

Multipurpose backcountry funmobile

By Sue Mead

Wendy Orthman is bullish on the Nissan Armada. "One of the things that stands out about the Armada is it fits well in suburban life and on pavement," enthused Orthman, as we motored across a picturesque off-road trail in the high country of northern Arizona. We were riding in a special-project version of the 2018 Nissan Armada dubbed the "Mountain Patrol," that has been upfitted as an example of how to expand this eight-passenger SUV's horizons from an everyday soccer-mom-mobile to a family camper.

"When Nissan chose the Patrol name, we were celebrating the heartbeat of this brand, with its longstanding global heritage, that now brings something of value to the US consumer," pointed out the senior manager of Trucks, Outdoor and Brand Communications

for Nissan. "I'm a soccer mom who drives an Armada in my everyday life, so I love to surprise people as I showcase its capabilities beyond pavement."

Nissan calls the Armada Mountain Patrol "the ultimate overlanding family adventure full-sized SUV." The eye-appealing multi-purpose model could be used as an around-town family hauler in the city, an errand-runner for supplies and weekend work duty, or as a summer getaway-mobile to explore the beauty of the backcountry and parklands.

The uniquely-modified Mountain Patrol follows on the heels of Nissan's Titan pickup-based Project Basecamp—created last year as a special-project vehicle built on a stock truck platform—with a collection of add-ons that include a custom exterior body wrap, functional exterior accessories, and a full complement of essential camping necessities. "We've had a lot of success showing our design imagination with show vehicles, like Project Basecamp and Mountain Patrol," said Orthman. Both vehicles were introduced at Overland Expo WEST, held annually at Fort

Tuthill County Park south of Flagstaff.

Stylish and roomy, all Armadas have excellent performance on tap, a refined interior, and advanced technology that includes a suite of available smart safety and security features such as intelligent forward collision warning, intelligent backup intervention, and intelligent around-view monitor. Completely revised for its second generation in 2017, the 2018 version comes in a range of high-content grade levels—SV (starting at \$46,090), SL (\$50,850), Platinum (\$59,190), and Platinum Reserve (\$62,190)—in both rear- and four-wheel-drive configurations (4WD versions add authentic off-road capability for \$2,900).

Inside, Armada combines a premium level of materials with a special emphasis on quietness and quick cooling and heating for passenger comfort. The roomy interior has 40.0 inches of second-row headroom and 41.0 inches of second-row legroom, allowing riders ample stowage and accommodations for gear.

Under the hood is a 5.6-liter V8 engine with a laudable 390 horsepower at 5,200 rpm and 394 lb-ft of torque at 4,000 rpm. It's paired with

a seven-speed automatic transmission with adaptive shift control and downshift rev matching. Towing capacity is rated at 8,500 lbs.

"One thing true off-road enthusiasts understand about the Armada Mountain Patrol is its authentic adventure heritage—the inspiration from over five decades of off-roading credibility," said Brandon White, director, chief marketing manager of Nissan North America, Inc. "For that reason, only minimal modifications were made to the factory Armada drivetrain."

Designed for exploring and camping, the Armada Mountain Patrol has a long list of custom accessories that enhance comfort, convenience, storage and capability. Outside, it wears a unique body wrap, roof-mounted LED light bar, bumper-mounted fog lights and wheel well lighting, while underneath, it features heavy-duty coil-over suspension and extended A-arms that fit 17-inch Icon Bronze Rebound wheels wrapped in 35/12.25/17 Nitto Ridge Grappler tires. Body protection comes from rock sliders, a spare tire swing-away, and custom-fabricated heavy-duty steel bumpers front and rear. Performance modifications for the one-off model include a cat-back exhaust system, to help with extra air to help

cool the engine, and auxiliary fuel storage.

Of note is the four-person Mt Shasta rooftop tent from Cascadia Vehicle Tents that keeps occupants safely above the ground and a little closer to the stars; a Rhino-Rack Batwing awning; and Alps Mountaineering pop-up tent, sleeping bags, and chairs. Katzkin leather seat covers provide a comfortable and plush ride for passengers, while an ARB refrigerator helps keep food cold and fresh.

Other specialized gear includes a Lowrance navigation system, Rugged Radios off-road radio system, Rhino-Rack aluminum BackBone Pioneer tray, ARB pull-out drawer system, Pelican gear cases, Dometic refrigerator/freezer, Otterbox Venture coolers, 12,000-pound Warn Platinum Series winch, rack-mounted MaxTrax vehicle recovery boards, Hi-lift vehicle jack and Rhino-Rack shovels.

"We want to thank everyone who provided input on the design and equipment for this special Armada Mountain Patrol build," added White. "We couldn't be more pleased with the outcome." As a special demonstration model, the Armada Mountain Patrol project vehicle is not for sale, but will tour the road less traveled to various media and outdoor events through the year. ■

KEY FEATURES

- Nitto Trail Grappler Tires : 35 12.50 R17
- Icon Bronze Rebound Wheels
- Rhino Rack Backbone System with Pioneer Tray
- Rhino Rack Shovel
- Hi-Lift Jack
- Baja Designs XL80 Lights
- Baja Designs LP9 Lights
- Baja Designs Light Bar
- Calmini Bumpers
- Calmini Rock Sliders
- Calmini Dropbracket 6-inch Lift
- Icon Coilovers
- Warn Zeon Platinum 12S Winch
- Factor55 Closeloop Winch
- ARB Fridge
- ARG Drawers
- ARB Twin Screw Air Compressor
- CVT Tent
- Rhino-Rack Batwing Awning
- IF Signs Custom Wrap
- Katzkin Seat Covers
- Pelican Professional 1650 Cases
- League Navigation
- Alps Mountaineering pop-up tent, sleeping bags, and chairs

The Mountain Patrol's name is a nod to the rugged Nissan Patrol sold just about everywhere else in the world since 1951.

