



## 2020 Ford Explorer

### PART ONE: DETROIT PRIVATE REVEAL

Several days before the media preview preceding the North American International Auto Show in Detroit (NAIAS), we flew in for an early reveal of the sixth-generation 2020 Ford Explorer, joining other media, along with dealers and VIPs, in the stands at Ford Field, home of the Detroit Lions.

The vehicles rolled out onto the field, which had been transformed with an audio-visual underlay of scenic highways and off-road trails, topped off by a huge screen backdrop for presentation details and a few proud words from the team who developed the vehicle.

The completely redesigned vehicle significantly returns to a rear-drive basis, reflected in strong rear haunches echoing the utility's 600-pound increase in tow capacity, with a leaner look overall, reflecting additional light-weighting. Sporty and athletic are the new Explorer's key buzzwords, making the reveal at mighty Ford Field appropriate. When fitted with a 3.0L EcoBoost engine, this is the most powerful Explorer ever.

The cabin is more spacious and adds new layers of available technology, such as a 12.3-inch digital cluster, 10.1-inch portrait-mounted touchscreen with full-screen maps, traffic-sensing Ford Co-Pilot360 driver assist, Reverse Brake Assist and Active Park Assist 2.0 (which aims to park the vehicle for you, at a touch of a button). New terrain management has up to seven drive modes, each with animated 3D graphics in the cluster.

### PART TWO: NAIAS AUTO SHOW REVEAL

For those who weren't at our early reveal of the 2020 Explorer, there were two more firsts saved for reveal at NAIAS—a hybrid and a performance ST. Ford Performance expands its utility presence (see Ford Edge ST, the first ST utility, in this issue) with the 2020 Ford Explorer ST, featuring a 400-hp, 415-lbft performance-tuned 3.0L EcoBoost V6 with a targeted top track speed of 143 mph. And a new 318-hp 2020 Explorer Hybrid with 3.3L powertrain is rated for over 500 miles of range (see Detroit Auto Show highlights, also in this issue). ■



## 2020 Shelby GT500

### PART ONE: DETROIT PRIVATE REVEAL

The Ford Explorer reveal was our original mission, but while we were in flight to Detroit, we received an email saying that if we could change our return flight, they had something else special to show us. We could, and we did.

Come Detroit's chilly dawn, we headed to a suburban development park, where a variety of vehicles were receiving secret final prep for NAIAS. Deep within the facility was a room curtained off from the rest, and within that room were a first-generation 1967 Shelby GT500 with modified 428 V8, along with the reason for our special detour—the 2020 Ford Mustang Shelby GT500. On hand for our private presentation was Melvin Betancourt, Ford design manager and father of the new project (photo at top with the '67 and the new 2020).

Carroll Shelby had called the '67 Shelby GT500 "the first car I'm really proud of." The 2020 model is the third GT500 and the most potent and advanced Mustang ever—in fact, the most powerful street-legal Ford ever, with an over-700-hp supercharged 5.2L V8 (the current Ford GT has a 647-hp 3.5L EcoBoost V6). The new GT500 boasts a segment-first dual-clutch transmission and the largest brakes of any domestic sports coupe, using Ford GT and Mustang GT4 race tech. Other areas receiving special attention are aerodynamics for increased downforce, thermal management, and race-tuned active chassis drive modes. Zero-to-60 times are in the mid-threes, with sub-11-second quarter-mile times. Colors include Red Hot, Twister Orange and Iconic Silver, with painted stripes available.

### PART TWO: BARRETT-JACKSON AUCTION

Later that day, we were back in Arizona, and the car arrived here a few days later. VIN 001 of the new 2020 Shelby GT500 was auctioned for charity at Barrett-Jackson at no reserve, with Edsel B Ford II and Carroll Shelby's grandson Aaron Shelby joining the car on the block. Barrett-Jackson chairman and CEO Craig Jackson put up the winning bid, at \$1.1 million, with proceeds going to JDRF, the leading global organization funding type 1 diabetes research. ■

