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CARS • DRIVEN

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HiDefinitionLux

The Toyota Hilux has been urbanised to such an extent that it seems too pretty to be dirtied. This may be exactly what the new crop of buyers want but those with even a bit of hankering for some rough stuff would find it a turn-off. What are they to do if they love the brand? Well, they can look to this example for inspiration.

The most obvious casualty of this quite extreme makeover are the bumpers; the full wraparound plastic and colour-coordinated units are junked in favour of heavy-duty metal protectors. The Aussie-made front set, with crashbar and winch, is airbag-certified. The rear one is locally made. It has a reverse sensor (useful for a long vehicle made longer still by a tow-ball) and a warn winch nicely hidden away. The side bars are also made locally. The reinforced look is

nicely matched by the gleaming new wheels.

An interesting feature is where the roll-bar would usually be; there's what appears to be a canvas-wrapped set but this is actually a foldable canopy, the first we have seen. With attached guides to ensure correct alignment, the canopy opens up to offer effective protection against the elements. It is designed to fit well, with ribs to ensure tautness and rigidity. It even has windows with different degrees of openings. An impressive piece of work.

The dynamics of the chassis have been upgraded with the switch to Old Man Emu's system components. They are effective in curing the Hilux of its jiggly and harsh ride, caused by its overly-sprung-and-insufficiently-damped suspension.

The interior has been left alone. For details of the exact fitments, see next page.

PHOTOS BY
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FROM FOUR WHEEL DRIVE EQUIPMENT SDN BHD

The foldable canvas canopy is one of the more innovative ideas to have come along in recent years. This one from Thailand is tailormade for the Hilux. It is well designed and constructed, offering easy-to-reconfigure carrying flexibility in a neat and sturdy package. It is claimed to be water and wind proof up to considerable speeds.

