Infiniti getting serious

THE new 2014 Infiniti Q50 undergoes a road test as its Australian launch.

Infiniti has had a very quiet start to its return to the Australian market, with old models and pricing that we're used to at least this year. Infiniti says the Q50 is the real start to Infiniti's success in Australia.

Is the first all-new design to reach our shores and it shows, with an aggressive look that bears no relation to its Nissan masters.

The question is, with a new design and a hi-tech approach, will this be the breakthrough that the brand needs?

The three-tier, two-engine range kicks off at $51,900, for the 2.2 diesel-only GT, a handy $8400 cheaper than its most obvious competitor, the BMW 320d.

It's also cheaper than the A4 and C Class.

The diesel S can be had for $57,900 and the S Premium for $61,900.

The GT base model bursts out of the blocks with an impressive array of standard features, but we've only got space here for the highlights.

The first all NEW InTouch system which handles most of the car's functions.

The top screen is for navigation and you can leave the maps on while you’re driving if you like, which is handy when you – or your passengers - are using the phone at the same time.

The standard list features surprises like DAB digital radio, sat-nav, electric drivers' seat, leather upholstery. Moving on to the A spec you add the Direct Adaptive Steering, sport front bumper and Bose stereo, among a few other desirable options.

The range-topping 8 Premium, available with both engines, adds a safety package with backup collision warning, active headlights, blind spot and lane drift warning and active cruise control.

The Q50 is the first car Infiniti in Australia that really looks like an Infiniti. It's all curves and bulges, with the double arch grille at the front and the crescent theme in the headlights, rear doors and rear lights.

Inside is a European-feeling interior. It doesn't seem related to its parent company's cars either, so feels appropriately special. Somewhere between a Mercedes and Audi interior.

The Q50 has a five-star ANCAP safety rating under the new 2014 guidelines, which mandate higher pedestrian safety.

Standard across the range are six airbags, brake assist, brake force distribution, active cruise control, front and rear sensors with rear-facing camera.

8 Premium adds a suite of safety features including predictive collision forward warning, active lane control, blind spot intervention, forward emergency braking and steering object detection. Pre-collision forward warning monitors two cars ahead and hits the brakes to help prevent an accident.

Back-up Collision Intervention helps avoid large objects and adults walking into your path.

The diesel 2.2 is from Mercedes-Benz engine 122kW-400Nm, 5.2-100km, with stop-start.

The hybrid 3.5 V6 is good for 268kW and 546Nm while returning 6.8l/100km (RWD) or 7.2l/100km (AWD).

The diesel 2.2d is from Mercedes-Benz engine 122kW-400Nm, 5.2-100km, with stop-start.

The hybrid 3.5 V6 is good for 268kW and 546Nm while returning 6.8l/100km (RWD) or 7.2l/100km (AWD).

The diesel S Hybrid is $67,900 and the S can be had for $61,900.

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