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## New Suzuki Swace – Road Test

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MAKE WAY FOR THE SWACE - A MID-SIZED ESTATE FROM SUZUKI VIA TOYOTA.

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

The Suzuki Swace hybrid 5-door mid-sized estate is the second recent model to join the Suzuki range from their partnership with Toyota formed in 2019. Toyota also manufacture the Across large-ish Plug-in-Hybrid SUV which is based on the new RAV4 PHEV.

The addition of Swace and Across models to the Suzuki range means all Suzuki models throughout their line-up are hybrids and that helps manufacturers to meet ever more



stringent overall exhaust emission targets and rising development costs which reduce profit margins.

The Swace estate is based on the estate version of the latest Toyota Corolla range of 5-door Hatchback, Touring Sports estate and 4-door Saloon. The Swace, like the Corolla Hatchback and Touring Sport models, is built by Toyota in the UK so that's good for Britain and hopefully patriotic customers. Suzuki GB will also be responsible for exporting between 11,000 to 12,000 UK-built Swace vehicles annually to Suzuki distributors in the EU.

Unlike the comprehensive Corolla family line-up of models and the choice for most of them of 1.8 and 2.0-litre petrol-electric self-charging powertrains with standard fit CVT auto transmissions, the Swace estate has a simple line-up, just the 120 hp 1.8 litre hybrid powertrain with CVT auto gearbox and SZ-T and SZ5 specification levels. The prices are £27,499 and £29,299 respectively. The wider choice of Corolla estate models allows their prices to be from just under £26k to just over £30k for the 1.8 litre Hybrid versions and £27.5k to £32k for the 2.0 Hybrid variants.

It's worth noting that just like the Suzuki Across SUV the Swace estate is only covered by a 3 year/60,000 miles warranty whilst the Toyota RAV4 PHEV and Corolla estate are covered by Toyota's 5 year/100,000 mile warranty, although both brands offer a 5 year warranty for the components of the hybrid system. Another annoying gripe I'll mention now, no sat-nav systems for Across or Swace despite their high spec level rating, whilst the Toyota models have them either as standard in most cases, or as an option. It's even more annoying because the Across/Swace touchscreen display has a 'map' display button. Users of Suzuki versions have to use the sat-nav function via the data allowance of their mobile phones.

To get Swace sales buzzing Suzuki in the UK has just introduced and available until the end of March this year their latest PCP personal contract purchase prices. The SZ-T model is available with a deposit (9x advanced rentals) of £2,151 followed by 35 monthly payments of £239 based on 8,000 miles per annum. Moving up to the higher specification SZ5 model the initial deposit or 9 advance rentals is £2,264 with 35 monthly payments of £251



representing just £12 more per month than the SZ-T. Suzuki GB expect to sell around 2,000 Swace units in its first full year of sale with marginally more going to fleet/business customers, and the more affordable SZ-T spec level I tested is expected to be the most popular

Now at this point I guess you might be wondering why Swace for a name - what might it mean? Well car names don't necessarily have meanings as we know, but the word Swace intrigued me. A quick Google search and Swace could mean the South West Association of Colleges and Employers or from Origin and Numerology came Simplicity, Willingness, Appealing, Cute and Exceptional and the one I liked best - Swace - a mix of Swagger and Grace from the Urban Dictionary. So feel free to use what interpretation suits your explanation choice when we all get down the pub again to chat about cars and what's yours called?

