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MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE

We found the Isuzu D-Max V-Cross—India's first adventure utility vehicle—to be up to the hype surrounding it

MOTORSCRIBES

(A pitstop for modern-day car and bike enthusiasts, this column features the latest machines, reviews, roadtrips and more. By a team of automotive insiders who call themselves MotorScribes)

THE first thing one notices about the D-Max V-Cross is its sheer size – 5295mm in length, 1860mm in height and 1840mm in width. Its clean lines and pronounced wheel arches lend it a bold stance. The front is dominated by large headlights with projector lamps and the large, single slat, chrome-finished grille wearing a big 'Isuzu' badge. The rear features a simple design, save for a little chrome and an 'Isuzu' sticker on the tailgate. Roof rails, scratch-resistant plastic flooring and sides in the load bay, with six-spoke 16-inch alloys that run 245/70 R16 tubeless tyres complete the look of a no-nonsense pick-up built like a tank.

The five-seater cabin gets power steering, air conditioning, electronically foldable ORVMs, cup holders, other storage compartments, and a clean layout with commendable fit and finish. The driving position allows a command-



ing view of the road, but isn't upright like most SUVs – it's more sedan-like. The rear bench gets sizeable leg space with a 60:40 split, but no air-conditioning vents.

4x4 powerhouse

The 2,499cc, 4-cylinder Common Rail VGS turbo-intercooled diesel engine, which makes a healthy 134bhp and 320Nm of torque is refined, but with a bit of diesel clatter. The 5-speed manual gearbox offers smooth shifts along with

a shift-on-the-fly 4WD system. Fuel economy was a respectable 11kmpl over our test, which included a lot of city driving, some off-roading and a bit of a highway run. Not too bad for a 1,905kg vehicle.

When driving the V-Cross, one can immediately feel its weight and size, but you grow accustomed to that real quick. That's when you can really step things up a notch and have an absolute blast behind the wheel. In the city, it's not cumbersome to manage until you need to find a parking spot. Where it truly shines is on the open country roads, where the possibilities are endless – thanks to its comfortable ride and 260kg payload capacity.

The massive ground clearance and 4WD take on the roughest of terrain fearlessly. In the dirt, the suspension soaks up undulations effortlessly and while the rear is a little skippy thanks to the leaf springs, it never loses its composure. Safety systems include dual airbags, ABS, EBD and brake assist, built into Isuzu's all new Gravity Response Intelligent Platform – a ladder frame platform touted to offer better stability and long-term durability. All told, Isuzu has a winner on their hands, and we hope for more exciting products as they grow their footprint in the India.

₹12,99,819 (Ex-showroom price Bengaluru).

Details: isuzudmaxvcross.in

— Vikram Gour
@VikramGour