



PICTURES: PAWAN DAGIA

# Big better and brawny

Renault hopes that the success of the Duster will have a rub-off effect on the facelifted Koleos. We find out if it works for the SUV

It has been just about three years since Renault decided to go solo in the Indian market. Once the Duster became a bestseller, people started taking Renault seriously. When Renault launched the Koleos, the company was still trying to find its feet in India. As such, the SUV slipped under the radar. Now, the French carmaker wanting to encash on its new found success has rolled out the 2014 Koleos with a decent list of upgrades.

The most noticeable change is the new reshaped grille that tapers towards the bottom gets the big Renault logo at the centre. Also, the five-spoke alloys are styled differently compared to

the older variant. A rear spoiler and new roof rails round up the changes to the exterior. But the headlights, fog lights and the bumper have been carried over from the older car. Positives? The re-shaped grille gives more street presence to the Koleos.

The inside story is pretty much the same too. It's exactly the same as the previous generation. The dashboard is uncluttered and is neat and organised. There is a hint of premiumness inside the cabin, but Renault could have done a little more. One can find plenty of soft-touch plastic cladding on the inside, especially around the dash area. The feature list is quite com-

Renault Koleos



The cabin feels classy with soft touch plastic cladding all around and leather draped seats. The Bose audio system enhances the listening experience. The rest of the interiors is much the same as before

prehensive though with things like ESP, ABS, airbags, fully adjustable steering wheel, cooled glovebox, automatic wipers and headlights, electric seat adjustment and leather upholstery. The seats are comfortable and there is decent room too.

The Koleos is a car made for long drives. The engine gets a bump up in power figure of 170bhp, which is 21bhp more than the previous variant and can happily munch miles all day

long with ease. However, there is a slight problem with the way the Koleos' 2-litre diesel is tuned. Power and torque kicks in at much higher revs. Hence, one feels the lack of power at lower revs. This mean that one has to keep the Koleos on its toes while climbing hills like we did on our drive in Ooty. Adding to it is the gearbox, which in this case is a six-speed automatic. The gears take time to shift down. As a result the SUV has

a slightly sluggish feel to it. But once it has hit its sweetspot the Koleos takes off confidently. In short, it would have been much better if the engine would offer more power and torque at a much lower rpm.

On a positive note, the Koleos handles well and there is plenty of feedback from the steering wheel irrespective of the kind of road its driven on. The ride remains absorbant and comfortable even on rough patches.

↑ **What we liked**

**Dynamics** The ride and handling are good. On a different note, the Bose audio system is simply delightful.

↓ **What we didn't**

**Turbo lag** There is a pronounced lag till 1,900rpm.

! **What surprised us**

**Same as above** The gearbox feels lazy at low revs and this makes driving slightly cumbersome in the city. Despite the big engine, it takes a while to get it up on speed. The peak torque kicks in at 2,000rpm.

**Verdict**

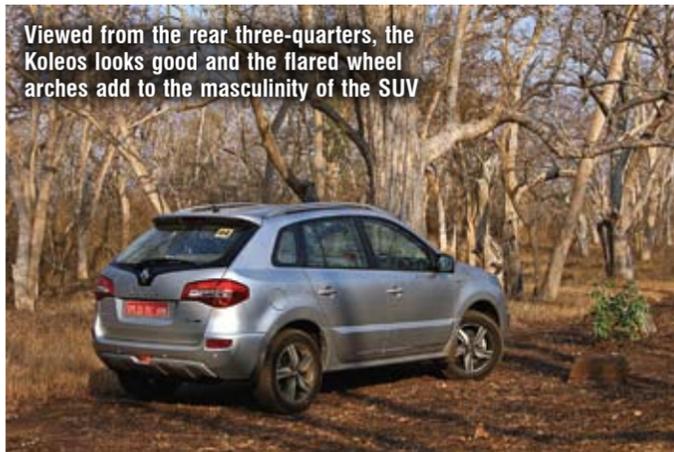
The Koleos is a great highway runner, but suffers from turbo lag at low rpm. It comes with a solid amount of kit and the updated looks has given it more street presence. Apart from the proverbial chink in its armour, if you have a family of four-five people and like to travel a lot on weekends, the Renault Koleos makes a strong case for itself.



Kingshuk Dutta



Viewed from the rear three-quarters, the Koleos looks good and the flared wheel arches add to the masculinity of the SUV



**Renault Koleos 4x4 AT**

Engine: 1,995cc, 4-cyl

Power: 171bhp@3,750rpm

Max torque: 320Nm@2,000rpm

Gearbox: 6-speed automatic

Wheelbase(mm): 2,690

LxWxH(mm): 4,520x1,855x1,705

Top Speed: NA

0-100kmph: NA

Price: Rs 21.29lakh (ex-showroom Delhi)

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