

# NEW TOP SPOT BY JOE SAGE

For years, when buying a GMC Sierra pickup (or Yukon SUV), the Denali trim level has been their ultimate unit, a powerful and luxurious build, top of the line. Across a broad and diverse lineup starting at \$42,895, it's a great place to arrive. Accordingly, Denali buyers are among the most fiercely loyal there are. As evidence of that, we have friends who buy one Denali after another, keeping each well into six digits of hearty yet luxurious service on the odometer. On the other hand, we have a neighbor who expresses his love and commitment by buying a new one every year.

Now GMC has upped the game with a more ultimate model—appropriately, the Denali Ultimate. That neighbor has been living happily at the top

of the pyramid for years, so he of course ordered a 2022 Sierra Denali Ultimate as soon as it was announced. But with ongoing global supply chain constraints, he knew he'd have a wait—so he of course bought a new non-Ultimate Denali to tide him over. Knowing this, we felt a little bad knowing we'd take delivery of ours right in front of his face. But that face was grinning ear to ear when he saw it pull up. He checked ours out inside and out, and his enthusiasm remains unabated.

The Sierra 1500 Denali is a fine truck, with a base price of \$62,800. The that-much-finer Sierra 1500 Denali Ultimate runs \$19,100 higher—\$81,900. (There is also a Sierra HD Denali, though not a Sierra HD Denali Ultimate at this point.)

The full Sierra 1500 lineup, this included, has updates for 2022, from new grille and headlamp styling to a new Google-compatible 13.4-inch touchscreen and 14-inch heads-up display, as well as trailering-capable SuperCruise driver-assist.

The Sierra Denali Ultimate is immediately recognizable by a deeper Vader Chrome grille and badging, and by its 22-inch low gloss black wheels with machined accents. The interior is finished in Alpine UMBER full-grain leather seats and dark open-pore Paldao wood trim, a rich and handsome command post. Full-grain leather continues across the instrument panel, doors and console, while the headliner is premium microsuede and surrounds a standard power sunroof. Seats are 16-way power adjustable and include massage up front, with a decadent array of settings. Audio is from an all-

new 12-speaker Bose Premium system.

While Sierra Denali also offers a standard 5.3-liter V8, Denali Ultimate offers just the two absolute top engines—the 420-hp 6.2L EcoTec3 V8 in our sample, or a 3.0-liter inline-six Duramax Turbo Diesel, which matches the V8's 460 lb-ft of torque. The 6.2-liter includes Dynamic Fuel Management cylinder deactivation, helping to deliver decent fuel mileage from this powerful beast. The 10-speed automatic in this truck provides one of the best-matched powertrains we've driven in some time.

The chassis has been updated to accommodate an optional NHT (code) Max Trailering Package (not on ours) that brings the 1500 truck's tow capacity up into lower HD truck range.

Tech features are laid on thick, from a wide range of driving aids (well implemented and defeatable via the interface), to GMC's full set of trailering technologies, notably including 14 cam-

era views and their "Transparent Trailer" feature that gives you a full electronic rear view mirror as though the trailer weren't even there.

Whereas you can get the Sierra Denali with rear-drive, the Denali Ultimate is four-wheel-drive only, always great to have and totally appropriate to any full-size pickup. That said, this build has such a handsome, urban personality, underscored by an easy entry-egress 8.1-inch ground clearance, we didn't take it out to the dirt. For regular doses of that, there's the AT4 or the also-new-for-'22 AT4X, which has a clearance of 10.9 inches (or the AT4 either 10.7 or 10.9, depending upon box length).

This is an everything-included-and-then-some truck. (Our only option was a special metallic paint.) Any Denali buyer with the extra \$20 grand will surely go Ultimate. And all indications are, if you buy one, you are destined to become a fiercely loyal repeat buyer over time, as well. ■

## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY.....	Fort Wayne Assembly, Indiana
ENGINE / TRANSMISSION.....	USA / USA
PARTS CONTENT.....	42% US / 44% Mexico
BUILD.....	crew cab / short bed
ENGINE.....	6.2L EcoTec3 V8 VVT DI with Dynamic Fuel Management
HP/TORQUE.....	420 hp / 460 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO.....	11.5:1
TRANSMISSION.....	Hydra-Matic 10-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN.....	4x4
TRANSFER CASE.....	2-spd AutoTrac, auto-locking rear differential
AXLE RATIO.....	3.23
SUSPENSION.....	F: independent coil-over-shock w twin-tube shocks; R: solid axle w semi-elliptic, variable-rate, two-stage multileaf springs, splayed twin-tube shocks
STEERING.....	elec pwr-assist rack & pinion
BRAKES.....	F: 13x1.18; R: 13.6x0.79
WHEELS.....	22x9 low gloss black alum w machined accents
TIRES.....	P275/50R22 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE.....	(cc/sb) 231.9 / 147.4
GROUND CLEARANCE.....	8.1 in
APPR / BRKVR / DEPART.....	19.3 / 19.3 / 23.5°
TURNING CIRCLE.....	na
HEADROOM (F/R).....	43.0 / 40.1 in
LEGROOM (F/R).....	44.5 / 43.4 in
BED LENGTH.....	(short box) 69.9 in (5.8 ft)
BASE CURB WEIGHT.....	(cc/sb/4x4) 4980 lb
MAX GVWR.....	7000 lb
MAX PAYLOAD.....	2030 lb
TOW CAPACITY.....	(cc/sb/4x4) 8900 lb (or w avail NHT max trailer pkg 13,000 lb)
FUEL / CAPACITY.....	premium unl / 24 gal
MPG.....	15/20/17 (city/hwy/comb)
<b>BASE PRICE.....</b>	<b>\$78,700</b>
PAINT: Titanium Rush Metallic.....	495
-CREDIT: not equipped w front & rear park assist (to be retrofitted later).....	(50)
DESTINATION CHARGE.....	1695
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$80,840</b>

*Note: price has increased since our sticker.*

## 2022 GMC SIERRA 1500 KEY BUILD VARIABLES

<b>Trims</b> .....	Pro, SLE, Elevation, SLT, AT4, Denali, AT4X (new), Denali Ultimate (new),
<b>Engines / Transmissions</b>	
2.7L Turbo-4 High Output.....	8-spd auto
5.3L EcoTec3 V8.....	10-spd auto
6.2L EcoTec3 V8.....	"
3.0L Duramax Turbo-Diesel I-6.....	"
<b>Cabs / Beds</b>	
Regular.....	long 8'2"
Double.....	standard 6'7"
Crew.....	short 5'10"; standard 6'7"
<b>Wheels</b> .....	17, 18, 20, 22-inch
<b>Tires</b> .....	A/S, A/T, M/T
<b>Tow capacity</b> .....	8900 to 13,000 lb
<b>Fuel capacity</b> .....	Reg cab 28.3 gal Double / Crew cabs 24.0 gal
<b>Base price range</b> .....	\$32,495 to \$80,395