

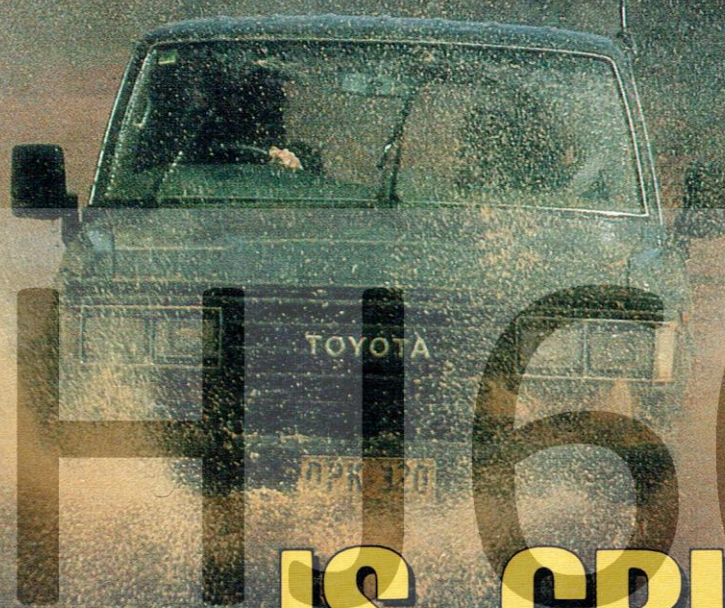
WIN: NEW NISSAN PATHFINDER!

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JUNE 88

overlander 4wd



**TOYOTA/
NISSAN
WAGONS
COMPARED**

IS CRUISER STILL KING?

CANNING
SIGNPOSTING THE ROUTE

24-PAGE PULL-OUT

TYRE GUIDE

Western WAGON

The Toyota LandCruiser has long been at the top of the long-wheelbase heap in 4WDs. However, with the release of Nissan's GQ Patrols, the Cruiser's claims of market leadership could be in jeopardy. Our comparison team took a LandCruiser and a GQ into the outback to assess just how big a threat the GQ really is. All photography by HELMUT MUELLER.

THE vehicles we chose for this comparison were those we considered to be your typical long-haul family tourers with good 4WD capability and which could easily be used as day-to-day transport. They were the LandCruiser FJ62 five-speed manual in GX spec and the petrol-powered five-speed GQ Patrol Wagon with ST trim.

The proposed destination for this comparo was Coongie Lakes, in the north of South Australia, about 120 kilometres north-east of Innamincka, but due to heavy rains and local flooding, this was later amended to a loop around the north-east corner of NSW. This loop took in some very interesting driving conditions thanks to the rain and some picturesque and historic sites like Mount Poole, near Milparinka, and the grave of James Poole, second-in-command to the early explorer, Charles Sturt.

We started from Sydney and headed for Nyngan on the Mitchell Highway, then took the Barrier Highway through Cobar and Wilcannia to Broken Hill. From there we turned north on the Silver City Highway to Milparinka and Tibooburra, where we stayed for three days, testing the vehicles in varying terrain on both private and public roads.

It was interesting to find, while we were staying in Tibooburra, that a bunch of blokes from The Pipeline Authority (a Federal Government department) were conducting a similar comparison to ours, but with diesel vehicles in base spec. We sat

for quite a few hours chatting and comparing our findings.

The road out of Tibooburra, via Wanaaring to Bourke, was riddled with bogholes and washaways providing one of the most interesting drives we have had for many months. It was a real disappointment to hit the tar again at Bourke.

THE VEHICLES

THE specifications we chose for the vehicles on this comparison gave us most of the appointments needed for comfortable motoring in all conditions. Both vehicles had such luxuries as cloth seats, carpets, air-conditioning and good, four-speaker stereo systems.

The seating arrangements differed in that the Nissan had front bucket seats and a split rear seat for more versatile load carrying. The Toyota, on the other hand, had a bucket seat for the driver and an alleged bench seat for two passengers up front. We tested the Toyo for a while with three people in the front and came to the conclusion that unless one of the front-seat passengers is a small child, this is really only a two in the front unit.

The Nissan's more-practical bucket seats and large two-storey central console won the seating department easily; as did its rear seat as the Toyota's has scalloped edges around the wheel arches which can be uncomfortable.

The driving positions of both vehicles is comfortable, with the

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Nissan again having a slight edge with a better seat and footrest beside the clutch pedal. There is also more room in the footwell in the GQ, allowing the driver more scope to get comfortable.

