

4WD BUYERS GUIDE

HOLDEN COLORADO

MEDIUM UTES



The GM Holden Colorado ute and cab/chassis lineup was released in July 2008, replacing the previous Rodeo range.

The Colorado was launched a few months ahead of the mechanically identical Isuzu Ute D-Max. Both vehicles replaced the former Holden-badged Rodeo, causing some confusion in the ute marketplace.

Here's why it happened.

The Isuzu D-Max and the Holden Colorado are badge-engineered utes, in much the same manner that Mazda's BT-50 and Ford's Ranger are mechanically identical, but aesthetically different. However, while Ford has a controlling interest in Mazda, making that arrangement quite tidy, the D-Max/Colorado pairing is messier.

Isuzu's four-cylinder KB ute range that was badged 'Rodeo' from the 1980s was originally produced in Japan and exported globally, including into Thailand. By the 1980s Isuzu had light and heavy truck production and marketing agreements with GM that eventually culminated in GM control of Isuzu.

The Asian meltdown of the 1990s saw GM relinquish its control of Isuzu, but some production and marketing agreements remained in place.

Isuzu utes have been selling in Thailand from 1957 and local production by Isuzu Operations Thailand (IOT) began in 1974, in parallel with Japanese production.

In 2002, the remainder of Isuzu Rodeo ute production was transferred from Japan to Thailand. In 2004 GM began production of the Chevrolet-badged Rodeo vehicle design in Thailand.

The IOT-owned D-Max brand is built in Samrong and the GM-owned Colorado is built by GM Thailand in Rayong. GM pursued this new-plant initiative in 2004 to bolster its flagging market shares around the world.

Once its Thai plant was in full swing it was logical for GM to sell the Colorado in Australia, through Holden dealers, but that move cut IOT's former product channel into Australia – one of the largest ute markets in the world.



Hence, the birth of Isuzu UTE Australia Pty Ltd (IUA), to bring in the IOT-built D-Max. The outcome is Holden dealers selling the GM-built Colorado and 40+ newly appointed IUA dealers selling the IOT-built D-Max.

Both companies have previewed 2012 models that have no common componentry and are built in different plants.

The 2008 Holden Colorado line-up was well specified, with driver and passenger airbags on the entire range and ABS with EBD (Electronic Brakeforce Distribution) standard on LT-R and all LX 4WD variants.

Diesel power came from a 3.0-litre four-cylinder common rail turbo engine, with peak torque of 360Nm at 1800rpm and maximum power of 120kW at 3600rpm and all 4WD variants had three-tonnes towing capacity.

A sports variant, the LT-R, featured sports bars, soft tonneau cover, side steps, front fog lamps, 16-inch aluminium wheels and sports interior trim. The LT-R 4WD had Bluetooth capability and Rear Park Assist.

Previous Models



The 2001 Holden Rodeo Range included an LT Sport Space Cab in petrol and diesel variants, Auto V6 Crew Cabs and immobiliser security.

The top-of-the-range LT Sport Space Cab had two-tone paint treatment, chrome sports bar, wheel arch flares, multi-reflector headlamps, side steps, matching chrome-finished mirrors and door handles, 16 x 7 five-spoke aluminium wheels and 245/70R tyres.

The Rodeo LX 4x4 Diesel cab/chassis model had its bucket seats replaced by a squeezey three-seat bench.

Interior appointments on LT Sport models included a leather wrap steering wheel.

The three-litre Rodeo diesel range arrived in 2002 with a new iTD engine generating maximum power of 96kW at 3800rpm and peak torque of 275Nm at 2000rpm (automatic transmission models) and 265Nm at 2000rpm (manual transmission models) – 30 percent more power and up to 18 percent more torque than the outgoing 2.8 engine.

These power and fuel efficiency improvements were achieved through a high-pressure Bosch VP44 fuel injection system and a top-mounted intercooler.

Holden claimed a nine percent improvement in fuel economy on a mixed city/highway cycle over the 2.8-litre turbo diesel engine, which was already recognised as the 4WD ute fuel economy leader.

The new engine could be coupled to an automatic transmission option in Crew Cab models.



