

H-1 is a talented multi-tasker

 By [Henrie Geyser](#)

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Hyundai's versatile H-1 people-carrier is a master of multi-tasking and talented enough to effortlessly cope with the demands of both the business world and the family environment - which is why it is the star of its class.



This comfortable H-1 has dominated the multi-passenger five-door market since it arrived on local shores about seven years ago and with well over 11,000 sales to its name, plus a recent make-over, sales continue to climb steadily northwards.

Richly endowed

And it is no surprise, really, because the H-1 is competitively priced and richly endowed with attractive looks, comfortable, elegant and spacious living quarters, versatile seating and top-class ride quality. Buyers can also choose between petrol and diesel engines as well as manual or automatic transmissions.

The two wagons on offer locally are a 2.3 petrol which produces 126 kW and 224 Nm and a 2.4 turbo-diesel that kicks out 125 kW and 441 Nm. I recently had the range-topping diesel on test which has been enhanced with Bluetooth connectivity and multifunction controls on the steering wheel; cruise control with controls on the steering wheel; automatic aircon with climate control; glove box cooling; leather steering wheel and gear knob covers and an Electronic Stability Programme (ESP).



Although it is described as a 9-seater the H-1 really is more of an eight-seater and it gets better as the number of occupants is reduced. Delightful with six aboard and tons of luggage but for the ultimate in luxury travel the big hauler can be trimmed down to pamper just four occupants with acres of leg and body room plus enormous luggage space for travel bags, suitcases and, in our case, several cases of wine.

Interior comfort, gutsy engine

I recently spent a week with my wife and two friends from the UK in the auto diesel, meandering along the Boland's wineries before heading to Hermanus via Gordon's Bay on the glorious scenic coastal drive that borders False Bay – and it didn't take long before compliments came about the interior comfort of the H1, its gutsy, yet surprisingly quiet diesel engine, smooth auto transmission and the large windows that made for great sightseeing.



Although the sheer length of the H-1 does not make for easy parking, the steering feel is pleasantly light so parking is not a major problem and the sliding doors make it easy for rear passengers to get in and out. I was impressed by the car-like handling of the bus and how easy it is to find a comfortable driving position. The steering is lighter than one would expect from such a large vehicle and the wagon sits confidently on the road even at legal maximum speed.

The cabin is particularly well-sealed against outside noises even when cruising along at a fair rate of knots. Comfortable seats and the airiness created by the large windows further contribute to the upmarket ambience of the snazzy Hyundai. The only two niggles about the H1 – the front passenger seat-belt is awkward to engage and the rear seat does not fold flat.



It is easy to understand why this Korean wagon is such a top seller. With all of its star qualities, price-inclusive 5-year/150,000 km warranty and roadside assistance plan, 5-year/90,000km service plan and prices of R499,900 for the petrol-model and R599,900 for the diesel, it presents a tough challenge to competitors such as the Ford Tourneo Custom (R477,900 to R561,900), Mercedes Benz Vito (R547,487 to R789,222), VW Kombi Caravelle (R775,800 to R890,300) and Kia Grand Sedona (R552,995 to R704,995).

ABOUT HENRIE GEYSER

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