Both the Nissan and the Toyota have full instrumentation including tachos and gauges for oil pressure and volts. The layout in the Toyo is similar to the older model 60-series wagons, which does seem a bit dated with the smaller guages harder to read than those in the GQ. The general dash layouts of both vehicles had everything within easy reach of the driver, but the Nissan had a dreadful problem with the louvred air outlets.

It is worth noting that both these vehicles were well-used examples — the Nissan having in excess of 15,000 kilometres on the clock and the Toyo with around 18,000 hard kilometres when we picked them up. But it is still inexcusable that all the air vents in the Nissan were damaged, with the far left vent being non-existent. The eyeball vents in the Toyota were in perfect condition.

The operation of the transfer case differed in the two vehicles in that the Toyota featured a push-button vacuum-operated transfer engagement of high range while the Nissan has the more conventional lever. Both of these have their merits — once you get used to each they are quick and easy to use. Perhaps the Toyota's is the most convenient but the Nissan's lever is one of the slickest on the market.

Getting into the gearbox department, the Nissan had a more positive gearchange with a shorter throw between gears. Where it really fell down though was in the clutch. In the petrol-powered GQs, the clutch is manifold-vacuum assisted and the assistance can be easily beaten with a quick double shuffle or when the revs are high. The Toyota uses vacuum assist as well but has a storage reservoir to eliminate the chance of being beaten and causing clutch effort to be substantially increased when you least want it to be.

In braking the Nissan was well ahead. The ST trim level gave our test vehicle four-wheel disc brakes as opposed to the Toyo's disc/drum set-up. GQs are also fitted with transmission handbrakes whereas all Toyotas get rear-wheel handbrakes.

Under the bonnet, both sported petrol-powered six-cylinder in-line engines, the Toyota's being the proven 4.0-litre 3F motor, while the Nissan is powered by the all-new 4.2-litre TB42.

One distinct difference between the vehicles was that the Toyota was

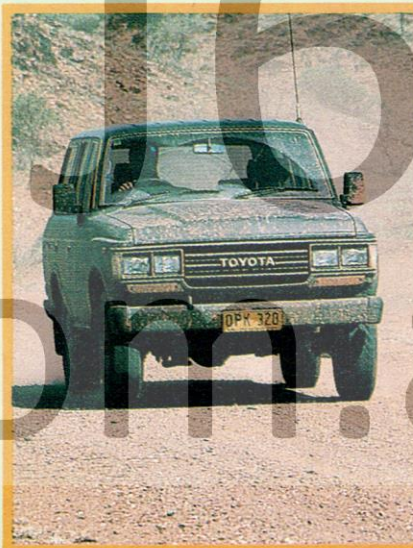
running 7.50R16 Dunlop Road Grippers while the Nissan was shod with 10R15 Bridgestone Desert Duelers. This wheel/tyre difference was to have some bearing later in the test.

ON ROAD

THERE is no doubt that on the bitumen the Nissan is superior in ride and handling to the LandCruiser FJ62. Although Toyota has improved the leaf suspension of the Cruiser it is no match for the all-coil system under the GQ.

The wider track of the Nissan certainly has it cornering flatter than the Toyo, which suffered from wallow and body roll. There is more vagueness in the steering of the 62 and it was prone to understeer when pushed through tight corners. Although it seemed that the steering ratios of both vehicles was too low, the Nissan's was more positive.

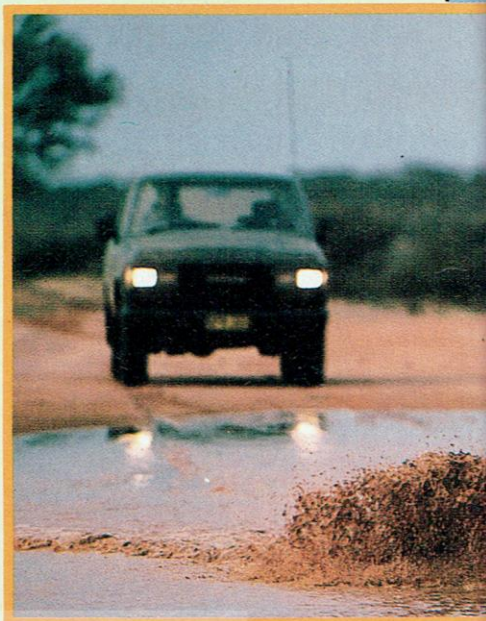
When pushed hard on the open road, both vehicles had plenty of power for overtaking or cruising — but once again the Nissan had the



LandCruiser was second best on dirt roads.

edge. This time it was due to the fact that when booted from cruising speed in fifth gear, it had more pick-up than the Toyota.

