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FEATURED THIS WEEK

2010 SUZUKI KIZASHI



2010 Suzuki Kizashi

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By Bob Kocher

Say It Again Charley – You won't Forget This Model!

Okay it's time to learn to say a new car model name. This time it's a hot new Suzuki mid-sized sports sedan, a performance sedan. So here we go, say Kizashi (pronounced "Kee-Zah-Shee"), and say it again over and over, Kizashi, Kizashi, Kizashi. This is Suzuki's first entry into the all-wheel-drive sport sedan segment. And yes, you will need to know how to pronounce the name of this all-new, very cool Suzuki model because you are going to see it everywhere and very soon.

Getting the name down is a must and next is getting its looks down so that you can associate the name with the look. In this large segment of cars, it often takes a very close-up view of the vehicle to identify it because many seem to look alike. But having said that, I must say the Kizashi is a very clean, distinctive design as a mid-sized sports sedan. It looks good and is finished well inside and out.

A couple of weeks ago I had a fun drive in the new Kizashi from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on great rolling two lane roads that ended at the Virginia International Raceway (VIR). There I took a few hot laps around this awesome racecourse.

Initially it was difficult for me to understand why any car company would jump into this segment of the car market, but then after a drive I think I can understand.

Here's a quick summary. It's very price-competitive with an entry price in the low twenty thousands. Next the Kizashi is fun, fun to drive. The car's 2.4-liter engine puts out a good 185 horses. Oh, and then there's the paddle shifting—very satisfying and adventurous to drive with in a very nicely priced mid-sized sports sedan. And to top that, this fine piece of Japanese engineering can (depending on how you order it) deliver up to 31 mpg with highway driving.

It's filled with safety equipment. It has all the sound and audio options ever wanted by buyers. You can hookup your iPod, listen to everything on a sound system by Rockford Fosgate, use Bluetooth for your cell phone, and Homelink by Johnson Controls.

Leather abounds and all of the car's trim is up there with the higher priced makes. Both leg and headroom inside the cabin is very ample, making it comfortable.

And the Kizashi also has these options: all-wheel drive, a 6-speed manual transmission that I'm not sure anyone needs, and a six speed CVT automatic (depending on model – paddle shifters on the steering wheel). You can have one with 16, 17, or 18 inch wheels.

To sum it up, The Kizashi drives and handles well, is loads of fun to drive, and the performance is right on. The car has a super finish and fit as well as a ton of options. And one of its best features is the cost. Make plans soon to go for a test drive as soon as it arrives. This is one of those new cars that will make you do a double take to make sure you're at the right dealer. And don't forget to practice saying KIZASHI.

Kizashi will start showing up in dealer showrooms in December. One thing to think about when you go to check this car out is that no other Suzuki vehicle you have ever seen is like this one. Not only is this their first entry in this overcrowded field, they have raised the bar in building this type of car. When I gave this car a good inspection, I could not find anything missing. I'm sure it will be a big hit for Suzuki. Many auto writers, including me, are saying, "This may be the best vehicle ever built by Suzuki."

Technical Specifications -- 2010 Suzuki Kizashi

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BOB KOCHER-CONTRIBUTING EDITOR



Bob Kocher

Award winning automotive writer

For the past 25 years Bob Kocher has been writing new and old car reviews, motorsports articles, automotive aftermarket product reviews, and automotive life style stories.

Bob's articles have appeared in numerous newspapers and magazines in the US and around the world including The New York Daily News, The Washington Times, The Chicago Daily Herald, and The Times Newspapers of Northwest Indiana. Bob Kocher also authored a weekly Tribune Media Services syndicated auto-related article for fourteen years, which enjoyed worldwide distribution.

He was also a contributor to City Talk, a weekly newspaper of the public radio and TV station WTTW in Chicago. Kocher created copy for the Hawaii (ABC-TV) car show Ohana Road, for which he received a Telly Award. In addition Bob has received several levels of awards from the International Automotive Media Association, including the Gold and Silver Awards.

Kocher's professional affiliations include holding various offices, including President, of the Midwest Automotive Media Association (MAMA/Chicago). He was also the architect of MAMA's ten-year running Spring Collection Rally at Road America. In addition, he is a member of the Automotive Press Association in Detroit, the Washington, DC Automotive Press Association; and the Guild of Motoring Writers in London, UK.

Along with his writing, Bob has served the past five years as a judge at the Greenwich Concours d'Elegance in Greenwich, CT.

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