

Depth of field

Truly global Ford Focus comes to the US in enough flavors to suit any taste



By Joe Sage



The all-new 2012 Ford Focus is making news almost faster than anyone could record it. Just in the couple of weeks since we drove it at its US press launch in southern California, absorbing all the technical and marketing marvels of this new small car from the team who created it, more news has poured in, about an upcoming EcoBoost™ version (see sidebar), a long-expected Electric Focus (ditto), more use of recycled and other sustainable materials, the launch of the Focus Rally America (which we test ran), EPA certification at 40 MPG and much more. This true world car has been long anticipated, and Ford has given it deep resources; it's no wonder it's been such a newsmaker.

With the recent new Ford Fiesta (we've driven and covered both four-door and hatchback versions), you could forget everything you ever knew about Fiestas past. The same holds true with the new Ford Focus. Maybe moreso, as the Focus also represents a major leap toward truly global distribution of a single vehicle that's optimized for every market—certainly for the US.

FOCUS RALLY AMERICA

We found out straight away that we'd be driving the new Focus a bit differently from most new vehicles. Instead of being taken first to our hotel or the starting point of our drive, we headed to a staging area at a hotel near LAX, where we were each given an iPod Touch, pre-loaded with a Q&A about the Focus. And we received a preliminary presentation on the car. Based on the Focus Rally America that others would run during a highly consumer-involving launch event, we would answer the questions at predetermined points in the trip.

The actual Focus Rally America runs as follows. The rally has six teams of two, driving the all-new 2012 Ford Focus, competing against each other to complete various challenges and tasks as they drive cross-country. Teams play to win the ultimate prize of \$100,000 and a brand new 2012 Ford Focus. The six teams began their adventure at a Super Bowl kickoff party in Miami on Friday, February 4. The first video webisode of the rally posted on www.Hulu.com the next evening. Two Super



Bowl commercials that Sunday invited viewers to participate in the campaign at www.focusrally.com (a third ad featured the new Ford F-150 with EcoBoost™ engine). Interactive social media elements allow everyone to not only follow along in real time, but to virtually participate in challenges during the rally and in some cases impact how the game plays out. Focus Rally America teams could rely on friends, fans and followers to help complete challenges during the cross-country road rally. World Cup and Olympic gold medal winner Jonny Moseley serves as the host of the event, which runs for five weeks. Fans get involved in several ways. They can view the nightly video webisodes on www.Hulu.com to see highlights of that day's rally. At www.focusrally.com, they can follow live and interact with rally teams while on the road. And they can join in the competition by registering as a supporter of one of the teams and then assisting that team to complete tasks and challenges throughout the rally. Registered "virtual team members" earn points through daily interaction on www.focusrally.com, and some fans are rewarded with a chance to join in the rally personally along the way, through a process similar to how the six were chosen for Miami. And if all that fun weren't enough, there are multiple chances to win a new Ford Focus: eight cars are being awarded to fans and followers through the rally.

Jumpstart, Focus Follower and Checkpoint Challenges are released daily. The team with the highest percentage of correct answers receives an advantage in the challenges on the following day. With Checkpoint Challenges, drivers are stuck at a checkpoint until they solve their puzzle, or 30 minutes elapse, whichever comes first. Focus followers complete an online challenge to reveal a hint that will help the drivers solve



their puzzle and get back on the road.

For every point earned, participants get one entry into each of the Focus Rally prize drawings. For example, 500 points equals 500 chances to win one of the prizes that will be given away throughout the rally. Virtual participants earn points for just stopping by, or for changing their profile picture, answering trivia and completing challenges. The more you play, the more points. Enough points will fill a Points Bar at the top of the page and raise you up a level. The higher the level, the more daily votes you get, which can be used for surprises and rewards for the drivers, thus having a direct impact on the event.

Participants win a prize if their name is drawn during ten prize drawings over the course of the rally. Chances of winning a prize are directly related to points earned on www.focusrally.com.

