

Blue Oval's R3bn investment flies the South African flag

Ford SA's announcement that it is investing another R3bn into its production facility in Silverton near Pretoria is great news for the company, the industry and for SA.



At a time when there are so many negatives, it shows a positive level of confidence. It also shows the popularity of Ford's Ranger and Everest models, both of which are built at the facility.

The investment is mainly for the Ranger of course. In 2017, [Ford](#) has sold over 27,000 of them in SA and exported even more, with 5,791 being exported in October alone.

Rangers leave the Silverton plant and head to 148 countries, and demand is increasing.

The investment is mainly for upgrading in order to increase modernisation on the production lines and increase capacity.



Ford SA pumps R3bn into Ranger production, to build Raptor locally

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That future demand will include the new Ranger Raptor, which will not only be the first official Raptor model to come to SA, but will also be the first Raptor to be built in SA when production starts in 2019.

While Ford SA says it is unable to comment, our sources have told us that the Raptor will be based on the upgraded Ranger which is due to be unveiled in 2018.

The revised Ranger will feature new suspension, although Ford international has been so protective of the new setup that for the first time in automotive history (as far as we know) it has camouflaged the suspension on the prototypes.

We are also likely to see the introduction of new EcoBoost engines, an enhanced interior and revised styling.

The changes come as Ford has to take on the upcoming new Mercedes X-Class and Renault Alaskan, as well as the existing Nissan Navara, all of which share the same platform.

The latest Mitsubishi Triton is one of the most comfortable bakkies we have driven and Ford needs to contend with that too. So we expect to hear much more about that car-like comfort stuff when the new Ranger appears. The question is whether those changes will also be transferred into the Everest. So far we have heard nothing, but given that the SUV is based on the Ranger, it would make sense to see it upgraded too.



The Ford Ranger FX4 is a foxy lady

Ilse van den Berg 26 Sep 2017



All of which brings me back to our long-term 2.2 diesel which is one of the models that came off the Silverton production line.

It has continued to do strong work in the urban environment this past month, although unlike Lerato's efforts with the Megane, improving the consumption on the Everest is proving much harder. In fact, it has become a source of debate on the issue of overworked lower capacity engines versus much bigger lumps which can do the work without breaking a sweat. That is a debate for another day.

It could be about to go through its biggest test with us yet though.

With family visiting from overseas, it will spend a considerable amount of time hauling three kids in child seats, four adults and as much stuff as we can squeeze into that small space behind the third row of seats.

Clever packing is going to be the order of the day, but surely this is one of the things the seven-seater Everest was designed and engineered to do. It will be interesting to see how well it copes.

Source: Business Day