

LDV G10

The G10 van is a trailblazer among Chinese-built vehicles.

Sam Charlwood

Chinese-made cars haven't exactly been a rollicking success in Australia. Wind the clock back a decade and you might recount some of the more forgettable examples: Great Wall with its pick-a-part specials, Chery with its poor safety scorecard and recently MG, reincarnated under the tutelage of Chinese manufacturing giant Shanghai Automotive and Industrial Corporation (SAIC) with limited success.

But just when you thought it was time to write off the Chinese made car altogether, an unlikely choice has emerged.

It's called the LDVG10, and it's arguably the best mainstream vehicle to hail from China. The LDV brand falls under the same SAIC ownership

model as MG, but there are some key distinctions in its build quality and parts.

Measuring 3.2 metres between the wheels and standing 1.98 metres high, the G10 sits below the larger V80 in LDV's Australian line-up.

Priced from \$29,990 drive away for ABN holders (\$31,569 for everyone else), the G10 undercuts rivals Toyota HiAce, Renault Trafic, Ford Transit and Volkswagen Transporter if an automatic transmission and petrol engine is a must.

Pulling yourself into the LDV's highly set cabin feels strangely familiar. Much of the switchgear, dials and interior fitments hail from General Motors and the Volkswagen Group, under an

arrangement with SAIC. There are soft, supportive seats with arm rests, a thoughtful driver position and well resolved ergonomics across the two-seat layout, including an arsenal of storage options.

The theme of quality carries over to the drive line, where a twin-turbocharged 2.0-litre petrol engine makes 165kW and 330Nm.

The engine never feels languid or thrashy under heavy acceleration, and does a reasonable job of shifting the G10's 1907kg heft thanks in part to an excellent six-speed ZF transmission driving the rear wheels. Fuel use is moderate but not excellent, especially in the company of more efficient diesel rivals. Officially, it's 11.7L/100km.

LDV's G10 commercial van treads a new path for Chinese-made vehicles in Australia. Photo: Supplied.



As for how the LDV performs under load, we will have to leave that verdict for another day. Its 1093kg payload and 1500kg towing capacity rate well against the established set (total GVM 3 tonnes). The business end measures 5.2 cubic metres in total (2365mm long, 1235mm wide and 1270mm high), dimensions LDV claims caters for two standard pallets. The cargo space is well accommodated, too, with dual sliding doors and a traditional tailgate. Eight tie-down points and a spread of interior lighting ensures excellent amenity in the cargo space.

Even unladen, the overall ride of the LDV feels spot-on. A turning circle of 11.8 metres ensures straight forward, but not excellent, city manoeuvring. Honest, accurate steering and four well-modulated disc brakes cement a handling package that leaves some rivals in the shade.

The LDV recipe isn't perfect, though.

There are some shortcomings, such as the bulging sections of seat material and the lack of illumination on the steering wheel at night.

A diesel engine and manual transmission would also boost its appeal.

Standard features include cruise control, MP3 connection and DVD player, seven-inch LCD touchscreen, Bluetooth phone and audio connection, climate control, power side mirrors, tilt adjustable steering wheel, reversing camera and parking sensors. Anti-lock brakes, electronic stability control and dual front airbags are standard.

The G10 is backed by a three year/100,000km warranty, supported by LDV's national network of 35 dealers.

In many ways, the LDV treads new ground for Chinese-produced vehicles in Australia. Its fate now lies in the hands of discerning trade buyers.

NUTS AND BOLTS

ON SALE: Now

PRICE: \$29,990 drive away (ABN holders), \$31,569 drive away (non-ABN holders)

ENGINE: 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo charged petrol

POWER: 165kW

TORQUE: 330Nm

TRANSMISSION: Six-speed automatic

FUEL USE: 11.7L/100km combined