Our media version followed much the same process, without the 30-minute holdups (nor the chance to win the car). We were pleasantly surprised, though, to find we did have a chance to score some loot at an evening event following the drive: third-party suppliers of Ford's many technologies contributed prizes, points were tallied, and it turns out there were four journalists tied for first place. The tie was to be settled by a slot car race. "Glad that's not me," thought your correspondent, who hadn't run a slot car since maybe age ten. But your correspondent was indeed among the four. And we went to bat for you, our readers, prevailing in four heats and taking home a new 42-inch GoogleTV from Sony. It's not common to have something like this, as we are untainted by any such persuasions. But if we were to say more about the GoogleTV from Sony, with its capabilities of surfing the web, loading apps, watching TV or Blu-ray videos, or all these at once, we're sure you'd understand.

THE FORD FOCUS LINEUP

We had a chance to swap vehicles at the halfway point, and did, though we just scratched the surface. There are four levels of Focus right now (with at least two more on the way; see sidebar), and there are two quite different body styles: a four-door sedan (in four trim levels) and a five-door hatchback (as with the new Fiesta) in three.

BASE PRICES/INCLUSIONS.....	SEDAN.....	HATCH
S Sedan	\$16,270	na
• Base S has 2.0L VCT direct-injection inline-4 engine, 5-speed manual and 15-inch steel wheels with covers.		
SE Sedan/Hatchback	\$17,270	18,065
• SE adds 16-inch steel wheels/covers and MyKey®.		
SEL Sedan/Hatchback	\$20,270	21,065
• SEL adds 6-speed PowerShift™ automatic with SelectShift™, plus Ford SYNC®.		
Titanium Sedan/Hatchback	\$22,270	22,765
• Titanium includes SYNC and adds MyFord Touch™.		

The very affordable base S model includes front disc brakes with ABS, sport-tuned suspension with independent rear including stabilizer bar, manual seats, black finish for door handles, mirrors and grill, but still power mirrors, power locks and front windows, a/c, storage and safety galore, AdvancTrac® with ESC® stability control, a 110-watt four-speaker AM-FM-CD-MP3 audio system, capless fuel filler, tach and rear defroster.

The SE adds body-colored door handles and mirror, more armrests and mats, fog lamps, auto headlights, MyKey®, more instruments including compass, outside temp, trip computer, steering-wheel-mounted audio

KEEP RIGHT >>

FOORD FOCUS TO GET ECOBOOST™



The Focus ST will be the first Ford with the new 2.0-liter EcoBoost 247-hp 4-cylinder engine. Compared to the 2.0L EcoBoost planned for other Fords, the Focus ST unit features redesigned intake and exhaust systems and unique engine calibration for power and responsiveness. The lightweight, all-aluminum engine combines three technologies—high-pressure direct injection, turbocharging and twin independent variable camshaft timing (Ti-VCT)—to create an advanced combustion system for performance and fuel efficiency. With direct injection, a state-of-the-art turbocharger ensures virtually lag-free operation at all engine speeds, spinning up to 195,000 rpm and designed for a life of 150,000 miles or 10 years.

FOCUS ELECTRIC YET THIS YEAR



Ford plugged in the Focus Electric at the Detroit auto show, signaling the company's first all-electric models due to launch later this year. The zero-CO₂, fuel-free Focus becomes the leader of Ford's growing fleet of hybrid, plug-in hybrid and all-electric vehicles rolling out by 2013. Range is designed to cover the majority of daily US driving conditions.

—Bill and Barbara Schaffer



Where better for a world premiere than Hollywood? US Air to LAX, a Rally briefing at the Custom Hotel, lunchwagon, ice cream truck and tech talk at the Hyatt Westlake Village bookended our coast and hills drive. A high-potency evening at the Andaz West Hollywood included Rally results, with a four-way tie settled on the slot car track and your home team winning a GoogleTV from Sony.



controls, rear power windows, 16-inch wheels and—on the hatchback (not available at the S level), a rear spoiler, rear wiper and 60/40 split second row seats.

