

Tweener BY SUE MEAD

THE CUMMINS-POWERED NISSAN TITAN XD PACKS UNIQUE FUNCTIONALITY BETWEEN 1/2-TON AND 3/4-TON FULL-SIZE PICKUPS

After spending a day evaluating the all-new Nissan Titan XD in the outskirts of Phoenix—including tow testing, payload hauling, and off-roading along a challenging 25-mile-long dirt track with a sand wash—we moved on the second day to our next test location: Nissan’s Technical Center in Stanfield. Here, on a 3,050-acre facility located in Arizona’s low desert terrain, we drove the new pickup on a high-speed track and over courses used by Nissan’s engineers to test ride comfort, along with a host of other torture tests to ensure longevity and reliability of all the truck’s components.

You can think of this truck as a “tweener.” The Titan XD bridges the divide between a light-duty pickup and a heavy-duty truck. This is more important than you might think: today’s full-size pickup truck segment is extremely competitive, with only five light-duty

offerings vying for consumers’ dollars, while each comes with a number of models, trims and options. Nissan is challenging these class-contenders with the second generation of its Titan truck, boasting a bold new design and powerful engine choices that make its new model a heavy-duty hauler with the drivability and affordability of a light-duty player. Its first iteration to come to market is diesel-powered.

Nissan says the Titan XD will cross the divide by offering the utility, towing and hauling capabilities of larger, more expensive 3/4-ton work trucks, while delivering the fuel-efficiency and pricing of a more affordable half-ton pickup. It competes with Ford F-150, Chevy Silverado, GMC Sierra and Toyota Tundra.

The first model to go on sale is the diesel-powered Crew Cab XD that comes in both rear-drive and 4WD, with a Platinum Reserve

luxury on-road model and a PRO-4X off-road model. The lineup will ultimately offer three cab configurations (Crew Cab, King Cab and Single Cab), two frame sizes and three bed lengths; a total of three powertrain offerings (adding gasoline V8 and V6); and five grade levels (S, SV, P4X, SL and Platinum Reserve).

With its powerful 5.0-liter Cummins Turbo Diesel V8 mated to an Aisin six-speed automatic transmission, Titan XD achieves 310 hp at 3,200 rpm and 555 lb-ft of torque at 1,600 rpm, with a maximum towing capacity of 12,314 pounds and a payload of 2,091 pounds. Nissan says the diesel powertrain is expected to provide 20 percent better fuel economy than a gasoline-powered V8, while towing full loads.

The Titan XD incorporates a unique frame and chassis to handle its Cummins diesel and its expanded towing and payload potential. Its new fully-boxed, full-length ladder frame is extensively reinforced and strengthened for added stiffness, vertical and lateral bending, and torsional rigidity. Up front, double-wishbone with stabilizer bar suspension is reinforced and tuned for hard use, while rigid rear axle suspension utilizes hefty leaf springs and leaf bushings, along with twin-tube shock

absorbers. Titan XD Crew Cab also features an extended 151.6-inch wheelbase—about 20 inches longer than non-XD Titan models. Responsive steering is provided by a recirculating ball-type high-capacity steering system with parallel rod steering linkage to optimize steering effort characteristics, even under heavy axle weight and towing conditions.

Durable off-road performance has also been emphasized, with features such as hill descent control, hill start assist and active brake limited-slip differential. Available towing aids include an integrated trailer brake controller, trailer sway control, tow/haul mode with downhill speed control and a trailer light check system that assists with one-person hook-up operations.

Also assisting trailer hook-ups is an available in-mirror RearView Monitor with trailer guides, while Nissan’s available Around View Monitor provides a bird’s-eye view of the surrounding area, combining information from front, rear and side cameras to help with parking and pulling in and out of tight spaces. Moving object detection also alerts the driver to moving vehicles, shopping carts or other large objects around the truck when backing out, via on-screen notification and warning chime.

Outside, the Titan XD features a bold, commanding presence with a fresh, modern

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The new Nissan Titan XD has a removable, lockable tailgate with two-way dampened assist and a full-size mounted spare tire and wheel. • The 2016 Nissan Titan XD with Cummins TurboDiesel V8 went on sale December 22, with a starting price of \$40,290 for the Titan XD S 4x2, \$50,970 for the PRO-4X 4x4 and \$57,470 for Platinum Reserve 4x4. • Being above-light-duty, the Titan XD is not EPA fuel mileage rated; however, Nissan anticipates that you will get 20 percent better fuel economy in this than its V8 gas-powered rivals while towing. • The new Nissan Titan XD won the coveted Truck of Texas award at this year’s Texas Autowriters Association (TAWA) Texas Truck Rodeo outside San Antonio.



