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Engineering the All-new Dodge Durango-Three-rows, Performance and Fun with Sensibility

- Responsive handling via isolated short/long arm front suspension, isolated multi-link rear suspension and standard electronic stability control (ESC)
- Use of advanced high-strength steels creates a lightweight rigid body structure that improves handling and ride characteristics with nearly 50/50 weight distribution
- Best-in-class towing; V-6 tows 6,200 pounds, V-8 tows 7,400 pounds

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The all-new 2011 Dodge Durango is a driver's SUV that delivers on-road performance and capability by combining handling characteristics with the flexibility of a three-row SUV. An independent suspension on all four corners combined with nearly 50/50 weight distribution transmits a solid driving feel that is usually found in much more expensive SUVs. Taking it to another level, Durango is available in an R/T model that is ready to be winded through the turns with unexpected dynamics.

"The all-new Dodge Durango offered an interesting challenge: develop a three-row, efficient and exciting vehicle that doesn't break the bank. There isn't another vehicle on the road that combines these features as well as the Durango does," said Scott Kunselman, Senior Vice President-Engineering, Chrysler Group LLC. "Durango delivers what competitive crossovers can't: fun-to-drive performance in a capable, sensible, fuel-efficient package."

A THREE-ROW PERFORMANCE VEHICLE ENGINEERED FOR THE DRIVER

Benchmarked against premium performance SUV's in the market, Durango delivers modernized refinement with electronics, suspension, powertrain, structural and noise vibration and harshness (NVH) characteristics.

Engineers spent countless hours developing the kinematics and dynamics of the Dodge Durango for an appropriate balance of handling and comfort. The unibody structure is built with a selection of high-strength and ultra-high strength steels that improve driving dynamics by integrating the suspension with the body-reducing flex when compared with the previous body-on-frame design. In fact, 52 percent of the Durango's structure is made from these advanced steels. Closed section front and rear structural cross members improve to overall stiffness. More than 5,500 welds and more than 4,100 mm of arc welding contribute to torsional stiffness levels greater than the Mercedes-Benz GL.

The all-new front and rear independent suspension features isolated front and rear cradles to deliver improved on-road handling and ride comfort. The new rear suspension and body structure also creates room for a full-size spare tire to be stored underneath the vehicle, allowing for additional storage space behind the third-row seat. Skid plates also are available to protect the underside of the vehicle in rough-road driving conditions.

Benefitting from the Jeep Grand Cherokee platform, the all-new Durango delivers on the pavement. Although they share a similar chassis, the all-new Dodge Durango uses shock and spring rates up to 10 percent stiffer and is equipped with larger sway bars to handle body roll in hard turning maneuvers. Electro-hydraulic power steering (EHPS) (V-6 only), and standard electronic stability control also contribute to maintain traction and vehicle stability.

"You will be amazed at the Durango's grip," said Ralph Gilles, President and CEO, Dodge Brand - Chrysler Group LLC. "Our engineers created a brilliant chassis tuning that allows you to throw the Durango through turns with confidence. It's a truly fun-to-drive experience that you don't expect. You're not supposed to be able to do this in an SUV!"

Braking, body structure, cooling capacity and standard Trailer-sway Control contribute to the Durango's best-in-class

towing capability. On models equipped with the Pentastar V-6 engine, the Durango can tow up to 6,200 pounds - more than the capability of the previous Durango when equipped with a 4.7-liter V-8. With the 5.7-liter HEMI® V-8 engine, the all-new Dodge Durango can trailer tow up to 7,400 pounds - more weight than a 24-foot boat and trailer.

Load-leveling shocks also contribute to the Durango's towing capability. The shocks react to payload levels and mechanically increase vehicle height when the vehicle has added rear payload. If payload is added to the vehicle, the shocks' gas pressure increases until the Durango reaches normal ride height.

Durango's available EHPS transmits road feel and improves on-center tracking, steering noise and fuel economy. When the Durango is stationary or moving at low speeds, the hydraulic pump increases power assistance for a lighter steering wheel effort. The pump reduces steering assistance at highway speeds to give the Durango a firmer feel. As a benefit, the system delivers a fuel savings of up to 3.5 percent by consuming less energy than a belt-driven-only pump.

Xenon high-intensity discharge (HID) headlamps are available on R/T and Citadel, turning the night into day. New auto leveling technology adjusts headlight beam area for slight changes in elevation. The 4-inch halogen fog lamps are standard equipment on all Durango models. The additional forward lighting provides a low, wide beam that illuminates the area immediately ahead of the vehicle.

A high-performance version of the all-new Durango is available with great looks, HEMI power, and world-class handling and R/T heritage. The R/T model features a unique suspension tuning, 20-inch performance tires and a 20 mm lower ride height, all of which add another level of dynamic capability. R/T also is available with a summer performance tire for even greater grip.

SENSIBILITY WRAPPED IN DRIVER'S GLOVES

Engineers started with the quality, proven Grand Cherokee platform and worked closely with the Dodge design team to stretch the Durango's overall length 10 inches and wheelbase by 5 inches, making room for a spacious and comfortable third row, as well as ample cargo space.

Inside, the new Durango boasts 28 different seating configurations with 84.5 cubic feet of cargo space, with an additional 30 bins and holders allocated for storage-up to 9.3 cubic feet, depending on subwoofer option. With second and third row seats folded flat, Express, Crew and R/T owners can fit a 6-foot couch with room for a coffee table, or for do-it-yourselfers, enough 10-foot 2x4s to build a tree house.

Placement of the third row was critical to make it easy for passengers to get in and maintain driver visibility. Engineering and design worked together to develop a simple solution. Using a single motion actuator, the driver can remotely drop the headrests with the push of a button for improved visibility.

The available power rear liftgate operates with the liftgate handle, interior one-touch buttons (cargo and overhead control locations) or the key fob.

WHISPER QUIET INTERIOR STANDARD ON ALL MODELS

A drag coefficient of approximately 0.35 contributes to an aerodynamic improvement of more than 14 percent compared with its predecessor, reducing interior noise and improving fuel efficiency. Every path that leads to the interior is sealed in one or more ways and joints are made as tight as possible by using sealer between panels, which expands during the paint process. Laminated acoustic front door glass comes standard on all models. Additionally, liquid-applied, sound deadener and sound absorption material is added throughout the structure. The Durango also features a premium double wall separating the engine compartment and the vehicle cabin to limit the amount of under-hood engine noise to occupants.

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