But it all comes with a cost, and in the Nissan the cost is fuel consumption. On our test the average figure returned by the GQ through all sorts of terrain was 22.5 litres/100 kilometres (12.6 mpg). The figure returned by the Toyota was 19.7 litres/100 kilometres (14.3 mpg) which, although not good, is better than the GQ.



The outback roads of the test route were often hidden by sheets of water.

One other problem with the Nissan GQ is the construction of the front windows and doors. When travelling at speeds of around 100 km/h or better, the front windows will suck out if they are slightly opened. This means that they are impossible to close until the speed is reduced. Similarly, if the windows are closed and the air on fresh, the doors will flex slightly, with resultant wind howl and squeaking.

This problem, in our opinion, could be simply fixed with the addition of quarter vent windows to the front to aid rigidity of the door and window, as in the Toyota.

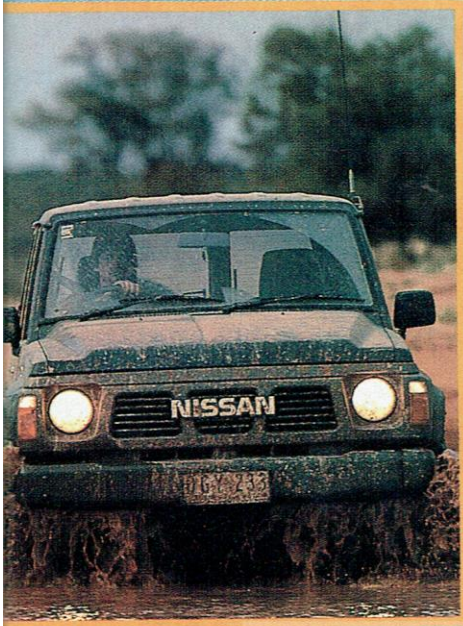
ON THE DIRT

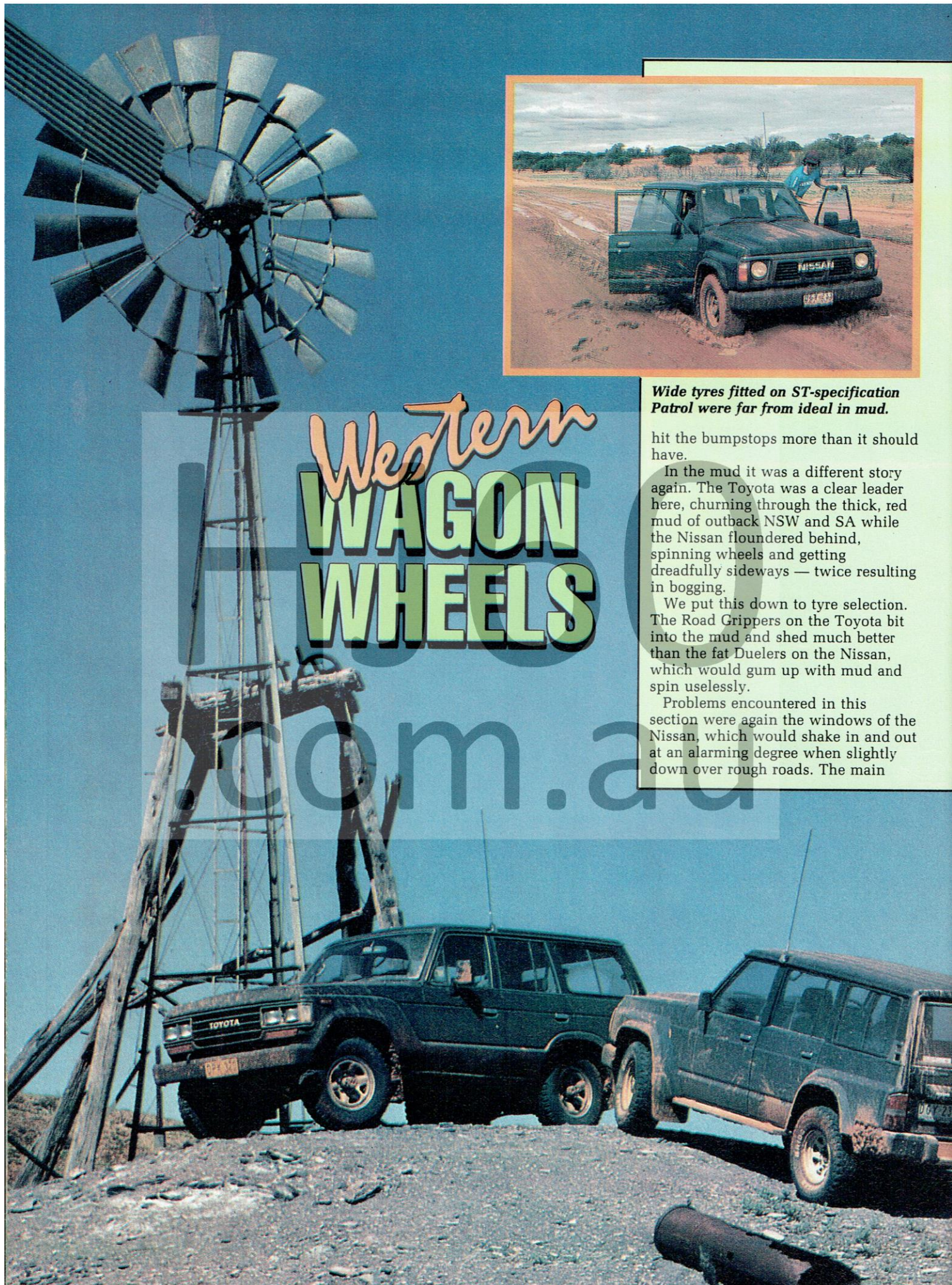
THE dirt roads we travelled were severely affected by the torrential rain and flooding just after Easter. Washaways and bogholes were numerous, as were deep wheel ruts on the drier sections.

