

# WHEN SAFETY MATTERS

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It is 7 am and I'm having my first cup of morning coffee enjoying the view of my one acre garden full of banana palms, lemon trees, lime trees, papaya trees, orange trees... a couple of ferrets are playing on the lawn – nice! They will keep the snakes away... I have a good life here – a beautiful garden, a nice house, my two dogs "Thunder" and "Lightning", and in the driveway I have the greatest car you can imagine – a big and powerful 4x4 Nissan Patrol 3.0 TDI SGL. You can forget all about Ferrari, Porsche, Lamborghini – they wouldn't stand a chance on the

road conditions we have here! The place is Tanzania – the land of endless savannahs and bad roads, perfect conditions for a good 4x4.

## Background story

In the beginning of June I was informed by my employer, The Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that I would be posted to the Danish Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. I already had a fair background knowledge of East Africa having lived here for



a number of times in the past, which was also my reason for applying for the position at the Danish Embassy in Dar es Salaam – I wanted to come back to East Africa to be able to go on safari again in the East African National Parks!

Now, wanting to enjoy the life of going on safaris in East Africa requires a very good car! I have never owned a car before, and my knowledge of cars was more or less limited to the fact that they usually have four wheels and that it is a vehicle that brings you from point A to point B. Therefore there were a number of things to consider before making the final choice of which car to buy. So, should you also be a first time car owner or maybe the first time to buy a car to bring to Africa I might have a few tips for you that you might find useful in making your choice of buying a car.

### Things I considered and my final choice

There are a lot of good cars on the market – and which brand should one choose? Should it be Toyota, Isuzu, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Land Rover, etc?

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For safety I quickly decided that I wanted a big car – the roads here in Tanzania are not very good, and there is also the driving skills of other drivers to be considered as well as which type of cars these drivers are having. It is not uncommon here that a lot of drivers don't have a driver's license which of course tells something about their driving skills. And a great number of cars here are big 4x4's. Not ever wanting to become the "small" one in a possible accident I for sure wanted a big car!

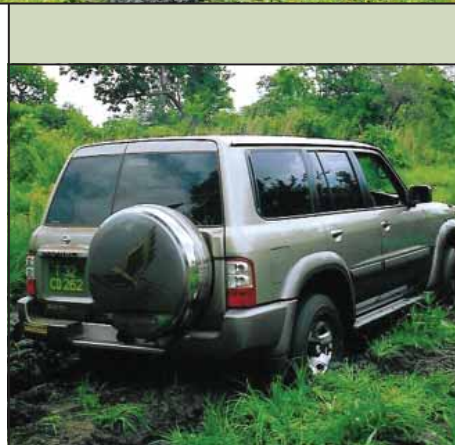
This choice did as such not exclude any of the above mentioned car brands, but at least it excluded a number of the smaller cars that these manufactures are producing.

Then of course there was the question of purpose of the car, I was going to buy. If I knew that I would only be driving in the city with the car there would be absolutely no reason of buying a big 4x4. But going on safari here in Tanzania definitely requires a 4x4!

Despite the fact that I am here without a family – also a thing worth to consider when it comes to size of car – I knew that I had to look for a car in the size of a Toyota Land Cruiser, Nissan Patrol, Mitsubishi Pajero or Land Rover Discovery.

Of course this sounds like there are more or less only Japanese models, but having been here in Tanzania in the past I knew that these brands were the most common ones to see on the roads. The American cars are virtually only used by American expatriates, and when it comes to Mercedes and BMW these two manufacturers do not manufacture cars the size I wanted (even if they did I would most probably not even be able to afford buying one...).

If you have not been to the country where you are going I can strongly recommend you to contact your future colleagues and ask which cars are the most common to see on the streets and if there are any certified dealerships of these cars. Quite important when it comes to servicing the car. And it would only make things even better if there is more than one certified dealership of the same car brand as the competition will work to your advantage! Also ask if the dealership is having a stock of spare parts so that possible repairs of your car would not be unnecessarily delayed. In some places it might even be a problem to have cars with too many electrical gadgets repaired – are the dealerships in the country you are going to able to carry out those types of repairs (electrical windows, ABS brakes, automatic gear transmission, etc.) or should you perhaps go for the more "basic" type of car? A good idea to check up on.



Certain car brands are also preferable when it comes to your resale of the car – will you be able to get a good and fair price after i.e. 3 years?!

Not that I wish to scare anyone but there might be one more thing that should have at least a small priority in your choice of car. Depending on which country you are going to there might be problems with crime – especially car hijackings! Car hijackers are often going for specific car brands. Here in Tanzania we are experiencing that Toyota Land Cruiser VX is topping the list of preferred vehicles by car hijackers!

