

Big things in small packages

By Joe Sage

The 2019 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 is a decidedly full-size pickup, spanning up to almost 20 feet in length and weighing in at about two and a half tons. It competes head-on with the nominal half-tons from its siblings at GMC, as well as the other Detroit manufacturers and two Japanese brands. And Chevy faces the same market pressures as the others: delivering big truck capability, safety and durability, increasingly along with an eye to fuel economy and emissions efficiency.

It has been several years now since one of the other Detroit makers introduced a fuel-sipping V6 turbo for its full-size pickup, hoping the market would respond to something other than a V8 for at least a degree of sales, only to discover it would be one of their top sellers. This has been mirrored in the car market, where V8s and sixes have been replaced by much smaller six- and more often four-cylinder turbos, all delivering better horsepower, torque and fuel mileage than the big engines.

Against this landscape, Chevy now takes things

a step further, with an all-new engine offering for their top-selling full-size pickup, a trim but robust and highly technical 2.7-liter turbo of just four cylinders. The all-new 2019 Silverado already shaved off 450 pounds (based on Crew Cab V8)—and the slimming program continues under the hood with the availability of the new 2.7T. (Chevy Silverado 1500 with the 2.7T weighs 380 pounds less than with the 4.3L V6 it is designed to displace.)

Engineered specifically for Silverado, the new 2.7T is a clean-sheet design, receiving optimized technology in every aspect large and small (see specifications highlights at right).

We met up with the Chevy truck team in Paradise Valley for a chance to get behind the wheel, first driving the new Colorado ZR2 Bison (see also in this issue) to an off-road site near Superior, then swapping into the Silverado 2.7T.

We drove east through Superior to Miami-Globe, north along Roosevelt Lake and

Four Peaks on AZ 188, then down the Beeline Highway (AZ 87) back to metro Phoenix—about 180 miles of two-lane and rural four-lane highway with significant grades, curves and straightaways.

The goal of such a drive is kind of two seemingly contradictory things—paying close attention to the performance of this new powerplant, while simultaneously realizing its operation is so normal you stop paying attention to it. That, after all, is the engine's mission—to deliver its benefits in a transparent (and in key ways advantageous) way.

And why wouldn't it? Its 310 hp beats the 4.3L V6's 285 and is not that far off the 5.3L V8's 355 hp. Torque tells the same tale, at 348 lb-ft beating the 4.3L V6's 305 and not that far off the 5.3L V8's 383. (Their 6.2L V8 has 420 hp and 460 lb-ft.)

What's more, the 2.7T reaches its peak torque at as low as 1500 rpm and holds it to 4000, the latter the point at which the others are just kicking in. The 2.7T is also rated at 23 mpg highway

and 20 mpg city, an around-town rating 13 percent better than the 4.3L V6. It hits zero-to-60 mph in 6.8 seconds, a full second faster than the V6.

In addition to all that lightweight performance, Silverado 2.7T brings decent brawn, able to tow 7200 pounds, with a max payload of 2280 pounds.

We've long since concluded that with modern small-displacement, lower-cylinder-count engines in passenger cars and utilities, the majority of owners, if no-one ever told them it was a smaller engine, would never know or care. Whether this is the case with pickup buyers is largely moot—the vast majority of truck buyers are very active in their selection of powertrain and will know. Nonetheless, even though surely fully aware it's a smaller engine, will they care? Probably so, but we suspect the reason for this is that it will most likely become a bragging point. ■

2019 SILVERADO 2.7 TURBO ENGINE

- ENGINE**2.7L turbocharged DOHC I-4
- HP/TORQUE**310 hp / 348 lb-ft
- VALVETRAIN:** Dual-overhead camshafts, four-valves per cylinder, tripower valvetrain with continuously variable valve timing, variable valve lift and Active Fuel Management
- AIR DELIVERY:** Single dual-volute turbocharger with electronically controlled wastegate; intercooling system. 22-psi / 1.5 bar max boost
- FUEL DELIVERY:** High-pressure direct injection (3000 psi / 20 MPa) and electronic throttle control; Active Fuel Management
- IGNITION SYSTEM**High-energy coil-on-plug
- MAX ENGINE SPEED**6100 rpm
- ADDTL FEATURES:** Continuously variable oil pump; electric water pump; engine oil cooler, automatic stop/start, Active Thermal Management, exhaust manifold integrated in cylinder head
- MANUFACTURED**Spring Hill, Tennessee

2020 SILVERADO HD



While at the 2019 Silverado 1500 2.7 Turbo drive, we were afforded a very secret sneak peek of the 2020 Silverado HD—the third all-new Silverado in 18 months—so new it was presented in foam study form (which looks like the real thing, but is a firmly no-touch situation). Cameras were prohibited, and even saying we had seen it was off limits for some time. But now it can be shown (as it gets closer to being more widely revealed in February).

To be built at GM's Flint Assembly plant in Michigan, the new Silverado HD has extremely bold styling to differentiate it from the Silverado 1500 lineup. The only sheet metal shared with the 1500 is the roof. Even the biggest and tallest of us felt diminished in its presence, as in-your-face dramatic as the front-end loader it could be towing.

Heavy-duty Silverado HD pickups will have more differentiation than ever before from lighter-duty models, with all-new customer-focused trailering technology, significant increases in towing and payload capabilities and a host of technologies and features designed specifically for heavy-duty truck customers, such as a new integrated "Bedstep," for easier access to the bed while hooked up to a fifth-wheel trailer.

The cabin benefits from basic changes already made on the all-new Silverado 1500, including an additional three inches of legroom on crew cab models and a taller, more comfortable seating position.

Options under the hood of the new 2020 Silverado HD will include two new powertrains: an all-new direct-injection gasoline engine with six-speed automatic, or a Duramax Turbo-Diesel V8, delivering a whopping 910 lb-ft of torque through an all-new Allison 10-speed automatic.

With this launch, Chevrolet will have new pickups across the board—new Colorado midsize models; and all-new Silverado 1500, Medium-Duty and HD full-size models.

The new 2020 Silverado HD will come in five trims: Work Truck, Custom, LT, LTZ and High Country. The 2020 Silverado HD goes on sale in mid-2019. ■

