

# Sporty model takes to the hills

Lerato Matebese joined other media colleagues to battle against some of the best drivers in the country in Knysna

**R**ENAULT has added more variants to its Megane range in the form of the GT line models. Just as other manufacturers have their own go-fast styling accessories list — think Audi S-line or Mercedes AMG — Renault has joined the ranks with a two-pronged model approach.

While the previous GT model was available only in five-door hatch form, the current model comes in both three-door coupé and five-door hatch styles.

So what does the GT line entail, you may be wondering. Well, foremost you get a sportier silhouette than the garden variety models, which includes different front and rear-bumper embellishments, 17-inch wheels and sportier side sills. The interior also continues the theme with sportier GT-line emblazoned seats, aluminium-look pedals and RS type dials, save for the yellow tinge. I am of the opinion that the upgrade has been



done tastefully and does much to steer away from mimicking the RS design, which was unfortunately the case with the previous GT model.

"The unprecedented success of the thrilling new Megane RS points to a healthy market for sporty versions of our models. Therefore, the launch of the GT Line expands this aspirational sporting character and demonstrates that driving enjoyment can be affordable," says Xavier Gobille, Renault SA MD.

Based on the Dynamique models and powered by the smooth 1.4 TCe turbo-charged engine pushing out 96kW and 190Nm via a six-speed transmission, both models that we drove from PE international Airport to Knysna proved to be more than adequate for the trip. Sure, the suspension is a touch on the soft side but it is surprisingly comfortable and will probably be sufficient for most buyers. However, I felt that 18-inch wheels would be more suitable from a cosmetic point of view.

Other than that I found the model offers decent levels of driver enjoyment.

Standard specification counts a built in Carminat Tom Tom satellite navigation system, the first in a car to offer live traffic updates. You also get cruise control, USB and Bluetooth connectivity, and dual climate control.

Meanwhile, the company used the opportunity to launch its second model in the Gordini range — the Clio RS Gordini — following last year's launch of the diminutive

Twingo RS Gordini. The RS Gordini continues with the exterior theme of a blue hue and twin white stripes. Under the bonnet beats the same high-revving 2.0/ powerplant with 147kW and 215Nm. It comes equipped with the Cup chassis, which simply means leech-like grip and endless fun.

The target market is said to be those seeking individuality over and above performance. So the typical buyer will probably have all the performance, but not necessarily exploit it. That there seems



Far left: The Clio RS Gordini packs a nostalgic punch. Left: GT line styling gives the Megane more individuality. Below: Deon Joubert took the 'Bratpack' honours in the hill climb.



meander through the course to qualify for the climb. The top 10 were chosen to compete up the hill below the Simola Golf Estate and the quickest top five were then chosen to compete for the final leg. Ashley Oldfield, of TopCar magazine, emerged the winner, posting a 53.4-second time to complete the 1,9km sprint in a Clio RS Gordini.

The Clio RS Gordini is the second instalment in the Gordini product line-up in SA.

Although there has not been mention of the Megane RS joining the ranks, I have a distinct feeling that it will be joining the fray in the not-too-distant future.

Prices for the Clio RS Gordini were not given, explaining that the car has not been launched officially to the market as yet.

Pricing for the Megane GT line, which includes a five-year/100 000km service plan and five-year/150 000km warranty, is R249 900 for the hatch and R259 900 for the coupé.

to be a market for that sort of thing has been echoed by most major market players.

Then there is the Knysna Hill Climb, now in its second year and fertile ground for hordes of performance-car owners to prove their mettle. The event is becoming one of the biggest dates on the local motorsport calendar. With man and machine being subjected

to the ultimate test as they race against the clock up a winding road to post the quickest time, it certainly is a spectacle to behold.

From modified bangers to race-prepped high-end sports cars, there was no shortage of glitzy sheet metal. Being part of the media contingent this year, the Twingo RS Gordini was the chosen weapon and we were asked to