

# Imported editions put carmakers' revenue in top gear

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Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, known for its best-selling premium SUV — the Compass — recently managed to rev up its India revenues via its rugged jeep, the Wrangler.

The company, which had imported around two dozen special limited edition versions of the Wrangler, priced at almost ₹70 lakh, sold every single completely built unit (CBU) in a matter of just 10 days.

A company official said they've sold close to 220 Wranglers since it launched the brand in India, pushing total revenue from just one model to around ₹150 crore.

These are really small winnings compared to the real business engine, the premium Compass, a smartly designed urban SUV priced above the Hondas and the Toyotas but below the luxury German equivalents such as the BMW X3 and the Audi Q5.

The Compass sold 50,000 cars in the last three years becoming a bona fide hit.

The trend of limited edition cars has been tried in fits and starts in the past, says Hormazd Sorabjee, editor at Autocar India



## FAST AND FURIOUS

■ Fiat Chrysler's Wrangler sees two dozen sales in just 10 days

■ Skoda Octavia vRS 245 sells 170 cars in 40 minutes

■ Mercedes-Benz GLE Hip Hop edition sells a dozen units in just two weeks

magazine.

He points to Maruti Suzuki, which launched a three-door variant of the Zen, decades ago. It was a limited edition and sold out very fast.

In recent times, however, the trend is picking up with new laws allowing companies to bring in small batches of imported cars homologation free, Sorabjee

says. "Of course the full duty makes it very expensive but that goes hand in hand with exclusive and helps push sales faster," he adds.

The Skoda Octavia vRS 245, a special limited edition car priced at ₹36 lakh, is designed for high performance and speed. It was introduced on March 1, according to a Skoda official. "We brought in a batch of

200 cars, and sold 170 in the first 40 minutes," he said. "The rest are all sold out of as of now."

Clearly, the buyers were all die-hard fans of speedy sedans, but business-wise, it also translated to ₹72 crore in sales. Skoda isn't the only German player to have seen success with limited edition runs.

Mercedes-Benz recently sold out almost a dozen of its limited GLE Hip Hop edition, which was priced around ₹1.25 crore, in less than a month. The car's novelty: It can bounce up and down while driving because of its controllable air suspension, thus making it seem like its dancing.

It's a trend that's not going unnoticed.

Sorabjee says Toyota is likely to bring in a small batch of its cult classic sports car, the Supra, at a tentative price of around ₹65 lakh. The Supra, which was first made in 1978, ran through at least four generations and was made until 2002 before restarting manufacture in 2019.

With that sort of lineage, fan following and nostalgic memory for die-hard car lovers, the carmaker can expect it to sell out as fast as any limited edition might.

