

Say Cheese.....

Ian Lamming has an epiphany as he drives a behemoth pick-up from Nissan

I WAS blind but now I can see. After driving a number of vehicles fitted with all round cameras I couldn't see what all the fuss was about, nor what I should be looking at.

But then I had a JFK – a what – a John F Kennedy moment. On a dim and distant holiday to Hawaii the tour coach stopped at what could only be described as a rock, because that's what it was.

The guide informed us that if we stared at said rock long enough it would morph into the former and sadly assassinated US president.

As the minutes ticked by, suddenly and without warning, good old JFK loomed from the cliff face, well it did for me anyway. Then I couldn't not see him, if you know what I mean.

It was the same with Nissan's brilliant new Navara. It boasts cameras on every side which project images onto a dash-mounted screen when you press the button inscribed camera or put the pick-up into reverse. So what? Well, cleverly, it is supposed to give you an aerial view of the vehicle.

As the minutes ticked by, nothing, then eureka, now I can't un-see it, an aerial view – it's fantastic. And boy, do you need it with this voluminous vehicle, especially when you are on your hols in the Lake District, a place of bus tours, tourists, drystone walls and very narrow roads.

I lost count of the number of times where I would not have had the confidence to squeeze through the gap using only my judgement from behind the wheel. The cameras allowed me to pilot Navara in

the tightest of places, whether that was reversing, moving through parked cars, or pulled up as close as possible to the fence so its bum was safely tucked in the car park place.

Just knowing the cameras were there to guide me was enough to give me the confidence to drive a gargantuan vehicle around Cumbria in relaxed fashion.

What a great way to spend your jollies, though I do wish I had thought to request a top for the load bay as all the valuables had to be piled on junior in the rear of the twin cab.

The 2.3 litre diesel coupled with a great auto box were the perfect companions, veritable Pas Partouts on a wonderful adventure.

At the launch of new Navara it showed its incredible off road credentials across parts of the Yorkshire Dales that could never be described as roads.

On the asphalt it is just as accomplished and while it dwarfs even the likes of Range Rovers it seems to shrink to manageable proportions once under way.

It is so much more SUV than flatback to drive and inside the cabin is positively posh featuring leather, touch-screen, satnav, connectivity, plugs and sockets. The satnav remains one the best and easiest to use on the market; why can't they all be like that?

If you can't see the many benefits of a modern day pick up as good as the Navara then it is time to remove the blinkers and use the cameras Nissan has kindly fitted.

Fact File

- Nissan NP300 Navara
- Engine: 2.3 twin turbo diesel
- Power: 190PS
- Towing capacity: 3,500kg
- Top speed: 112mph
- 0-62mph: 10.8 secs
- Combined miles per gallon: 40.3
- Transmission: seven-speed automatic
- CO2 g/km: 183