The first point we agreed on was that the Nissan was more stable and much more predictable on rutted roads. While the Toyota would move around on the road and follow the ruts, the GQ was easier to hold on line.

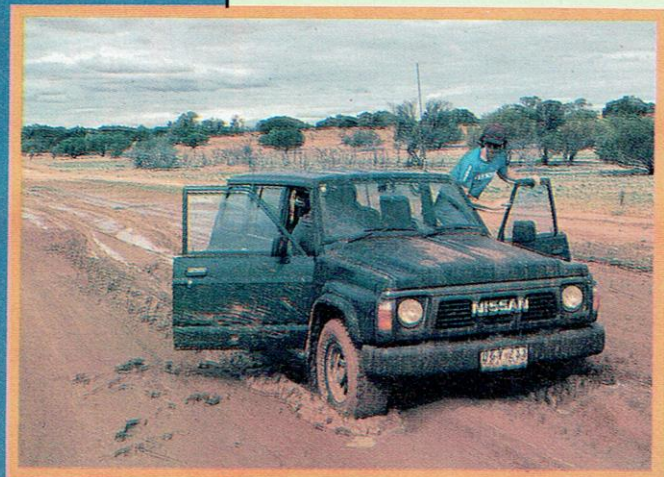
It was fairly even through the washaways, though. Although the Nissan was smoother through these parts, it was slightly under-damped in the front end causing some bounce and wallow. The Toyo, in these conditions, felt a bit under-sprung and

Western **WAGON WHEELS**





Western WAGON WHEELS



Wide tyres fitted on ST-specification Patrol were far from ideal in mud.

hit the bumpstops more than it should have.

In the mud it was a different story again. The Toyota was a clear leader here, churning through the thick, red mud of outback NSW and SA while the Nissan floundered behind, spinning wheels and getting dreadfully sideways — twice resulting in bogging.

We put this down to tyre selection. The Road Grippers on the Toyota bit into the mud and shed much better than the fat Duelers on the Nissan, which would gum up with mud and spin uselessly.

Problems encountered in this section were again the windows of the Nissan, which would shake in and out at an alarming degree when slightly down over rough roads. The main

complaint with the 62 was that the top section of the tailgate would spring open onto the first latch when the vehicle hit a sharp bump or washaway. This didn't do much good for the dust sealing which, apart from this problem, we found to be very good in both vehicles.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

ON A previous trip to this area our mate Ray Schubert, the local copper at Tibbooburra, suggested we take a trip out to an old turn-of-the-century gold mine which lies just north-east of Tib. We didn't get there that time so we took a swing out with Ray on this comparo.