The giveaway on Rodeos powered by the 3.0-litre turbo diesel was a bonnet-mounted air intake.

The early-2003 RA Rodeo was wider than its direct competitors, with the longest cab/chassis wheelbase and the widest track.

Rear trays were deeper and wider than any competitor's.

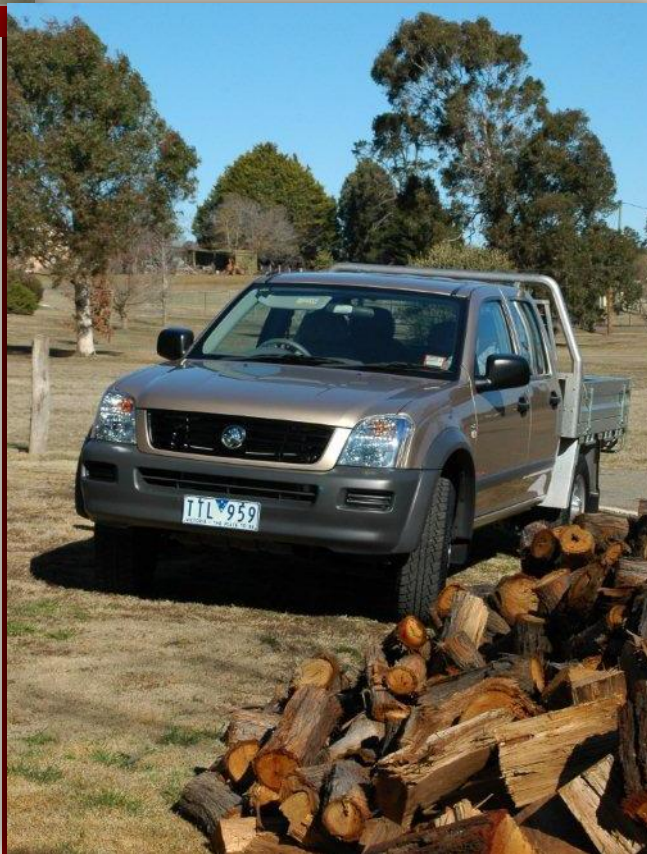
Polyethylene 76-litre fuel tanks were standard across the range.

Rodeo performance was boosted with the introduction of two new petrol engines - a class-leading 3.5-litre (147 kW of power at 5400rpm and 280Nm of torque at 3000rpm) V6 and a 2.4-litre 4-cylinder, with 94kW at 4800rpm and 207Nm of torque at 3200rpm.

Rodeo's proved 3.0-litre intercooled turbo diesel had increased torque of 291Nm at 2000 rpm (auto) and 280Nm (manual).

Rodeo was also the only ute in its class to offer rack and pinion power steering as standard. Braking performance was improved, LT models were equipped with ABS and remote central locking and CD players were standard on LX and LT models. Electronic 'shift on the fly' was standard on all 4WD Rodeos.

Towing capacity across the Rodeo range was 2000kg.



The new cabins provided 42mm more leg room, 40mm more shoulder space and 34mm more head room than before. Seats were taller and deeper, and front seat slide was increased by 40mm to 200mm. Rear doors on Crew Cab models had increased opening angles and rear legroom was extended by 60mm. LT Space Cab offered two rear jump seats, with seat belts.



In 2006 Holden installed its Global V6 3.6-litre Alloytec engine in place of the previous 3.5-litre V6 engine. The new engine produced 157kW at 5300rpm, an increase of 10 kilowatts over the previous engine and peak torque of 313Nm at 2800rpm, an increase of 33Nm.

The new engine warranted a trailer towing rating of up to 2500 kilograms, with automatic or manual transmission.

LT Rodeo scored a new wheel design, indicators on door mirrors and new interior trim.

Bush Modifications

Our extensive solo-vehicle and tow-testing of Holden Colorado utes shows that they need very little in the way of bush mods to go virtually anywhere.

We'd suggest a long-range replacement fuel tank, a snorkel and a suspension lift similar to the one we evaluated on the mechanically similar D-Max. A front-end diff lock would be nice, for severe trails.



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