

Utility Vehicles—Then And Now

(NAPSA)—Utility vehicles continue to turn skeptics into believers when they see what these machines deliver in work performance.

In 1987, John Deere created the all-terrain AMT for farmers wanting a machine with hauling capabilities of a small truck but the maneuverability of an ATV. To overcome initial skepticism, a number of John Deere dealers asked select customers to test these new machines on their farms. When it came time to retrieve the AMTs, many customers didn't want to give them up. Soon after, the AMT quickly found favor with contractors, landscapers, hunters and other material transporters.

Imagination Fuels Innovation

These early adapters realized the scope and potential of these machines, and their feedback prompted some of the innovations that were soon to follow. Customers now needed a machine that was more durable, more powerful and more functional than the AMT, so in 1992, John Deere responded again with a machine that essentially reshaped the utility vehicle market. Inspired by its tough, rugged design, overall appearance and ability to maneuver around in swampy, off-road conditions, the new utility vehicle was dubbed the Gator.

Redefining The Utility Vehicle

Contrary to the AMT, the Gator was built with two front wheels instead of one for enhanced stability. The Gator's side-by-side operator station had car-like features and revolutionary styling. As the popularity continued to grow, engineers at John Deere were vigilant on improving the core performance of the Gator. For the next 10 years, enhancements included increased ground clearance, a wider frame and fully independent suspension.



From a humble beginning, utility vehicles have grown to become the hottest in outdoor power.

Gators Grow Bigger And Smaller

By 2004, two new categories were introduced to the lineup: the Gator Compact Series and the Gator High-Performance Series.

The light-duty compact was created with the homeowner in mind—these vehicles are easy to maneuver and store, while maintaining tough performance standards. The heavy-duty Gator High-Performance Series is built for true commercial-grade work, letting customers pull, tow and haul more than they could before.

New Look To An Old Faithful

In 2005, the original Gators were replaced with a new generation of models rightly called the Gator Traditional Series. These machines are now faster (top ground speed of 20 mph) and more powerful than the previous generation of Gators, while also offering improved braking capabilities, increased payload and enhanced operator comfort. More than 180 attachments are available, making them more functional and versatile than before.

The Next Generation Of Performance

Today, a large customer base is looking for a utility vehicle that delivers exceptional crossover performance between work chores and trail riding. Responding to customer demand, John Deere introduced the new Gator XUV 4x4 for 2007.

“The Gator XUV is designed for customers who like to work hard and play hard with their vehicles,” explains Kevin Lund, utility vehicle group product marketing manager for John Deere.

“The Gator XUV is a true crossover vehicle, combining heavy-duty work performance with all-terrain capabilities,” Lund adds. “We’ve improved ride quality, power and acceleration, while maintaining the stability, safety and quality that John Deere is known for. One test drive is all it takes to truly appreciate the ride quality, power and performance of the XUV.”

The Gator XUV 4x4 is not the end, but a beginning of a new chapter in the evolution of utility vehicles. And as time has shown, no matter what you buy a utility vehicle for, it will do far more and far better than you think it will.