

Engine straight as God intended

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THE engine spec' sheet reads like a performance car — nearly five litres, 185kW of power — and the test vehicle in question would keep such a car honest in some on-road situations.

But the new Nissan Patrol Ti is still a truck at heart, despite the hot engine and relatively refined handling.

Patrols have been a hit with Kiwis, with most opting for the 4.2 diesel offered in older models. The new generation 3.0 litre turbo diesel is apparently a better performer than the bigger 4.2 — diesels have come a long way in a short time. However, our test drive was in the top of line

petrol version.

The sounds this 4WD's donk makes are delicious.

Producing 185kW at 4800rpm and 420Nm at 3600rpm, this six cylinder is configured the way God intended — straight. That's not a plug for Destiny Church, it's just that a straight six is a better balanced engine than a V6.

At some 2.5 tonnes and not blessed with the best aerodynamics, it needs reasonable power under the hood. There's a red-faced Mazda MX-5 driver somewhere in the North Island that could grudgingly confirm the new Patrol is more than adequately endowed in this department.

The bottom-end torque is useful off-road, too, and in

concert with good ground clearance, axle articulation and differential locks, makes the Patrol a fearsome competitor off-road. It has earned its stripes in the best terrain for breaking vehicles, including the Australian outback where the Patrol and its perennial rival the Landcruiser are kings.

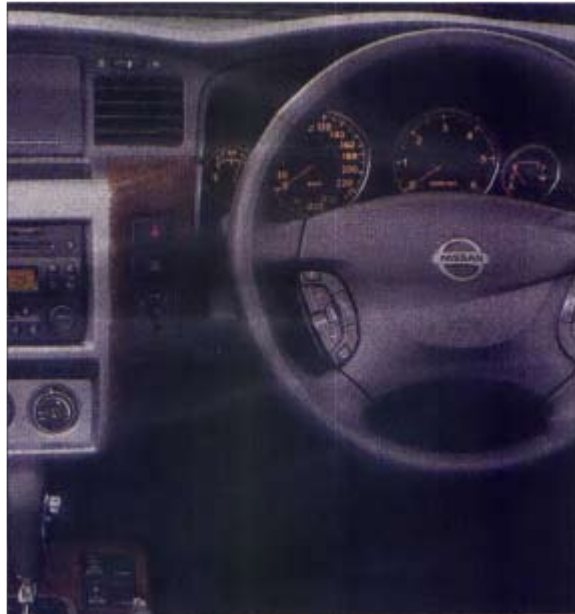
The only gripe in this department is the accelerator pedal, which has a short travel—useful on the road but could make smooth progress over boulders and bumps difficult. It is likely a high-specification vehicle costing \$78,970 RRP is going to see more action on tarmac than boulders, of course.

This is where the Patrol

most surprised *Rural News*. We know luxury 4WDs have better ride and handling characteristics than they used to, but the Patrol's sure-footedness on the less-than-perfect roads that lead the hordes to the Bay of Island every summer was impressive. Things this big are just not supposed to be able to go around corners as hard as the new Patrol does. Make allowances for the flex in the high-sidewall tires and slow weight transfer — these are unavoidable in a true-blue off roader — and you'll keep up with much nimbler cars through the twisties. The nicely weighted and accurate steering helps, as do the ABS brakes. discs all



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round. The ride is smooth and well-controlled and sitting on the power-adjustable leather seats in a cabin with climate control, six-speaker stereo, six-disc CD, sunroof, tinted glass and full instrumentation, long trips are a doddle.

Drive it hard and you'll pay a hefty price at the pump, however. (The 36 litre sub tank came in handy).

The diesel is likely to remain the big seller for

Nissan. And the Patrol's new exterior styling? Nissan has stuck with the 'butch' look that has made the Patrol a success — square-rigged, purposeful and with a hint of its smaller 'soft-roader' stablemate, the X-Trail.

The Patrol turned the heads of the average Kiwis in Kawakawa and the beautiful people in the Bay of Islands and seemed to have the Peoples' Choice vote.

