

4WD BUYERS GUIDE

NISSAN PATROL

LARGE UTES

On paper, the Nissan Patrol ute has it over the opposition, because its live-axle, coil-sprung front end can be matched with a choice of leaf rear springs or coils
In DX spec' level. The Patrol ST cab/chassis comes with four coils, air conditioning, power windows, central locking, moquette upholstery on twin bucket seats, non-MP3 CD player, power aerial, carpet, a lidded centre console, twin SRS air bags and twin map lights.



However, this tough and well-specified vehicle is let down by its powertrain and the wrong choice of wheelbase and gearing. Sadly, the workhorse 4.2-litre diesel is no more; replaced by a revamped three-litre, four-cylinder turbo-diesel.

Those who expected the upgrade to common-rail injection to revitalise this nine-year-old powerplant are going to be disappointed: 118kW at 3200-3400rpm and, more significantly, a torque peak point of 380Nm at a heady 2000-2400rpm may eclipse the figures of Nissan's 1988-vintage TD42 six, but don't compare with what the competition has to offer. The Navara's Renault V6 diesel with its 550Nm of torque can't come soon enough for the Patrol.



With a half-tonne load on board the Nissan takes a decidedly down at heel stance. The cause is well known to Nissan and to anyone who's bought a Patrol cab/chassis: the 2970mm wheelbase is too short for load carrying and the forward position of the rear axle puts a disproportionate amount of weight over the rear axle. The LandCruiser's 3180mm wheelbase is much better. If you want to buy a Patrol cab/chassis – coil or leaf rear end - and correct the wheelbase problem, budget four grand for a chassis and propshaft extension.

The Patrol's vacuum-assisted hydraulic clutch linkage, or the pressure plate, produces an irritating 'drag' on release and the lever action is heavy and notchy. Worse, the 4.262:1 first gear in the Patrol box is way too fast for 4.111:1 diffs, behind a revvy three-litre engine and all our testers found it too easy to stall the Patrol on lift-off. We'd hate to tow a heavy trailer with the Patrol cab/chassis.

Previous Models

A well cared for 4.2-litre, factory-turbo Patrol ute is a better buy than a new three-litre.

Bush Modifications

Patrol coils sag easily, so a taller, stronger set is required, along with matching shock absorbers.

The wheelbase is too short, so if you intend fitting a camping body on the back, an engineer-approved wheelbase extension is recommended.

Being a part-time 4x4 wagon the Patrol can benefit from a rear-axle self-locker, ideally matched by a driver controlled front locking diff.



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