found that people's response to a company is driven by more mundane considerations. These are price, convenience, loyalty, ease of use and habit – and there aren't many scandals considered quite scandalous enough to make us change any of those. ■

New forms of advertising raise questions about journalism integrity

With declining revenue from traditional display advertising and classified ads, news outlets are increasingly relying on native advertising.

MICHELLE A. AMAZEEN

Associate Professor of Mass Communication,
Boston University

Mainstream news media outlets have, in recent years, begun to create advertisements that look like news articles on their websites and on social media. My research raises questions about whether this modern form of advertising might influence those outlets' real journalism.

These specific advertisements are called "native advertising," but are also tagged as "sponsored content," "partner post" or other labels consumers don't understand. They look like news articles, with headlines, photos with captions and polished text. But really, they are ads created by, or on behalf of, a paying advertiser.

With declining revenue from traditional display advertising and classified ads, news outlets are increasingly relying on native advertising – a sector in which U.S. spending was expected to reach \$57 billion by the end of 2021.

Fashion and entertainment companies buy native advertising. So do corporations that produce products with potentially significant environmental or health connections, such as fossil fuels, opioid medications and cigarettes—including in attempts to counter negative news coverage.

Deceiving audiences

In one example from spring 2021, Philip Morris International—the tobacco company—ran a native advertising campaign across many media outlets, including The Boston Globe, The New York Times, Reuters and The Washington Post.

The ads complained about the "disinformation campaigns that muddy the truth" regarding the benefits of vaping products while themselves muddying the truth.

In the past, the tobacco industry sought to manufacture public uncertainty about the harms of its products. This time, Philip Morris is using a practice that

media critics say is deceptive and media scholar Victor Pickard calls "subterfuge ... creating confusion between editorial and advertising content," to make claims about the benefits of its products.

These advertisements that look like real news are labelled as ads, as required by the Federal Trade Commission. But research studies have repeatedly shown that those labels are largely ineffective at helping readers distinguish between the two types of content.

Made by journalists

Many media companies have created content studios, separate from their newsrooms, to create native advertising on behalf of corporate and special interest groups. While newspapers traditionally had ad departments that designed and mocked up advertisements for their clients, today's native ads are in the form of a "story" that often does not focus on—and sometimes does not even mention—its sponsor in order to resemble the seemingly objective journalism it imitates.

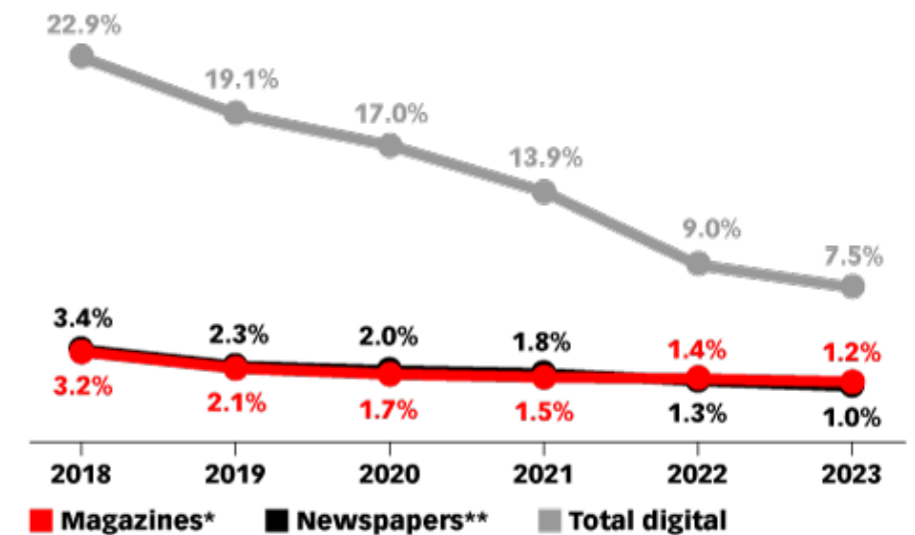
Sometimes those efforts have the help of intermediaries such as so-called "product marketing" teams that work between the newsroom and studios. A former "creative strategist" at The New York Times says that arrangement allows publishers "to skirt the implication that news staff work directly with brands to craft commercial content." In other cases, journalists write for both the newsroom and their publisher's content studio.

