



TRUCKS 2016

Two Fresh Midsize Entries

If you're looking for a midsize truck in 2016, there are two interesting new options from Chevrolet and Toyota that could give buyers a run for their money.

Toyota's 2016 Tacoma and Chevrolet's 2016 Colorado both bring several upgrades and fresh features to the table for the new year.

TOYOTA TACOMA

The Tacoma has been rebuilt inside and out with an all-new powertrain and enhanced suspension tuning. The Tacoma was already America's best-selling midsize pickup for 10 years running, and the all-new Tacoma aims to carry on that legacy. The new Tacoma will feature two different engines: a 2.7-liter DOHC four-cylinder with VVT-i that will produce 159 horsepower and 180 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4000 rpm; and an all-new V6 with a segment-first 3.5-liter Atkinson cycle with VVT-iW (Variable Valve Timing with Intelligent Wider Intake) equipped with Toyota's D-4S technology, featuring both direct and port fuel injection. The new V6 will generate 278 horsepower, an increase of 42 HP over the previous V6, and 265 lb.-ft. of torque at 4600 rpm.

"For more than 50 years adventure-seeking Americans have relied on Toyota trucks to take them places, on and off-road," Toyota's general manager Bill Fay said in a statement. "The all-new homegrown Tacoma is a tough truck designed, developed and built for lifestyles of the young and young at heart."

CHEVY COLORADO

The two-wheel-drive Colorado with the Duramax turbo-diesel is set to be the most fuel-efficient pickup in America, offering an Environmental Protection Agency-estimated 31 mpg highway fuel economy. The EPA-estimated highway fuel economy for 2016



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Colorado four-wheel drive diesel is 29 mpg.

The EPA has issued a Certificate of Conformity for the Chevrolet Colorado Duramax diesel. The agency expressed no issues or concerns following its recent extensive testing and evaluation of the emission control system on the Colorado Duramax diesel.

Colorado's all-new 2.8L Duramax turbo-diesel engine generates 181 horsepower (135 kW) and 369 lb-ft of torque (500 Nm). It is paired with the Hydra-Matic 6L50 six-speed automatic transmission, which

uses a unique Centrifugal Pendulum Vibration Absorber in the torque converter to reduce powertrain noise and vibration.

"The Colorado Duramax diesel is in a league of its own," Chevrolet Truck Marketing director Sandor Pizar. "Colorado's gas models already led the segment in fuel efficiency, and the new diesel — which no other non-GM competitor offers on a midsize truck — gives customers even greater freedom to go where they want with fewer fill-ups."

Cargo Management

If you're buying a truck, its ability to move cargo is likely at least one major factor in the decision. Luckily, the way trucks can secure cargo has come a long way in recent years.

AFTER-MARKET ADDITIONS

If you already have a truck and you're looking to upgrade its cargo system, there are myriad aftermarket options available. Some of the most popular include tool boxes to securely store items, trailer hitch cargo carriers for when you just have to have more space, and anchor point/eye bolts to provide extra anchoring and security for tying down cargo with rope or bungees.

FORD F-150

In 2015, Ford rebooted its management and stowage of cargo inside the pickup truck box with its patented BoxLink system debuting on the all-new Ford F-150. Along with LED box lights, a power locking and remote tailgate release, and segment-first cargo ramps, the 2015 F-150 is better equipped to help manage loads more efficiently.

BoxLink includes four lockable, die-cast zinc tie-down cleats and provides a unique interface to the box for improved flexibility and organization, as well as additional locations for tie-downs.

TOYOTA TACOMA

The 2016 Tacoma features several handy features for



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owners looking to move cargo of just about any shape or size. The truck's deck rail system is compatible with genuine Toyota accessories and includes a fork-mount bike rack, a cargo divider that locks into the rails to help keep cargo from sliding around the

bed, and mini tie-downs with hooks that also help secure cargo in the bed. An available 120V/400W power point further extends the bed's utility.

CHEVY COLORADO

The Chevy Colorado also offers several features for tie-

down cargo systems, including a flexible bed with Chevy's available GearOn cargo management system, which can enhance the capabilities. The GearOn system is designed to fit within the bed, for significant storage and hauling flexibility. It is upgradeable, with

modular cargo dividers and tiered storage to accommodate 4-by-8 sheets of plywood above the wheelhouse. It also uses the box's four permanent and 13 movable tie-down provisions to allow for a variety of secure and convenient cargo stowage options.

Quieter Cabins

Though the concept might still persist for some, the classic idea of a loud, rattly truck has started to become obsolete with many new models.

As the Wall Street Journal notes, auto manufacturers are making a major push to eliminate engine and road noise, which are the biggest factors that can cause cabin noise in a vehicle. Companies also are taking a hard look at the smaller details, from the sound of the air conditioning vent, to the sound the door locks make when closing. For inspiration, companies are looking to the skies.

Many vehicle designers are scoping out noise-canceling technology from airplane cockpit designs, which are built to cancel out massive amounts of noise during flight.

