

Sierra lineup offers plenty of choices

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Let's start with exterior changes that are, granted, more evolutionary than revolutionary— a more prominent grille, more aerodynamic mirrors, other new trim tweaks, and new standard, single projector headlights instead of the stacked headlamps of the Silverado.

An aluminum hood cuts weight by 8 kg (17 lb) and other aluminum suspension components complement new lightweight wheels paired with low-rolling-resistance tires on many of the models.

Delve deeper under the skin and we come to the three new EcoTecc3 engine choices shared with Silverado – a 4.3-litre V6, a 5.3-litre V8 and a 6.2-litre V8. All three engines feature aluminum heads and blocks, standard direct injection, continuously variable valve timing and GM's Active Fuel Management that seamlessly switches to fuel-sipping four-cylinder operation (yes, even the V6) during cruising conditions.

The 2014 Sierra begins with a base 4.3-litre EcoTec3 V6 (285 hp, 305 lb/ft) that offers the most torque of any standard V-6 in the segment, with tow ratings up to 3,266 kg (7,200 lb) - 227 kg (500 lb) more than the most capable Ford F-150 3.7-litre and 318 kg (700 lb) more than a Ram 1500 3.6-litre.

The 5.3-litre EcoTec3 V8 (355 hp, 383 lb/ft) is a \$1,125 option. GM boasts that this V8's 8.7 L/100km highway (2WD) fuel economy rating offers the best fuel economy of any V-8 pickup, and beats the fuel economy estimates of the Ford Eco-Boost V-6.

The new 6.2-litre EcoTec3 V8 (est. 420 hp, 450 lb/ft), enabling a 5443 kg (12,000 lb) maximum towing capacity for Sierra 1500, expected to attain the highest rating in the class, will come available later in the year for a premium yet to be determined.

All three engines translate power through six-speed automatic transmissions with Cruise Grade Braking, a feature that automatically downshifts the transmission on downgrades, similar to engine braking on big rigs.

We tried this out while towing in the mountains. On a downhill run, you simply stab the brake pedal lightly and the transmission holds that speed down the rest of the slope, saving brake wear.

But when you do need the brakes, Duraflex brake rotors, with a hardened and strengthened surface to reduce corrosion,



The 2014 Sierra's new gauge cluster with six gauges and a 4.2-inch color Driver Information Center showing vehicle status information, a trip computer and other information, such as radio and navigation.

Photo General Motors
are expected to last twice as long as conventional rotors and provide quieter braking with less vibration.

We've mentioned engine choices but that's only the beginning of the Sierra selection list which includes Regular, Double (extended) and Crew Cabs, 4X2 or 4X4, short boxes, regular boxes or long boxes (depending on models), and four trim levels – Sierra (\$31,615), Sierra SLE (\$36,995), Sierra SLT (\$44,515) and Sierra Denali (\$TBD).

There's no extra charge for varying box sizes and 4WD adds \$3,760 - \$4,565 depending on the model.

With that much selection, it takes some time to run everything off the assembly line. Currently, GM Canada's website shows only Crew Cab models available in three trim levels, which makes sense when you consider that Crew Cabs make up 60 per cent of all Sierra sales. Regular cab models, Double cabs and Denali versions will debut

later in the year along with the 6.2-litre V8 engine mentioned earlier.

Our testing was limited to Crew Cab models and, specifically, we drove a 2014 Sierra SLE 1500 4WD Crew with the 5.3-litre V8.

There are too many other items to detail here – new cargo box management and illumination, technologies that include Forward Collision Alert, Lane Departure Warning, Hill Descent Control, Trailer Sway Control, Park Assist with rear camera that aids trailer hookup, a new Driver Alert Seat with selectable audio or vibrating warnings, the list goes on and on.

And with three new powertrains, varying trim levels and configurations, along with an updated cabin and a full suite of available amenities and driving technologies, the 2014 GMC Sierra 1500 lineup offers pickup truck intenders plenty of choices to choose from.



The 2014 Sierra comes available with 4WD and, as tested here, with an offroad suspension package featuring Rancho brand shocks, underbody shield, 18-inch machined aluminum wheels and more.

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