

NEW MAZDA/FORD UTES on the way

The 2011 Mazda BT-50 and Ford Ranger utes made their global debut on Friday October 15 during press conferences at the 2010 Australian International Motor Show in Sydney.



These badge-engineered look-alikes are built at the AutoAlliance Thailand (AAT) joint-venture plant, where Ford Motor Company and Mazda Motor Corporation have recently invested US\$350 million to support the production of the next-generation pickup trucks.

The original production target is for delivery of the new Mazda and Ford utes in mid-2011, so the October 2010 showing was a preview.

Mazda is keeping quiet about its mechanicals, but Ford has revealed some 2011 Ranger details, including information about new passive safety technologies, such as the availability of side curtain airbags on all cab styles for the first time.

Two new diesel engines with up to 470 Nm of torque and one new petrol engine will feature, coupled to six-speed automatic and manual transmissions; payload capacity up to 1500kg on some short-cab models; and electronic aids including Adaptive Load Control, Trailer Sway Control, Rear Park Assist and the segment's first rear view camera system.



Technical Details

The display model on the Ford stand was a 2011 Ranger XLT Double Cab, powered by the new 2.2-litre Duratorq TDCi 110kW diesel that has 375Nm of peak torque. A new 3.2-litre Ford Duratorq TDCi I5 diesel, rated at 147kW and 470Nm will be available on some Ranger models. The third new donk is a Duratec I4 petrol engine with 122kW that can be configured for E100 ethanol fuel, or aftermarket kitted to run on CNG or LPG.

The carry-over part-time 4WD system has an electronically controlled, two-speed transfer case and the rear axles will be fitted with a limited slip differential or an electric locking differential in some variants.

A new chassis provides the base for a longer, 3220-millimetre wheelbase and wider track of 1560mm.

Measuring 1549mm long, 511mm high and with a maximum cargo width of 1560mm, the cargo box of the double cab is more than 100mm wider than the current model's. Width between the wheel arches is 1139mm on all ute models and there are 'mezzanine-floor' support pockets in the cargo box sides that allow plywood or plaster board to be laid in flat sheets on a false floor.

Up front, the suspension is a new coil-over-strut, double wishbone suspension and rack and pinion steering is fitted. The back end has traditional ute leaf springs

The brake system includes Electronic Brakeforce Distribution and Emergency Brake Assist to provide maximum boost for the Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS). . Flashing hazard lights automatically alert following vehicles when an ABS stop is triggered. All 2011Ranger models have larger, 302mm front disc rotors with twin-piston callipers. Rear axle brakes are old-fashioned, 295mm drums.

With Trailer Sway Mitigation the vehicle brakes are selectively applied to slow down the combination.

Ford's Electronic Stability Program (ESP) system that includes four-wheel traction control, yaw control and roll-over mitigation is available.

We'll publish more 2011 Ford Ranger and Mazda BT-50 information as it becomes available.



OUTBACK