The mine is on private property and the track out to it is, for the most part, a river bed. Although not requiring low range to any great degree, the track was a good test of manoeuvrability and power and torque (down low) of the two vehicles.

With the turning circles of both being quoted by the manufacturers as 13.4 metres, negotiating obstacles was similar in both vehicles. The lugging capability of the six-cylinder engines was also much the same. The only real difference between the two in this part of the test was in ride — the winner here again being the Nissan with its coil suspension.

Wheel articulation of both the vehicles was good. Neither was prone to lifting wheels while we were crawling in and out of the riverbed and traction was maintained at all times. The ground clearance of the

Toyota is slightly better than the Nissan, their heights being 225 mm and 220 mm respectively.

CONCLUSION

AT THE end of our comparison, the vote on which vehicle was the better resulted in a unanimous decision. The Nissan GQ got the nod.

It is a better blacktop tourer (save for the petrol consumption) and a better load carrier and has a towing capacity greater than the Toyota. The TB42 motor delivers more power and torque than the 3F and it is more flexible.

The Nissan handles fast dirt roads with more aplomb than the Toyota and its steering and brakes are better. Ergonomically, the Nissan is ahead as well, its front and rear seats are superior, seating position for the driver is better and the gauges are easier to read than those in the FJ62.

Still on the comfort side of things, the ride in the Nissan is much smoother than the Toyota and it handles bumps and corrugations in a much more civilised manner due to its suspension system. Its wider track and good suspension also make it a better handler on twisting roads. It doesn't wallow as much as the Toyota, nor does it have as much body roll.

Overall, we thought that the Nissan is just a better all-round package than the Toyota for as near as you can get to the same price.

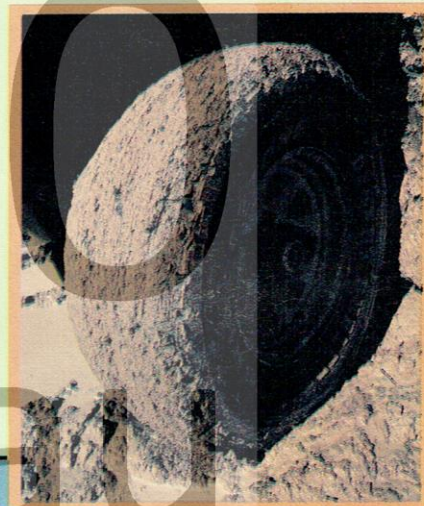
Clogged tyre tread was the cause of the Nissan's inferiority in sloppy patches.

MIDDLETON

IN my view, the Nissan GQ won this comparo without doubt. But that doesn't mean it's perfect — there are some glaring problems that Nissan have to deal with in their first update of the GQ range.

Firstly, the front window problem must be addressed along with the self-destructing louvre vents on the dashboard. These sorts of things should not be evident in a vehicle costing nearly \$35,000. The headlights fitted to the test vehicle this time were not the sort which fill up with water at the merest hint of a fording situation, but that is not to say that the problem has been remedied. The vacuum assist on the clutch must also be looked at by the Nissan technicians. Perhaps the same set-up as on the diesels would be the way to go.

Most motoring enthusiasts will tell





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you that in any complete model change there is bound to be a few problems and I am sure that Nissan will fix these in the near future.

Aside from these gripes, I thought that the GQ behaved itself very well over the course we took it on. I'm not going to bag it for getting bogged in the mud as I believe that tyre choice is no indication of a vehicle's performance in a given sort of terrain. The Nissan seemed to do everything just that little bit better than the Toyota — ride, handling, performance on and off the road, and comfort.

We don't know about durability yet as the vehicle hasn't been on the market long enough, but at this stage if I was looking for a 4WD wagon, I would certainly go for a Nissan GQ (or perhaps a Ford Maverick).

CAREY

IT'S A classic case of generation gap.

Toyota's heavyweight wagon is the 'old' one of the pair, of course. The Cruiser shows the value of years of attention to detail. Unlike the Patrol, its face-level air vents didn't fall apart, you could wind its front windows up and down all of the time and its vacuum-assisted clutch worked all the time.

However, the limits of the Cruiser's ride comfort and handling were dictated by the all leaf-spring suspension layout that was chosen years ago when the vehicle was on the drawing board. The suspension too shows the benefit of development. It's certainly better, notably in handling.

