

Ford's New Ranger ad packs a strong punch

By [Brendan Seery](#)

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I was a bit underwhelmed by the latest Toyota ad for its Fortuner SUV because it seemed "meh", especially on the back of 40+ years of iconic ads done for the South African company by the FCB group before they were fired last year.



That probably primed the pump in my head when I first took in the TV ad for Ford's New Ranger bakkie, launched on the SA market a few months ago. The first time, I saw it, though, I only got the tail end – it seemed as though the New Ranger was towing the sea. What an intriguing concept...

Strong execution

When I finally saw the full ad, it made the Fortuner ad look a bit second class, to be honest. Not a bad vehicle, but the Ranger ad execution had the sort of punch you need if you are, as Ford is, trying to take the fight to Toyota.

Ford has already done ads around the world for this model Ranger and its predecessors, which focus on its toughness. One, for the European market, encourages buyer to "Go break it in", showing an engineer-looking man subjecting his New Ranger to all sorts of abuse from overloading to charging over and through off-road obstacles.

The South African ad adopts a similar stance, by showcasing not only the Ranger's go-anywhere ability, but also its power. The New Ranger is already being talked about among the manne because of the power under the bonnet, courtesy of a twin-turbo diesel and even more macho V6 diesel engine.

How to illustrate that in a commercial? Hook up a two rope to the tow hitch and simply seismically change the very geography of the planet. That's what happens. We see the tow being set up, courtesy of a visual of the Ranger's massive touchscreen display, which features a rear-view camera specifically angled on the tow hitch.

New level of entertainment

Then, the obligatory accelerator flooring, wheel-spinning (if that doesn't say power, I don't know what does), before we see three different Rangers all dragging slices of Mother Earth (and the much needed water) to exactly where they are needed – in a parched community.

It's fantasy, but because of that takes viewers, and possibly buyers, to a new level of entertainment – but also where the salient points about the new bakkie are emphasised and can be appreciated.



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Brendan Seery 20 Mar 2023



The closing shot – of three Rangers parked, along with their pilots, atop a high point in the wilderness somewhere – comes with an appropriate catch line: Unlimit your world in the Next-Gen Ranger.

It's a great piece of work and gets an Orchid from me. And that's always better than a "meh"...

Cheesy marketing

A colleague of mine almost tore their hair out on reading a cheesily obvious bit of copywriting pushing a FlySafair special offer for Easter.

Word for word, here it is: "PICK A FAVOURITE SPOT AND HOP, HOP, HOP! Every bunny needs a break...so where will you be hopping over to this Easter? With over 150 daily flights between Joburg, Cape Town, Durbs, Gqeberha, East London, George, Bloemfontein, Mauritius, and now Zanzibar too, you have so much choice on where to go. From sunny shorelines to the green countryside, to rugged bushveld, to stunning mountain tops to vibrant cities—we can take you

anywhere. Simply visit our website or download our app today for even faster, easier bookings. C'mon, get on board for the most egg-citing time of year! "

The screenshot shows the FlySafair website interface. On the left, there's a promotional banner for "MORE HIP AND HOPPENING EASTER HOLIDAYS FOR EVERYONE" at "DURBAN CANELANDS BEACH CLUB & SPA" starting from "From R2 636". The banner includes a note about per night per person sharing for a five-night stay, with Ts and Cs apply. On the right, the booking search form is visible, featuring tabs for "Flight", "FlyMore", "Holidays", and "My Booking". The "Flight" tab is selected, showing options for "Round-trip" (selected), "One-way", and "Special Assistance". It also includes fields for "Departure Airport" and "Arrival Airport", and date inputs for "Departure" (27/3/2023) and "Return" (27/3/2023). Below these are dropdowns for "Adult" (set to 1), "Child" (0), and "Infant" (0). A checkbox for "Flexible dates? Use the low fare finder" is present, along with a prominent pink "Let's Go" button.

This came in a mailshot to customers, but the silliness was spread across the website, as you can see from the attached screenshot.

I know I run the risk of being labelled a humourless killjoy, but I think this angle and tone just makes you look childish. And if that is the best you can do, FlySafair, then it tells me you should either be ready to bullet your ad copywriters – or the execs who approved it. This is not creative, it is just lame and shows a distinct lack of imagination.

Rather than HOP, HOP, HOP, this should have got the CHOP, CHOP, CHOP.

An Easter Onion for you, FlySafair.

ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.
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