Jump to the SEL, and audio goes to six speakers, rear brakes become disc, the grille goes from black to classy piano black and a chrome beltline molding is added, climate control becomes dual-zone, the interior picks up metallic trims, the side mirrors add marker lamps, back seats have 60/40 split as in the hatchback, alarm, overhead console and other storage are added, along with 16-inch painted aluminum wheels, some SYNC® features, and a 6-speed PowerShift™ automatic with SelectShift™ capability.

An ST model with EcoBoost™ turbocharged engine is yet to be released (see sidebar), but the current top of the line is the Focus Titanium, adding a host of features including 10-speaker Sony audio with HD Radio™, additional trim, leather and ambient lighting upgrades, an 8-inch touchscreen display for MyFord Touch™ features along with SYNC®, rear spoiler even on the sedan and 17-inch aluminum sport wheels.

It sounds like quite a jump from the base S sedan to the Titanium, and in features and technologies it is, yet though it climbs past the \$20k mark, the Titanium is only 36.8 percent higher than the S model. If, on the other hand, you want a manual transmission, you'll stick with the S (sedan) or SE (sedan or hatchback)—both of which are also available with automatics—and up-option from there. You'll find you can build quite a car this way, with tech and style packages rivaling the higher models, and you'll still be able to shift.

The first half of our complex drive course was made in a Focus Titanium four-door sedan, and the second in a Focus SE 5-door hatchback.

The Titanium sedan had the more exciting course, up the coast through Malibu and into the hills, along Mulholland and other challenging twisties, ending up back in civilization at the Hyatt Westlake Village for lunch. The sport suspension and 17-inch wheels gave us a great ride, though we found legroom lacking on the front passenger side. As we saw one of our compatriots drive by in another sedan, followed by a hatchback, we noted the sedan's styling as far less distinctive; however, as we reviewed our own photos, we found each equally appealing in its own way. No matter how you slice it, you can recognize the new Focus immediately, and this was in fact one of Ford's goals: as surely as a Mustang shows its recognizable face from a distance, in an instant, they created a Focus that, even in a crowded market and among a very complete Ford lineup, can be



spotted coming, by virtue of its combination of grille opening, lights and trim. This works. Despite being the top model, the Titanium still had manual cloth seats, though in a sport style. Our codriver, who drove first, endured brief torture getting the manual seat set right, but did prevail. We'd welcome power here.

The displays are informative, complete and easy to operate. One mixed blessing is the trip odometer, a video display between the primary gauges and above two needle gauges for engine temp and fuel. Since two of us help each other navigate against a route book, it was handy to have this odo so visible from the passenger's seat; however, it could encourage back-seat (or side-seat) driving in general use. Either way, we commented that we had never seen one that worked so well.

After extensive technical presentations from a full range of specific engineers at Westlake Village, where we also enjoyed lunch from a taco wagon and dessert from an ice cream truck—perfect Southern California touches to the day—we changed to the SE hatchback, to try not only the other body style but also the 5-speed manual transmission. We noted the difference in its lower-grade audio system, but we found that both the driver and front seat passenger seemed to enjoy considerably more legroom in the hatchback.

Perhaps we got it a little backwards, driving the automatic up the Pacific Coast Highway and through the hills, then the manual on surface streets and freeways, back to West Hollywood. Or perhaps this was for the best, as the inverse of that would border on the more obvious. Either way, we found plenty to love in both body styles, two of the four trim levels and both transmissions, under a wide variety of driving conditions, from open road to thrilling road to daily highways.

Check your budget, choose your model level (factoring in the transmission option if need be), decide whether you prefer the format and function of a sedan or the attention-inducing hatchback, and pick your poison. It's quite a lineup, and none will disappoint. ■

2011 GOODGUYS Rod & Custom Association

EVENT SCHEDULE

MARCH

March 11, 12 & 13 - Scottsdale, AZ 📍

★ 2nd SPRING NATIONALS

WestWorld of Scottsdale. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

March 18, 19 & 20 - Ft. Worth, TX 📍 NEW EVENT!

