

TUESDAY,  
FEBRUARY 18, 2020

# Auto watch



# BORN TO BE WILD

COVER  
VEHICLE  
PG. 2

# Upgraded Wildtrak keeps Ford in front

by John Jones

THINK of the Ford Ranger as a heavyweight champion boxer or the top gunslinger in a classic western.

You are at the top of the hill and everyone wants to get you.

After four years as New Zealand's top seller, Ford is well aware of this and is determined to keep the Ranger in front, particularly its widely popular Wildtrak.

That means continually upgrading the model, which Ford has done.

The Wildtrak has undergone a number of improvements.

The most obvious of these is the new stylish alloy wheels, which further complement the strong, sturdy and confident appearance of the big ute.

One upgrade winning a lot of favourable comments is the redesigned power-operated roller shutter, which improves security and offers additional load space.

Instead of the previous system where you pulled on a strap, now you just press a button and the cover slides open or shut.

It's a real night and day change.

The latest Wildtrak also has H1 LED headlights, which provide up to 20 percent more visibility.

These impressive changes add to the attributes already available for the Wildtrak, which offers the choice of two big engines — a 3.2-litre diesel engine and the biturbo engine.

The 3.2-litre model boasts 147kW of power and 470Nm of torque and has a six-speed automatic transmission, while the biturbo combines high grade alloy materials to ensure durability at higher temperatures.

The two turbo chargers work together with the 10-speed auto to allow for greater torque, better fuel efficiency and

lower noise levels.

With up to 3500kg braked towing capacity and 6000kg gross mass combined with trailer sway control, you will be able to move the biggest loads easily and with confidence.

A tow bar is standard on all Wildtraks.

The Wildtrak has a strong book of safety features including lane keep assist with a lane departure warning and pre-collision assist with pedestrian detection.

Add to that the comfort of keyless entry and a push button start, plus the Sync 3 entertainment system for Apple's CarPlay or Android auto.

The latter combines camera and radio sensors that see the road ahead.

The AEB system is designed to help detect and mitigate frontal collisions with vehicles and vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists by automatically applying the brakes.

Speed sign recognition can automatically detect and display the current speed limit and even provide an audible warning.

This could save money on traffic fines or, even worse, a suspension. It is standard on all Rangers.

Ford went into the new decade out in front in the ute department. It is banking on the Wildtrak to keep it there.



photos by  
ANDY  
SEARLE





# 370km trip done by driverless car

A DRIVERLESS car completed the longest autonomous journey on Britain's roads after it self-navigated itself 370km without attracting attention from passing motorists.

A specially modified 2017 electric Nissan LEAF travelled from the car's firm base in Cranfield, Beds, to the brand's manufacturing plant in Sunderland.

Over the course of the 370km journey, the autonomous car tackled country lanes with no or minimal road markings, junctions, roundabouts and motorways.

Autonomous technology activated along the route to change lanes, merge and stop and start when necessary. The only moment the passenger took control of the LEAF was to drive into motorway services in order to charge it.

The UK Government-backed HumanDrive project, which took place on public roads with surrounding motorists none the wiser, is the result of 30 months of work by a consortium of industry leaders.

George Freeman, Future of Transport Minister, said: "The UK is fast becoming a leader in intelligent and automated vehicle and traffic management technology, a huge global sector set to create thousands of jobs."

"Our Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy is supporting transport innovation for cleaner, greener and smarter transport, and Nissan's successful HumanDrive project is an exciting example of how the next phase of the UK's transport revolution could look."

# Grand opening but no cars yet on expressway

THE Huntly section of the Waikato Expressway enjoyed its grand opening last week with iwi blessings, official lunches, the inaugural Expressway Classic half-marathon and the opportunity for members of the public to traverse the new road on foot, by cycle or in a bus.

But there's no official word on when the 15km of new road, which links Ohinewai in the north with Ngaruawahia in the south, will be open to traffic.

In some respects this is standard operating procedure by NZTA for a major new route.

It's a crucial and long-awaited addition to the Waikato Expressway that will eliminate the congestion through Huntly township and eventually allow 110kmh motoring (although it will open at 100kmh while auditing and consultation takes place).

With so much attention on the new development, it's usual for the opening date to be kept secret until close to the time to avoid motorists queuing up to be the first and creating unnecessary congestion.

However, regulars on the existing road have some useful insight into expressway progress.

Driven editor Dean Evans commutes from Waikato to Auckland regularly and passed through Huntly on Monday morning.

