

SUZUKI SWIFT 1.2

ROAD TEST

By Jim Mc Cauley

Suzuki's all-new Swift has just arrived in the showrooms here to take up the mantle of success achieved for the company by the outgoing supermini. Styling-wise, the dynamic and energetic lines of the former model have been refined in the latest version, which cloaks an all-new engine underneath as well as comprehensive chassis and suspension changes.

While a 1.3 litre diesel will extend the choice in the Spring of next year, the sole launch version is powered by a 1.2 litre petrol engine. Marginally larger than the



model it is replacing, the gains are evident in the cabin where improved quality also abounds.

Power source for the car is a new in-house 4-cylinder engine producing 94PS and marks a significant advancement over the previous 1.3 litre unit. On benchmark performance is goes from rest to 62 mph (100km/h) in 12.3 seconds with the potential to top 103 mph. At the same time emissions are lowered to just 116 gms/km while fuel consumption on the combined cycle betters that of the 1.3 litre unit by almost

8 mpg, at 56.5 mpg.

Available in a choice of 3 and 5-door bodystyles, test choice was the latter version, the pert, cheeky styling losing none of its appeal with the extra doors. Settling in, and the first impression is one of quality, reinforced on the move by a well insulated and quiet cabin even at higher motorway speeds. Front cabin space is good and rear doors provide excellent back-seat access to an area that is adequate rather than generous, but better than much of the competition, particularly for head and shoulder room.

The 1.2 litre engine provides adequate power for the car and can be injected with some enthusiasm with full throttle sweeps, comfortably maintaining its pace on the open road. Its overall refinement and excellent chassis with improved roll resistance make the new Swift a very pleasant drive, and comfortably advances it from the outgoing model. A 5-speed manual gearbox is standard with a 4-speed automatic optional on the two higher trim levels.



Available in Suzuki's standard SZ2, 3 and 4 specification levels, all models feature seven airbags including a driver's knee unit, and electronic stability program (ESP) as standard, contributing to the car's top 5-star EuroNCAP crash test award.

SZ3 most notably adds air conditioning and alloy wheels while the top SZ4 model is identified by its front fog lights and rear privacy glass as well as gaining automatic air conditioning, push button starting, cruise control, Bluetooth connectivity and automatic headlights.



The Swift has established itself as the quality hallmark for Suzuki, produced in seven plants around the world and sold in 100 countries. Its multi-award winning predecessor sold over 55,000 units in the UK alone since its launch in mid 2005 and the company intends to maintain sales here of 10,000 per year. The new range starts at £9,995 and extends to £11,795 for the top SZ4 3-door model. Add £500 for the 5-door versions and £1,000 for the automatic gearbox. With a CO2 emissions of 116 gms/km, all versions are in Band C for

annual car tax of £30. Depending on trim level, the car is in Group 8/9 of the new 50 category insurance ratings and all are covered by Suzuki's 3-year / 60,000 mile warranty. To launch the car, Suzuki is offering an additional bonus of zero per cent finance over three years.