★ 1st SPRING LONE STAR NATIONALS

Texas Motor Speedway. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

March 26 & 27 - Pleasanton, CA

29th ALL AMERICAN GET-TOGETHER

Fairgrounds - Pleasanton. All years American Powered Cars & Trucks. AutoCross, Vendors, Huge Swap Meet & Car Corral.

APRIL

April 1, 2 & 3 - Del Mar, CA 📍

★ 11th MEGUIAR'S DEL MAR NATIONALS

Del Mar Fairgrounds. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

MAY

May 20, 21 & 22 - Nashville, TN 📍

★ 6th BRIDGESTONE NASHVILLE NATIONALS

LP Field, Tennessee Titan Stadium. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

JUNE

June 3, 4 & 5 - Loveland, CO 📍

★ 14th COLORADO NATIONALS

The Ranch Events Complex. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

June 4 & 5 - Pleasanton, CA 📍

18th SUMMER GET-TOGETHER

Fairgrounds - Pleasanton. All years American Powered Cars & Trucks. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

June 24, 25 & 26 - Rhinebeck, NY

★ 20th EAST COAST NATIONALS

Dutchess County Fairgrounds. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

JULY

July 1, 2 & 3 - Des Moines, IA 📍

★ 20th HEARTLAND NATIONALS

Iowa State Fairgrounds. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

July 8, 9 & 10 - Columbus, OH 📍 THE BIG ONE!

★ 14th GOODGUYS PPG NATIONALS

Ohio Expo Center. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. Friday Nite Drags, AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

July 22, 23 & 24 - Puyallup, WA

★ 24th PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONALS

Puyallup Fair & Events Center. Rods, Customs & Classics thru '72. Friday Nite Drags, Show 'n Shine, Vendors & Swap Meet.

AUGUST

August 12, 13 & 14 - Joliet, IL 📍 NEW DATE!

★ 5th PEAK CHICAGOLAND NATIONALS

Chicagoland Speedway. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

August 19, 20 & 21 - Spokane, WA

★ 10th GREAT NORTHWEST NATIONALS

Spokane Fair & Expo Center. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

August 26, 27 & 28 - Pleasanton, CA

★ 25th WEST COAST NATIONALS

Fairgrounds - Pleasanton. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

SEPTEMBER

September 2, 3 & 4 - Kansas City, KS 📍

★ 10th MID-WESTERN NATIONALS

Kansas Speedway. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

September 16, 17 & 18 - Indianapolis, IN 📍

★ 1st WIX FILTERS SPEEDWAY NATIONALS NEW EVENT!

Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Rods, Customs, Classics & Trucks thru '72. Show 'n Shine, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

OCTOBER

Sept. 30, Oct. 1 & 2 - Ft. Worth, TX 📍

★ 19th LONE STAR NATIONALS

Texas Motor Speedway. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

October 28, 29 & 30 - Charlotte, NC 📍

★ 18th SOUTHEASTERN NATIONALS

Charlotte Motor Speedway. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

NOVEMBER

November 12 & 13 - Pleasanton, CA 📍

22nd AUTUMN GET-TOGETHER

Fairgrounds - Pleasanton. All years American Powered Cars & Trucks. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

November 18, 19 & 20 - Scottsdale, AZ

★ 14th SOUTHWEST NATIONALS

WestWorld of Scottsdale. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

November 25, 26 & 27 - Del Mar, CA 📍

★ 1st FALL DEL MAR NATIONALS NEW EVENT!

Del Mar Fairgrounds. Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars & Trucks thru '72. AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet & Car Corral.

- ★ — National Events
- 📍 — AutoCross

Goodguys Schedule as of 10/20/10. All dates subject to change.

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