

Kia Sportage successfully completes Paris-Dakar-Cairo 2000



Only 95 of the original 138 entries including the two Sportages completed the rally in Dakar

CAIRO - Two Kia Sportages, the only North American team entered in the grueling Paris-Dakar-Cairo 2000, finished the event despite the rigours of eighteen days across the North African desert. "Being able to finish the toughest off-road rally in the world was a dream come true," said driver Darren Skilton, the SCORE Class 3 champion. "E- the course tested preparations, the K- flawlessly."

Sportage



It's about time everyone had a well-made car.



"What a long beach!"

Sportage navigator Giorgio Albiero

There we were at the start line in Paris, fender to fender with the toughest 4x4s in the world. Two Kia Sportages ready to take on the gruelling North African desert.

Fully prepared with Sportage's standard rugged ladder frame construction, lots of diet cola and Abba's Greatest Hits, the two teams knew this would be no ordinary day at the beach.

For over 6,000 kilometres the drivers and navigators battled their competitors, the elements and, when they were down to their last cola, each other.

The 2.0-litre, 16 valve, 4-cylinder DOHC engines thrust them full throttle past sand dunes, pyramids and the occasional terrorist threat.

And Sportage's sure-footed agility gave them the confidence to pass galloping camels, notorious for not signalling properly.

Then, after eighteen dust-filled days, they arrived at the finish line in Cairo, a destination that 43 of the original entries would never see.

Upon arrival, one jubilant Kia driver knelt down and kissed the ground. Big mistake in the desert. But the others danced and hugged their dusty Sportages knowing that under that sand-covered, but stylish exterior, beat the rugged heart of a truck.

And those same tough-as-a-camel qualities are yours in every Sportage.

While certain modifications were made to cope with desert conditions (air fresheners, for example) even more impressive modifications prepare Sportage for Canadian conditions.

There's power steering, power windows, power locks and dual outside power mirrors. And it features dual front airbags and driver's knee airbag, just in case you do happen to meet up with a camel going AWOL from a local zoo.

There's even a theft deterrent system that lets you sleep like the pharaohs at night.

All this for under \$21,000.

Which is pretty good for an SUV that's way more than just a car dressed up like a truck. And it stands to reason that if a Sportage can arrive safely after crossing the North African desert, it'll probably get you to your bowling tournament in one piece.



It's about time everyone had a well-made car.



HOW TO PACK FOR THE DESERT

Power Train

Engine Type	Inline 4-cylinder, iron block and aluminium head
Displacement	1998 cc
Valve Gear	DOHC, 4 valves per cylinder
Transmission	5-speed manual 4-speed electronically controlled automatic
FWD System	Part-time, 2-speed transfer case

Body and Chassis

Layout	Front engine, 4-wheel drive
Front Suspension	Double-wishbone, coil springs with anti-roll bar
Rear Suspension	Three bar links and panhard rod with coil springs
Steering	Recirculating ball, power assist
Brakes	Power-assist vented front disc, rear drum
Tires	P205/75 R15 steel belted radials