

Hyundai i30 N review: A thrilling and affordable contender for SA's best hot hatch

 By Imran Salie

9 Jun 2023

With the announcement of Toyota's GR Corolla entering the local market, the segment for hot hatches in South Africa has heated up. Adding to this stiff competition is the latest iteration of Honda's Type R, a local favourite and a star performer. This makes it a good time to evaluate the key competitors, and we were recently behind the wheel of Hyundai's latest i30 N, which left a lasting impression and a reminder that it should not be left behind in the conversation for the best hot hatch in the country.





As an FWD car, the i30N is up against the Type R and the eighth-generation Golf GTI, both of which are phenomenal cars.

But the i30N makes a name for itself with explosive driving capabilities and the looks to match.

To describe it in a nutshell, the i30 N is one heck of a fun car to drive. Expect good throttle response, great exhaust sounds, and balanced handling. Adding to this is its ability to work as a daily driver with sufficient practicality and comfort. And as mentioned, the i30N looks good, especially in the standard light baby blue colour.

How well does the i30 N perform?

The i30 N has different drive modes, each of which is adaptable to a desired output. For example, in N mode, it becomes easier to thrust forward with rapid torque, so much so that spinning the front wheels can happen without intention.

Then there's the Sport mode, which is a slightly toned-down version of the N mode, but still does well to provide an enhanced sporty driving experience.

In Eco mode, a mode which I advise should be used for daily driving as the car can be heavy on fuel is more relaxed and reserved.

As I mentioned earlier, the i30N has balanced handling, partly due to its low centre of gravity and suspension. Going around bends at faster speeds is almost a walk in the park as I experienced little body roll. This is thanks to an electronic limited-slip differential and electronic stability control.

Because the i30 N is built for performance, you can expect a stiff suspension, which can be adjusted for more comfort in the infotainment system.

Features include:

- New N DCT (eight-speed dual-clutch transmission) with paddle shifters
- 19-inch forged alloy wheels
- Pirelli P-Zero ultra-high-performance Hyundai N tires
- N steering wheel, drive modes, and custom settings
- 2l turbocharged engine delivering 206 kW and 392 Nm torque
- Maximum speed of 250 km/h and 0-100 km/h in 5.4 seconds
- N DCT with improved torque transfer and shifting fun
- N Power Shift, N Grin Shift, and N Track Sense Shift for enhanced performance
- N Grin Control System with five drive modes (Eco, Normal, Sport, N, Custom)
- Creep Off mode for preventing automatic rolling
- Electronic Sound Generator and variable muffler control for enhanced engine sound
- LED headlamps featuring V-shaped daytime running lights
- Launch control
- Heated seats
- A 0.25-inch touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. The i30 N is also fitted with a

wireless charging pad

Final word

One evening as I was cruising at a speed of 80km/h, a seventh-gen Golf GTI whizzed past me. This prompted me to switch into N mode to see if I can catch up to it within speed limits. I was behind the GTI at a good following distance in about 10 seconds after the switch of a button.

I took this as a sure sign that the I30N is not to be messed with and deserves more respect. It's more the manner in which the i30N caught up to its rival that was impressive; it was quick and the new DCT gearbox clearly makes a difference to its performance.

For its price tag, the I30 N puts itself in a position of value for money.

Price

The new Hyundai i30 N DCT is R 749 900 (including VAT).

As part of the standard package, the customer also gets Hyundai's seven-year/200,000 km manufacturer warranty; a five-year/75,000km service plan; and roadside assistance for seven years or 150,000km.

ABOUT IMRAN SALIE

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