

Dodge Durango: A passenger vehicle with power

LORNE DRURY
Special to The IFP



The 2006 Dodge Durango has just the right blend of size and power that will appeal to many buyers. The Multi-Displacement System on the 5.7L Hemi provides improved fuel economy of up to 20 per cent.

The Durango has been around since 1998, but the current model is a derivative of the second generation, which debuted in 2004. It was new from the ground up and bigger in every way and for the first time offered seven-passenger seating.

For 2006, a 60/40 split third-row seat is offered in all but the base SLT model, providing the capability of seating eight passengers. In reality, that third row bench is designed more with kids in mind than adults. So, if it's your turn to haul part of the team to that soccer or ball tournament, the Durango will do quite nicely, thank you.

The 2006 Durango is offered with four

trim levels: SLT, SLT Plus, Limited and Adventurer. My test vehicle was a Limited 4X4 in a beautiful Patriot Blue Pearl Coat finish, complete with Hemi engine, navigation system, rear seat video system and trailer towing package and other options that brought the price as tested to \$57,665.

That's a lot of money for any vehicle, but the Durango does offer a blend of size and power that many will find attractive. Electronic Stability Program (ESP) and roll-sensing side-curtain air bags are now standard, while a power rear liftgate and remote start are new offerings for this year's model. Also standard is four-wheel anti-lock brakes.

DaimlerChrysler likes to talk about the interior roominess of the Durango and I can speak to this. During my week with the Durango we had guests from New York in town and we went downtown to a Blue Jays-Yankees game at the Rogers Centre and toured wine country in the Niagara Peninsula. While the third row seats didn't see any use, those of us up front (including one 6-foot-5 guy) and in the second row had room to spare.

The Durango handled both city and highway driving with ease and speaks to the versatility the vehicle can offer. Downtown, parking it wasn't a chore as it sometimes is with full-size SUVs and on the highway, the ride is smooth and quiet.

For those who tow a boat or trailer, the Durango has a towing capacity of 3,969 kg (8,750 lb.). Government fuel consumption ratings for the 2006 Durango 4X4 with the 4.7L Hemi are 16.5L/100 km city (17 mpg) and 11.2L/100 km highway (25 mpg).

2006 DODGE DURANGO 4X4 LIMITED AT A GLANCE

BODY STYLE: 5-door sport utility vehicle

DRIVE METHOD: front engine, all-wheel drive

ENGINE: 4.7L SOHC V8 with 235 hp and 300 lb.-ft. of torque, also available 5.7L Hemi V8 with 335 hp and 370 lb.-ft. of torque

FUEL ECONOMY: 5.7L Hemi 16.5L/100 km (17 mpg) city and 11.2L/100 km (25) highway.

PRICE: Dodge Durango Limited \$50,140 (as tested \$57,655)

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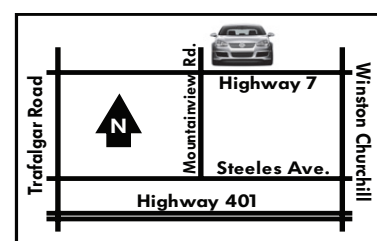
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