

Mustang 2015 has 'torque on tap'

Continued from pg. 1

a six-speed automatic with paddle shifters optional.

Adding to the fun is the Performance Package on the EcoBoost and GT models with bigger brakes and beefed up suspension settings. It is recognizable by its blacked out 'Ebony' wheels.

There were no 3.7-litre models at the press launch in Los Angeles, but lots of 2.3- and 5.0-litre fastbacks with a mix of transmissions and trim.

Frankly, the 2.3-litre EcoBoost with Performance Package and manual stood out especially in dark blue coupled with the black wheels that gave it a sinister, stealthy look.

The Recaro seats were a very snug fit. The interior has the signature twin brow instrument panel. The IP face is genuine aluminum not faux and gauges and dials that are legible and simple to work, with a backup camera standard on all models.

On certain versions, there is a Mode toggle switch on the lower centre stack that allows the driver to set launch speed at a choice of rpms or lock up the front wheels and do burnouts at will.

My co-driver did nothing silly like that but we drove the car hard up from LA into the Cleveland National Forest along Highway 2. Forget the Pacific Coast Highway. If you want to enjoy a drive in California take CA2 and you will be rewarded.

The 2.3-litre is so easy to drive at any speed. On the freeway, it cruised along in sixth being

remarkably quiet, thanks in no small part to the muffling effect of the turbo.

Heading up into the mountains we pushed it. No matter what gear, there was more than enough torque on tap.

With the big Brembo brakes, slowing was progressive and solid.

At first, I found trouble hitting the clutch pedal squarely with my left foot brushing the brake. But after a few miles, I was in sync.

One neat thing is the placement of the centre console cupholders slightly more aft than usual. This was done to give the driver greater hand/arm movement freedom with the shifter.

But the best part was the mileage. We averaged (US) 29.1 mpg. In the 5.0-litre GT manual we also drove, the previous drivers had really pounded the car with the average fuel consumption registering (US) 12.7 mpg.

Now to be fair to them, this was a press launch where the object of the vehicle is to test it to the limit. In real life, the 2015 Canadian five-cylinder fuel numbers listed as fairly accurate.

The one thing the GT did have was that deep rumble and high-speed howl you can only get on a big V8.

On the other hand, the great fuel economy and power of the 2.3-litre can only make me wonder what the Mustang would be like the 3.5-litre EcoBoost V6 and you just know Ford has some lurking behind the engineering walls in Dearborn.

For the base Mustang EcoBoost, fuel num-

bers are 10/6/7.5L/100 km city/highway for the manual and 11.0/7.4L/100 km for the automatic. For the base Mustang they are 13.5/8.3L/100 km for the manual and 12.6/8.9L/100 for the auto. On the GT, consumption is 14.9/9.5L/100 km and 15.2/9.7L/100 km respectively.

The base car runs from \$24,999-\$29,999 for the fastback or convertible respectively. Price range of the EcoBoost is \$27,999-\$38,999. And

the GT runs from \$36,999-\$47,999. There is also the limited run 50th Limited Edition at \$52,899. This does not include the \$1,600 shipping fee.

The last thing of note is anyone can drive one of these cars, no matter which engine, meaning your grandma can drive one to bingo and then humble the kids at the light.

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