

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2008 Ford Taurus Limited AWD

BY KATHLEEN LINDER

The 2008 Ford Taurus represents the resurrection of a name that has been a standard in the Ford stable of sedans for almost 20 years.

The Taurus remains a four-door, five-passenger vehicle. All Taurus models are outfitted with a 3.5-liter V-6. The standard transmission across the line is a six-speed automatic with overdrive.

Bang down the throttle pedal and the new 3.5-liter V-6 with 263 horsepower in the 2008 Ford Taurus forcefully surges. It's not fast at 0 to 60 mph in 7.6 seconds, but it's in the game.

The new engine and transmission in the 2008 Ford Taurus are a wonderful team. The engine is extremely quiet and smooth at idle, and uses a pendulum mounting system that effectively separates its motions and vibrations from the rest of the car. It sounds healthy, powerful and smooth at full throttle, makes the car plenty quick in acceleration and passing situations, and settles down to a nice background hum in sixth gear, as it should. At freeway speeds, the Taurus is very, very quiet inside.

With its five-star NHTSA crash ratings, Ford is already calling it "the world's safest family sedan." Safety features include front, side and curtain airbags, ABS, and traction control. Electronic stability control is an option. With its Volvo-



Take the new Taurus by the horns

Specifications: 3.5-liter 263-hp @ 245 lb-ft. torque 24-valve V-6 engine; 6F 6-speed automatic transmission AWD; 17-City 24-Highway MPG; \$33,600. MSRP

like crash structure and features, the new Taurus has been awarded a Top Safety Pick by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS).

The new front end is dramatic and powerful. Ford's signature three-bar grille draws the Taurus into the family and adds machismo to the wispy wire mesh grille. The new front fascia gives it a more substantial look. The 2008 Ford Taurus is available in ten exterior paint colors and two interior trim shades.

The new Ford Taurus has

about as much useful room inside it, counting the trunk, the folding seats, and the interior layout, as your average crossover SUV. It just happens to look and behave like a family sedan. It's big inside,

big outside, and it's taller than almost every other sedan on the market with that big bubble roof, but if it's room you need and room you want, this might be the one.

Expect the traditional Taurus seating arrangement with 60/40 split-fold seats to the rear. The message center includes both a compass and a trip computer and the audio system includes a jack for an MP3

player. The instrument panel, center console, and center stack are all finished in woodgrain while the steering wheel and shift knob are wrapped in leather. There are eight cupholders throughout the cabin and reading lamps are included for the passengers. Power locks, windows and mirrors are standard.

The 2008 Taurus Limited AWD we drove was loaded with options, including AdvanceTrac electronic stability control, a roof-mounted rear-seat DVD entertainment system, heated front seats, convenience package, wood package, power adjustable pedals, a moonroof, voice-activated touch-screen navigation, Sirius satellite radio, and reverse sensing system, bringing the bottom line to \$33,600, and making it the best-equipped Taurus possible, short of the 18-inch chromed aluminum wheel option.

The model marks the return of an old favorite. The 2008 Ford Taurus delivers the safety, reliability and performance with the interior space of an SUV. A familiar and reliable name loaded with goodies -- plus the all-season security of AWD -- for around \$30,000. Take the new Taurus by the horns and see what you think.

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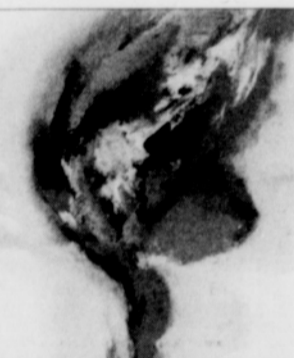
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