The northern interchange still looks "at least a week or two from completion", he said.

He reckons it will be a March, rather than February, opening, which won't be welcome news for those keen to get cracking on the new road after all the festivities.

It also adds to the frustration of regular commuters who have experienced another slowdown on the Longswamp section (just south of Hampton Downs).

It opened in December with a 100kmh limit southbound and a restriction to 70kmh northbound.

However, as of yesterday the road is back down to one lane of 70kmh traffic each way as final work on the northbound-lanes stone mastic asphalt takes place. This won't be completed until early April when all lanes will be available at 100kmh.



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- New 18" Alloy wheel design



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**FOR MORE INFO OR BOOKINGS**

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Leave message, name & phone no. and I will contact you.

## **AUTO ACTION** AROUND TOWN

**Saturday, February 22**

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**Teams Derby and a full**

**race programme**

Gates open 5pm, racing 6pm

**Surfcity Rod and Custom Club**

**Surfcity chill and grill**

Last Friday of each month at Carl's Jr from 6pm. All special interest vehicles welcome.

**Gas Guzzlers Breakfast**

**First Sunday of each month**

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**East Coast Museum**

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Open Sun-Fri 10am-4pm,  
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**Gis. American Car Club**

**Various Events**

Colin 868 1454; Rick 027 490 1373

**Tairawhiti Aviation Museum**

Open Tuesday 9am-4pm and  
Sunday 9am-4pm Gisborne Airport

**Ulysses Motorcycle Club**

Monthly meeting held on the first  
Wednesday of the month.  
7.30pm at the Bushmere Arms

## Illustration and story by Doug Curtis

RILEY cars date back to 1898 in Coventry, England.

Over the ensuing 70 years Riley produced some cars considered delightful although conservative.

Other cars Riley made were highly successful sports cars.

Riley was taken over by Lord Nuffield

in 1938 so the car I have drawn from a NZ Trade Me advertisement would have to be the last of what were true Riley cars.

After that date these cars featured components from other makes — Austin, Morris and Wolseley.

Over the years, Riley made several changes to its engine sizes and designs. All the sports cars had numerous success in sporting events including Le Mans.

The engine in this car is a 2.5-litre, four-cylinder and was introduced in 1937. It had twin SU carburettors.

Most English-built cars used 12-volt Lucas electrical equipment and large headlights.

This car has twin driving lights fitted later, as was the horn.

The Kiwi owner wants \$70,000 for this four-seater sports car, which is in first-class condition and would be a showpiece at all vintage and classic rallies.

To do a complete write-up on all the different model Rileys built would fill a book, but years ago I owned a 1.5-litre 1948 Riley and although it was well past its use-by date, it was quite an amazing old car to drive.

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# HYPERCAR WITH A KIWI CONNECTION

THROUGHOUT the years New Zealand has had connections to some incredible supercars, the most iconic being Bruce McLaren of course, but this latest hypercar (above) blows everything out of the water.

It comes in the form of the Shelby SuperCars Tuatara, a hypercar capable of over 300 miles per hour (48 kmh) and named after the iconic New Zealand reptile, which is known for having the fastest molecular evolution of any living animal.

Built by SSC in America, the name is where the New Zealand connection ends, but that's OK because this thing is more of a spaceship than it is a road-going commuter car.

Just 100 Tuataras are set to be built and this is the first one to roll out of the factory. It is powered by a twin-turbo flat-plane crank V8 which makes 1305kW while only weighing 1247kg.

A seven-speed CIMA transmission sends power to the rear wheels exclusively and it is able to shift gears in 100 milli-seconds flat.

The 0-100kmh time still remains a mystery but with those stats, a sub-three second time is expected.

SSC brags that a six-foot driver (complete with helmet) can easily fit in the hot seat and the digital display looks to be set up for track time.

"We have created the full package," says SSC boss Jerod Shelby.

"Looks, performance and artwork all rolled into one."

Just like the performance times, the price still remains a mystery for the most part.

When unveiling the prototype, a US\$1.3 million figure was thrown around, and it is unlikely to have got any cheaper since then.

Despite the Kiwiana name, it is highly unlikely a Tuatara will ever actually make it down to New Zealand.

# Retro toy Camaro worth more than the real thing

ANYONE who thought that retro and nostalgia trends were just temporary fads at the turn of the millennium should well and truly have eaten their words by now.

Twenty years into the century and the love for "old-school" is as strong as ever before. And Hot Wheels collectors have been among the core benefactors.