Because native advertising typically has no by-lines, most people are unaware that advertisements may be created in such close connection with mainstream newsrooms. Former employees, including a former executive editor of The New York Times, say most publishers are not transparent about it with their audiences. One digital journalist told researchers, "Some people will say the ad is labelled so it's not bad. That's crap ... the unsophisticated won't get it and then they'll click on something meant to look exactly like a story. That's a problem."

Disappearing disclosures

US Digital Ad Spending Growth on Select Channels, 2018-2023

% change



Note: includes advertising that appears on desktop and laptop computers as well as mobile phones, tablets and other internet-connected devices, and includes all the various formats of advertising on those platforms; excludes mobile messaging (SMS, MMS and P2P messaging); *includes B2B, consumer, local and Sunday; **includes classified, national and retail
Source: eMarketer, Feb 2019

246196

www.eMarketer.com

Many media companies have created content studios, separate from their newsrooms, to create native advertising on behalf of corporate and special interest groups.

When native ads are shared on social media, they're often distributed in ways that further confuse or deceive audiences.

The Wall Street Journal, for instance, has retweeted posts from its Custom Content studio from the same Twitter account that promotes its news content. While this particular retweet disclosed the commercial nature of the original tweet,

this is not always the case.

More than half the time, the FTC-required advertising disclosures disappear when the content leaves the publisher's website and is shared on Facebook and Twitter. For example, when I recently shared an American Petroleum Institute native ad on Twitter, the disclosure disappeared – a violation of the FTC's labelling mandate.

I believe it is the responsibility of publishers, not consumers, to ensure that sponsored content is accurately labelled when shared online. Otherwise, people will amplify undisclosed commercial content they think is genuine news.

Suppressing news coverage?

I have another concern about this type of potentially deceptive advertising. Since as early as 1869, anecdotal evidence has >>

PARTNER FEATURE & SPONSORED CONTENT



Many media companies have created content studios, separate from their newsrooms, to create native advertising on behalf of corporate and special interest groups.

>> indicated that reporters are hesitant to write about advertisers that are lucrative to their news outlet. My recent research with digital advertising scholar Chris Vargo signals those similar concerns may occur with this new form of advertising.

We counted all the native advertisements between 2014 and 2019 we could find from The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal, by looking at native ads those news outlets posted on Twitter and with a custom search process we built on top of Bing. We noted what dates the native ads were published and what company sponsored them.

We also used the GDELT database, which collects online news stories from those three outlets and many other mainstream, partisan, and emerging news sites across the U.S. In that data, we noted the number and dates of news stories naming major companies.

We found 27 companies for which there was enough information in both data sets to make a meaningful connection. For each of those 27 companies, we charted

how many mentions they had in news stories over time, and compared those time periods with the timing of that company's releases of native advertising.

We found that for 16 of the companies, news coverage noticeably decreased after a native advertisement was published. For just three companies, news coverage noticeably increased after a native ad was published.

These results suggest that advertiser-driven "news" stories—written and approved by paying sponsors—often go unchallenged.

For example, Wells Fargo—a multinational financial services company plagued by a litany of scandals, such as deceiving customers with fake bank accounts—

engaged the content studios of The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal to create nearly a dozen native ads. One, created by The Washington Post's BrandStudio, touted how Wells Fargo was investing in a cleaner environmental future. If it had been a real news article, it would have reported that the company was also financing the controversial underground oil transport system, the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Our study found statistically less reporting on Wells Fargo not only within those three elite news organizations but across all U.S. online media following the native advertising campaigns.

Native ads are potentially very deceptive to consumers, in their content, their presentation and how they are shared on social media. Our research does not prove a direct connection, but when we add it to the anecdotes that news management discourages stories critical of important advertisers, we also wonder about the power of native ads over journalists' supposedly independent decisions regarding what to cover and when. ■



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What will 2022 bring in the way of misinformation social media? 3 experts weigh in



“Fake news” is hardly a new phenomenon, yet its costs have reached another level in recent years.

ANJANA SUSARLA

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Assistant Professor of Communication, University of Arizona

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At the end of 2020, it seemed hard to imagine a worse year for misinformation on social media, given the intensity of the presidential election and the trauma of the Covid-19 pandemic. But 2021 proved up to the task, starting with the Jan. 6 insurrection and continuing with copious amounts of falsehoods and distortions about Covid-19 vaccines.

To get a sense of what 2022 could

hold, we asked three researchers about the evolution of misinformation on social media.

