

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

The surprising substance of the Landwind 5 reminds us yet again not to make comparisons before having a proper look!



There is a humorous series of adverts running on TV at the moment made for an insurance company called Hippo.co.za. In these ads, the Hippo alludes to comparison dos and comparison don'ts, often parodying awkward situations where the everyday man unwittingly compares two things he shouldn't, like a rather overweight woman to his pregnant wife. The funny series of commercials resonates with all of us as most of us have, at one point in time or another, made a comparison we shouldn't have.

When the Landwind 5 was delivered to us for review, the first thing that struck us was that it shared a striking resemblance to a Lexus. The badge, although not identical, still resembled that of a Lexus badge and the shell shared many striking similarities to a Lexus too. So when judging the car initially, we couldn't help but hold it to the very high standards set by the Japanese luxury manufacturer Lexus. Sadly, this comparison didn't lead us to believe that the Landwind 5 was a sluggish and poor attempt to enter a very saturated luxury SUV market. When that couldn't be further from the truth.

For starters, the Landwind 5 is more than half the price of the Lexus comparative, meaning at R289 880 for the top-of-the-range model we tested, you certainly get great value. With a well laid out interior and a stylish exterior, this entry-level SUV opens up a vehicle segment to a whole new market of clientele. There is

ample space inside the Landwind 5 for a family of five, and the large boot copes well with the pressures of transporting kids and all that goes along with them.

The 2.0L engine delivered acceptable performance in everyday testing, but we felt that the automatic gearbox severely hurt its overall delivery of power and speed. The 8-speed automatic gearbox missed the beat completely and there were moments of brilliance during the test where we felt that there is plenty to offer under the bonnet of the Landwind 5, which just couldn't get out and express itself.

The Landwind 5 ticks all the safety boxes on paper with EBD, ABS, stability control, front side airbags, driver airbags and traction control, but it did have some body roll issues that made for some nervy cornering at speed. With a top speed of 170km/h, it gives further evidence to the fact that there is power to be found, somewhere in the Landwind 5. On further research, the manual version delivers a top speed of nearly 10% more and gets to 100km/h nearly two seconds quicker.

It may feel like we're being overly harsh on the Landwind 5, but in reality, it has far more merit than fault. Yes, the automatic gearbox hurt the performance, but in day-to-day traffic, you barely get a chance to get above crawling speed anyway. Other than that, the Landwind 5 does offer the growing family a great tool to enter the SUV market and enjoy the comforts of a big car, with big space. *✎*

