

Taiwan Tech

Test-Driving The Luxgen U6

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Back in 2013, we tested Luxgen's first SUV offering – the L7 – and were left disappointed by its build and quality. Now, it seems as if Luxgen has been listening, and their new soft-roader SUV – the U6 – is a far more compelling proposition.

One of the main differences for the Chinese market is that the car is supplied in many more eye-catching colours than in Taiwan. Our 1.8T Smart trim test car was resplendent in a burnt orange hue. Externally, the car is put together well and has good-looking lines, but still has a slightly generic SUV feel about it. Details

such as the diamond cut light glass and sharp alloy wheels are meant to provide a more upmarket look.

Inside, the materials still drag down the package with hard plastics dominating. Tactility aside, it looks clean and modern, and has some nice touches including the metal plates on the front door sills. The car



is targeted at younger customers, and in particular women. In an effort to cater to the fairer sex, the climb into the car is not too extreme, and there is a tray under the passenger seat to store driving shoes.

Luxgen cars pack some pretty impressive technology. Unfortunately, in the U6 much of this is only available in the top of the range Flagship trim. Fellow Taiwanese company, HTC, provides the touchscreen. But unfortunately, the sync function that lets you connect an HTC phone – for which a special cradle is provided – is only on the Flagship version. However, other trim levels do benefit from GPS, rear and side view cameras, plus a CD player and USB connection.

In the rear, headroom is good and legroom is impressive thanks to the relatively long wheelbase. All three passengers get proper seatbelts and there are ISOFIX child safety seat tethers. The boot has a very solid feeling, and there is an easy-pull handle to fold down the seat backs. However, as a way of reducing costs, the bench does not come up, so it is not possible to fold the seats flat.

There is a choice of 1.8 litre turbo and 2.0 litre turbo engines. The 1.8T comes with a five-speed automatic, whereas the 2.0T gains a sixth ratio. Currently, there is no all-wheel-drive version, although, Luxgen may produce one in the future.

On starting the engine, the head-up display rises – on the Flagship, the two corner speakers also rise up. Supposedly, aircraft design was an inspiration with controls wrapped around the driver. In an unusual move, the controls for the electric driver's seat are on the door.

The 1.8T engine provides adequate performance for inner city driving. However, Luxgen engines provide too little power for their size – the 1.8T only producing the equivalent of a Qoros 1.6T unit.

Steering is well weighted, but thanks to largely straight roads, handling couldn't be fully assessed. The U6 did, however, provide a comfortable ride over a variety of roads and surfaces. One very good aspect of the U6 is that when you use the indicators, a view of what is behind that side of the car is displayed, thereby stopping any blind spots; a real plus when there are mopeds and cyclists around.

Unfortunately, other features such as the lane departure warning system, Eagle View (a 360° view around the vehicle) and night vision are only available on the Flagship trim. Even still, price-wise it is highly competitive, starting at RMB 128,800 and rising to RMB 200,800. The real selling point is the technology, with materials and engines lacking.

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