

How many model derivatives are offered in SA?

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Exactly how many model derivatives are offered in South Africa? Though local buyers still have a huge choice, the number has actually fallen markedly since 2018.



According to Naamsa, South African new-car buyers have the widest choice-to-market-size ratio in the world. But the lofty local model-derivative count has actually fallen markedly – by 31.13%, according to our maths – since 2018.

The organisation describes the new-car trading environment in South Africa as “extremely competitive compared to global standards”, saying original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) continue to “introduce a growing range of model variations and body shapes of each model”.

Indeed, Naamsa lists South Africa’s new passenger-vehicle market as having encompassed as many as 43 brands and 2,513 model derivatives in 2022. In the light-commercial vehicle (LCV) segment, meanwhile, 22 brands were operating last year, with 498 model derivatives from which to choose.

While those are certainly sky-high numbers considering the local market’s size in global terms, they’re down on 2021’s figures, when 43 passenger-vehicle brands offered 3,077 model derivatives and 23 LCV brands put forward 746 model

derivatives. Meanwhile, in 2020, the model-derivative count in the passenger-car space was higher still at 3 132, while the LCV figure was slightly lower at 689.

Fascinatingly, the numbers from the prior year were remarkably similar to those of 2022. Yes, in 2019, South Africa had 46 passenger-car brands offering a total of 2,507 model derivatives, along with 28 LCV brands marketing 526 model derivatives.

And 2018? Well, back then, the South African market featured a whopping 49 brands in the passenger-vehicle space, offering a heady 3,716 model derivatives between them. The LCV-brand tally stood at 30, which together provided 656 LCV derivatives. If we combine passenger-car and LCV variants, we find the market's total model-derivative count dropped from 4,372 in 2018 to 3,011 in 2022, representing a fall of 31.13%.

Still, there's no doubt South African buyers remain spoilt for choice. In the LCV space, for instance, Toyota currently offers as many as 39 derivatives of its popular Hilux. Isuzu, meanwhile, markets 27 variants of its D-Max (plus another 5 in the prolonged-lifecycle Gen 6 line-up) and Ford lists 24 derivatives of its new Ranger (with more likely in the pipeline).

In the passenger-vehicle segment, we currently count as many as 31 derivatives of the 992-generation Porsche 911, as well as 24 variants of the Land Rover Defender.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Having written about everything from sport to politics and crime, Ryan eventually settled on motoring. For the past 12 years, he's been penning articles - both online and in print - about the broader automotive industry, though he's particularly fascinated by vehicle sales statistics. Currently a freelance writer and editor, Ryan is itching to slide (okay, squeeze) in behind the wheel of his soon-to-be-restored 1971 Austin Mini Mk3.

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