Absent regulation, misinformation will get worse

Anjana Susarla, Professor of Information Systems, Michigan State University

While misinformation has always existed in media—think of the Great Moon Hoax of 1835 that claimed life was discovered on the moon—the advent of social media has significantly increased the scope, spread and reach of misinformation. Social media platforms have morphed into public information utilities that control how most people view the world, which makes misinformation they facilitate a fundamental problem for society.

There are two primary challenges in addressing misinformation. The first is the dearth of regulatory mechanisms that

address it. Mandating transparency and giving users greater access to and control over their data might go a long way in addressing the challenges of misinformation. But there’s also a need for independent audits, including tools that assess social media algorithms. These can establish how the social media platforms’ choices in curating news feeds and presenting content affect how people see information.

The second challenge is that racial and gender biases in algorithms used by social media platforms exacerbate the misinformation problem. While social media companies have introduced mechanisms to highlight authoritative sources of information, solutions such as labelling posts as misinformation don’t solve racial and gender biases in accessing information. Highlighting relevant sources of, for example, health information may only help users with greater health literacy and not people with low health literacy, who tend to be disproportionately minorities.

Another problem is the need to look systematically at where users are finding misinformation. TikTok, for example, has largely escaped government scrutiny.

cerning Covid-19 has cost countless lives all over the world. False and misleading information about elections can shake the foundation of democracy, for instance, by making citizens lose confidence in the political system. Research I conducted with S Mo Jones-Jang and Kate Kenski on misinformation during elections, some published and some in progress, has turned up three key findings.

The first is that the use of social media, originally designed to connect people, can facilitate social disconnection. Social media has become rife with misinformation. This leads citizens who consume news on social media to become cynical not only toward established institutions such as politicians and the media, but also toward fellow voters.

Second, politicians, the media and voters have become scapegoats for the harms of “fake news.” Few of them actually produce misinformation. Most misinformation is produced by foreign entities and

Looking ahead to 2022, it’s important to address this cynicism. There has been much talk about media literacy interventions, primarily to help the less politically sophisticated. In addition, it’s important to find ways to explain the status of “fake news” on social media, specifically who produces “fake news,” why some entities and groups produce it, and which Americans fall for it. This could help keep people from growing more politically cynical.

Rather than blaming each other for the harms of “fake news” produced by foreign entities and fringe groups, people need to find a way to restore confidence in each other. Blunting the effects of misinformation will help with the larger goal of overcoming societal divisions.

Propaganda by another name

Ethan Zuckerman, Associate Professor of Public Policy, Communication, and Information, UMass Amherst

I expect the idea of misinformation will shift into an idea of propaganda in 2022, as suggested by sociologist and media scholar Francesca Tripodi in her forthcoming book, “The Propagandist’s Playbook.” Most misinformation is not the result of innocent misunderstanding. It’s the product of specific campaigns to advance a political or ideological agenda.

Once you understand that Facebook and other platforms are the battlegrounds on which contemporary political campaigns are fought, you can let go of the idea that all you need are facts to correct people’s misapprehensions. What’s going on is a more complex mix of persuasion, tribal affiliation and signalling, which plays out in venues from social media to search results.

As the 2022 elections heat up, I expect platforms like Facebook will reach a breaking point on misinformation because certain lies have become political speech central to party affiliation. How do social media platforms manage when false speech is also political speech? ■

Once you understand that Facebook and other platforms are the battlegrounds on which contemporary political campaigns are fought, you can let go of the idea that all you need are facts to correct people’s misapprehensions.

What’s more, misinformation targeting minorities, particularly Spanish-language content, may be far worse than misinformation targeting majority communities.

I believe the lack of independent audits, lack of transparency in fact checking and the racial and gender biases underlying algorithms used by social media platforms suggest that the need for regulatory action in 2022 is urgent and immediate.

Growing divisions and cynicism

Dam Hee Kim, Assistant Professor of Communication, University of Arizona

“Fake news” is hardly a new phenomenon, yet its costs have reached another level in recent years. Misinformation con-

political fringe groups who create “fake news” for financial or ideological purposes. Yet citizens who consume misinformation on social media tend to blame politicians, the media and other voters.

The third finding is that people who care about being properly informed are not immune to misinformation. People who prefer to process, structure and understand information in a coherent and meaningful way become more politically cynical after being exposed to perceived “fake news” than people who are less politically sophisticated. These critical thinkers become frustrated by having to process so much false and misleading information. This is troubling because democracy depends on the participation of engaged and thoughtful citizens.

