

# Taurus SHO packs plenty of pleasant surprises

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Ford's latest lineup of EcoBoost engines finds a replacement for displacement with turbocharging.

In this particular case, The SHO utilizes twin turbochargers, instead of a larger single unit, reducing the 'turbo lag' often associated with earlier-generation turbos, delivering a linear flow of power across a broad torque band from 1,500 to 5,500 rpm.

Another key feature of this EcoBoost V6 is a direct injection system that improves throttle response, reduces cold start emissions and even benefits fuel economy.

Ford rightfully boasts of 'V8 power without compromise to V6 fuel economy' but, of course, one hand giveth and one hand taketh away, in this case negating some of the fuel savings with a premium octane recommendation.

Taurus SHO engine power is channeled smoothly through a six-speed SelectShift transmission that allows normal automatic operation or driver-controlled manual shifts via the tucked-in steering wheel paddles.

All-wheel drive is standard on the SHO, and this sophisticated torque-sensing system automatically puts power to the wheels with the best traction, adding a sense of all-weather security to its high-performance traction abilities.

The 2011 Taurus SHO has a few other performance tricks up its sleeve, including an Electric Power Assist Steering (EPAS) system.

This electrically powered system was designed for responsive road feel but it also makes a minor contribution to fuel economy due to the lack of parasitic drag off the engine. A firm ride and confident handling come courtesy of a sport-tuned suspension featuring unique shock absorbers, springs, stabilizer bars and a multilink SR1 rear suspension design.

With all that performance technology packed into the car, you'd expect a high level of standard equipment as well.

And you'd be right.

Pretty well everything included in the top-of-the-line Limited AWD version



A leather-wrapped interior features Miko suede inserts on massaging 10-way powered seats along, a choice of seven ambient lighting colours, plenty of elbow room and a host of standard and optional luxuries.

makes it into the SHO along with the performance enhancements — things like a 390-watt home theatre-style SONY audio system, a rear view camera, blind spot sensors, a power rear sunshade, seven-colour ambient lighting and a whole lot more.

Options include adaptive cruise control and collision warning with brake support and a voice-activated Navigation System with a right-inch touch screen and 10GB of digital hard drive storage to bolster the audio system. The Taurus SHO can be personalized further from the accessory list with dual DVD headrest screens and other assorted

bells and whistles.

And all of these features accent a roomy, full-size interior with leather-trimmed 10-way power adjustable seats with Miko suede inserts.

And, lest you forget you're in first class accommodations with a serious performance slant, the SHO accelerator and brake pedals are trimmed in aluminum, the console, instrument and door panels are marked with SHO-specific aluminum appliques and SHO branding is inscribed on the floor mats and instrument panel.

Now that you're more familiar with the qualities of the Taurus SHO, you

might spot a few hints of both the beauty and the beast within but, as Ford puts it, 'the key element of the authentic SHO formula is the subtlety of its unique exterior design cues'.

Like the standard 20-inch Michelin high-performance tires on premium painted wheels, discreet badging, a slightly different grille, a subtle spoiler on the decklid and twin chrome exhaust tips peaking out from under its skirts.

My tester was wrapped in Kona Blue Metallic, a new colour for 2011 and, some of the 2012 models now appearing at dealers will have other minor packaging changes for a new year.

Ford has announced more significant changes for the upcoming 2013 Taurus lineup — a thrifty 2.0-litre EcoBoost four-cylinder version, more power for the regular model's V6 and handling tweaks for an upgraded SHO.

For now, 2011 SHO models, as tested here, seem to be the best deal, listing for about \$4,000 less than the 2012 versions.

The Taurus SHO does not come cheap but it does come complete, with all the roomy utility of a full-size sedan, with a long list of included luxuries and amenities, and with enough power and handling potential to satisfy even the most dedicated performance enthusiast.

Yeah, this 'sleeper' might surprise the car in the next lane.

It will definitely surprise you.

## Ford Taurus SHO 2011 at a glance

**BODY STYLE:** full-size performance sedan

**DRIVE METHOD:** front-engine, all-wheel drive.

**ENGINE:** 3.5-litre Super High Output (SHO) twin-turbocharged V-6 EcoBoost (365 hp, 350 lb/ft)

**FUEL ECONOMY:** 12.4/8.1L/100km (city/hwy)

**CARGO:** 569 litres

**PRICE:** \$44,199

**WEBSITE:** www.ford.ca



Under the hood, the 2011 Taurus SHO hides a Super High Output (SHO) 3.5-litre twin-turbocharged V-6 EcoBoost engine making 365 hp at 5,500 rpm and 350 lb/ft of torque peaking at 3,500 rpm while offering a reasonable fuel economy rating of 12.4/8.1L/100km (city/hwy).



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