



Conversion Specialist Project Thirty Four Acclaims Hilux As The Market's "Benchmark" 44 Pick-Up

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The Toyota Hilux has a proven reputation as one of the toughest vehicles on earth, making it an ideal candidate for UK conversion specialist Project Thirty Four to turn it into something even stronger.

The Midlands-based firm has more than 25 years' experience in engineering 4x4s and light commercials for use in extreme conditions, from desert sands to mountain slopes. It favours the Hilux as a pick-up that provides a fundamentally strong platform for its conversion programme, for competition, travel and day-to-day business requirements.

As an example, it has created the Hilux Extra Cab Proto, fitting new suspension and damping system that provides increased ground clearance and a smoother ride over rough and rutted surfaces. Extra underbody protection, a rear step tow bar and heavy duty tyres are also part of the package, together with a bespoke rear body.

Steve Gaunt of Project Thirty Four said: "We use Hilux because it is the benchmark. There is no fragility; it has proved itself over decades of use and evolution. Our company test teams go to Africa and Iceland each year to appraise the vehicles in volatile environments and the reason for most of our new AWD vehicles being Toyotas is their established reliability. We've found that a Toyota is always ready to embark on a 10,000-mile trip with just quick levels check, where with other brands you might need to be a little more cautious.

"Our own vehicles are sourced through Toyota and Lexus Fleet Services and a Toyota would be the only brand we would recommend, unless there was a specific customer requirement it couldn't fulfil."

Project Thirty Four is currently using the Hilux Extra Cab as its development vehicle, with a Hilux Invincible recruited for everyday duties. "Each vehicle was chosen on the basis of transmission requirements, namely a rear axle differential lock on the Extra Cab for off-road use in Africa and an automatic which is preferable for everyday driving in the UK," said Gaunt, who added the prospect of a rear diff lock becoming available later this year will prompt a move to the Invincible for Project Thirty Four's next travel programme.

The platform for Project Thirty Four's development of Hilux is a Commercial Body conversion. Built to EU standards, it has been endurance tested over more than 10,000 miles in two continents. The design makes the vehicle more useable for a wider range of commercial operators, in particular farmers, builders and gamekeepers, thanks to its improved load space and better accessibility.

Neil Broad, General Manager Toyota and Lexus Fleet Services, said: “Project Thirty Four’s independent advocacy of Hilux’s strength and reliability is a great advert for the qualities that make it such a formidable performer. While Project Thirty Four’s specialised conversions are designed to deal with the most extreme driving conditions, the standard vehicle is ably equipped to tackle a great range of everyday business needs, as well being comfortable and well equipped for personal day-to-day use.”

Note to editors: for more information about Project Thirty Four please visit www.projectthirtyfour.co.uk