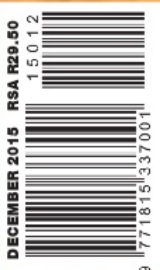


Ride More Stress Less

DECEMBER 2015

# Dirt & Trail

KX450F



# CONTROL Freak

TESTED: 2016 KAWASAKI KX450F



**IN THIS ISSUE:** 2016 YAMAHA YZ250X / CANAM TURBO  
2016 DUCATI MULTISTRADA ENDURO / NITE X ENDURO  
NORTH VS SOUTH MX / 2016 TRIUMPH EXPLORERS  
HONDA 150 & 125 / BMW MOTORRAD DAY / KUBOTA  
**2015 ROOF OF AFRICA PROGRAMME PULL-OUT!**

THE KUBOTA RTV X900

# THE PRINCE OF DEED

Pics Will Sutherland, Tristan and Kyle Foley.

It's amazing how diverse the World of off-road vehicles, whether on two wheels or four, really is. One minute we were charging around some mealie fields in the fastest off-road experience on the planet, and the next we were making our way majestically around similar field at a stately 32km/h.....the top speed of the new Kubota 4x4 diesel utility vehicle.

For all that this 4 wheeler is just as high tech and purpose built as any terrain gobbling speedster. This one is for heavy duty use on the farm or construction site. It has the sturdiest chassis ever built into a side by side, and the simple reason is that this is a work horse. For an engine, Kubota offers its proven four-stroke diesel technology in the form of an 898cc three-cylinder diesel engine that is liquid cooled. In the RTV, this puts out up to 21 horsepower and buckets of torque. Getting that power to the

ground is a VHT (variable hydro transmission). Unlike a belt drive this setup never freewheels. This also means that engine braking takes place till the moment the machine stops. In fact, this braking action is so effective you'll hardly ever use the brakes, though it does have them. The RTV uses front and rear enclosed wet-type disc brakes. Being fully enclosed, they are not affected by water or debris and their performance is consistent. It comes standard with four wheel drive with diff lock, high and low ratio and lots of other features made to cope with working in tough conditions where a conventional 4x4 bakkie would struggle. Although it is unlikely to fall over as a result of the driver speeding, there is always the possibility of a terrain induced mishap, in which case the driver and his helper will be protected by a massive roll cage and lap seatbelts.







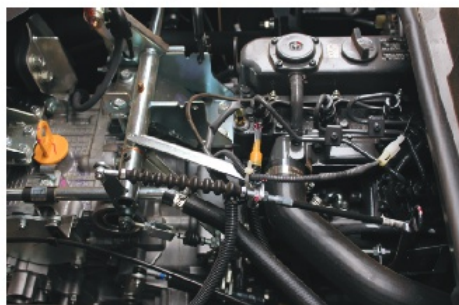
Everything on the Kubota is about being practical and doing a tough job. The steering is a power-assist setup so turning pin to pin is easy and the tight turning circle assists in weaving in and out of obstacles. To get you over the rough stuff, the front end suspension is an independent MacPherson strut-type while the rear is a semi-independent DeDion axle with leaf springs and shock absorber. The low-point on the unit is the axle where you still get 8.5-inches of clearance. Vital underside components are tucked up high and any vulnerable arrears have guards and shields. The air-cleaner is situated high up in the nose of the vehicle, as is the radiator and the brake system. The engine is mid-mounted with the battery right alongside in a protected position. The driver and his mate have large, somewhat upright seats with lap-belts and lots of handles to hold onto when the going gets rough. The prime purpose of this side by side is to carry heavy loads. It has a huge,

very robust "bak" behind the front seats, which can be unlocked and manually tilted. This means that if it has a heavy load, the load will have to be removed before the load bed can be tilted, which seems to defeat the objective a bit. It has a tailgate which can be lowered for unloading or carrying long cargo like poles. The chassis is strong enough to fit a towbar, and despite the low top speed it has more than enough power and torque to pull a trailer.

It is very pleasant to drive, and is quiet and comfortable. The exhaust note is pleasant and low toned, and it is easy to carry on a normal conversation in the vehicle. It has a cigarette lighter type power socket and powerful hand brake. A special feature is the Noddy car hooter, guaranteed to make anyone stepping in front leap back in shock....although for sure they will smile at the toy town beep! An interesting standard feature, which we discovered when changing a tyre after getting a puncture (and there is no spare,

or wheel changing tools, on an almost R300 000 vehicle) is that each wheel is held on by two studs and two wheel nuts. We are not sure why, but there it is. We didn't drive it in the dark, but the headlights look modern and capable, with halogen globes, so this workhorse should be able to continue working after hours as well. This is not a small machine and it's not suited for swamp crossings, racing around sand pits or jumping anything. It is not that kind of ATV. What it is suited for is work, and lots of it. The diesel Kubota should appeal to those who need a tough load carrying vehicle in places where space is an issue, perhaps a farm where space and terrain dictates that a small vehicle is needed, or perhaps in a mine, factory or aircraft hanger. One thing is for sure, this is not a toy for leisure use.. It's one tough mutha ready to do a full days' work and then more.

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