

Stretching Infiniti

MARK ANDREWS

Looking to buy a new car? Talk test drives the new Infiniti M25L to see how it weighs in against the current competition.



Few outside of North America will be familiar with Nissan's upmarket brand Infiniti. China, however, currently figures big in the company's future plan. Not content with moving their global headquarters to Hong Kong, Infiniti has additionally recently launched a lengthened version of its luxury Infiniti M model, which has been stretched by a not-to-be-sniffed-at 150mm.

Lengthened cars are both figuratively and literally big in China. After all, an additional perk for a high flyer that would rather be driven around in style, is being

able to use the back seat as a mobile office. This current model is squarely aimed at bringing competition against the stretched versions of luxury cars such as the BMW 5 series, Mercedes E class, and Audi A6. Still, where the new M25L eschews the conservative lines of the Teutonic competition is with a sleeker, curvier look.

Curves, which Infiniti claims are nature inspired, extend into the interior. The dashboard almost lovingly wraps itself around the driver and front passenger, plus the buttons and door handles are all rounded. There are four trim levels available (on the 2.5 litre) starting from the

basic Comfort and rising to Luxury (as on our test car), which comes with an eight-inch touch screen display that acts as sat-nav (Chinese only), reverse camera, and DVD player. All the usual electric toys are included, right down to the leather seats, which have the added features of heating and cooling. The air conditioning system also has a unique "forest" function, which acts as an air freshener, delivering a pleasant aroma that Infiniti claims, promotes alertness and alleviates stress!

In the back, you can really see where the stretched wheelbase has been put to use. There is more than sufficient legroom for passengers to stretch out and if that isn't even enough, the front passenger seat can go further forward, giving space for the legs of the Yao Mings of this country. High spec versions additionally treat occupants to a 16 speaker Bose sound system. For more privacy, rear passengers have blinds on the windows and there is also an electric blind for the back window.

Still, while there are a lot of perks to the Infiniti M, if there is one thing that lets the model down, it's the wood trim used in

the interior, which is overly processed and lacks an upmarket look.

Our test car came with a 2.5 litre V6 engine. There is also a 3.5l V6 hybrid available - in two trim levels - which not only gives better performance but also better fuel economy.

When you push the accelerator, how the car behaves is very much dependent on the mode selection of the seven-speed automatic gearbox. Choose Eco and a light appears on the dash to encourage fuel economic driving with the throttle muted. Driving like this soon becomes boring; the Standard setting is far more suited to getting the best out of the engine. Drop the selector into Sport and the V6 growls its approval.

Handling is generally good and the car goes where you throw it. Steering is well weighted and, unlike many cars in China, not overly light.



This vehicle is a definite left of field choice to the usual German suspects. Still, the M25L ranges from RMB 498,000 - 625,000 and the M35hL, RMB 718,000 - 818,000. When you compare this to the recommended prices for the stretched BMW 5 series, which is made locally, starting at RMB 428,600 and

extending up to RMB 797,600 the Infiniti becomes a lot less attractive.

Infiniti plan on starting Chinese production in 2014 and, while not confirmed, the M is likely to be one of models. Until local production leads to a price drop, it remains to be a car for an individual who is not so mainstream brand conscious.



蓝枪鱼西餐·酒吧
Home Away From Home



2012
MERRY CHRISTMAS

Christmas Festivities

10 December: Blue Marlin 13th Birthday Party
30% Off Everything (excluding Happy Hour)

Christmas Eve / Christmas Day / New Year's Eve
Winter Warmer Buffet with all the Trimmings for ONLY ¥288
All You Can Drink from 6pm-12pm, Mulled Wine & Egg Nog
For ONLY ¥150
All Month Long ¥30 per Glass

Green City
5030 9676
No. 689 Lantian Rd.
Green City Jinqiao Pudong

Thumb Plaza
6886 7876
No. 17/199 Fangdian Rd.
Thumb Plaza Pudong