

The #AllNewNavara is all that and more

 By [Ilse van den Berg](#)

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As an owner of a 1.4 very lady-like hatchback vehicle, spending some time dashing over dunes and grazing over gravel roads is quite the treat, you can imagine.

We were introduced to the all-new 4x4 Nissan Navara over the weekend at a media launch up the West Coast to give us an idea of just what this rugged, redefined pickup is capable of.



According to Nissan's senior manager product planning, Freddie Louw, because Nissan has such a heritage and history of making pickups (they've been making them for 80 years now), they were faced with a challenge: where do you start redefining and improving? The company then identified two main objectives: tough and advanced. Toughness being their consumers' basic expectation and advanced thinking and technology being what would differentiate the new Navara.

Why the wait?

This particular model took a little bit longer to arrive on South African shores due to the rigorous local testing which brought about specific model changes and improvements to the South African models. This ensured a vehicle that is durable and reliable - one that's just right for the South African and African terrain. One such an example is the vehicle height: the South African version of the new 4x4 Navara is 20mm higher than the Australian and European versions, and 40mm higher than the Thai version.

The vehicle also went for more than 40,000 different quality and endurance test cycles and over one million test kilometres, including tough African terrain. It's no wonder I felt so safe going at about 130km/h on gravel and climbing over dunes and rocks without even a tad of tension forming in my stomach or neck (which I've often experienced before). It really seems to be a trusty steed on any terrain, even with an inexperienced 4x4 driver like myself behind the wheel.



Tough and advanced

The new Navara has a fully-boxed ladder frame chassis which has been reinforced with high-strength steel. It's got serious off-road performance - as mentioned above - with standard driving features such as ABLs, hill start assist, hill descent control, on-the-fly 4x4 shift and an electronic locking rear diff.

With its 2.3-litre twin-turbo diesel engine, it boasts superior comfort and handling thanks to the new five-link coil suspension - the first in mainstream pickups. Unlike LEAF rear suspension which usually has friction due to the relative movement

between the LEAFs, a coil spring has no friction. This allows for better stability and an all-over comfier ride.



The engine delivers 140kW at 3,750rpm and 450Nm, which is available across a wide engine spectrum and which peaks for 1,000rpm between 1,500rpm and 2500rpm.

This particular vehicle sees a fuel consumption improvement of 19% over the outgoing engine. This is achieved through the engine's new thermal management system and electrically operated oil pump, combined with the weight saving and aerodynamic aids.

Comfort and design

Comfort abounds in this pickup. Not only is it incredibly spacious with loads of legroom, but it also comes with features like satellite navigation (although, is it just me who struggles with TomTom?), cruise control, rear air vents, and seven airbags.



The touchscreen infotainment system was relatively easy to operate - I struggled a bit getting my device connected to the Bluetooth but I eventually got it sorted. One other frustrating element was that it seemed you could either have the navi on, or either listen to music - not both at the same time. Perhaps there's just another setting I didn't get to figuring out.

On the outside, the pickup has a tough, yet pretty sleek-looking face complete with LED-headlights with boomerang-style LED daytime running lights. At the back, you might think Nissan added a little shelf for you to rest your beer on when, in

fact, this integrated lip on the tailgate adds to the aerodynamics of the vehicle.



Another nifty solution to a problem some pickup owners perhaps never knew they had, is an electrically operated sliding window between the rear cabin and the load bay. Simply push a little button next to the steering wheel and in comes a beautiful breeze from the back.

Coming back from Lambert's Bay via Citrusdal, the Navara was carefree and casual around the bends. I could have probably driven to Jozi and still be fresh as a flower when I got there. To me, this is comfort redefined.

Both the automatic and the manual are super easy to drive but, as always, an automatic is quite convenient and makes the driving experience just a tad more relaxed.

Pricing

Nissan Navara 2.3 DDTT 4x4 SE Double Cab MT: R514,900 (incl. VAT)

Nissan Navara 2.3 DDTT 4x4 LE Double Cab MT: R565,900 (incl. VAT)

Nissan Navara 2.3 DDT 4x4 LE Double Cab AT: R597,900 (incl. VAT)

Nissan is the only brand with five pickups in their stable, and it's clear to me that they're leading the charge when it comes to redefining rugged.

ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work here and here. Contact Ilse through her website here.

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