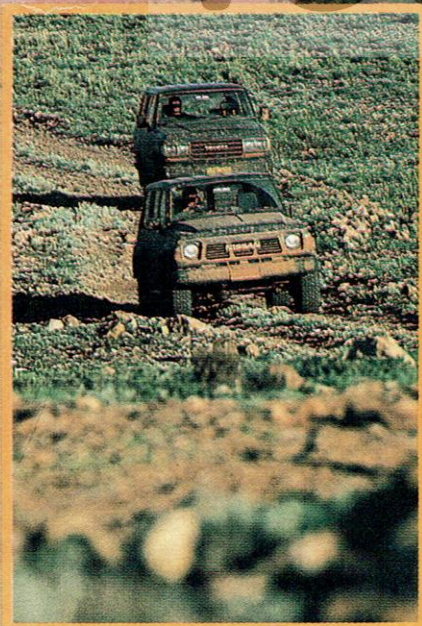
The Patrol, in contrast, displays both the benefits and disadvantages of

being a more recent design.

Its strengths come from its good coil-spring suspension system. It handles beautifully on the bitumen, sitting flat and tracking true at higher speeds than the Toyota can manage. On the dirt the Nissan was again better than the Toyota, although the margin of superiority wasn't as great as it had been on the blacktop.

The Patrol is the vehicle I'd choose to buy, despite its niggling faults. Why? Because I'm certain I'd enjoy driving it much more than the Cruiser. However, that situation is likely to change before a year has past. Toyota will have an all-new coil-sprung Cruiser on the Australian market within that period. Then a comparison between the heavyweight wagons from Toyota and Nissan will be really interesting.

WHEELS



SPECIFICATIONS

Toyota LandCruiser FJ62 Nissan GQ Patrol ST Wagon

ENGINE

Type
Bore/Stroke
Power/Revs
Torque/Revs
Capacity
Power/Litre
Fuel Type

3F:4.0-litre, six-cylinder, ohv
94 x 95 mm
110 kW at 4200 rpm
284 Nm at 2200 rpm
3955 cm³
27.8 kW/litre
Unleaded petrol

TB42:4.2-litre, in-line, six-cylinder
96 x 96 mm
125 kW at 4200 rpm
325 Nm at 2800 rpm
4169 cm³
30.0 kW/litre
Unleaded petrol

GEARING

Ratios
1st
2nd
3rd
4th
5th
Reverse
Transfer Case
Axle Ratio
Locking Hubs

	High	Low
1st	4.843	9.507
2nd	2.618	5.139
3rd	1.516	2.976
4th	1.000	1.963
5th	0.845	1.655
Reverse	4.843	9.507
Transfer Case	1.000	1.963
Axle Ratio	4.111:1	
Locking Hubs	Manual	

	High	Low
1st	4.556	9.203
2nd	2.625	5.303
3rd	1.519	3.068
4th	1.000	2.020
5th	0.836	1.689
Reverse	4.245	8.575
Transfer Case	1.000	2.020
Axle Ratio	3.900:1	
Locking Hubs	Manual	

SUSPENSION

Front

Live axle with leaf springs, anti-swaybar and gas-pressure dampers

Live axle with coil springs, three-link location, anti-swaybar and hydraulic dampers

Rear

Live axle with leaf springs, anti-swaybar and gas-pressure dampers

Live axle with coil springs, five-link location, anti-swaybar and hydraulic dampers

Tyres

Dunlop Road Gripper 7.50R16 6-ply

Bridgestone Desert Dueler 10R15

BRAKES

Front/Rear

Ventilated discs/drums with vacuum assistance

Ventilated discs/ventilated discs with vacuum assistance

STEERING

Type
Turning Circle

Power-assisted ball and nut
13.4 m (2WD)

Power-assisted recirculating ball
13.4 m

DIMENSIONS

Length x Width x Height 4750 x 1800 x 1830 mm
Wheelbase 2730 mm
Track — Front/Rear 1475/1460 mm
Ground Clearance 225 mm
Approach Angle 41 degrees
Departure Angle 22 degrees
Central Angle n.a.
Mass 1975 kg
GVM 2760 kg
Mass/Power 18.0 kg/kW
Mass/Power at GVM 25.1 kg/kW

4810 x 1800 x 1825 mm
2970 mm
1530/1535 mm
220 mm
42 degrees
30 degrees
31 degrees
2035 kg
2800 kg
16.3 kg/kW
22.4 kg/kW

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Average 19.7 litres/100 kms
Fuel Tank Capacity 90 litres
Range 457 kms

22.5 litres/100 kms
95 litres
422 kms

PRICE

\$34,742

\$34,774