

by Howard Keeg

➤ Negotiating a steep incline



Viva Las Vigus

The headline for this article is totally inappropriate, as the JMC Vigus, according to the promotional blurb, "is built to withstand and handle all African terrains", and the Las Vegas strip is the very antithesis of what this endeavour represents.

However, I couldn't resist it, so please indulge me.

Taking the promotional claim at its word, I decided to test this hypothesis by giving the Vigus 4x4 SLX 2.4 a rigorous work-out on the diverse roads of the Mabalingwe Nature Reserve in Limpopo, some 30 km. from Bela Bela. And take my word for it, the roads are diverse. The reserve has tar roads, gravel roads, sand roads, and 4x4 roads that range from mild to insane. The Vigus was put through its paces on all these roads, and my report back is pretty complimentary.

The Vigus has a hard suspension, so you feel the bumps on the uneven tarred roads of the reserve, but you appreciate the suspension when you hit the gravel and sand roads, as the ride firms up and compensates for the vagaries of unpaved roads.

All these roads were easily navigated in two wheel drive, which meant that the acid test was going to be the official 4x4 routes, which varied from easy to moderate. Once again, the Vigus did not flinch, navigating a good portion of these roads in two wheel mode, and the balance in 4W High. What to do? The only option was to try the NO ENTRY roads, and then the fun started. Very soon the 4W Low was engaged.

Engaged is a little misleading, as changing driving modes is done with a simple turn of a dial which is situated next to the gearshift.



➤ Up we go

On the "unofficial" roads, the Vigus was fully tested, with a lot of loose rock, and steep inclines. Not much mud, as the reserve was pretty dry, but the loose rocks did provide a challenge, as traction was at times difficult.

The verdict: the JMC Vigus is a capable off-road vehicle, with the only suggestion that better off-road tyres be fitted. Add to this the easy game viewing experience on the sand roads, when you put the vehicle into second gear, in two wheel mode, and you glide along at 12 km/h in leather seated comfort, which is an ideal speed for the eagle eyed game viewers, who very quickly alert you to a sighting.



➤ "Daar's 'n bosluis in my oor"

Back on the national road back to Johannesburg, I had the opportunity to put the Vigus through its on-road paces, and apart from the slightly hard suspension, it was good. Then, the concertina effect near the Olifantsfontein off-ramp required some sharp braking, and no problem. And, at R375 990, the price is extremely competitive.

Thus, if you ask me about my opinion on the vehicle, my answer would be "Viva Las Vigus."



➤ Visiting the Kalahari Oasis bar

➤ Photos courtesy of L. Gould