

Ford celebrates 100 years of making bakkies

Last week saw the 100th anniversary of Ford Motor Company's Model TT, a small truck based on the Model T car and launched on 27 July 1917.



Over the years, Ford bakkies have been used by farmers, families, soldiers, construction workers, and adventure seekers. It is this versatility, capability and reliability that has propelled the company to so many decades of sales leadership, as shared in this look back through history.

It was the best of times

The year was 1917, and nine years on from the release of the Model T, customer demand was for a vehicle that was tougher and more capable than anything that had gone before. Up stepped the Model TT.

Able to haul a payload of one ton, the TT helped change the way the world worked. Originally sold as a chassis only, with buyers supplying their own body, Ford went on to sell almost 1.3 million TTs until it was replaced in 1928 by the Model A and AA, the latter one of the earliest members of the Ford dynasty of bakkies.



“With vehicles such as these early pickups, Ford began changing the perception of trucks,” says Robert Kreipke, Ford’s Corporate Historian. “Whereas at one time trucks were considered purely work tools, Ford began to evolve them into a much more balanced vehicle for both work and recreational use.”

“These trucks provided inspiration for the later development of vehicles such as the F-Series and Ranger,” said Kreipke.

The tough that Ford built

In 1976, a copywriter for a Ford truck magazine advertisement wrote three simple words: Built Ford Tough, the phrase that would come to epitomise Ford’s commitment to creating strong, capable, safe, and powerful bakkies.

One of the first mass-produced Built Ford Tough vehicles was the Ford Ranger, the company’s first compact bakkie introduced in North America in 1982.

Originally designed and built in the US, Ranger’s reputation as a tough, smart, and capable vehicle quickly caught on, leading it to thrive in a number of diverse markets around the world. In South Africa, Ford first manufactured Ranger in 2001 at the Silverton Assembly Plant in Pretoria.



So while the styling, power, and capability of the Ford bakkie have all changed since the first Model TT rolled off the assembly line a hundred years ago, the company’s core mission to provide vehicles that address and surpass customer demands has remained the same.

Ford facts:

1. The Model A, and subsequently the Model AA, were the first vehicles to sport an early version of the Ford script in an oval badge
2. In 1941, Ford temporarily put a stop to all civilian vehicle production and began producing the first 'general purpose' vehicles – GPs, or jeeps – to assist the Allied effort in WWII
3. The Ranger, which is produced at Ford's Silverton Assembly Plant in Pretoria, is exported to over 148 markets in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The plant underwent a \$9.5m upgrade to its production line earlier this year.
4. The Ford Ranger is the best-selling vehicle in South Africa for 2017. Ford sold 17,014 units in the first half of the year, while a further 25,399 were exported.

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