“Ten years ago most interior noises couldn’t even be heard because of the engine and road noise,” John Tepas, vice president of engineering at Mahle Behr Troy Inc., the Michigan-based subsidiary of Mahle GmbH, an auto-parts maker that produces such components as heating, air-conditioning and ventilation systems, told The Wall Street Journal.



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SHAPE MATTERS

Aerodynamics also play a factor in canceling out noise, and though the inherent needs of truck design can make it a bit harder, auto manufacturers are still making major strides in that area.

In a 2013 report, GMC noted that to achieve improved airflow, aerodynamic engineers like Diane Bloch examined every millimeter of the truck to find areas of improvement, debunking some popular myths along the way.

To study the way air passes over, under and around the 2014 Sierra, engineers used General Motors’ state-of-the-art Aerodynamics Lab. It’s a 750-foot-long tunnel through which a

43-foot-diameter fan powered by a DC electric motor with the equivalent of 4,500 horsepower can generate winds of up to 138 mph. Aerodynamic advancement is one reason the 2014 Sierra will be the most fuel-efficient V-8 pickup on the market.

“We can’t stop air; we can only guide it through the path of least resistance. It’s like electricity, without the shock,” Bloch, GM aerodynamic performance engineer, said in a statement. “The

biggest misconception is that it’s all about single components. But a certain side mirror design doesn’t create a certain amount of drag; its interaction with the rest of the vehicle does.”



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Trucks and Technology

Many newer model trucks feature some cutting-edge — and very handy — technology.

NATURAL GAS AND PROPANE

The first 2016 Ford F-150 with the ability to run on clean-burning compressed natural gas has rolled off the assembly line, making Ford the only manufacturer to offer a CNG/propane-capable half-ton pickup. The 2016 Ford F-150 with 5.0-liter Ti-VCT V8 engine is available with a factory-installed, gaseous-fuel prep package that includes hardened valves, valve seats, pistons and piston rings so it can operate on natural gas, propane or gasoline through separate fuel systems.

NISSAN'S LATEST OFFERING

The new edition of the Titan is loaded with cutting-edge features, including a rearview camera with adaptive guidelines and hitch-free hitching. The design is meant to cut out the guesswork and make aligning a trailer a one-step process. The driver can see what's directly behind him on the available 7-inch high-res LCD navigation display screen, and use the blue center guideline to align with the trailer.

The Titan also offers downhill speed control and the tow/haul mode. When the tow/haul mode is engaged, downhill speed control is engaged, as well, helping drivers to slow and stay in con-

trol when it is needed most. A simple tap of the brakes automatically downshifts allowing you to maintain your momentum without extended braking.

The Titan waits until you engage the brakes, keeping control where it belongs — with you. The result is less shift-hunting, better performance and a real sense of confidence — especially important when towing heavy loads.

The Titan also features trailer sway control, and the vehicle dynamic control will automatically apply the brakes on one side of your vehicle. If that's not enough, a simple tap of the brakes

engages trailer sway control, automatically applying the trailer brakes, and keeping you focused on the road ahead.

CHEVY'S SMART TRUCK TECHNOLOGY

Chevy's latest Colorado model features an available customizable Chevrolet MyLink 8-inch diagonal touch-screen radio with support for Apple CarPlay, which allows you to easily interact with some of your iPhone's features, like music and text messages, the way you're used to

through the interface of your truck.

The customizable Chevrolet MyLink system is equipped with Pandora streaming radio so your favorite tunes always come along for the ride, and is equipped to make phone calls, select radio stations, choose music from your mobile device and more through voice commands or through steering wheel-mounted controls. The available Chevrolet MyLink Radio with navigation also includes turn-by-turn directions and a three-month trial of SiriusXM Travel Link, all integrated into the MyLink system.



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Euro-style Van Takeover

A new class of vans is reigniting sales for the vehicle type. “Euro-style” models are designed to drive and feel more like cars — with decent miles per gallon to boot.

According to the Wall Street Journal, new full-size vans — such as the Ford Motor Co.’s Transit, Daimler AG’s Mercedes-Benz Sprinter, Nissan Motor Co.’s NV, and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV’s ProMaster — led sales to increase by 11 percent in 2015 when compared to the same period for the previous year. Ford holds the crown for America’s top-selling full-size van, the Transit, which is designed primarily for business use. Ford is selling more than 10,000 Transits per month, and other companies have taken notice.

Much of the growth seems to be coming among business owners, and outdoor enthusiasts looking for a versatile vehicle with extra space.

In October, Germany’s Daimler began selling its smaller Metris van in the U.S., and manufacturing its Sprinter at a South Carolina plant. Even longtime van manufacturer General Motors Co. recently added a European-styled City Express van to its existing Chevrolet Express and GMC Savana work vans.

WHY NOW?

