



# New double cab Tata's Xenon is in a class of its own

IN bringing a leisure oriented 3-litre diesel double cab to the market for R169 995 Tata are almost inventing a little sector for themselves.

In fact the R194 995 4x4 version which comes with a 3 year/100 000km manufacturer's warranty, and a 3 year/60 000km service plan might be carving that niche even more neatly.

The Xenon is aimed at the same sort of person who would want the more traditional Japanese double-cabs. But budget, or common sense, dictates that the R120 000 plus premium they command for adding, essentially, ABS is a bit steep.

Of course, there are differences in finish depending on what competitor you choose, but the price difference remains vast, no matter how you look at it.

#### OFFERINGS

But, if price were all, you could look at some of the Chinese offerings that flood our shores. But there there is a difference too. Even if you were to find a diesel double cab of substantial displacement and size, would you find anyone to fix it? In the bush, probably not. Hence Tata have made themselves a private, practical space, surrounded by a large dealer network.

Driving the Xenon on a pretty rough 4x4 route

GLEN HILL



recently, I found it to have much the same off road ability as about any other 4x4 double cab. The major difference was that having paid R120 000 less, I would be more adventurous.

The ride is firm as one would expect, but not uncomfortable.

#### CUSHIONED

The seats are cushioned cloth buckets as standard, but leather trim is an option for ease of ice-cream removal.

Interestingly the rear bench is actually quite useable with plenty of leg room, so even your sulky, gangly teenager won't disown you when you arrive at your destination. (Well not because of the Xenon.)

Under the bonnet is a 4-cylinder, 3-litre direct common rail diesel engine, a much more modern affair than in the Tata workhorses. It produces 84.5 kW and 300Nm, not quite as much as some of its more expensive Japanese rivals, but quite enough to haul a load.

The approach angle is 26 degrees and departure is 22 degrees. I could not find the breakover but it seemed fine on the high riding bakkie.

The Xenon 4x4 also offers "Shift on the Fly." This is a feature allowing the driver to change into either a 4x2 or a four wheel drive High Range without having to come to a complete stop.

Freewheeling hubs automatically engage and disengage and account for the characteristically ugly Tata wheels. In fact these protrude so much that several of the covers were knocked off as we clambered up and down the rocky trail. What an improvement.

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