

STAR-STUDDED TRAVEL ALLIES

IF EVER THERE WAS A MATCH MADE IN MOTORING HEAVEN, IT WOULD INCLUDE THIS AFFORDABLE LANDWIND 5 COMPACT SUV, BEDECKED WITH A HOST OF THULE ACCESSORIES



FIGURES

LANDWIND 5 2.0T A/T
 ENGINE 1 997 cc, turbocharged petrol
 CYLINDERS 4, in-line
 POWER 140 kW @ 5 500 rpm
 TORQUE 250 Nm @ 2 800 rpm
 DRIVETRAIN 8-speed automatic, FWD
 0-100 KM/H 11 sec
 TOP SPEED 185 km/h
 OVERALL FUEL CONSUMPTION (CLAIMED) 8.5 l/100 km
 CO₂ EMISSIONS 216 g/km CO₂
 DRIVING AIDS ABS, EBD, TC, SC
 WARRANTY 3-year/100 000 km
 SERVICE PLAN 5-year/100 000 km
 SERVICE INTERVALS 10 000 km
 PRICE R299 880



LEFT PAGE, AND LEFT THE LANDWIND 5 IS A HANDSOME YET UNDERSTATED SUV THAT LOOKS AT HOME IN ANY SETTING, RURAL OR URBAN. BELOW UNDER THE BONNET IS A 2.0-LITRE COOLED TURBO-PETROL ENGINE (RATED AT 140 KW AND 250 NM). ON OUR JOURNEY, IT CONSUMED FUEL AT 10.5 l/100 KM, WITH MIXED DRIVING.

The road between Dullstroom and Sabie via Lydenburg (now Mashishing), is in a sad state – suspension-smashing potholes abound, waiting to spoil a weekend away.

Fortunately, the Landwind 5 – our chariot for the trip – is no ordinary car. Rather, it's an SUV-type vehicle boasting a taller disposition and a commanding view of the road ahead. Its multipurpose tyres have a high profile with tall sidewalls, providing added flex in rough conditions, like on the potholed roads of Mpumalanga. All this reduces stress levels when behind the wheel.

Pre-emptive shifting makes for swifter and smoother responses from the engine



Strong brakes and a willingness to quickly change direction helps too, no matter the kind of evasive action you need to take. The ride is firm yet comfortable, and it held its line through the sweeping bends and tighter turns of Long Tom Pass.

By the time we arrived at Misty Mountain – roughly 12 km west of Sabie – the overall impression of the Landwind's driving dynamics was favourable. It impressed us in other

ways, too: The 2.0-litre turbo-petrol is willing, but it does reward using the eight-speed transmission like a manual; with the driver taking command by using the sequential gate, rather than just leaving the auto gearbox in 'D'. Pre-emptive shifting makes for swifter and smoother responses, especially when the road looks anything but straight and flat.

The Landwind 5 arrived on the local scene in 2015; this two-pedal version

was added last year. In many ways, it's more appealing than the six-speed manual, and smooths the delivery of torque to the front wheels, for less frenetic progress.

The interior complements the drivetrain, and while the seats are a tad hard on first acquaintance, they are forgiving enough after many hours on the road. They also feel a little too high relative to the steering wheel, but familiarity ushered this feeling away.

TOP RIGHT A TRIO OF THULE CHASM BAGS (90-, 70- AND 40-LITRE) BARELY TROUBLED THE TOURING L ROOF-BOX. TOTAL VOLUME IS 420 LITRES, BUT THULE'S RANGE OF BOXES IS MADE TO FIT ANYTHING FROM A CITY CAR TO A FULL-SIZED SUV.

BELOW RIGHT WHETHER IT'S CLOTHING, COMPUTERS OR CAMERAS, THERE IS A THULE PRODUCT TO HELP YOU HAUL IT.

BELOW LANDWIND, NOT KNOWN BEFORE 2015, IS THE CAR-MAKING DIVISION OF JMC (WELL KNOWN FOR ITS VIGUS RANGE OF DOUBLE-CABS). THULE HAS A LOCAL PRESENCE GOING BACK 15 YEARS.

BOTTOM RIGHT THE DRIVING POSITION IS COMMANDING, AND THE CONTROLS FALL READILY TO HAND.



A Thule roofbox essentially makes any car bigger, without the drawbacks of a trailer



The seats are clad in leather, and the interior has a suitably upmarket ambience. There's also just the right amount of chrome detailing to make it feel luxurious rather than garish. It is spacious, and the sunroof adds to the airy ambience.

Impressive, too, is the size of the rear accommodation, and the legroom back there is difficult to fault. Yet it doesn't come at the cost of utility – there's plenty of space for a family's luggage further back. Fold a portion of the 60:40 split rear seat flat, and the luggage compartment becomes decidedly cavernous.

Nevertheless, for added stowage space, we equipped the Landwind with a Thule Touring L (for 'large') luggage box (in grey to emphasise the car's Lightning Silver paintwork), with its 420-litre capacity. A combination of all three of Thule's soft Chasm bags barely troubled it. A Thule roof box essentially makes

any vehicle bigger, without the inherent drawbacks of a trailer, and there's a model in the range to suit anything from a micro-mini to a full-sized MPV. It's also an option for cars that aren't designed to be fitted with a tow bar.

The Landwind comes standard with roof rails, so attaching Thule's crossbars – or racks, as the Swedish brand

calls them – is particularly straightforward. To these, the latest version of ProRide bicycle carrier was added, which was fitting, as the SA Lowveld is prime

mountain-biking territory. An option would've been the even newer UpRide – a carrier that clamps to the bicycle's

wheels alone, making it an ideal option for the latest generation of MTBs that combine dual suspension and a carbon-fibre frame.

Misty Mountain proved to be a great destination for our Landwind journey. Away from the bustle of Sabie, we were treated to wonderful valley views, and the White River and Graskop were close by, the latter being an especially worthwhile spot to visit. The Graskop Gorge Lift Company has a 51 m elevator that heads straight down into the riverine forest, which you can explore at will.

After our adventure, the cruise back to Gauteng in the Landwind was effortless, the auto gearbox and willing 2.0-litre power plant soaking up the kilometres. Our Landwind-Thule rig was just the right companion for a much-needed weekend away from the city. ♦

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For more info on these brands, visit www.landwindsa.co.za and www.thule.co.za.