

Chevrolet blazes a new trail

 By [Henrie Geysers](#)

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Chevrolet's big-easy Trailblazer has been given a nifty makeover with a liberal addition of fancy technology, safety features and enough driving aids and cosmetic touches to make it a very serious seven-seater contender.

It will take a magic wand and lots of fancy footwork to shove the Toyota Fortuner from its dominating perch but the big Chev has certainly matured into a very appealing alternative now that its list of fancies include Lane Departure Warning, Forward Collision Alert, Side Blind Zone Alert, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, front and rear cameras as well as a class-leading infotainment system.



Attractive added cosmetic touches include a bolder front end and LED daytime running lights on the top models. The range flagship LTZ Z71 model I recently piloted for a week in the Magoebaskloof area has even benefitted from a special dose of blue-beard appeal with black wheel rims, door handles and mirrors, plus a model unique decal on both front doors.

Putting the Trailblazer to the test

As part of a "Trailblazer Adventure" group I recently put the Trailblazer to the test on a challenging off-road route that included steep, and at times slippery, mountain trails, rock-strewn tracks and stream crossings all of which it handled with the ease of a gentle stroll on the beach.



Although the Chev does not have a diff lock it does have a quick-response limited slip differential as well as a “gradient braking” function that maintains speeds on steep downhills. It also benefits from electronic stability/traction control and hill descent control to further enhance its rock-rabbit abilities.

The LTZ variants can also be armed with an optional four-wheel drive with low range which makes changing between two-high, four-high and four-low drive modes just a switch away.

Comfortable, spacious

Trotting along at pace on motorways the large SUV further underlines its appeal with comfortable seats, lots of leg and shoulder space, stepped-up cabin insulation and well-weighted new electronic power steering - but most of all by its willing 2.8 Duramax turbo-diesel that effortlessly kicks out 144kW and a class-leading 500Nm.

Other top-notch features of this seven-seater include a fold-flat back row of seats (much more convenient than the Fortuner’s side-folding seats) and generous luggage space of 205 litres with all seats in position; 1229 litres with the 3rd row down and 1830 litres with the 2nd and 3rd-row seats folded flat.

Also new is a user-friendly seven-inch touch screen with fully-integrated satnav system.

Peace-of-mind safety features

Peace-of-mind safety features of this people-hauler include ABS with EBD, PBA (panic brake assist), HBFA (hydraulic brake fade assist) seven airbags, seat belt pretensioners and ISOFIX child seat anchors.

This comfortable, spacious family cruiser and highly capable off-roader is much more than just another player in this segment. It presses all the right buttons, and to add to its appeal it comes with the price-inclusive backing of a best-in-class five-year/120,000km warranty as well as a five-year/90,000 service plan.

There are five models to choose from ranging in price from R471,000 to R634,500.

ABOUT HENRIE GEYSER

Henrie Geyser joined the online publishing industry through iafrica.com, where he worked for five years as news editor and editor. He now freelances for a variety of print and online publications, on the subjects of cars, food, and travel, among others; and is a member of the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists. henrieg@iafrica.com

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