

# WHEELS

## Ford ups turbo diesel stakes in light trucks

By Jim Robinson  
Metroland Car Critic

Ford has just upped the turbo diesel stakes in the light, working truck class. Ford's new 7.3-litre turbo diesel is claimed to be the most powerful engine offered in a light truck in North America. This V8 produces 210 hp at

3000 rpm and 425 ft/lbs of torque at 1,800 rpm. But what makes it most interesting to me is its DI (direct injection) system which makes it possible to start this engine from cold as low as minus 20 degrees Celsius.

As far as the power vs power is concerned, here are the numbers in comparison with the new

Ford DI (direct injection) unit: Dodge Ram Inline-6 Cummins turbo diesel, 175 hp at 2500 rpm and 420 ft/lbs at 1500 rpm; GM V8 turbo diesel, 190 hp at 3400 rpm and 385 ft/lbs at 1700 rpm; and Ford's current indirect injection diesel (still offered on the Ford F-150 pickup) 190 hp at 3000 rpm and 395 ft/lbs at 1400 rpm.

Of course torque is the thing here and what buyers are looking at in terms of just how much weight they can haul to a work site. The DI offers a Gross Vehicle Weight Ratio (GVWR) of up to 17,000 lbs in the F-250 4X2 and 4X4 and an astounding 19,000 lbs in the 4X2 Chassis (or crew) Cab version and the one I made sure to get my hands on.

The new engine will be offering on all F-250 heavy duty pickups and all F-350. What makes this engine different is the use of direct injection and a battery of sensors which monitor accelerator position, camshaft position, injection control pressure, boost pressure, oil temperature, ambient air temperature, barometric pressure, and exhaust back pressure and that just the fuel monitoring part.

The DI's turbo unit, for instance, has an integral oil supply and drainage which eliminates external tubes and connections. There is a printed technical brochure for techno-junkies, so believe me when I say computers are making what was impossible 10 years ago more than possible today.

I had a chance to drive one of the first of these trucks and I went for the big six-seater, four-door version. In work-a-day blue and white, climbing up into the cab was normal and I think everyone was surprised at how much it looked like your basic car. Crank the key over until the glow plug light goes out and twist one more notch to start, and it catches almost immediately. Absent was the first, mighty internal explosion and throw of the crank felt in the Ram Cummins couple, but it was more forceful and louder than the V8 Turbo tested recently in a GMC Yukon.

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