

Your next adventure awaits in the Jeep Gladiator

From rugged village tracks to open game park roads, the Jeep Gladiator combines SUV comfort with pickup versatility. Spacious, powerful, and packed with smart features, it is built for drivers who want adventure without compromising on everyday practicality.

BY ROLAND D NASASIRA

When it comes to exterior aesthetics, some vehicles appear better suited as sport utility vehicles (SUVs) rather than being converted into pickups. Models such as the Cadillac Escalade, the American Hummer, and the Volkswagen Amarok have sparked this debate among motorists. Some argue that the Amarok shares design similarities with the Volkswagen Touareg, much like Toyota developed the Toyota Surf from the Hilux, with the main visual difference being the enclosed rear section of the Surf.

Another vehicle that arguably looks more natural as an SUV than a pickup is the American Jeep Gladiator, also known as the Rubicon. Jeep's SUV lineup in-

cludes popular models such as the Cherokee and the Wrangler, both known for their distinctive styling and off-road presence. The 2021 Gladiator I test-drove last week, can be easily mistaken for an SUV from its front profile. The biggest difference is its open tray at the rear.

Built for adventure

From its high-profile tyres to its dashboard layout, the Gladiator reflects the rugged character typical of many high-performance American vehicles built primarily for off-road performance.

It comes equipped with two winches for towing, one mounted at the front and another at the rear, enhancing its recovery capability in challenging terrain. The roof can also be unbolted, allowing for

NICHE RIDE

Gilbert Wavamunno, the managing director of Spear Motors Limited, the authorised dealer of Jeep brands in Uganda, says the Gladiator is a double-cabin pickup built on the Jeep Wrangler platform. It is designed as a full-sized pickup that retains the interior cabin space and serious 4x4 capabilities of the Wrangler while offering a pickup bed at the back.

All Jeep models target specific market segments, and the Gladiator exemplifies the brand's ability to combine comfort, utility, and rugged off-road performance.

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an open-air driving experience that is ideal for exploring Uganda's vast game parks. With the roof removed, only the doors remain, giving the vehicle the appearance of a stripped-down adventure machine.

In terms of ground clearance, the Gladiator offers one of the highest ride heights among pickups I have test-driven, making it well-suited for accessing remote villages with uneven and rugged roads. This elevated stance also enhances passenger comfort. Its boxy design creates generous cabin space, allowing both front and rear passengers to enjoy ample legroom.

Rear passengers, in particular, will appreciate that their knees do not press against the front seats, making long journeys more comfortable, especially when seated on the premium leather upholstery.

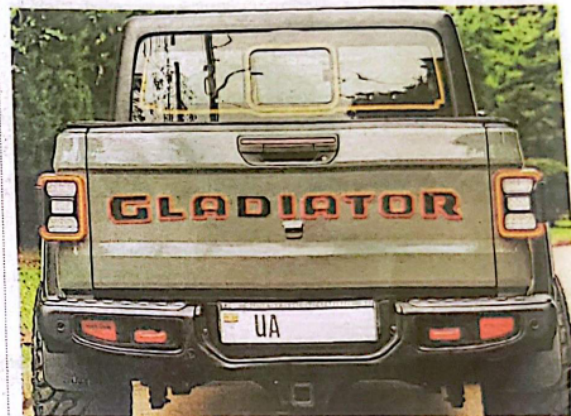
Comfort is further enhanced by well-distributed air conditioning vents that allow both front and rear passengers to regulate airflow. Unlike many double-cabin pickups, the rear cup holders are conveniently positioned behind the centre console shared by the driver and co-driver, rather than being placed in the doors, making them easier to access.

The dashboard features a range of user-friendly controls, but the highlight

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With one of the highest ground clearances among pickups, the Gladiator easily handles uneven, rugged roads, making it ideal for accessing remote vi

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