

Tough elegance

4x4 diesel half-ton in premium trim

BY JOE SAGE

Though no strangers to diesel powertrains and certainly no strangers to building the F-150—the best-selling vehicle of any type in America for decades—Ford has finally merged the two. They have also been optionally furnishing rugged pickups with increasingly elegant trims and features for a number of years. This F-150 Turbo Diesel in top Platinum trim incorporates both these trends.

Diesel engines have devoted fans for a number of reasons—for them, the only way to go. For those who consider all possibilities, diesel's main advantages are prodigious torque and generally higher fuel economy. (Diesel fuel was once cheaper at the pump, too, but that advantage has largely evaporated with the cost of improved formulas and the opportunity that comes with popularity.)

Choosing an F-150 powertrain can be complex, but that's the reason there are choices. It has only been a few years since their offer of an EcoBoost six-cylinder was a gamble, in a beef-and-brawn segment that had long had a V8 image. But sales were startlingly strong from the get-go. F-150 offers two EcoBoost V6 engines—a 325-hp 2.7L (standard) and a 375-hp 3.5L. (There's a 450-hp high-output version of the 3.5L available on Raptor

and top trim Limited.) An entry F-150 is also available with a 290-hp naturally aspirated 3.3L V6. And there is indeed still a 395-hp 5.0L V8.

The new Power Stroke 3.0L V6 turbo diesel has just 250 hp, but you won't much notice this—except at the pump, where the diesel expects to beat all the others, as independently measured or forecast to date (EPA numbers are pending)—because of all its torque. The turbo diesel's 440 lb-ft outperforms the base V6, the smaller EcoBoost V6 and even the V8 (at 265, 400 and 400, respectively). The 3.5L EcoBoost, however, beats the diesel on torque (at 470 lb-ft standard or 510 high output).

The diesel is pricier than any of the gasoline trucks. The engine adds \$3000—and is only available in three upper trims (Lariat through Platinum).

The high-torque diesel has an 11,400-lb tow rating, beaten by the 3.5L EcoBoost (and virtually tied with the V8's 11,600). But the diesel's full torque is on tap by just 1,750 rpm—great for acceleration and highway cruising for anyone, but indispensable for some specific hard core tasks—say a rancher or contractor powering out of deep mud with a heavy trailer. Of course, either may be more likely to go for an F-250, -350 or -450 with up to 34,000 pounds of tow capacity for, say, sixteen head of cattle. If your theoretical needs approach this on a lighter scale—say hauling your boat out of a lake during a muddy flash flood—the F-150 turbo diesel fills a gap not filled before. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE.....	3.0L Power Stroke V6 Turbo Diesel
DRIVETRAIN.....	4x4
HP/TORQUE.....	250 hp / 440 lb-ft
TRANS.....	electronic 10-spd w tow/haul, sport modes
SUSPENSION.....	F: indep double-wishbone w coil-over shocks, stamped lower control arm, stblzr bar R: wide-track Hotchkiss design w two-stage variable leaf springs & outboard-mounted shocks
STEERING.....	electric power-assisted w drift control
BRAKES.....	power, vented front & rear discs w 4-whl ABS
WHEELS/TIRES.....	20" polished alum / 275/55R20 A/T
BED.....	5.5 ft
LENGTH/WHEELBASE.....	231.9 / 145 in
HEADROOM (F/R).....	40.8 / 40.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R).....	43.9 / 43.6 in
TOW CAPACITY.....	11,200 lb
GCWR.....	17,100 lb
FUEL CAPACITY.....	23.0 gal (36.0 avail)
MPG.....	target: 30 mpg EPA est

BASE PRICE (gasoline).....	\$57,910
3.0L POWER STROKE V6 TURBO DIESEL.....	3000
PRICE: TURBO DIESEL.....	\$60,910
RUBY RED METALLIC.....	395
20" POLISHED ALUMINUM WHEELS.....	incl
PREF EQUIP GROUP 701A: PLATINUM SERIES: incl Group 700A package (a list a mile long including wood trim, B&O PLAY premium audio, voice nav, fade-to-off lighting and more), plus tech package, 360-degree camera w split view, active park assist, adaptive cruise-stop-go-pre-collision & pedestrian detect, tailgate step.....	2540
3.55 ELECTRONIC LOCK REAR AXLE.....	470
TRAILER TOW PACKAGE.....	995
PRO TRAILER BACKUP ASSIST.....	395
WHEEL WELL LINER.....	180
SPRAY-IN BEDLINER.....	495
DESTINATION CHARGE.....	1395
TOTAL.....	\$67,775

