24 hours of Nissan and Datsun in the Free State

By Ilse van den Berg

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Nampo is not a word unfamiliar to me. As a student at NWU, my friends and I used to frequent this (then not-so-big) agri festival almost every year, funnily enough. For *platsak* students, it meant easy odd jobs and easy money, with a vetkoek and koeksister thrown in the mix.

This year, however, my trip to Nampo looked a little bit different. Firstly, I didn't arrive in a 1989 light blue Toyota Corolla (don't judge the student car), but instead, in a sexy all-new Nissan Navara. And secondly, I couldn't find a koeksister...

I won't go on about the new Navara too much since I think you already know how I feel about it. However, I felt right at home behind the wheel as we set off to Bothaville.

A trip in this rugged redefined 4x4 pickup - especially the automatic - truly is a dream. The ride is smooth and it was great to give it a go on a different terrain such as the wide-open spaces of North-West and Free State - without hitting a pothole I might add.

The #AllNewNavara is all that and more

Ilse van den Berg 22 Mar 2017

The Woodstock of the farming community

Bothaville is, if you don't know, considered one of the top agricultural areas in South Africa. I couldn't help but gasp at the amount of bakkies and trucks parked on the festival grounds. This agri fest has surely tripled in size since I last attended. It's basically the Woodstock of the farming community - bakkies, trucks, tractors, and hundreds of other machines with wheels and engines as far as the eye could see. 70,000 visitors frequent this festival over a span of three days, to give you a better idea.

Driving straight past the festival grounds, we made our way to the airfield where we swapped our Navaras for some spunky Datsun GOs. Even though a little bit tin-like inside, the Datsun GO is small yet incredibly spacious. What also stood out was its impressive ground clearance. I love that it's a simple, uncomplicated, nippy little car and such a fun drive!

Arriving at Nampo in our Datsun GOs, we were met by the Nissan team who escorted us to the stand where we were shown a remarkable display of the NP200, NP300 Hardbody, and the all-new Navara pickup range and related accessories.

Also on the stand, was a full-sized model of the Navara's award-winning chassis. We could inspect the five-link coil-sprung

independent rear suspension and the twin-turbo diesel engine, as well as see its design and operation. I'd rather not ask how they got that colossal thing there without a trace of a scratch or mark. Absolutely impeccable.

After seeing Nissan's comprehensive vehicle accessory range and, more specifically, the fully accessorised Navara looking all cool and rugged, I was ready for an off-road trip to the bush.

According to Xavier Gobille, director of sales, marketing and aftersales at Nissan Group of Africa, the all-new Navara was launched with 67 different Africa-tested and approved accessories including cattle rails and heavy duty off-road replacement bumpers, to name but a few.

Cool classics

From here, we make our way to the Bothaville Nissan Museum where we met Freek de Kock and marvelled at his legendary collection of over 80 perfectly restored classic Datsun and Nissan cars and pickups. Also on display was an example of every generation of GT-R and Fairlady Z models to date.

A charter flight back to Lanseria took us over the festival grounds, just to show me the full extent of bakkies, trucks, and agricultural equipment from above... It's truly a sight to see.

Nampo runs until Friday, 19 May 2017. For more go to www.grainsa.co.za. Find Nissan at stands 125 and 126 near the Nampo Hall.

P.S. Keep an eye out for a more detailed article on this incredible Datsun heritage museum in Bothaville!

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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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