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3 DECEMBER 2021

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Getting the work done with TGB's quad bikes

TGB recently launched its Blade 600 range of all-terrain vehicles in South Africa. The range includes models for recreational and commercial use, and could be a wonderful on-farm helper. **Janine Ryan** reports.



The TGB Blade 600 AR EPS 4x4 is ideal for commercial use, and comes equipped with a cargo bed that can carry a useful load of up to 200kg. PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

The Taiwan Golden Bee (TGB) Blade 600 range of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) was officially launched in South Africa on 12 November. The TGB ATVs will be distributed in Southern Africa by ETG Logistics (ETGL).

The ATVs are renowned for their safety features, and are the only ATVs in Australia that meet the strict Australian safety driving standards, says Francois van Eeden, sales and marketing head for automotive and farm equipment at ETGL.

The commercial model of the ATVs are used in mines in Australia, and thus have to pass the strict safety regulations.

At the recent launch, Taiwanese ambassador to South Africa Anthony Ho explained that the collaboration between TGB and ETGL was symbolic of Taiwan and South Africa working together to create prosperity and economic opportunities for both countries.

The TGB Blade series currently available in Southern Africa includes two models: the SE.X EPS 4x4 (SE),

specifically designed for recreational use, and the AR EPS 4x4 (AR), which has been designed for commercial use, especially for the agriculture and mining sectors.

It was also announced that ETG was in discussion to distribute the more powerful TGB Blade 1000 series and three-seater Utility Terrain Vehicles in Southern Africa in the future.

"We believe the TGB Blade 600 series will find quick market acceptance given the very competitive price positioning. And, considering the generous standard specification level, we are confident buyers will appreciate the outstanding value-for-money proposition," said Rajeev Saxena, CEO of ETGL, in a statement.

AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION

The SE and AR models feature a single-cylinder SOHC 561cc engine. Maximum output is 33,4kW, and 46,5Nm of torque.

Transmission is automatic, which makes it much easier to drive than other ATVs. Both models have a

18l fuel tank, ground clearance of 320mm and seat height of 950mm.

Suspension travel of 220mm in the front and 240mm in the rear ensures easy travelling off-road.

Rider fatigue is also mitigated by the electric power steering, which can be adjusted based on the terrain, and the location of the handlebars, which are situated below the rider's shoulders.

"The Tri-Mode speed-sensitive electric power steering senses the ATV's speed to provide varying levels of assist for the most comfortable ride. Riders can conveniently select their required level (from no assist to minimum assist) for trail riding, and maximum assist for low-speed riding in rough or muddy terrain. The end result is precise steering, easy handling, and a high degree of stability," says ETGL in a statement.

EVEN WHEN GOING DOWN A RATHER STEEP SLOPE, NEITHER THE REAR NOR THE FRONT BRAKE HAD TO BE DEPLOYED

Front and rear hydraulic disc brakes make it easy to move the vehicle up and down steep and uneven slopes.

"The front and rear brakes can be independently applied for varying conditions while armoured brake hoses ensure protection in difficult off-road conditions," the statement says.

Both models have a rear hitch with a braked towing capacity of up to 830kg, and a winch mounted at the front of the ATV that can pull up to 1 360kg. Both models also have a backrest.

The front rack can carry up to 30kg.

The Blade 600 range comprises the only ATVs on the South African market to feature rear-view mirrors, making the



The TGB Blade 600 SE.X EPS 4x4 is a wonderful recreational vehicle, and moves easily over smooth, rugged and uneven terrain.

vehicles not only safer to drive, but easier to use when performing certain tasks.

The AR model comes standard with a cargo bed that can carry up to 200kg. As a result, its dimensions are slightly greater than those of the SE model at 2 500mm x 1 500mm x 1 280mm. It has a dry weight of 503kg, and a wheelbase of 1 450mm.

The SE model features a sporty design, with a streamlined body and high-brightness LED front lights. The SE does not come with a cargo bed, but does offer a rear hitch and winch for towing and pulling.

In addition, the SE has load-carrying racks in the front and rear of 30kg and 50kg capacities respectively, further cementing its place as a leading recreational vehicle.

It has a dry weight of 437kg, making it ever-so-slightly nimbler than the AR model, and a wheelbase of 1 290mm.

The SE also has a rear passenger seat.

TEST DRIVING

Farmer's Weekly was invited to put the AR and SE models through their paces at the Gerotek testing facility in Pretoria.

There were four test stations. The first involved driving the AR model through thick red sand on an even plane. Even after getting (purposely) stuck in the sand, switching from high range to low range and from 2x4 to 4x4, the AR model moved through the sand without any great effort.

The second test involved a speed test. This took place over 300m on an even concrete road, and was aimed at determining the maximum speed

the SE could reach in 100m. The SE clocked in at around 80km/h.

According to ETGL, the AR model can reach a speed of up to 70km/h over 100m. Fuel consumption is around 9l/100km.

In the third test, the AR was tested on a 4x4 track. In low range and in 4x4 mode, the AR went up and down steep rocky slopes without much effort. It also went through muddy water smoothly, without getting stuck or losing power.

In the fourth and final test, the SE model was driven on a 14° downward slope and a 20° upward slope. Even when the vehicle was going down the rather steep slope, neither the rear brake nor the front brake had to be deployed, thanks to

the ATV's engine-braking capacity. The ATV also showed more than sufficient power coming up the 20° gradient.

In most cases, the front-wheel brake on the left handlebar was enough to stop the vehicle. However, on a downward incline, using both the front and rear (right foot) brake offered greater stability.

The Blade 600 range comes with a two-year warranty (unlimited mileage). The TGB Blade 600 SE.X EPS 4x4 starts at R183 500, while the TGB Blade 600 AR EPS 4x4 starts at R195 500.

ETGL's South African dealer network consists of nine dealers nationwide. All spares and parts are available locally. Visit tgbatv.co.za or etgldistribution.com. **FW**



The TGB ATVs include a multi-function LCD screen that is easy to read and offers a digital tachometer and digital speedometer. It also shows the maximum engine speed and the vehicle's average speed.