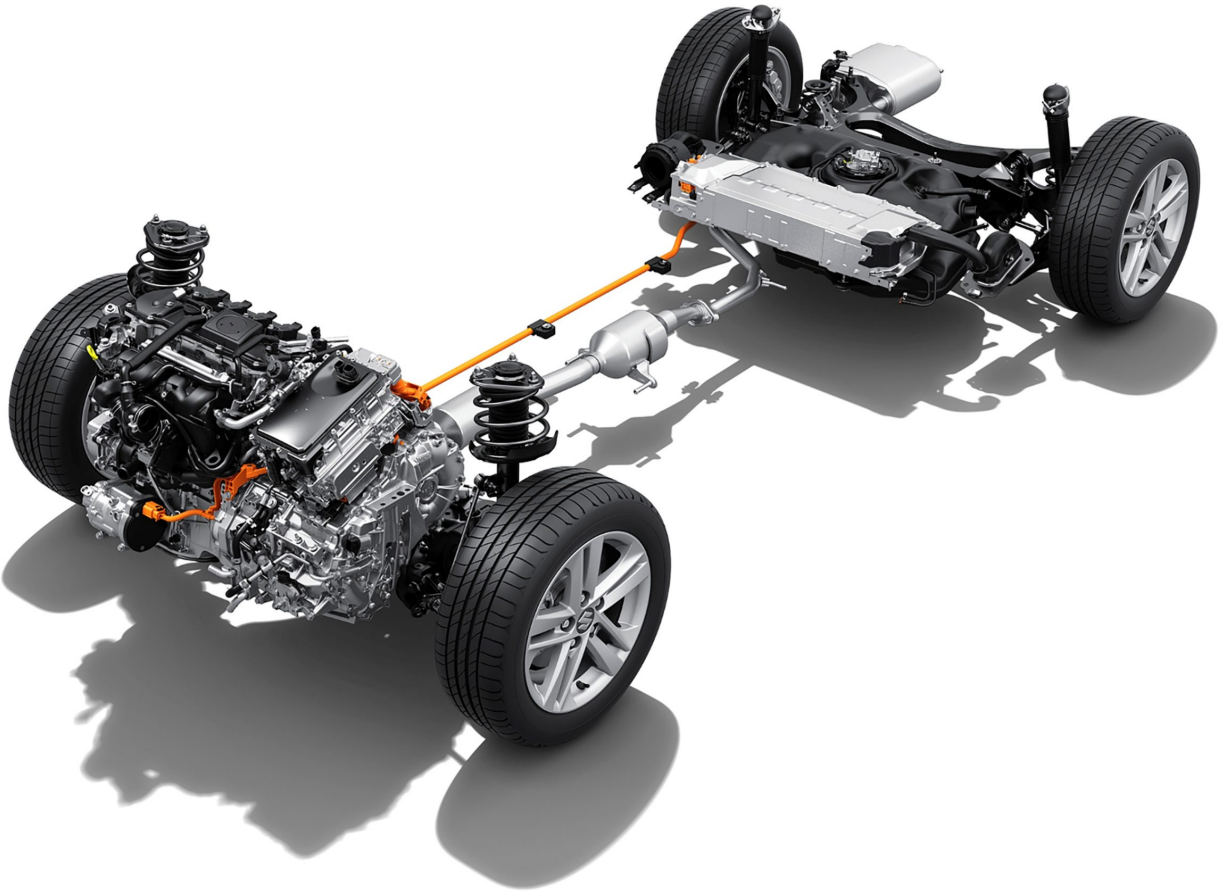
Well if you are in the mid-sized estate market they could be called any of the following - the Ford Focus, Vauxhall Astra, VW Golf, SEAT Ceed and roomiest of all the Skoda Octavia being the main ones, plus the Toyota Corolla of course.

So back to the basic information about the Suzuki Swace. It has the well known Toyota 1.8 litre, 4-cylinder normally aspirated direct injection petrol engine developing 102 hp, boosted by an electric motor of 53 kW giving a total self-charging hybrid system output of 122 hp and torque of 163 Nm (120 lb.ft) from the electric motor overlapping with the 142 Nm (105 lb.ft) of torque from 3,600 rpm from the petrol engine. Drive to the front wheels is through a CVT auto transmission and there are the usual Normal, Eco and Sport selectable driving modes plus EV Drive Mode which the driver selects for solely driving via the electric motor for short distances. This is especially suitable for use in residential areas early in the morning or late at night, or in garages and indoor car parks.



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The Swace with its petrol-electric self-charging powertrain can be driven either by the electric motor, the engine and electric motor combined, or the engine can charge the battery via the on-board generator while driving. During deceleration and braking the electric motor also uses the wheel rotation to generate electricity to charge the lithium-ion battery positioned under the boot floor. There is no plug-in PHEV mains charging facility with this system and of course there is no driving range anxiety as with some pure electric powered cars.

As for performance, top speed is 112 mph, the zero to 62 mph acceleration time is 11.1 seconds, which isn't quick but it's adequate.

The WLTP rated Combined Cycle fuel economy figure is 64.2 mpg and my curtailed amount



of driving mileage due to the lockdown returned an average 61.2 mpg. This was with lots of short runs and the rest of the driving was mainly winding country roads to our main shopping centre. The CO2 emissions initially when launched were published at 99 g/km but just recently these have been confirmed as UK spec level adjusted at 103 g/km. This change has pushed the VED First Year Alternative Class road tax up from £125 to £145 but the Standard rate for year two onwards remains at £140. The BiK company car tax was 22% but this has increased to 23% following the CO2 emissions revision. Insurance remains in Group 20E. Warranty we have already discussed.

As for size well the Swace is 4,655 mm (15.27 ft) in length, 1,790 mm (5.87 ft) wide, 1,460 mm (4.79 ft) high with a relatively long wheelbase of 2,700 mm (8.86 ft) which allows for good rear passenger legroom. The boot area is very practical with 596 litres (21.05 cu.ft) available with the split rear seats in use and 1,606 litres (56.72 cu.ft) with the rear seat backs folded down fully flat, and for ease of use there is a remote lever to fold down the seats in the luggage area. The rear sill is low and the floor is level with it, so it's easy to slide heavier items into the boot. For those who tow the braked towing weight is only 750 kg (1.653 lb) due to the weight of the hybrid components.





