

# **OZ ROAMER**

**TOYOTA KLUGER GRANDE  
WINNER OF THE OZROAMER  
2013 7 SEAT AWD SUV OVER \$60,000 AWARD**



**OZROAMER 2013 AWARDS**

by Anthony Hood



Toyota's Kluger ticks almost all the boxes for a family AWD SUV. It's almost as if they were reading the minds of buyers over the years. The Grande is the top of the range.

The style of the Kluger is spot on for the market. It blends into the background, does nothing notable yet somehow seems evoke a comfortable feeling. The Kluger has roof rails, roofline spoiler, halogen headlights, colour coded bumpers and 19 inch alloys with 245/55 R19 103S tyres.

What impresses most about the Kluger Grande is the feeling of space inside. You literally have to get out and check that it is a mid size SUV. The designers have done an amazing job of extracting every available mm of space internally.



The leather driver's seat is electronically adjustable along with the four-spoke leather steering wheel. Apart from needing some more slide travel I was able to find a comfortable driving position.

The dash is typically Toyota, clean and functional. In front of the driver is two large dials with two internal gauges and a blue background. The thick rimmed steering wheel houses all the necessary controls.

The centre stack houses the multi-information display with a 3.5-inch colour screen that displays the trip computer information and incorporates climate control functions. Below this is the 8 inch screen for the satellite navigation, AVN four-CD changer audio with MP3-compatible, Bluetooth™ telephone

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compatibility\* linked to a 6 speaker audio system and reversing camera screen. For a family vehicle, in fact for all vehicles reversing camera should be mandatory.

There are storage pockets and cup holders (12 in fact) everywhere and standard equipment includes multi-zone front climate-control air conditioning, rear climate-control air conditioning, electric power-assisted steering, driver's variable cushion length adjustment, front-seat heaters

The clever middle row of seats fold flat and have a 40:20:40 split with 120mm of fore/aft slide adjustment and have remarkable head, shoulder and knee room even for adults. The third row is good for smaller occupants but comfortable. Passengers in the rear seats are entertained by the 9 inch screen DVD rear entertainment system that will keep the kids quiet for hours and the driver can keep an eye on them with the conversation mirror.

There is a glass hatch in the automatic tailgate for easy access to the rear luggage area which has a long capacity with fold flat seats. This is also great for picking up the kids from school where they dump their bags without worry about them falling out

Other features for the Kluger Grande include: chromed front grille, clear treatment halogen headlamps and rear lamps, power-operated tailgate, auto headlamps, Smart Entry and Smart Start, electro-chromatic rearview mirror, wood-pattern trim and tilt-and-slide moonroof.

The Kluger is powered by a 3.5-litre all-alloy Quad Cam V6 engine with dual variable valve timing with intelligence (VVT-i). It delivers 201kW of power at 6200rpm and 337Nm of torque at 4700rpm. Fuel can be heavy especially around town but it is reasonably economical on the freeway. It is matched to a five-speed sequential-shift electronically controlled automatic transmission and delivers the power through the AWD system that has a bevel-gear centre differential providing a 50/50 torque split between the front and rear axles.

Driving the Kluger is an experience. Not for blistering performance, or handling dynamics, but rather for the ease and almost invisibility of the experience. You just jump in and drive. It's hard to describe, but while the Kluger does nothing outstanding it does nothing poorly either. It just happens. To be honest this is a car for those drivers that simply want to get from 'A' to 'B' in comfort, safety and with minimum fuss. In this capacity there are few better than the Kluger. This also I guess describes 90% of Kluger buyers. That is why it's so successful.

Features include Traction Control (TRC) that electronically controls torque distribution, eliminating the need for a viscous coupling. Also as standard is Hill-start Assist Control and Downhill Assist Control



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<b>Model</b>	Kluger Grande
<b>Model Price</b>	\$71,175 RDAP
<b>Engine</b>	3.5L ULP V6
<b>Drivetrain</b>	AWD 5 speed Auto
<b>Power</b>	201 Kw @ 6,200 rpm
<b>Torque</b>	337 Nm @ 4,700 rpm
<b>Safety</b>	5 Star ANCAP
<b>CO2 Emissions</b>	259 g/km
<b>GVR</b>	3 Star
<b>Economy</b>	110 L/100km (ADR comb)
<b>Tow Capacity</b>	Max 2000 kg
<b>Tow Ball Rating</b>	200 kg
<b>Servicing</b>	Capped Price
<b>Warranty</b>	3yr/ 130,000 km with full roadside assist



The Kluger is equipped with Vehicle Stability Control. VSC monitors your steering angle and the direction in which your vehicle is actually travelling and senses when your front or rear wheels begin to slip. It automatically detects that you're not on your intended path and intervenes, helping ensure safer cornering by actively detecting and controlling any understeer or oversteer. The VSC• system cuts power and applies braking pressure to the relevant wheels - to help you regain control.

Other safety features include - Anti-skid Brakes (ABS), Electronic Brake Distribution (EBD), Brake Assist (BA), active front-seat head restraints, Front airbags, Side airbags, Side curtain airbags front and rear and Knee airbag for the driver's side.

The Kluger will tow 2000kg in comfort and with a 200kg tow ball rating it is well balanced when doing so. However load it up with a pile of kids and hitch a trailer on and you will feel it not only with a saggy bottom and poor power delivery. However for smaller caravans, camper trailers, bike trailers, seadoos etc the Kluger's towing ability adds to its family value credentials. What you will find though is that with the powerful petrol engine the fuel consumption when towing will increase dramatically and there is little you can do about that.

However just because it's a Toyota and has AWD drive system, don't confuse this with an off road vehicle. The AWD system is best for dirt roads, awesome in the snow fields, hard packed sand etc. If your adventurous spirit extends beyond these boundaries then perhaps the Kluger shouldn't be your choice.

The Toyota Kluger Grande is an exceptionally well appointed, versatile, luxurious family AWD SUV. Easy is a word that comes to mind. Easy to own, easy to use and drive, easy to load a heap of kids and gear inside and easy to sell when the time comes. It has just about everything that you could wish for. I just wish for a diesel option with a 6 speed transmission. Despite this it is a worthy winner in our awards for 2013 7 Seat AWD SUV over \$60,000.



#### What's Good:

- Internal space
- Practical family car
- Standard features

#### What's Not:

- No diesel option
- Only 5 speed auto
- Drivers seat needs more travel

**Overall OzRoamer Rating: 84/100**

Behind the Wheel	9	Practicality	10
Comfort	9	Fit for Purpose	9
Equipment	10	Towing Ability	7
Performance	8	Off Road Ability	6
Ride & Handling	8	Value for Money	9