On this basis I felt I was now able to make my choice – although there were still a variety of cars to choose between.

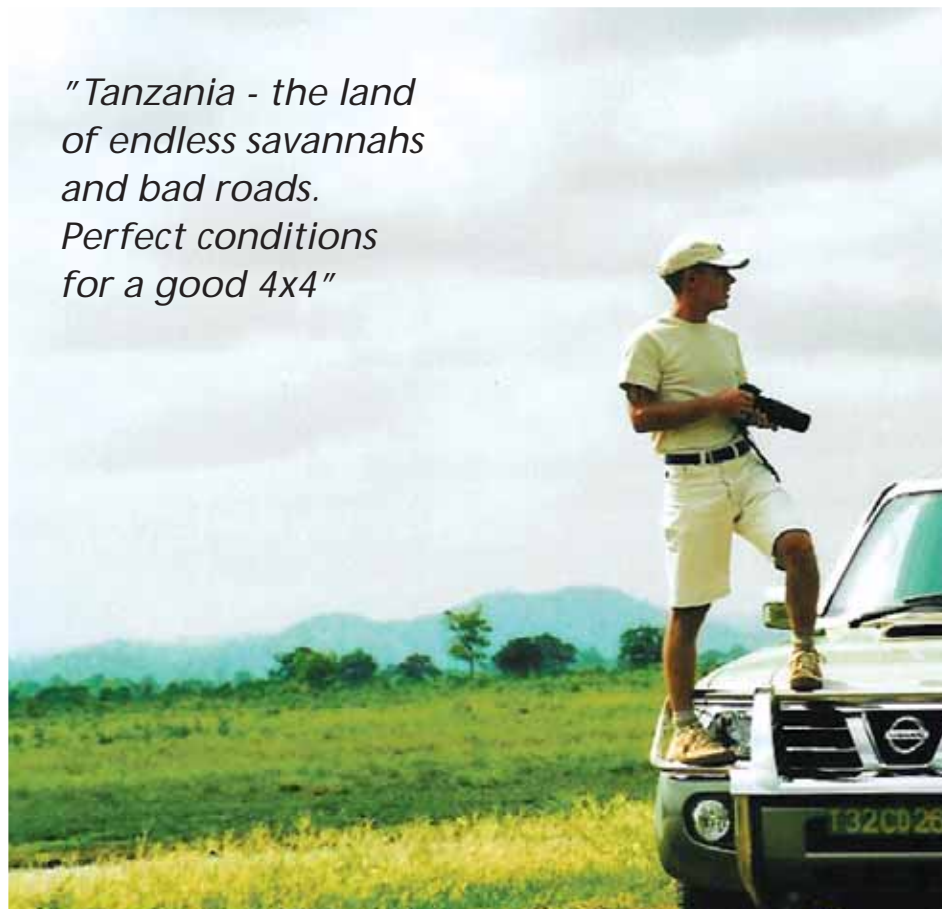
I quite quickly excluded the Toyota Land Cruiser – it was simply too expensive compared to the other cars looking at what I would in fact get for that price. The Land Rover Discovery I also excluded – although not because of price and not because of abilities as a 4x4, but the distances here in Tanzania from the city to the National Parks also requires a car that is very comfortable and speedy as well, which I did not find the Discovery to be! And finally I excluded the Mitsubishi Pajero – as it is still not very common here in Tanzania and thus I was not very sure of the possibility of having the car serviced and repaired.

My final choice came to Nissan Patrol! Now I had to choose which Patrol I wanted to buy – should it be a 4.2 L Diesel, or the one with a powerful petrol engine, or the relatively new 3.0 Turbo

Diesel. The Patrol running on petrol I excluded – the quality of petrol here in Tanzania is not very good and would probably ruin the engine of the car. I have previously been driving both the standard 4.2 L Diesel and also the new 3.0 Turbo Diesel – and no doubt about it, I wanted the Patrol with a turbo engine! It is an absolutely fabulous car to drive – very quick acceleration compared to the standard model and a top speed also being a little higher than the standard model. Further more the Turbo model comes in the SGL version which basically means that all the extra equipment one might wanted to have is already included in this version!

So, today, in my driveway I have – in my eyes – the perfect car! It has only been driving 6,200 KM the past 6 months and it still has this very nice smell of new car. Every morning getting into the car starting it up brings a smile to my lips – all my “efforts” to choose the perfect car paid off!

I wish you very enjoyable time considering your choice of car – and if I may, then I can recommend that you take Nissan into your considerations!



*“Tanzania - the land of endless savannahs and bad roads. Perfect conditions for a good 4x4”*

