

Special points of interest:

- 76mm Shock body
- 50mm internal bore and piston
- 20mm Double chromed shaft
- 14mm mounting pins
- 2.5mm Outer shock tube wall thickness
- High temp oil filled
- Comes in standard length or 50mm (2") longer

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The Shock of it!!

The day has finally come where my spine could take no more.

Spine? I hear you thinking, What's that got to do with a shock?

Well until recently my spine was just about the only effective shock on our 2007 Defender Puma. Taking the daily brunt of some badly surfaced roads in Sydney.

The defender has some 64,000km's clocked up and not all of them easy. The ride in the defender had become harsh and the cornering at times a little hairy.

So the decision was made to replace the shocks (and front springs due to the weight of the bar and winch).

Not wanting to remortgage the house or give up my first born I was looking for a reasonable shock for a reasonable price. I have heard many times before you get what you pay for, but having pro-comp long travel shocks on my discovery for some years and being more than happy with its performance I was no stranger to the cheaper less popular shock.

I then got chatting with Rovacraft Victoria only to be shown an expedition shock made by a company called TerraFirma, TerraFirma meaning "The Earth"

I had heard good things from the UK about this TerraFirma product, but had not heard of anyone fitting them in Australia.

So I figured I would be your guinea pig.

My first words to you are, Don't be put of by the glitzy paint. A friend of mine who had seen them on the internet had quickly decided they looked cheap due to its glitzy grey armor. I can assure you if feel was anything to go by, this feels like a very well put together product.

The shock body is a big 76mm with 14mm mounting pins (the largest pins possible to fit the original land rover mounting points).

The internal piston is 50mm in size, 20mm short of a

Koni raid but at literally a quarter of the price. The shaft is a big 20mm 's and double chromed and the mounting points are fully welded. The shock uses like many, a high temperature oil but coupled with the large shock body this helps to keep the internal workings cooler while keeping up the maximum dampening performance.

The shock is by no means a light weight though, probably weighing close to one and a half times more than the defenders original shock, this for some may be a concern.



Above: Old spring out ready for a new spring and shock going in.

Below: The TerraFirma big bore shock fitted to the rear of my defender



I'm by no means a shock expert all I'm doing here is giving you my account on a shock not readily used in Oz in defenders.

Articulation



Defender flexed on the embankment outside the house

Well as you could come to expect with a +2 shock they performed very well on the embankment outside my house. The car fortunately for us was not on the highest part of the embankment when the spring decided to pop out for lunch. Woops I should of remembered that it was +2 shocks fitted to the car before we flexed it up.

The shock still had some more left in it., and we probably could and should have pushed it further to see, however by this time my partner Ian had given birth and was panicking that the spring was now hanging out 3 inches below were it was supposed to be sat.

In all fairness to my partner though my cars are set up to dislocate where his aren't. Ian had also spent the morning fitting the front springs and shocks to the car and after the swearing heard from within the house while fitting the front drivers side spring, I think putting the spring back in was the last thing he wanted to do.

Have you ever fitted a front drivers side spring to a defender puma before? If you haven't well have fun with that like most things land rover, forcing is required.



So I now need to consider tying the springs in or perhaps fit a relocation block which sits on the spring that may possibly allow an airbag to seat within the coil.

This bit I haven't thought out yet (can you tell), as I do have airbags to fit

“ Woops should of remembered that it was +2 shocks fitted to the car before flexed it up”



The TerraFirma front shock next to the partially extended original defender shock

My only concern with this little test was the angle of which the shock bolt sat and the strain placed on the bush. This could just of been deceiving due to the large natural rubber bush the shock has, making the angle look more extreme then it was however we never pushed the car either.

Lets not forget though that this shock is an expedition shock which has been designed specifically for the heavy ladened land rovers, which tour with large amounts of heavy gear even up top. So the need for the extra travel for me is



more of a bonus than a must have.

On the Road

The shocks performed OK on road handling has improved a lot since changing to these shocks. However the manufacturer claims because they are an expedition shock that when un-laden it gives “sports like handling” Well I hate to break this too you but other than the general handling being improved there is no miraculous sports like



handling. The defender already has very limited body roll when it comes to cornering. The defenders I have

owned and driven all corner very flat, it would be interesting to see whether the handling would however be improved on a discovery.

Although I couldn't say for sure I think they would.

The general ride on the defender with the shocks fitted is a good one (although a little unfair to judge comfort with the fact I have fitted heavier duty springs to the front of the car) The bumps in some of our not so good roads are still evident however they have certainly been smoothed out somewhat, and the jolts the car took from some of these harsh bumps and pot holes in the road have disappeared or become much less noticeable. Over some of the harsher parts of the road I would often watch my dash put up a violent

episode making it difficult to hear anything, thankfully though this has also reduced a lot with the better dampening.

On the Dirt and corrugations



Well we were impressed with the handling of the shocks on the dirty. The Terrafirma shocks handled the dirt well! They definitely smoothed out the ride a lot more and although they are not the quickest responding shocks we have had they did handle the pot holes very well and reduced a lot of feed back through the steering wheel on the corrugations.

The corrugations we encountered recently on our trips were not enough to test these shocks to their full extent but it gave us a reasonable idea.

“We were impressed with the handling of the shocks on the dirt”

Pulling the trailer

The performance of the shocks on and off the road while the trailer was attached did not change in performance much at all. The trailer does have a reasonable nose weight and therefore does bare down a little on the back of the defender. This however if anything improved the ride slightly. I do think these shocks do prefer a little weight on them to make them work, and was surprised at how well they seemed to cope while towing a heavy trailer. Initially we thought it was because the road seemed graded as the ride was fairly smooth. So on taking the trailer off took it down the tracks behind our place that we know are bumpy, and much to our delight the ride didn't get worse and remained the same.



Summary....



So to sum up!!

I think these shocks are worth a go if your looking for a good all-rounder that doesn't break the bank.

It's hard to be able to predict the longevity of this shock especially after subjecting them to some punishing and unforgiving corrugations, so only time will tell if this shock is really up to the task or not. I for one wont hold back when we head out towards the cape next year.

I have confidence these shocks will take me there its whether they will still be performing when we come out at the other end.

Do I think they will? Yes I do.

So just to also reiterate....

I have stated at the beginning I'm not a shock expert and I'm sure that would be evident to some people reading this report. However its just an honest account of my feelings towards the Terrafirma shock on my car.

I'm planning on doing a follow up report on the Terrafirma's once we have had them on for a few thousand kilometres and put them through some tougher rougher stuff so stay tuned.

Thanks for reading!!

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