

Ford SA launches new Wildtrak X model

 By Imran Salie

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The Wildtrak X is the latest member of the Ford Ranger family. Positioned as a more off-road-oriented version of the Ranger Wildtrak, the Wildtrak X is priced at R1,013,000.



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“The Ranger Wildtrak range has been immensely popular in South Africa for more than a decade due to its trend-setting

style, peerless status, innovative suite of driver assistance technologies and exceptional performance,” says Doreen Mashinini, general manager for marketing at Ford South Africa.

“With the Wildtrak X we’re giving this prized nameplate a more muscular character and even greater off-road capability, enabling our customers to push the boundaries of an active, outdoor lifestyle.”

The launch of the Ranger Wildtrak X marks the first introduction of Ford’s Trail Turn Assist, which works in four-wheel drive off-road conditions (in 4H and 4L) to reduce the turning radius by up to 25%.

This complements the Trail Control, first seen on the new Ranger Raptor, which manages the vehicle’s acceleration and braking in challenging terrain.

It has a 30mm wider stance to provide a 'more stable footprint off-road', while ground clearance has risen by 26mm.

To achieve this boost in both track width and ground clearance, Ford engineers fitted new-design 17-inch alloys wrapped in 265/70 R17 General Grabber AT3 all-terrain tyres with bold white lettering. It is also equipped with Bilstein Position-Sensitive Dampers.

The Ranger Wildtrak X also introduces Ford’s new Flexible Rack System, which is available as an option. It consists of two main components: a sliding load rack that can be locked into five positions along the length of the load bed, and folding roof racks that store inside the roof rails when not in use.

It is the first Ranger 2.0L Bi-Turbo model to be available with Ford’s on-demand four-wheel drive system that offers four modes.

Externally, the Wildtrak X gets a multitude of new design features:

- New off-road grille with integrated auxiliary driving lights and Cyber Orange accent
Enthusiast-rated steel bash plate
- Cast aluminium side steps
Wildtrak X badges on the front doors and tailgate
Black Ford oval badges front and rear
- Distinctive black ‘Wildtrak’ lettering across the bonnet
Asphalt black finish for the grille surround, bumper H-bar, wheel lip mouldings, fender vents, mirror caps, door handles and rear bumper

Included as standard is Ford Protect comprising a four-year/120,000km warranty, four-year/unlimited distance roadside assistance and five-year/unlimited distance corrosion warranty. The recommended service interval is 15,000 km or annually, whichever occurs first.

Driven

Biz Auto had the opportunity to test the Wildtrak X at its local launch in the Northern Cape. Ford South Africa allowed us and other media to get a feel of the Wildtrak X on tar roads, gravel, and sand. This allowed us to test the updated capability of the Wildtrak X and we were also shown a first-hand demonstration of the Trail Turn Assist, which we found pretty nifty for turning in tighter angles.

Ford SA led us on a convoy from Upington Airport to the Tutwa Desert Lodge, which is nearly a 300km trip. A majority of this driving was done on normal tar roads in the Wildtrak X's 2L setting. The suspension is notably stiffer here in comparison to the Wildtrak, which we drove a week prior to the new arrival to the Ranger lineup. Keep an eye out for our review of the Wildtrak. The stiffness can be attributed to the Bilstein Position-Sensitive Dampers.



Notice the inflatable boat on top the Wildtrak X, which the new roof rack feature helps hold up | Image credit: Irran Salie

Before we reached the Tutwa Desert Lodge, we drove on a long dirt road for a few kilometres. Here we switched to 4H mode. The Wildtrak X handled this obstacle superbly. We were able to drive at speeds of 100km with control and with minimal discomfort from the uneven surface. Each Wildtrak X kick-upped dust as it meandered through to the lodge.

On the sand, which we drove on from the lodge to the Orange River, the Wildtrak X in its 4L mode again showcased capability. The Wildtrak X maintained decent control against the ripples, indents, bumps, and unpredictability of the sand as we snaked our way through to the river.



Wildtrak X's lined up at the Orange River after driving from the Tutwa Desert Lodge | Image credit: Imran Salie

The rest of our driving at the launch consisted of us making the same trip back to Upington Airport.

As for the interior, we found the suede finish to be an upgrade to its Wildtrak counterpart. Exterior-wise, we found the black finishes enhance the Wildtrak X's rugged distinctiveness to its Ranger sibling. A very noticeable difference on the outside is the sliding roof rack. Ford South Africa also demonstrated to us how this is used by placing an inflatable boat on the roof.

ABOUT IMRAN SALIE

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