

Engines Are Shrinking, But You'll Never Notice

CHANDLER, --, UNITED STATES, November 19, 2013 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ford seems delighted by the way Europeans are snapping up the three-cylinder version of their Fiesta sub-compact. With gas costing around eight bucks a gallon, it's no wonder they're doubling engine production at the factory in Germany. If gas cost the same amount here, we'd downsize too.

Well here's the shocker: we already are!

Perhaps it's escaped your notice, but US engines are shrinking. Where you might expect to find six or eight cylinders, like under the hood of Ford's Taurus sedan, you'll now find a two-liter four-banger. But thanks to advances in engine technology, you probably can't feel the difference.

Improving gas mileage

Since the 1970s, car makers have been required to meet the Corporate Average Fuel Economy, or CAFE, regulations. These were left unchanged for a long time, but higher targets have now been imposed. In 2016, the average for all new cars is to be 37.8 mpg, and the target rises to 54.5 mpg by 2025.

Those are some serious stretch goals, and the manufacturers are responding with weight-saving materials and greater use of turbocharging, gasoline direct injection, and variable valve timing.

Turbocharging pumps more air into the engine, creating more power. Gasoline direct injection, or GDI, sprays a fine mist of gasoline right at the piston, resulting in better combustion and more power. And VVT, short for variable valve timing, improves how the engine "breathes." The result is, you guessed it, more power.

What's the benefit? Well when you squeeze more energy from every drop of gas, engines don't need to be so big. Here are some examples.

Finding the new technology

Some manufacturers tout their engine hardware in the car's name, so look for "VVT", "GDI" and "Turbo" badges on the trunk. Others use their own names, like "EcoBoost" (Ford) and "Skyactive" (Mazda.) These haven't been around very long and many buyers don't appreciate the benefits of a smaller engine with more punch. That means whether you're a Georgia native shopping for [cheap used cars in Atlanta](#) or an Oregonian looking for something pre-owned in Portland, this could be a great time to buy. Here are four to look for:

Ford Taurus: This gets 240 hp from its 2.0 liter EcoBoost engine and achieves EPA mileage numbers of 22 City, 32 Highway. Pretty impressive for a big, comfortable five seat sedan!

Mercedes-Benz CLA: New for 2014, this entry-level luxury car also sports a 2.0 liter turbo where once you'd have expected a V6. With 208 hp, the four-door coupe sprints zero to 60 in under seven seconds, so clearly there's little reduction in performance.

Mazda 6: Another good-looking family sedan, this gets 26/38 from a 2.5 liter Skyactive-G engine. Not long ago it took a basic econo-box to approach those numbers

Ford F150: This comes with a choice of engines that include a 5.0 liter V8 and a 3.5 liter EcoBoost V6. The EcoBoost makes more power, (365 hp and 420 lb-ft versus 360 and 380,) and gets better mileage (16/22 versus 15/21.)

And that three cylinder Fiesta? Ford say it makes 123 hp and customers will "...notice an extremely smooth and quiet idle, terrific acceleration accompanied by a sporty sound at high revs, and – most importantly – outstanding fuel economy." Look for it to hit the US soon.

Oraine Mathews

nxbcfo

4806891684

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