Support from guilty pleasure adult collectors is at all-time highs, with plenty of current releases selling out instantaneously at shops around the world.

But it's one of the brand's oldest models that has drawn the latest global interest.

Pawn Stars TV series star and toy collector Joel Magee recently stumbled across this plain white red line Chevrolet Camaro (pictured below) — ironically recounting to Fox News that he couldn't remember where he had even bought it from given the number of events he attends. It was only after some further inquiry from a collector friend that Magee realised the model was a prototype, valued in the realm of NZ\$156,605.

Back in 1968, Hot Wheels released its first 16 castings — known now among collectors as The Original 16. The Custom Camaro was one of them; depicted in a deep reflective purple.

Magee understands this white, Hong Kong-stamped Camaro is a prototype from the production of that original set.

Prototype models are a common part of diecast production. Model car companies will often request prototypes of their castings during various stages of the production cycle.

These days, Hot Wheels get a "first shot" prototype made from 3d-printed plastic, followed by prototypes that depict the full construction of each model in individual components, and then final decorated prototypes just prior to the green light on production.

In the early days, though, Hot Wheels would receive prototypes painted in Enamel White specifically in order to find defects in the casting and production.

Magee ended up consulting with former Hot Wheels designer John Wood, who helped confirm the model was a Hong Kong model that had slipped into American retail circulation.

"He said, 'Oh my gosh, I've never seen or heard of one of those before, especially Camaro,'" Magee told Car & Driver. "If you can pick any Hot Wheels car, the Camaro is at the top of the list. It's hard to imagine a little toy car is worth more than a real one."



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**SATURDAY,  
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# 'I just wanted a Big Mac'

*Driver pays hefty fine for using unregistered car*

WHAT was meant to be a quick Macca's run cost one P-plater a lot more than they expected when police noticed a big issue with their vehicle while they were in the drive-thru.

The 22-year-old driver was caught out by police when they attended a McDonald's at Tarneit, just outside of Melbourne.

The driver ended up having to cough up more than \$800 on top of the price of their Big Mac meal after the officers discovered the vehicle wasn't registered.

"A dark coloured Honda was checked by Police at 3am in the Tarneit McDonalds drive thru — with no rear bumper bar," a police spokesperson said.

"The car was found to be unregistered — attracting a \$826 infringement notice."

When asked by police why the car was unregistered, the driver simply said: "I just wanted a Big Mac".

The incident was posted to the Wyndham Police Service Area Facebook page, with users quick to poke fun at the driver for their mistake.

"What a fool. Should have had it delivered. Haha. Seriously well done VicPol. Don't need these types out driving," one person said.

"Someone got a side order of McFines," another joked.

One added: "That's one heck of an expensive Big Mac!" — News.com.au



# Fire-breathing funny car series set to tour NZ

EIGHT nitromethane-burning funny cars have just arrived in New Zealand ready for the Aeroflow Outlaw Nitro Funny Car Series double header at Kiwi drag strips.

The Australian series has shipped its supercharged 400km/h quarter-mile machines across the Tasman for events at Meremere Dragway on February 22 and then at the Masterton Motorplex on March 21.

The eight race cars are Nitro Express, Let's Boogie, Bandit, One Bad Kiwi, King Kong, LA Hooker, Terminator and Dark Horse joined by the popular Nitro Sherriff wheelstander. Two custom-built semi-trailers transport the cars and spare parts needed to maintain them through two days of racing away from home and serve as a mobile workshop.

Former New Zealand Top Alcohol champion Morice McMillin drives the One Bad Kiwi Pontiac Trans Am funny car and is the manager for the Aeroflow series.

McMillin said, "The Aeroflow series is all about entertainment. The cars run side-by-side 5secs passes and were also bringing the Nitro Sheriff wheel stander that can run the full quarter-mile on its back tyres at over 160 kmh.

McMillin has clocked a personal best ET of 5.48secs in One Bad Kiwi and the Pontiac has nudged over 425km/h at the end of the quarter-mile (400M).

The funny cars will race a three-round "all-run" format at both events rather than an elimination contest.

"The way we tune the cars is to deliver as many side-by-side full-throttle runs down the full quarter-mile as possible. It's all about producing an entertaining show for the crowd," McMillin said.

The Saturday event at Meremere will also feature the fourth round of 2019-20 Meremere Competition Series.

The Masterton event on March 22 is also the final round of the 2019-20 NZ Drag Racing Championship.





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