



LION HEART

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For his initial foray into the world of modified off-road vehicles, Ben Khan stuck to the brand he knows best and built one tough Colorado.





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to improve ride quality, NVH and suspension/handling. This resulted in new engine, body and transmission mounts, a switch to electric steering, tweaks to the electronic traction aids, and an up-size of the front stabiliser bar.

"I work for Holden, obviously, so that was a good starting point, and I really like the Colorado. I think it's [the MY16 update] a vast improvement. The pre-2016 models to the new ones – yeah, a massive difference," Ben reckoned.

It's hard to disagree. The latest incarnation of the Colorado (Ben's is the auto variant) is indeed a noticeable all-round improvement. When combined with the proven 2.8-litre turbo-diesel engine's 147kW/500Nm output (in auto form), you have a solid base from which to build a tough tourer. This is just what Ben has done, with a few surprise choices.

THE LESS-TRODDEN PATH

MOST of us looking to modify vehicles for touring tend to go straight down the aftermarket route. The vehicle manufacturers offer factory accessories, but these are more often than not bypassed by owners in favour of specialist gear. This wasn't the case with Ben's Colorado. Again showing his loyalty to Holden – and with an eye for what looks schmick – Ben rifled through the Colorado's factory accessory catalogue and fitted what we reckon is one of the best-looking factory-supplied front bars. The steel Safari bar fitted to the Colorado offers an integrated factory look that is unobtrusive in appearance while offering increased frontal protection and an improved approach angle. Ben's also ticked the boxes on the factory LED light bar and the steel underbody protection, only stepping outside Holden's accessory list for some rated recovery hooks up front. The result is a tough-looking, functional front-end.

Factory-fitted Safari bar gives a 'standard' look with protection.



Ben chose the Colorado on research and brand allegiance.

IT'S FUNNY how quickly things can change. When Ben Khan first bought this sweet, satin, steel-grey Colorado Z71, the main aim was to 'just' use it as a tow vehicle for his heavily modified Commodore, with the rest of its time for daily runabout duties.

It didn't take long (only a couple of months after purchase) for Ben to view the Colorado as more than just a tow rig, and he started to explore the modification potential of Holden's popular off-road workhorse.

You don't get much more loyal to Holden than working for it and modifying a number of its sedans, so Ben's choice of Colorado Z71 ain't that surprising. However, it wasn't done blindly. His research on vehicles took a while, with the release of the revised Colorado in late 2016 sealing the deal for this passionate General man. Ben chose the revised Colorado due to the increased input by local engineers



Big rubber and lift kit transforms both looks and capabilities.



A host of stereo upgrades lurk within the updated cabin.

The factory accessory theme continues at the rear, with Ben fitting a Holden rear step bar, as well as a snorkel, tow bar, brake controller and rear tub liner. The only itch he has left to scratch is whether to fit a winch, which will mean a change to the current front bar.

“The only thing I don’t like about the Safari bar is that it doesn’t have provision for fitment of a winch. That’s the only downside, otherwise I’m loving it,” he said, adding that he’s not in a huge rush to fit a winch at this point in time.

GETTING HIGH

BEN has modified a number of Commodores over the years, but this Colorado was his first attempt at modifying a 4x4 and, initially, he just had one thing on his mod must-do list: a lift, with big rubber to accompany it.

For the lifted suspension, Ben did a tonne of research to figure out just what he wanted and eventually settled on a complete King Off-Road Racing suspension kit. He then called on the team at Fourbys in Moorooka, Queensland, to do the fitment. The Colorado’s front end copped a three-inch lift, with King Off-Road remote-reservoir shocks and springs. Yep, it’s pretty awesome, but it wasn’t without the need for additional tweaks due to the height increase. Further mods include adjustable ball joints and a diff drop kit.

“It’s just to keep the driveline ‘straight’ so it doesn’t put undue stress on the CVs,” Ben explained. “It just keeps everything straighter, rather than having the CVs on a massive angle.”

Ben reckoned the two-inch lift at the rear was more straightforward, but he still wasn’t quite satisfied with the clearance around the wheels – so two-inch body blocks were fitted.

Rolling stock is a set of Tuff T16 A/T 20x8-inch alloys wrapped in beefy Mickey Thompson Deegan 38 305/55R20 A/T hoops. And, before you look twice, they’re huge. The lift and big rubber combo looks impressive, but how does it perform on- and off-road? Brilliantly, according to Ben.

“I absolutely love it,” he said. “The only small downside with the big tyres is the hum on-road, but you expect that. Suspension-wise, it is fantastic; I cannot rave on enough about

For a first-timer, Ben’s done a cracking job of modifying his Colorado for touring





it. I have had a couple of guys that I work with here that have driven it and they were blown away by it as well.”

THE FAST AND THE FUTURE

BEN’S definitely a man who, once he decides to do something, does it quickly. Once he had decided to “do a bit more to it” it only took him a few weeks of intensive research before he dropped the Colorado off at Fourbys with his wishlist and instructions. Impressively, the team there only took a couple of weeks to finish the project.

“Yeah, the actual job only took them two weeks to do,” Ben said. “There was a bit of to-and-froing, and a couple of bits were added last minute, and it was done.”


Those “couple of bits” include a custom BOSS air compressor with the air tank under the tray and workshop-style quick-release fittings that make it easy to run air tools or re-inflate tyres. The other “bit” was something Ben fitted himself: The custom sound system, which is a mix of brands and components (including a JL Audio HD900 amplifier, TW5 13-inch subwoofer and JL C3-650 rear speakers, combined with Rockford Fosgate Power T4652-S front

speakers) from Ben’s past street machines. Finishing off the interior mods is additional sound-deadening in the front and rear doors and the rear of the cab, plus a Uniden UH8070S UHF radio.

For a first-timer, Ben’s done a cracking job of modifying his Colorado for touring. Now it gives him the perfect excuse to get out and make the most of it, beginning with a number of off-road weekend trips, before tackling a few bigger adventures. And then there’s always those “few more” mods he’d like to include in the future.

“I would love to go higher, but obviously in Queensland that’s not legal. I would also like to put a couple more light bars on it, and maybe a roof rack,” Ben said.

“I have got the next few weekends away planned and that means more 4WDing. I thought I would gradually increase my skill level and then get onto bigger things.”

With this tough modified Colorado to help boost those skills, and knowing Ben’s habit of accomplishing goals quickly, we reckon it won’t be long before Ben and his wife are tackling one of those “bigger things” and heading off on the first of no doubt many epic outback adventures. 

GOOD GEAR

ELECTRICAL

JL Audio HD900 amplifier
TW5 13-inch subwoofer
 JL C3-650 rear speakers
Rockford Fosgate Power T4652-S front speakers
 Uniden UH8070S CB radio
Custom BOSS air compressor

WHEELS AND TYRES

Mickey Thompson Deegan 38
 305/55R20 A/T hoops
Tuff T16 A/T 20x8in alloys

SUSPENSION

King Off Road Racing suspension kit
King Off Road remote-reservoir shocks and springs

Fitment by Fourbys in Moorooka, Queensland.