Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2008 Nissan Xterra OR-V6 4X4

Prove Nothing. Accomplish Everything.

BY KATHLEEN CARR

Nissan's truck-based Xterra is the Xterra. geared toward the young and/or Nissan Xterra is a tough guy SUV, with a rugged design and solid offcomfortable car-based SUVs for "softies." The game plan for the Xterra never has been to make it softer to grab more buyers. It's no car-based SUV or crossover ve- back. hicle, but a genuine truck for rough use and rugged off-road driving.

The Xterra has a decent amount of standard equipment, despite its go-anywhere nature. Even the base trim level has air conditioning, a tilt wheel, an AM/FM/CD player, a rear wiper and a full-size spare tire. There's also anti-lock brakes and cruising an anti-skid system.

items as: a leather-wrapped steering wheel with audio controls, an upscale audio system and tubular side steps. Additional options also included side-curtain airbags, satellite radio and a tow kit. Forget frills such as leather upholstery or a sunroof because Nissan feels that

such items would be out of place for

active buyer - or those who want 261 horsepower and 281 poundsto appear that way. The midsize feet of torque. The engine teams with either a crisp-shifting fivespeed automatic transmission or a also optional. road abilities. It leaves the more six-speed manual. Available parttime four-wheel drive includes; Automatic, 4-High and 4-Low modes. The Xterra has a double-wishbone front suspension and a rigid axle in

> But there's no stinting on perfor- among SUVs. mance: The Xterra has a sophisticated engine with plenty of torque. The engine sounds gruff during hard acceleration but propels the Xterra to 60 mph in 7.3 seconds and allows quick merging, safe highway passing and easy high-speed surroundings.

The quick steering is rather The Xterra OR included such heavy, and a wide turning circle doesn't help close-quarters maneuverability. Handling is good if the Xterra isn't driven too hard, and the brakes provide short stops. Although improved, the ride is predictably truck-like despite the longer wheelbase and gets choppy over some roads.

Standard all-disc antilock brakes have electronic brake-force distri-Nissan's 4.0-liter V-6 develops bution and brake assist. Seatmounted side-impact airbags and side curtain airbags are optional. An electronic stability system is

The Xterra hasn't been crashtested by our preferred source but has earned four out of five stars in the government's frontal crash test. It carries a three-star rollover rating, which is as poor as you'll find

But there's good room for four tall adults in the utility-oriented interior. Gauges can be quickly read, and controls are easy to reach and use. The rear seats elevated to give rear occupants a better view of

pact of daring styling. The Xterra's styling is an evolution of the original's, introduced in 2000, and is defined by its standard tubular roof rack and stepped roofline. The roof rack features a inches in diameter. New paint col- also are such outdoor-oriented fea- to be something it's not. That's latchable box for gear. Between ors for 2008 include Red Alert and tures as 10 cargo area utility hooks comforting when its driver conthe large hood and the integrated front bumper is a grille with angled bars that's similar to other SUVs single out the Xterra because it's to secure bike racks and other ac- active lifestyle.



Specifications: 4.0-Liter 261-hp @ 281 lb-ft. torque V6 Engine; 5-Speed Automatic Transmission; 14-City 20-Highway MPG; \$30,590. MSRP

Nissanknows all about the im- in Nissan's lineup. Running sort of a sports locker on wheels, cessories or gear. boards are optional.

level adds bodyside moldings. side bumper steps allow easier ac-

with such items as cubbies, nets All 4WD models have mud- and a roof-mounted storage com- Xterra will be the Weekend guards, and the highest, SE, trim partment for wet, dirty clothes. Rear Athlete's best bud.

Extreme active lifestyle people in the cargo floor that makes it easier while demanding more to meet an

Straight out of the box, the Nissan

The Xterra is an honest ve-Wheel sizes are limited to 16 or 17 cess to that compartment. There hicle because it doesn't pretend and an adjustable channel system fronts challenging conditions;

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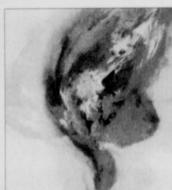
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