Disinformation campaigns are murky blends of truth, lies and sincere beliefs – lessons from the pandemic

Crises are often accompanied by uncertainty about the event and anxiety about its impacts and how people should respond

KATE STARBIRD

Associate Professor of Human Centered Design & Engineering, University of Washington

The Covid-19 pandemic has spawned an infodemic, a vast and complicated mix of information, misinformation and disinformation.

In this environment, false narratives – the virus was “planned,” that it originated as a bioweapon, that Covid-19 symptoms are caused by 5G wireless communications technology – have spread like wildfire across social media and other communication platforms. Some of these bogus narratives play a role in disinformation campaigns.

The notion of disinformation often brings to mind easy-to-spot propaganda peddled by totalitarian states, but the reality is much more complex. Though disinformation does serve an agenda, it is often camouflaged in facts and advanced by innocent and often well-meaning individuals.

As a researcher who studies how communications technologies are used during crises, I’ve found that this mix of information types makes it difficult for people, including those who build and run online platforms, to distinguish an organic rumour from an organized disinformation campaign. And this challenge is not getting any easier as efforts to understand and respond to Covid-19 get caught up in the political machinations of this year’s presidential election.

Rumors, misinformation and disinformation

Rumors are, and have always been, common during crisis events. Crises are often accompanied by uncertainty about the event and anxiety about its impacts and how people should respond. People naturally want to resolve that uncertainty and anxiety, and often attempt to do so through collective sensemaking. It’s a process of coming together to gather information and theorize about the unfolding event. Rumors are a natural by-product.

Rumors aren’t necessarily bad. But the same conditions that produce rumours also make people vulnerable to disinformation, which is more insidious. Unlike rumours and misinformation, which may or may not be intentional, disinformation is false or misleading information spread for a particular objective, often a political or financial aim.

Disinformation has its roots in the practice of *dezinformatsiya* used by the Soviet Union’s intelligence agencies to attempt to change how people understood and interpreted events in the world. It’s useful to think of disinformation not as a single piece of information or even a

Distinguishing between unintentional misinformation and intentional disinformation is a critical challenge. Intent is often hard to infer, especially in online spaces where the original source of information can be obscured.



single narrative, but as a campaign, a set of actions and narratives produced and spread to deceive for political purpose.

Lawrence Martin-Bittman, a former Soviet intelligence officer who defected from what was then Czechoslovakia and later became a professor of disinformation, described how effective disinformation

campaigns are often built around a true or plausible core. They exploit existing biases, divisions and inconsistencies in a targeted group or society. And they often employ “unwitting agents” to spread their content and advance their objectives.

Regardless of the perpetrator, disinformation functions on multiple levels and

scales. While a single disinformation campaign may have a specific objective—for instance, changing public opinion about a political candidate or policy—pervasive disinformation works at a more profound level to undermine democratic societies.

The case of the ‘Plandemic’ video

Distinguishing between unintentional misinformation and intentional disinformation is a critical challenge. Intent is often hard to infer, especially in online spaces where the original source of information can be obscured. In addition, disinformation can be spread by people who believe it to be true. And unintentional misinformation can be strategically amplified as part of a disinformation campaign. Definitions and distinctions get messy, fast.

Consider the case of the “Plandemic” video that blazed across social media platforms in May 2020. The video contained a range of false claims and conspiracy theories about COVID-19. Problematically, it advocated against wearing masks, claiming they would “activate” the virus, and laid the foundations for eventual refusal of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Though many of these false narratives had emerged elsewhere online, the “Plandemic” video brought them together in a single, slickly produced 26-minute video. Before being removed by the platforms for containing harmful medical misinformation, the video propagated widely on Facebook and received millions of YouTube views.

As it spread, it was actively promoted and amplified by public groups on Facebook and networked communities on Twitter associated with the anti-vaccine movement, the QAnon conspiracy theory community and pro-Trump political activism.

But was this a case of misinformation or disinformation? The answer lies in understanding how—and inferring a little about why—the video went viral.

The video’s protagonist was Dr. Judy Mikovits, a discredited scientist who had previously advocated for several false theories in the medical domain— >>

>> for example, claiming that vaccines cause autism. In the lead-up to the video's release, she was promoting a new book, which featured many of the narratives that appeared in the "Plandemic" video.

One of those narratives was an accusation against Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases. At the time, Fauci was a focus of criticism for promoting social distancing measures that some conservatives viewed as harmful to the economy. Public comments from Mikovits and her associates suggest that damaging Fauci's reputation was a specific goal of their campaign.

