

# Standby Msanzi: The futuristic-looking Baic Beijing X55 is on its way

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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It's very impressive and set to ruffle a few feathers in the tightly contested mid-segment SUV market. But before I get to tell you more about the Beijing X55, let me tell you about the company behind this wanna-be game changer. Beijing Automotive Industry Corp. (Baic) is one of the largest automobile manufacturers in China. The company was established in 1958 and is headquartered in Beijing. It ranks 124th on the Fortune 500 list in 2020.



Baic Beijing X55 | image supplied



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Baic South Africa was launched in 2016 through a joint venture with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and is the single largest investment in SA in 40 years. Fast forward four years and they boast a local manufacturing and assembly plant in Gqeberha and a network of fourteen dealerships nationwide.

You will recall from this column that I recently reviewed their B40 Plus 4x4.

But back to the Beijing X55. Three derivatives were ‘pre-launched’ at Zwartkops in the past few days, being Level 1, 2 and 3. Let’s just say that this SUV is an attention grabber with that electric vehicle look.

### Avant-garde styling

The Beijing X55 is a compact SUV with avant-garde styling, excellent power, advanced technology and the latest generation of the Baic Group's BMFA (Beijing modular functional architecture) platform chassis.

Vice president of sales and marketing at Baic South Africa, Mr Hugo Hu says that the company has invested in developing intelligent cars under a new brand, Beijing underpinned by cooperation with its partners on intelligent connected vehicle technologies.

“We’re bringing the best of breed in innovation, supported by Daimler’s technology who have been our main partner in China for years, operating Mercedes-Benz factories in Beijing through joint venture Beijing Benz Automotive.”

### **Futuristic design**

**Basil Costa, senior manager at Baic South Africa says that the Beijing X55 boasts a sophisticated interior and exterior design.**

**“The futuristic design is truly visible in every aspect of the vehicle. The LED lights, floor door induction, hidden door hands, split rear wing and the shark fin aerial accentuates the vehicle’s ultramodern design. Opening the door is like shaking hands, with stylish high-class sports car door handle design, which significantly reduces side wind resistance,” says Costa.**

The exterior has a lot more to offer, with an induction pop-up, ensuring that when carrying the key near the vehicle, the Beijing X55 automatically unlocks and pops up the door handle when getting out of the vehicle, the vehicle automatically locks and closes the door handle.

This vehicle is in a class of its own, with the best in its class, crafted in detail with a borderless low wind resistance grille, large sloping windscreen, flowing curves, split tailgate, hidden door handles, hidden wipers, flat chassis and other designs.

“When driving in the rain, the windscreen retains fewer raindrops and the windows on both sides of the driver and passenger sides are cleaner, enhancing driving safety. The Beijing X55 has ultra-low wind resistance, adds Costa.

### **Power and performance**

With highly efficient power, the magic core of the vehicle, Beijing X55 holds a 1.5 turbo engine with a 380 dual-clutch transmission (DCT), and 130KW – 305NM, showcasing impeccable power.

Acceleration is a breeze with 7.8s 0-100km/h, this BMFA latest generation 2.0 architecture chassis also offers multiple driving modes: eco, comfort, sports and smart. This double Top 10 Powertrain winner, has an efficient fuel consumption of per 100km: 7,2ls and a 0-100km/h acceleration in 7.8 seconds.

## Safety

The Beijing X55 meets the C-NCAP five-star safety standard and C-IAI CPSR full G standard Airbags and has all the safety bells and whistles one could ask for. From emergency brake assist, to hill descent control, crash doors that unlock automatically and then some.

## Verdict

Be prepared to be awed by this impressive SUV that is aimed to please the most demanding customer. It really has everything you could ask for including a double panoramic sunroof and seamless door handles that sticks out as you approach the door from a close range.

I was also keen to check out the pricing of all three derivatives. We were told that we could expect pricing from R400,000 to R460,000. Further details of this eye-catching SUV will be announced soon at the official launch. It's going to attract lots of attention, I can tell. Standby-by Msanzi.

## ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

Naresh Maharaj is a petrol head who loves cars and writing about them. He is also a Member of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists. Naresh is also an international sports correspondent and an acclaimed corporate MC and voice-over artist. Naresh is a sports/news producer for community radio stations and also an award-winning sports journalist. Contact Naresh on [nmaharaj321@gmail.com](mailto:nmaharaj321@gmail.com).

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