

Which Car should Santa drive?

Whether you call him Santa Claus or Father Christmas, he is still scheduled to visit millions of children on December 25th. Traditionally, he arrives on a sleigh pulled by flying reindeer. However, following a book club session earlier this year, Mrs Claus read a book on Reindeer Rights, and decided that Santa needs to utilise his magic powers in a Reindeer friendly manner. Being a frequent user of Zoopa (www.zoopa.co.za) Mrs Claus referred Santa to SA's leading authority on vehicle statistics and specifications to source a more appropriate mode of transport for the big guy (because let's face it ladies, if we left it up to him, it would never get done - hoho hoho). The team at Lightstone Auto sprung to work like a group of little (some of them not so little) elves. Off the cuff we were able to assist Santa in choosing the most appropriate mode of transport to ensure that all the little people received their much anticipated Christmas morning experience.

Firstly, Santa would definitely only choose between a red or white car. With white being the most popular car colour (where 243 709 were sold in SA in 2015), we doubt Santa would want to blend in. That said, we think he'd opt for something a little more bold – such as red (where there were only 27 281 red vehicles sold in South Africa.)

We then needed to apply some filters as choosing from twenty thousand million, wait, listen, twenty seven thousand hundred - wait listen carefully, twenty seven k - was tough for more than just one person, so we factored in the following:

- Only passenger and LCV vehicles were considered as Santa driving a truck is, well, we're not in Texas, are we?
- When considering a larger vehicle like a double cab, SUV, MPV or a Cross over vehicle, it was narrowed down to 6 113 red vehicle models.
- The risk of deep vein thrombosis and the desire to not wear tight stockings aside, an automatic is a *must*. Imagine the leg ache if he had to use a clutch, manually navigating the traffic in small coastal towns recently invaded by the popular clan named "Vaalies". This reduced the potential candidates to 2 800 red vehicle models that are automatic.
- An onboard navigation system was suggested by the handy helping elves, but those "technically savvy" introduced Santa to the world of navigation apps via a smart device. So this was thrown out the sun roof.
- With the big white beard, a fury suit, a heat inducing fur lined hat, and a sack full of presents, there is no amount of Axe antiperspirant available that could control this problem. So aircon is a non-negotiable requirement.
- ABS brakes is key as stopping (with precision) is very important. Our sister company Lightstone Property tells us that the average size of a residential property roof in SA is only 143 m². Anti-skid control is required to ensure dodging of the numerous solar panels and satellite dishes on the roofs (and the taxis on the roads.)
- ISO fix child seat attachment in case he needs a small elf to join on his travels – especially to help him use his new found Google Maps app.
- We considered cup holders, but seeing as he mostly eats and drinks milk (*wink wink*) in each house, he is unlikely to be snacking along the way.
- Potholes and Joburg traffic lights that go out, and bearing in mind storms that may hit Pretoria, we felt the need for a 4x4 - which left us with 1 252 vehicle models to choose from.
- Cruise Control for the long stretch of seriously boring road between Bloem and Beaufort West.
- Engine size – bigger than a 2 litre motor takes us down to 371 vehicle models.

Applying all these filters we got to the Top 11 red new vehicles sold year to date October 2015 (passenger and LCV):

| Make | Type | Model | Engine Size | 2015 YTD Oct |
|------------|------------------------|--|-------------|--------------|
| BMW | BMW X4 | X4 xDrive20d 4x4 Dsl AT | 2 | 61 |
| JEEP | JEEP Grand Cherokee | Grand Cherokee 6.4 SRT 4x4 8-sp AT MY14 | 6,4 | 57 |
| LAND ROVER | L-R Range Rover Evoque | Range Rover Evoque 2.2 SD4 Dsl Dynamic 4WD MY13 AT | 2,2 | 56 |
| BMW | BMW X3 | X3 xDrive20d Dsl 4x4 MY14 AT | 2 | 40 |
| MAZDA | MAZDA CX-5 | CX-5 2.2 DE Akera AWD MY15 AT | 2,2 | 38 |
| FORD | FORD Kuga | Kuga 2.0 EcoBoost Titanium AWD MY15 AT | 2 | 35 |
| JEEP | JEEP Wrangler | Wrangler Unlimited 3.6 Sahara 4x4 AT | 3,6 | 28 |
| NISSAN | NISSAN X-Trail | X-Trail 2.5 SE 4x4 CVT MY14 | 2,5 | 20 |
| TOYOTA | TOYOTA RAV | RAV4 2.2 VX AWD Dsl MY14.5 AT | 2,2 | 14 |
| AUDI | AUDI Q3 | Q3 quattro RS 2.5T FSI 228kW S-Tronic MY15 | 2,5 | 11 |
| SUBARU | SUBARU Forester | Forester 2.5 XS AWD MY13 CVT | 2,5 | 11 |

Even though his luggage is generally not limited by the constraints of time and space, there is always some software issue that means the amount of compressibility of presents cannot be infinite. Let's leave it at: he needs a decent boot size. That said, we scientifically chose a boot capacity of at least 500 dm³ ("scientifically" means 5 is bigger than 4 but smaller than 6). We are left with:

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| JEEP | JEEP Grand Cherokee | Grand Cherokee 6.4 SRT 4x4 8-sp AT MY14 | 6,4 | 57 |
| LAND ROVER | L-R Range Rover Evoque | Range Rover Evoque 2.2 SD4 Dsl Dynamic 4WD MY13 AT | 2,2 | 56 |
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| NISSAN | NISSAN X-Trail | X-Trail 2.5 SE 4x4 CVT MY14 | 2,5 | 20 |
| SUBARU | SUBARU Forester | Forester 2.5 XS AWD MY13 CVT | 2,5 | 11 |

Everyone says that fuel consumption is important, but the fact is that oil price is at the lowest in an elves memory so it didn't play a large role in the filter and let's face it, he is only going to use the car once a year. Nevertheless, we set a combined fuel consumption level of 8.2 litres per 100km.

This leaves us with the following 4 vehicles:

| Make | Type | Model | Engine Size | 2015 YTD Oct | Price (approximately) |
|-------------------|------------------------|--|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| BMW | BMW X4 | X4 xDrive20d 4x4 Dsl AT | 2 | 61 | R598 000 |
| LAND ROVER | L-R Range Rover Evoque | Range Rover Evoque 2.2 SD4 Dsl Dynamic 4WD MY13 AT | 2,2 | 56 | R636 000 |
| BMW | BMW X3 | X3 xDrive20d Dsl 4x4 MY14 AT | 2 | 40 | R520 000 |
| SUBARU | SUBARU Forester | Forester 2.5 XS AWD MY13 CVT | 2,5 | 11 | R 354000 |

If money was an issue Santa would choose the Subaru, but we all know that “the old man is loaded” so then he would likely go with the Range Rover Evoque.

Let us know which one you would choose for Santa from the above list and tweet us on @LightstoneAuto or facebook us at Lightstone Auto. There may be a present in there for you...