

Toyota's Urban Cruiser ad ignites wunderlust

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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It's that time of the year when the thoughts of many people turn, not to love but to the end-of-year holidays...and for many that means a road trip.



I love road trips and have explored more of this country and our neighbours than most people. It's made me realise that this is where a car – no matter what it is – is the facilitator for many happy family memories. It was so with us when we were newlyweds, when the kids were small and remains so even after they've left the house.

Wanderlust

These days, the ubiquity of social media means you can instantly share those memories with your followers and travel pics have become some of the most posted images on apps like Instagram.

Toyota's new ad for its Urban Cruiser small SUV speaks to all of those things: the itchy feet wanderlust that makes you want to get "on the road again", the need to find great scenic spots to show the world what a blast you are having and, of course, why the car you use can make your dreams come true.

Built around the slogan “go find your fun”, the ad shows your typical target market couple – young and upwardly mobile, looking for a bit of fun. They’re impulsive and happy to take the road less travelled because it might produce “gram-able” surprises.

Yet, they won’t be completely out there on their own because, as the ad shows, the top range Urban Cruiser are compatible with the Android Auto app, which means your phone’s maps and guidance can work through the car’s infotainment system.

That’s a clever piece of story telling which at the same time showcases a feature of the car and there were plenty of others in the ad which do the same thing. That’s smart marketing because you are looking at product intrinsics at the same time you’re building the emotional dream.

Naturally, all the places they visit- from the mountains to the sea, feature in their social media posts and get their friends and followers to compare...and presumably get jealous.


The locations – in the unspoiled beauty of the Western Cape, it seems to me, are also chosen to emphasise what the Urban Cruiser can do in terms of opening up your world. It’s also a great reminder about how beautiful our country is.

The ad would have got me planning my own road trip – at least if I hadn’t already done so already and arranged everything for a trip through the Karoo to Knysna in December.

Orchid to Toyota for effective advertising... and you can see that through the monthly sale figures for the Urban Cruiser.

Rugby fever

Now that the Boks are back home, the wave of rugby fever will probably not abate for a while. So, the opportunity is still there for the cynical to do a bit of “ambush” advertising and capitalise on the emotion by linking their product to the Boks, even though they are not official sponsors.

“ For [#BokFriday](#) we’ve just dressed Paris in the unofficial Bok colour  [#Sixty60](#)
pic.twitter.com/7gm2OwuQrq— Checkers Sixty60 (@Sixty60_Tweets) [October 27, 2023](#) ”

There’s been plenty of that, but the most egregious hijacking of the sporting achievement of Siya and the whole SA Rugby team was done on Monday night by none other than our President, Cyril Ramaphosa.

He used the opportunity provided by the triumph to produce a thinly-veiled marketing spot for the ANC. No doubt with an eye on next year’s election, Ramaphosa droned on and on about how wonderful things are... and not a lot about the ability,

discipline and unity among the Bok squad, all of which should serve as an inspirational template not only for the government, but for all South Africans.

Because politics at its heart is a form of marketing, Ramaphosa gets an Onion for trying to steal the valour of the Boks and bask in their reflected glory.

Another cynical piece of marketing was executed by Checkers Sixty60, which blasted social media ahead of the cup final, with claims that “with a little creativity, Checkers Sixty60 today dressed Paris in the unofficial Bok colour.”

What they didn't say – other than the tiny oblique hint about creativity – was that the images they posted, purporting to be billboards in the French capital, had been Photoshopped.

Advertisers must be very careful with this sort of subtle manipulation because many people will take it at face value. And it's going to become even worse with the advent of artificial intelligence.

An Onion, then for Checkers Sixty60 for not playing completely open cards. What is annoying is that there was no need for this sort of subterfuge. The brand did actually have a Sixty60 branded motorbike cruising around Parise, complete with delivery box...which was quite funny and clever.

ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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