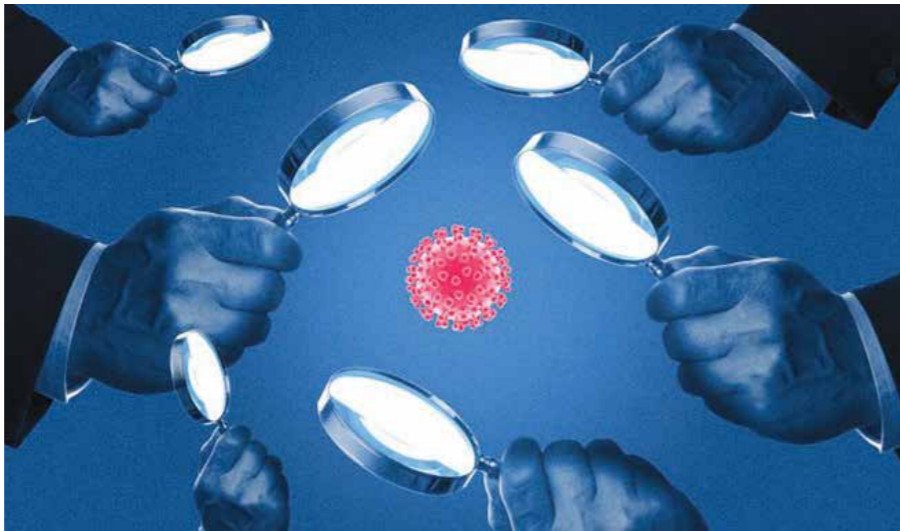
Anthony Fauci

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, preparing to testify before a Senate hearing. Fauci was a target of the 'Plandemic' conspiracy theory video. Kevin Dietsch/Pool via AP

In the weeks leading up to the release of the "Plandemic" video, a concerted effort to lift Mikovits' profile took shape across several social media platforms. A new Twitter account was started in her name, quickly accumulating thousands of followers. She appeared in interviews with hyper partisan news outlets such as The Epoch Times and True Pundit. Back on Twitter, Mikovits greeted her new followers with the message: "Soon, Dr Fauci, everyone will know who you 'really are'."

More recently, Sinclair Broadcast Group, which owns or operates 191 local television stations across the country, had planned to air an interview with Mikovits in which she reiterated the central claims in "Plandemic." In airing this program, Sinclair would have used the cover and credibility of local news to expose new audiences to these false—and potentially dangerous—narratives. The company is reconsidering its decision after receiving criticism; however, the interview was reportedly posted for a time on the company's website and was aired by one station.

This background suggests that Mikovits and her collaborators had several objectives beyond simply sharing her mis-



Regardless of the perpetrator, disinformation functions on multiple levels and scales. While a single disinformation campaign may have a specific objective—for instance, changing public opinion about a political candidate or policy—pervasive disinformation works at a more profound level to undermine democratic societies.

informed theories about Covid-19. These include financial, political and reputational motives. However, it is also possible that Mikovits is a sincere believer of the information that she was sharing, as were millions of people who shared and retweeted her content online.

What's ahead

In the United States, as Covid-19 blurs into the presidential election, we're likely to continue to see disinformation campaigns employed for political, financial and reputational gain. Domestic activist groups will use these techniques to produce and spread false and misleading narratives about the disease—and about the election. Foreign agents will attempt to join the conversation, often by infiltrating existing groups and attempting to steer them towards their goals.

For example, there will likely be attempts to use the threat of COVID-19 to frighten people away from the polls. Along with those direct attacks on election integrity, there are likely to also be indirect effects—on people's perceptions of election integrity—from both sincere activists and

agents of disinformation campaigns.

Efforts to shape attitudes and policies around voting are already in motion. These include work to draw attention to voter suppression and attempts to frame mail-in voting as vulnerable to fraud. Some of this rhetoric stems from sincere criticism meant to inspire action to make the electoral systems stronger. Other narratives, for example unsupported claims of "voter fraud," seem to serve the primary aim of undermining trust in those systems.

History teaches that this blending of activism and active measures, of foreign and domestic actors, and of witting and unwitting agents, is nothing new. And certainly, the difficulty of distinguishing between these is not made any easier in the connected era. But better understanding these intersections can help researchers, journalists, communications platform designers, policymakers and society at large develop strategies for mitigating the impacts of disinformation during this challenging moment. ■

This article has been updated to include news about Sinclair Broadcasting and the 'Plandemic' video.

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