

Fit to go



The Daihatsu Gran Max is claimed to be a value for money one-tonner. Fact or fallacy? VIC OLIVER puts it through its paces to test this claim...

To find out whether the Daihatsu Gran Max lives up the manufacturer's claims, **FOCUS** took the vehicle on a 246 km unladen road test. The test route was from Boksburg to Witbank and was conducted on a cold and windy day with a strong headwind on the outward-bound run and a good tailwind on the return journey. Although the vehicle is comfortable cruising at the national speed limit the road test was limited to 80 km/h.

The fuel consumption obtained on the **FOCUS** road test was 6.65 l/100 km which was impressive and proved that the Daihatsu Gran Max's advertised unladen fuel consumption of 7.5 l/100 km for the vehicle is no idle boast.

Considering the very competitive price of the vehicle it is nonetheless equipped with many safety and functional features that make the Gran Max a good value for money vehicle. Safety features include crumple zone, collapsible steering column plus driver and passenger airbags (hi-spec model), giving the driver and passenger optimum protection. The vehicle is also equipped with ABS.

All the driver-controls are extremely driver-friendly and very easy to use. The dash-mounted gear lever is well positioned and makes gear selection very easy. The driver and passenger seat are functional but not very comfortable for long distance driving. There is a centre seat between the driver and passenger seat for a second passenger, but the centre seat spacing is small and, in my opinion, unsuitable for a second passenger on a long trip. To add to driver and passenger comfort an air conditioner is available as an optional extra.

Daihatsu Gran Max Running Costs				
	Jhb - Pretoria			
	Laden 2 ways		Laden 1 way	
Purchase Price (Rands)	108 000		108 000	
Interest Rate (%)	10		10	
Payload (tons)	1		1	
Distance (km)	113.1		113.1	
Time taken (hrs:min)	1:28		1:27	
Ave Speed (km/h)	76		76.9	
Fuel Used (litres)	14.5		13.8	
Consumption (l/100 km)	12.8		12.3	
Fuel Price (R/l)	7.54		7.54	
Productivity Factor *	6.0		3.4	
Ave Distance p.a. (km)	47 936		64 388	
Ave carried p.a. (tons)	852		572	
Fixed Costs	Rands/annum		Rands/annum	
Instalments	27 536		27 536	
Crew	43 680		43 680	
Insurance	9 072		9 072	
Licence	624		624	
Overheads	8 990		8 990	
Total fixed costs	89 902		89 902	
	R/km	R/Ton	R/km	R/Ton
Total fixed costs	1.88	105.52	1.40	157.17
Variable Costs				
Fuel	0.80	44.99	0.79	90.01
Tyres	0.08	4.75	0.09	10.20
Maintenance	0.59	33.34	0.59	66.71
Toll Fees				
Total Costs	3.35	188.60	2.87	324.09

* Productivity = payload (tons) x average speed / fuel consumption (l/100km)

These tables have been generated using **TransSolve** Transport Solutions Software. For a free trial CD visit the htm.co.za website.

Gran Max

Road test by Vic Oliver



ON THE ROAD

The vehicle performs well thanks to the lively 1.5 litre four cylinder petrol engine, which develops 71 kW at 6 000 r/min. The maximum torque output is 134 Nm at 4 400 r/min. Due to the flat torque curve 90% of the torque is available at 2 000 r/min, which improves performance at low speeds and on initial start.

The engine is also equipped with dynamic variable speed valve timing, enhancing timing of the engine to improve engine performance. Another engine feature I like is the chain-driven timing belt, which adds durability to the engine and reduces maintenance costs.

Noise levels inside the cab while travelling

are acceptable considering the forward control design. Road holding is good and the brakes are excellent. The power steering and small turning circle make the vehicle very easy to manoeuvre in small spaces. The driver's view is good due to the large windscreen.

Clutch and gear change mechanisms work well and are very easy to use. Driver abuse of the clutch is avoided thanks to a protection mechanism, which allows the clutch to engage evenly, even when the driver suddenly and harshly drops the clutch. This is another factor that will reduce maintenance costs.

The dashboard is only equipped with a speedometer, an engine temperature gauge

and a small bar type fuel gauge. However the vehicle has a full complement of warning lights, which would light up should a problem occur with any major or safety critical component.

The vehicle is fitted with a large 3.25 metre long dropside body with a low loading height of 72 cm and can carry a full one-ton payload.

Daily pre-trip checks are quickly and easily done by opening the front inspection lid and lifting the passenger and driver's seats.

In summary the Daihatsu Gran Max is reliable, easy to maintain, fuel-efficient and can carry a one-ton payload effortlessly. It's an excellent, light commercial vehicle. And yes it does offer terrific value for money. ■



The Daihatsu Gran Max is an economical workhorse that is both well built and reliable.