



TRAIL BLAZER

JUST before heading down to Nissan headquarters to pick up one of their all-new Nissan X-Trail ST-L, I happened to glance at the television and catch an advertisement for that very same vehicle.

“Not for pretenders!” it proclaimed to various shots of extreme people doing extreme things with their shiny new X-Trails.

I thought to myself “If that’s how you want to play it Nissan, you have given yourself a mighty challenge”.

Once I was firmly ensconced in the car and on my way to the office, I started to become more and more suspicious of the X-Trail’s off-road abilities – it just drove too nicely on the road, cruising along effortlessly like a mid-priced sedan thanks to its very smooth 2.5 litre petrol motor and dipping into corners with surprising stability.

So, the X-Trail looks like a soft-roader, it drives like a soft-roader, surely it’s a soft-roader?

That weekend, I was to discover there is far more to the brand new X-Trail than I had



originally thought.

With its all-new intelligent 4x4i drive system, the car is able to switch from two-wheel drive to four-wheel drive with the twist of a knob. The new system is a very impressive piece of technology, using sensors placed all over the car that monitor pitch, roll and g-forces, and then amending the handling system to suit.

In the real world, this tech wet dream worked an absolute treat. Despite its demure

looks, the X-Trail absolutely ate nearly everything I could throw at it, even showcasing its incredibly stiff chassis a number of times as one corner of the car lifted high into the air. Only once did I feel its limitations. While attacking a deeply-rutted clay road, a lack of ground clearance did leave me a little concerned for the sump. But, in saying that, sacrifices have to be made and to be fair, most of these cars will never see dirt, let alone any sink holes. Not for pretenders? Perhaps they are right, the X-Trail is comfortable, sharply-priced and a huge improvement over previous versions.

You may never drive up a mountain track or through a pool of mud in one of these but it sure is nice to know that if you really wanted to, you could.

Just be aware that the only people lucky enough to know this will be you and your fellow X-Trail owners!

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