2016 NISSAN TITAN XD PRO 4X CREW CAB 4X4

VEHICLE TYPE	Full-size pickup
SEATING CAPACITY	5 (bucket fronts) (S and SV have optional 6 w/split bench front)
ENGINE	5.0L Cummins Turbo Diesel V8
TRANSMISSION	Aisin 8-speed automatic
DRIVETRAIN	RWD or part-time 4WD
HORSEPOWER	310 hp at 3200 rpm
TORQUE	555 lb-ft at 1600 rpm
ALTERNATOR/BATTERY	200A / 550A cold cranking
STEERING	Variable speed hydraulic recirc ball
BRAKES (F/R)	14.17 / 14.37 vented disc
WHEELBASE	151.6 in
LENGTH	Crew Cab (Pro 4X) 243.6 in
BED LENGTH	77.9 in
GROUND CLEARANCE (F/R)	8.9 / 9.0 in
TURNING CIRCLE	53.8 ft
APPROACH ANGLE	20.96 degrees
DEPARTURE ANGLE	23.94 degrees
BREAKOVER ANGLE	20.1 degrees
TOW CAPACITY TRAILER	(Pro 4X) 11,784 lb
	(all models) 10,608 - 12,314 lb
TOW CAPACITY TONGUE	(Pro 4X) 1,178 lb
	(all models) 1061 - 1231 lb
CURB WEIGHT	7257 lb
WEIGHT DISTRIB	58-60 front / 40-42 rear
GVWR	8990 lb
FUEL	Ultra low sulfur diesel only
FUEL CAPACITY	26.0 gal



SUE MEAD is an automotive journalist and author, as well as an off-road adventurer and racer. She travels the globe test driving cars and trucks, working for magazines, newspapers, television, radio and the Internet to provide vehicle reviews, as well as adventure stories about racing, automotive expeditions and travel throughout the world. Mead has won a number of writing and photojournalist awards and is an inductee into the Off-Road Motorsports Hall of Fame. She has authored three books about automotive subjects.



technical feel that Nissan says is inspired by a theme of the Titan as a "powerful precision tool." Its muscular, athletic design bears an extended front overhang, with aerodynamically tuned front spoiler, roof and tailgate spoilers, underbody covers, rear tire wind deflectors, and a seal between the cab and bed.

To aid with cargo, the XD employs Nissan's Utili-track Bed Channel System, which features four heavy-duty aluminum alloy cleats that move and lock anywhere along the walls, bed floor and header tracks for flexible tie-down possibilities. Also onboard are lockable, removable, watertight and drainable bedside storage boxes that can be accessed from inside the bed without having to remove a camper top or tonneau cover.

Inside, designers focused on enhanced utility, with conveniently grouped controls, additional lockable storage and a center console that can hold a computer tablet with case or a 15-inch laptop. The premium grade instrument panel includes a combination of analog and digital gauges, along with a 5.0-inch color display, unique diesel monitoring and maintenance displays, and 7.0-inch

NissanConnect color monitor with Navigation, Mobile Apps and Services.

Nissan's standard front and rear Zero Gravity seats help optimize posture positioning, for enhanced comfort during long-distance driving. Available are heated and cooled front and heated rear seats, along with a choice of water-repellant fabric or leather appointments.

Special attention was paid to reducing the intrusion of noise and vibration into the cabin, using laminated front and rear side glass, additional engine noise isolation and body sealing.

We concentrated our drive on the 2016 Titan XD PRO-4X on a variety of on-road and rigorous off-road courses. We also used the truck for towing and appreciated its plentiful torque, smooth and quiet diesel ride and its towing technologies. Nissan has done its homework and has not only met its competition head-to-head, but also has some game-changing technologies and competencies. It's a large truck with a big-boy feel, but is easy to get in and out of, and its ergonomics make it easy to maneuver. ■



NISSAN TECHNICAL CENTER NORTH AMERICA: ARIZONA

Nissan Technical Center North America Arizona Testing Center (NTCNA) is Nissan's premier test facility for the Americas.

LOCATION: A barren, five-square-mile census-designated place near Stanfield AZ.

CAPABILITIES: Hot- and cold-weather simulation; high altitude; high speed; crash; powertrain; durability. Arizona's low desert terrain provides NTCNA with an ideal environment to test Nissan vehicles for hot weather, heat durability, engine cooling and air conditioner performance. NTCNA proving ground also features a 5.7-mile high-speed oval and four individual road courses designed to test vehicle durability, reliability and ride comfort.

According to ATC director Steve Monk, the site focuses on "comfort and ride-and-handling events that are important for the North American region." That means scouring the continent for challenging, aggravating and crappy roads, hiring a civil engineering firm for surveying purposes, then precisely replicating those roads on the grounds of the 3050-acre facility. "We have wavy asphalt roads from Florida, broken concrete from Michigan, turns and elevation changes from the San Gabriel Mountains, and two turns that replicate racetracks," Monk says. •