As for the Swace's exterior appearance, it looks from its side profile with the longer wheelbase and low height, to be aerodynamic and at the front is a Suzuki interpretation of the Toyota Corolla grille. At the rear is rather a dull treatment of the bumper which makes the rear quarter of the body look bloated rather than athletic. The smaller 16-inch wheels don't give the car a visual lift and normally I advocate staying with smaller alloy wheels with deeper walled tyres for better ride comfort but I think 17-inch wheels might just give the Swace's subdued styling a sportier looking lift.





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Inside the design is carried over from the Toyota Corolla, clean and uncluttered styling lines, well positioned controls and a centrally positioned 'floating' 8-inch touchscreen for using the radio and other functions. Thankfully the heating and ventilation controls are not via the touchscreen, they have their own logical place and are simple and easy to use. There are the usual steering wheel mounted buttons and Bluetooth is included and is compatible with Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and MirrorLink. Annoyingly there is no sat-nav fitted or available as an option. There is just a pointless button on the touchscreen which says 'Map' which is useless. The centre console between the seats houses the cupholders and storage



and the doors have adequate holders as well as storage for the usual 'stuff' we gather over a period of time.

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Standard equipment with the SZ-T model I tested is at a good level and in addition to the touchscreen and various connectivity functions it has seven airbags, dual zone air conditioning, heated front seats, heated steering wheel, power operated front seats, the very useful rear parking camera, pre-collision braking function, lane departure alert, lane centering function, cruise control, electrically operated windows and door mirrors, push-button start, drive mode selector, a full array of seat belts and Isofix child seat tethering points. Some of the spec additions the SZ5 level brings are smart door locking, intelligent park assist, front and rear parking sensors, BI-LED projector headlights, blind spot monitor, rear cross traffic alert and centre console tray with a wireless phone charger.

Either spec level is a good package but the SZ-T looks the best value with its £1,800 lower price and that leaves more than enough to buy an after-market sat-nav system.

As for driveability, the 1.8 litre petrol-electric self charging hybrid system we know well enough from Toyota Corolla and Prius models and it's very fuel efficient if driven with consideration as my restricted long journey driving proved. In other words it's better for shorter commutes with plenty of stop-start conditions and winding country roads rather than high mileage high speed driving, thrashing it along motorways, where there is little opportunity for the hybrid and recharge system to work at its best.

The handling is well-balanced, steering sharp, the ride comfort was good to soft due in part to the deep-walled tyres. I think 17 inch alloy wheels with marginally lower profile tyres would give it a sharper cornering performance and reduce the body-roll through the sidewalls of the deeper standard 16 inch tyres. But it's an easy car to drive and live with.





## VERDICT

The Swace family estate, courtesy of the deal with Toyota, gives the Suzuki yet another string to their bow for increasing sales whilst lowering the overall CO2 emissions of their entire range. It also means Suzuki dealers have a UK produced model to sell to patriotic customers and now we are out of the EU what's wrong with supporting British jobs.

**For:** Built in Britain, practical lower CO2 emissions vehicle to broaden Suzuki's range of models, well priced, good specification, excellent interior build quality, comfortable ride, good real-life fuel economy.

**Against:** Less warranty than the UK built Toyota Corolla estate versions, no standard or optional fit sat-nav system, some areas of bland exterior styling, small alloy wheels, WLTP measured CO2 emissions have just been increased putting it in one higher VED/BiK tax band.



## MILESTONES AND WHEELS-ALIVE TECH. SPEC. IN BRIEF:

Suzuki Swace, SZ-T, 1.8 Hybrid, CVT auto, 5-door family estate.

Price: £27,499.

Powertrain: Self-charging 1.8 litre, 4-cylinder normally aspirated petrol engine with electric motor and generator, CVT auto transmission with driving and EV mode selectors, combined power output 122 hp.



Performance: 112 mph, 0 - 62 mph 11.1 seconds,

Fuel consumption: WLTP Combined Cycle 64.2 mpg (61.2 mpg overall on test).

Emissions and taxation: New WLTP CO2 rating 103 g/km, Alternative fuel VED First Year tax £145, Standard rate £140, BiK company car tax 23%.

Insurance Group: 20E.

Warranty: 3 years/60,000 miles, hybrid components 5 years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,655 mm (15.27 ft), W 1,790 mm (5.87 ft), H 1,460 mm (4.79 ft), wheelbase 2,700 mm (8.86 ft), boot/load space 596 to 1,606 litres (21.05 to 56.72 cu.ft), braked towing weight 750 kg (1.653 lb), 5-doors/5-seats.