

The Nissan Spirit of Africa Challenge



By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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Nissan SA reaffirmed its commitment to adventure and performance by hosting media for a thrilling edition of the Nissan Spirit of Africa challenge. It was unforgettable, to say the least, and judging from comments from fellow motoring colleagues and journalists, it was a day thoroughly enjoyed by all.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj



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This was no straight 4x4 trail. Everything we did on and off track was either a speed or precision test, overseen by a group of ever-willing officials, both from the Spirit of Africa track as well as Nissan officials.

Spirit of Africa

Nissan's partnership with the exciting Spirit of Africa property, which is celebrating its 19th year, highlights the brand's dedication to fostering a community of adventure-seeking off-road enthusiasts. It also serves as the perfect showcase for the all-terrain capabilities and advanced technologies in the Nissan Navara.

Challenges

There were at least 14 challenges that faced the media from dragging a tractor tyre over a measured and twisty route to putting pedal to the metal and going flat out on the speed test with late-breaking to negotiate tight turns. The Navara handled all of the challenges we threw at it with such great aplomb. Think it and we endured it, or should I say the Navara endured it all.

Oom Sarel

Renowned for its challenging terrain and thrilling atmosphere, the Spirit of Africa challenge was created by eleven-time South African Rally Drivers champion and local motor racing legend, Sarel van der Merwe. It has been described as the "toughest 4x4 challenge in Africa" and provides the "average" driver with an opportunity to test their off-road driving ability in a competitive environment. But more than that, it was sheer fun with a touch of adrenalin.

Navara: Rugged Redefined

The best Nissan Navara Bakkie ever built is styled to stand out, but don't be fooled by its robust good looks, because this pickup is also one tough customer when taken off-road and put through its paces. In fact, the Navara Pickup is one of the best all-around utility vehicles ever to hit South African shores.

This is all thanks to its bold and distinctive style, heavy-duty independent double-wishbone with stabiliser front suspension and Leaf spring rear suspension which gives it superior off and on-road performance, best-in-class technology and segment-first features. All of which are perfectly blended with exemplary levels of performance and capabilities to create a truly South African vehicle that suits a diverse range of drivers' needs and lifestyles.

With its reliability, brute power, and cutting-edge technology, the Nissan Navara is the ideal choice for navigating the wild terrain of the Spirit of Africa. Several locally built, highly capable Nissan Navara's have been made available for the media leg of the event, each expected to be pushed to the limit. Through rough terrain marked by steep inclines, muddy crossings, and heart-stopping descents that demand precision, speed, and endurance – the Nissan Navara has your back.

Under the hood

Nissan's 2.3l four-cylinder turbo-diesel features two-stage inline turbochargers that provide excellent lag-free response and ample outputs. It produces 140kW at 3750rpm and 450Nm of torque served at full strength between 1500-2500rpm. Impressive. A real thoroughbred.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj

Adventure

As part of Nissan's dare to move and commitment to pushing boundaries, defying limits, and bringing the thrill of off-road adventure to the forefront, the carmaker also recently launched the 'Nissan Adventure Club'. Designed to empower its customers with knowledge of their Nissan vehicle's features and capabilities by taking it through its paces on the off-road track while learning important defensive driving techniques.

As we packed up and headed for the airport, I reflected back on a day that was well spent, with lots of adventure and daring drives, all made possible by an exciting Navara 4x4. Quick on the gas for speed, hard breaking with lots of twisty, tight turns, hill climbs and descent and then some.

Final word

"We are proud of the turnout for the first edition of Nissan's Spirit of Africa, which saw drivers contest to secure their spot in the finals. Through all the dust, terrain, sport and navigation – Nissan is excited to see what our motoring associates can do behind the wheel of the rugged and redefined Nissan Navara," said Stefan Haasbroek, Nissan Africa Chief Marketing Manager Direct.

The Nissan Navara has been meticulously enhanced for African roads, offering a bakkie that is not only competitive globally, but also tailored to thrive in the unique conditions found in Africa. Our commitment to delivering the right products for South Africa and the markets we serve across the continent is evident in the Navara's innovative design and capabilities," concluded Haasbroek.

Catch up on all the previous Spirit of Africa rounds on [Nissan South Africa's YouTube page](#), with the finals episode airing a week after the competition has taken place.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

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