



The 2012 Ford Focus is available in a four-door sedan or five-door hatchback (SEL shown). Both are the same as Focus models sold around the world.

Ford reinforces its Focus on compact cars

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When I did a First Drive of the 2012 Ford Focus last year I made sure that any subsequent road test would be thorough and for a good reason.

I won't bore readers with the story yet again, but I once owned a 2001 Ford Focus that was, in a word, terrible.

So this time around I spent not one week but two, driving a SEL and a Titanium.

As part of the 'new' Ford strategy of 'One World' cars, we get the same 2012 Focus available around the globe. Now it is made in Michigan, not Mexico, which was, in my opinion, part of the problem with the first generation.

My 2001 Focus besides being mechanically weak had odd styling. Not bad mind you, but odd with ellipses competing with straight lines for visual at-

tention.

The 2012 Focus was styled by Morey Callum, an old acquaintance, who keeps coming up with fresh new designs. As head of Ford styling for the Americas, Callum has introduced what he calls 'kinetic design' on the new Focus.

When I attended the initial press launch last year, Callum was in attendance and described the overall look as starting with a striking front end with a very pronounced beltline running from just behind the front wheel well to the rear making it look taut and fun to drive.

But there is more to it than that.

The new Ford design language is also highly aerodynamic. For instance the drag coefficient on the 2012 Focus is 0.297 compared to 0.320 for the current model.

There are many contributing factors to this such as a steeply raked windshield, but a key is the grille. Using new active grille shutters, they close when

airflow to the radiator is not required. This has the added bonus of improving aerodynamic efficiency at higher speeds and, at the same time, reducing under hood temperatures at low speed that, in turn, increases thermal efficiency.

It's what you call a win-win.

The 2012 Focus is powered by a gasoline direct injection inline, four-cylinder engine producing 160 hp and 146 lb/ft of torque.

This engine is a great advance over what has gone before. For instance the 2.0-litre four-cylinder used in my 2001 Focus made 135 hp and 130 lb/ft of torque. More to the point the 2.0-litre used in the 1993-1997 Ford Probe mustered only 118 hp.

There are no less than four ways to go when it comes to fuel economy.

The base five-speed manual is rated at 7.8/5.5L/100 km (36/51 mpg) city/highway. The six-speed automatic gets 7.3/5.2L/100 km (39/54 mpg) while the

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