

NEW SUZUKI SWIFT SPORT

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“GREAT THINGS can come in small packages”. It’s a well used expression and one that definitely suits Suzuki’s new Swift Sport.

The car, which will be available in the UK in the New Year, is expected to sell for around £14,500 and, let me tell you, you will get a lot for your money if a super-mini is the kind of motor that toots your horn.

I got to drive the Swift Sport around Barcelona as part of the Japanese company’s efforts to promote its latest model to the media. I was impressed; the car has more control, it’s more fun and it has lower emissions than its predecessor. But the best thing about it is that a sixth gear has been added to a gearbox which has been woefully lacking in the past.

On the outside, the Swift Sport looks great from the rear. A wind diffuser and twin tailpipes give it an appearance model to the media. The front is less extreme, but from the side the car has a low-slung stance which immediately distinguishes it from a standard Swift. 17 inch alloy wheels also add to the chunkier, more potent, image.

Behind the wheel, the new model is quicker off the mark than the last one due to an increase in power output, which has risen from 121bhp to 134bhp. The sixth gear also helps to improve acceleration and gives the speedy Swift a more sporty gear change. The leather clad steering wheel and the front sports seats add to the athletic feel of the Japanese car. The seats grip you when the Suzuki is flung around corners (and there were plenty of left and right-handers on the bendy hills rising above beautiful Barcelona). Don’t get me wrong, the Swift Sport is never going to give you an adrenaline overdose – but it’s fun enough to stand up to fast little numbers like the Citroen DS3, the Fiat Punto Evo and the MINI Cooper.

With seven airbags, Suzuki’s pocket-rocket is safe as well as sprightly. It offers the same control and peace of mind as the standard Swift, which earned a five-star rating in the European New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP) and the highest overall points scored amongst other new cars tested at the time. Standard safety equipment also includes anti-lock braking with electronic braking-force distribution, and an Electronic Stability Programme (ESP).



Suzuki expects its new offering to appeal to motorists in their early 30s, so it’s possible that parents with young children, who are looking for a bit of a fun drive, could go for this motor. I suspect that many won’t be looking at the Swift Sport as a practical option though and it’ll be the single girls and guys with a limited budget and a need for speed who will be heading in their droves to Suzuki dealerships in 2012.

PROS ‘N’ CONS

- Comfortable ✓
- Quick ✓
- Economical ✓
- Tiny boot X

FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 121 mph
- 0-62 mph: 8.7 secs
- Combined mpg: 44.1
- Engine: 1586 cc 16v petrol
- Max. power (bhp): 134 at 7000 rpm
- Max. torque (lb/ft): 118 at 4400 rpm
- CO₂: 147 g/km
- Price: £14,500 (Estimate)