INFORMATION EVERY MOTORIST NEEDS

MOTOR MART

Popular vehicles set to rock 2018

By Ahmad Muto

According to car dealers, much as the Toyota Wish was the biggest hit of 2017, its reign is over. The car dealers expect other cars to top the list of favourites in 2018. Here are some of them.



Toyota Kluger's spacious interior gives it an advantage



Mitsubishi Pajero iO is gaining popularity among women

Toyota Harrier

This midsize crossover has a lot in common with its cousin, the Lexus RX. You can hardly differentiate them until you check the badges on the body. The first generation (1997-2003) models have been a darling in the past, but the second generations (2013+) have picked up, specifically the 2003-2005 models. They have been christened "*Kawundo*" (bat) because of how they pick up speed. Enthusiasts say they fly. It is powered by a 2.4cc engine that does about 7km on a litre.

Bilali Saeed Lali, the sales and relations manager at Yuasa Investments Limited, says the Toyota Harrier has picked the market because the price has reduced. "Previously it used to be between sh60m and sh65m. Currently, one can get it at about sh45m," he says.

Lali adds that the Harrier is going to become a hit because it is going to cut the market value of the Prado TX.

Ramathan Kigenyi, a salesman at Kingsway Enterprises, a car bond, says the Harrier is still hot in the market. The 2003-2004 models sell most because they are raised and stable on the road. He says they cost sh45m and above.

However, Hassan Mutebi, a sales manager at Minhas Motors Uganda is skeptical about the Toyota Harrier making it big in 2018 because "its price is around sh42m", depending on the taxes. However, he says it is compatible, looks good and has a high ground clearance. It also has a VVTi engine and people also love cars that can take off fast. "They are called kawundo (bat) because they can pick up speed fast," he says.

Toyota Vanguard

The third generation (2005-2012) of the RAV4 saw the development of two models, the short and long wheelbase.

In 2007, the long wheelbase became the Toyota Vanguard. They share the same design and one would mistake it for the third generation RAV4.

The Toyota Vanguard, (2007-2009 models) that are on sale in bonds are spacious compact SUVs. They are 7-seaters powered by a 2.4cc engine and cover 10km to a litre.

Lali says it is a small version of the Prado TX that has been christened "Ronaldo". It goes for between sh70m and sh80m. According to Lali, it is a "slightly high class" car and new in the market.

However, Kigenyi thinks it is not hot in the car market because of the relatively high price.

"One will look for them around town and get less than 10. They are expensive at sh75m to sh78m at Kingsway bond. I do not see anything unique on it. Everything in it is a RAV4, except the Vanguard does not come with a spare tyre," he says.



Mercedes Benz brand name gives the 4matic an edge in the SUV market

Premio (2007-8)

This Sedan has been on market right from the first generation of 1998 and never runs out of fashion.

Dealers think it will still be one of the best selling cars of 2018. Only that in 2018, the new models (2007-2008) are expected to steal the spotlight from their older models. The new Premio is going to be a hot cake because people have been waiting for it. The Premios in this market have a loyal base of enthusiasts who have been stuck with them for years. In people's mind, it is still a popular car," says Lali.

Isaac Sammy, a salesman at Kingsway Enterprises, says the Premio does well because it is a Toyota.

"They are good cars. It is selling because the Premio has cheap and easy-to-get spare parts in addition to being powered by a VVTi engine. The 2004 model is sh30m, 2003 model costs sh26m and 2002 model is sh25m," he says.

Mitsubishi Pajero iO

According to Lali, much as the Pajero iO has been popular, it is just picking up.

People used to be afraid of the brand name Mitsubishi, but they have learnt that its spare parts are not expensive. However, Kigenyi says it was a hit in 2015-2016, by next year they might be wiped out completely. He says it has a problem with the front wheels.

"They begin making screeching sounds and even if it is changed, it will still continue," he says.

The car is popular with women because it is raised and has a good view.

"Women no longer want to spend money on cars and spend a big part of their driving experience monitoring what is in the side mirrors," Kigenyi says. The Pajero iO is now in the range of sh22m, up from sh18m.

According to Kigenyi, it was previously at sh15m. A new car could not spend two weeks in the bond without being bought off.

Toyota Kluger 2001-15

If the Toyota Harrier sells in 2018, there is absolutely no way the Toyota Kluger will not. The two are built on the same platform. All generations of this midsize SUV is set to be on market in 2018.

The price of a Toyota Kluger starts from sh36m and above. It is a raised car with good ground clearance, spacious, five-seater with spare parts available in town.

Mercedes 4Matic

2017 will forever remain the year that the Mercedes Benz 4matic sent signals it is yet to become a darling. The 4matic is a term coined by Mercedes-Benz for the All Wheel Drive (AWD) designed to increase traction in slippery conditions.

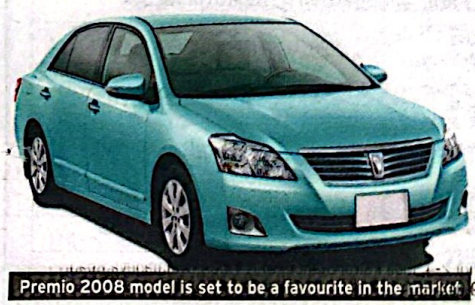
Lali says the Mercedes 4matic prices has since dropped to sh100m.

"One good thing with the Mercedes Benz is that it is a respected brand worldwide. The 4matic is a 3.5cc petrol engine but, much as it has a big engine, it is economical on fuel.

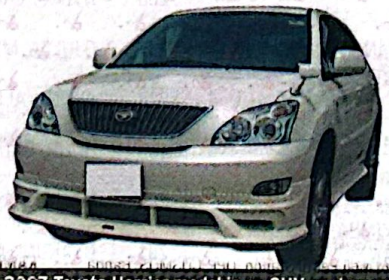
It gives 10km per litre because of the new technology of the Mercedes-Benz. It is also strong and heavy," he says.

However, Kigenyi says few people in Uganda drive cars that are in the price range of sh50m. "The oldest model ranges between sh85m and sh90m. I cannot say we sold many units of 4matic this year. We have two here, a pearl white and silver, but they have been in the bond for five months. No one is interested in them, clients ask for the price, but do not even check them out. It will sell in 2018, but to a specific class," he says.

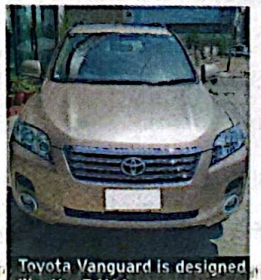
"The Mercedes 4matic comes in 3.5, 4.2 and 4.5cc engines and one will easily be tempted to park the car to save on fuel and use bodabodas," he adds.



Premio 2008 model is set to be a favourite in the market



2007 Toyota Harrier model is an SUV on demand



Toyota Vanguard is designed like the RAV4

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