Bob Hegbloom, head of Fiat Chrysler’s Ram division, told WSJ the up-tick in interest is due to the rebounding econo-



Much of the growth seems to be coming among business owners, and outdoor enthusiasts looking for a versatile vehicle with extra space.

my and improvements in the vehicles’ efficiency.

“Vans used to be rear-wheel drive [and] only powered by big V-8 engines that hurt their fuel efficiency,” Hegbloom said. “Today they are front-

wheel drive, making them easier to handle and are powered by a V-6, which is more economical.”

THEY’RE ALSO PROFITABLE

According to the WSJ, the

average transaction price of large vans (such as the Transit and ProMaster) has increased 10 percent, or \$3,000, as of July 2015. During that same period, sales incentives reportedly dipped to \$1,742,

according to automotive researcher J.D. Power & Associates. Dats estimates prices of large vans are up 27.6 percent, while incentives are down 15.3 percent, since 2010.

Two New Diesel Models

Two new diesels appear poised to shake up the truck landscape this year.

Both Nissan and Chevrolet are introducing lines that combine the fuel efficiency and benefits of a diesel engine with all the bells and whistles offered by today's pickups.

NISSAN TITAN XD

With the diesel-powered Titan XD, Nissan has dropped a Cummins 5.0L V8 Turbo Diesel engine in a half-ton for a vehicle with enormous towing power. In controlled tests, Nissan recommends commercial grade components and the stability provided by a gooseneck hitch. To that end, the manufacturer engineered them right into the Titan XD frame.

In early trials held in sweltering Arizona (testing ground for the new SAE J2807 towing standard), the Titan pulled more than 6 tons, and reportedly performed with total confidence.

Nissan also has added a rugged new transfer case, designed to ensure maximum power distribution in every gear. It pushes torque to both axles and gives you four-wheel drive whenever you need added traction on snow, ice, sand, mud, muck, dirt, water or gravel.

The Titan also has a high-strength steel frame for imposing towing and payload stats, and features a fully boxed, full-length ladder frame. Every component has been bolstered and strengthened for added stiffness, vertical and lateral bending, as well as torsional rigidity.

CHEVROLET COLORADO

The Chevy Colorado was the Motor Trend Truck of the Year for 2015 and 2016, with the 2016 Colorado Diesel specifically winning the award this year.

The Colorado provides what Chevy calls available best-in-class horsepower and towing, with advanced 2.5L I-4 and 3.6L V6 engines in addition to the 2.8L Duramax Turbo-Diesel offering up to 31 MPG highway.

The Colorado also offers advanced safety technology, including what Chevy calls ingenious active safety technologies such as a standard rear vision camera, available Forward Collision Alert, and Lane Departure Warning to help prevent collisions before they happen, providing added peace of mind as you focus on your drive.



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Gains in Fuel Economy

In the past, fuel economy was often a trade off for owning a big truck — but that doesn't have to be the case anymore.

DIESEL MODELS

Newer diesel model pickups offer vastly improved fuel efficiency, with many large and powerful models scoring between 20 and 30 miles per gallon. Some leading models out this year include the Nissan Titan XD and Chevrolet Colorado.

MOST FUEL-EFFICIENT MODELS

In regards to fuel efficiency, Edmunds looked at several new truck models to see which ones lead the pack for 2015-2016.

Edmunds gave the 2015 Ram 1500 a rating of "A," saying it remains a top contender in the full-size pickup segment, thanks to a winning combination of strong powertrains, a class-exclusive eight-speed automatic transmission, a smooth ride and a well-trimmed cabin. The Ram offers a 3.0L turbodiesel V6: 22 mpg combined (19 city/27 highway); 3.6 L V6: 19 mpg combined (16 city/23 highway); 5.7 L V8: 17 mpg combined (15 city/21 highway); 5.7L V8 (six-speed): 15 mpg combined (13 city/19 highway).

UP NEXT

After that is the 2015 Ford F-150,

which received a "B" rating. Edmunds noted the redesigned 2015 Ford F-150 may not look all that different, but the truck is a sophisticated and capable version of this best-selling pickup ever to hit the road. "Ford's groundbreaking use of an all-aluminum body has trimmed about 700 pounds from the truck, which allows the use of a down-sized engine lineup without any loss of

capability," the Edmunds report noted.

The F-150 offers a 2.7L turbocharged V6 with 20 mpg combined (18 city/23 highway); 3.5L V6: 19 mpg combined (17 city/23 highway); 3.5L turbocharged V6: 19 mpg combined (17 city/23 highway); 5.0L V8: 17 mpg combined (15 city/21 highway).

Following the F-150, the 2015 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 also received a

"B" rating. The report notes that a wide range of body styles, an impressive interior and a lineup of powerful and fuel-efficient engines make the 2015 Chevrolet Silverado a top pick in the full-size pickup class. The F-150 offers a 4.3L V6: 19 mpg combined (17 city/22 highway); 5.3L V8 with 18 mpg combined (16 city/22 highway); 6.2L V8: 17 mpg combined (15 city/21 highway).

