



# Not just your average SUV

## Fact File

Suzuki Grand Vitara

Engine: 1.9 turbo diesel

Power: 129PS

0-62mph: 13.2 secs

Top speed: 124mph

Combined miles per gallon: 42.8

Transmission: five speed manual

Insurance: 24

CO2 g/km: 174

Ian Lamming spots the subtle changes in Suzuki's Grand Vitara

**H**AVE you noticed? Suzuki always does things a bit differently.

The Japanese marque might not be the biggest, it might not bring out a new model every week, but there is something endearing about its model range.

Many moons ago it worked out a successful formula, which it sticks to even today. It goes like this: design cars that are appealing, make them of the very best quality so they last, no matter how much hammer you give them, and fully load them with goodies. Then sell them with an affordable price tag.

So you won't be surprised to hear that is exactly what it has done with the latest Grand Vitara.

Fresh faced GV sports new modern looks and better proportions. The changes are subtle with a slightly wavy grille and the top of the range SZ5 getting sexy and incredibly efficient HiD lights.

Spare wheel returns to the rear door and is covered with a neat plastic cover sporting the name, which is class. The rear door opens out instead of upwards, which is useful when space is tight and the load bay is a decent size and shape.

The nose, the spare wheel positioning and the large 18in alloys all help the GV in the looks department as they give it a more aggressive, wide and stable stance.

It also makes the Suzuki sure-footed on the road and it will need to be to endure the test route.

Neither Yorkshire's undulating roads not the lumps and

bumps of the Yorkshire Dales could upset this little critter.

When the twists and curves start to kick in there is a choice, and a good one at that; twist a knob on the dash and it switches from running in two wheel drive to four, sharpening handling and steering responses in equal measure.

If you do decide to go off road – by choice, not just from crashing – then the four wheel high drive locks up, as does the low transmission ratio. Now that's a luxury not many SUVs possess nowadays, particularly in this price bracket of around £25K.

The new 1.9 litre diesel comes from Renault of all people and is torquey, if a little unrefined. The 42mpg on offer is fair and the gearbox much improved and surprisingly rewarding to use – yes, it requires some degree of effort, skill and co-ordination – it makes you work for your money.

Despite only having five gears the Suzuki trundles along the motorway in relaxed mood allowing the driver to appreciate the well appointed cabin, its leather seats (heated, of course), excellent satnav, and quality fittings.

Town driving is helped by the GV's lack of overall bulk and it is happy to whizz around the confines of town and city streets.

There are a plethora of SUVs on the market from just about every manufacturer there is but what you have to realize is that Suzuki has been making and honing them for longer than most. The new GV sticks to its guns and can't fail to be appreciated by its loyal following or new customers, come to that.