

Mustang BOSS 302S Race Car Will Be Built At Flat Rock

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The BOSS 302S uni-body starts as a Mustang body-in-white, to reduce weight, the factory seam sealer, sound deadener and interior panels are deleted prior to body build – all to enhance performance dynamics.

In addition to body reinforcement, a 6-point FIA legal roll cage is installed for driver safety and chassis rigidity. The interior features a RE-CARO HANS Pro-Racer lightweight race seat, 6-point safety belt, quick release steering wheel and AIM data acquisition system with GPS.

BOSS 302S aerodynamic updates include a unique fiberglass heat-extracting hood, adjustable front splitter and adjustable carbon fiber rear wing.

A “retro”-styled BOSS 302 graphics package is included with each car and mimics the graphics from the original 1969 BOSS 302 program.

Production is scheduled the second quarter of 2011 and orders are now being taken at Ford dealers that participate in the Ford Racing Performance Parts program by ordering part number FR500-B302S (performance white paint) or M-FR500-B302SO (orange paint). MSRP for the BOSS 302S is \$79,000.



This special Ford F-150 “Hall of Fame” pickup truck visited Ford Field in Detroit this past weekend as part of tailgate promotion.

Ford Begins Assembly Of Focus in Germany

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) – Ford Motor Co. last week started high-volume production of its new Focus compact at its Saarlouis factory in Germany, the company said.

Early U.S. production of the car is now under way at a factory near Detroit, with the Focus due in U.S. showrooms early next year.

The car, designed in Europe for sale in 120 markets around the globe, will be built in mid-2011 in St. Petersburg, Russia, and in 2012 when new plants start up in Chongqing, China, and Rayong, Thailand, the company said in a statement.

In Europe, Ford will sell four-door Focus sedans, a five-door hatchback version

and a wagon, but only the sedan and hatchback will be sold in the U.S.

The Focus, which is far sleeker and more efficient than the current U.S. model, is an important vehicle for Ford as it tries to build the essentially the same cars across the globe to save on design, engineering and manufacturing costs. The basic design and about 80 percent of the Focus parts will be common to all models worldwide. Some variation in the models is required because of varying consumer tastes and different pollution control and safety standards between countries.

The Focus is being built on Ford's new compact underpinnings that will spawn other vehicles worldwide. The company expects to produce more than 2 million vehicles per year off the common platform by 2012.

More than 10 million Focuses have been sold around the world since the first model was introduced in 1998. Six million of these cars were sold in Europe, with the Saarlouis plant building almost 3.7 million.

The Saarlouis plant has more than 6,500 employees, and Ford said it has invested over 3 billion euros in it to keep it modern. It can build up to 1,850 vehicles per day on three shifts. Currently it

‘Hall of Fame’ F-150 Visits Ford Field

MASSILLON, Ohio – A customized Ford F-150 Football Hall of Fame truck traveled to Ford Field for this past Sunday's Detroit Lions game, giving football fans a chance to check out the vehicle's unique design elements as well as attend an autograph session with Pro Football Hall of Fame legends.

Truck cap and tonneau cover manufacturer A.R.E. and the Pro Football Hall of Fame – both headquartered in northeast Ohio – partnered to build this special F-150 designed to take the Hall of Fame experience on the road.

The truck features unique elements, including a painted silhouette of the Pro Football Hall of Fame museum and stadium; a football-themed interior with material resembling pigskin leather and gold Hall of Fame jackets; a hitch-

mounted grill and fold-down flat-screen TV; and a pull-out truck bed storage system housing historic Hall of Fame memorabilia.

A matching A.R.E. LSX Series fiberglass tonneau cover – embellished with autograph signatures from dozens of Football Hall of Fame Enshrinees – tops the bed of the truck.

The A.R.E. Football Hall of Fame truck will be located inside Gate G at Ford Field, off St. Antoine Street, on Sunday, Dec. 12, as the Lions took on the Green Bay Packers. Detroit Lions Hall of Famers Lem Barney and Charlie Sanders were onsite to sign autographs prior to the game.

Barney, a cornerback from 1967-1977, was named the NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year in 1967 and selected to play in seven Pro Bowls. He

was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1992. Sanders, a tight end from 1968-1977, was the teams' all-time reception leader (336) at the time of his retirement.

A seven-time Pro Bowl selection, he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2007.

Ford Motor Company awarded A.R.E. with the truck, which debuted at the 2010 Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) Show in Las Vegas, as part of its project vehicle program designed to showcase Ford vehicles customized with aftermarket products.

The truck's impressive design and craftsmanship earned it a 2010 Ford Product Excellence Award.

Ford Field officials said the truck's visit enhanced the tailgate experience for the fans.

Strong November New Car Sales Buoy Domestic Automakers Going into '11

By SHARON SILKE CARTY
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) After a year of watching auto sales slowly increase month by month, industry executives are finally willing to firmly declare that the U.S. market is in recovery.

People who had been too afraid to make a big car purchase are finally coming back to dealerships, a little more confident that they won't lose their jobs. And that's reflected in November's auto sales figures: Industry sales were up 16.9 percent for the month compared with a year ago. Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, Honda, Nissan and Hyundai all posted double-digit gains.

“We're starting to see people showing an inclination to go back into the dealerships, to go back into the malls,” said Jim Bunnell, general manager of General Motors Co.'s U.S. sales operations. “It's not going to happen overnight, but we think as we roll through 2011, we're going to see a nice, gradual im-

provement and recovering in the automotive sector.”

For most of 2010, car sales were driven by people who needed a car rather than wanted a car. Jeremy Anwyl, CEO of consumer website Edmunds.com, says that still holds true at the end of the year: “They've been putting it off and they can't put it off any longer. Some people waited till this time of year to catch the close-out deals.”

Bob Carter, Toyota's top U.S. sales executive, is seeing customers going even further. As the economic landscape improves, the company is starting to see buyers opting for more highly equipped SUVs, which indicates buyers aren't just using them because they need them for family transportation, he said.

Still, Toyota was the only automaker to post a decline, with sales down 3.3 percent. It blamed the drop on a cut in sales to fleet buyers such as rental car companies. Nevertheless, the automaker has been fighting a string of embarrassing safety problems. Toyota has recalled more than 10 million vehicles worldwide mostly for problems with sticky gas pedals or floor mats that can trap the accelerator pedal.

Yingzi Su, GM's senior economist, said the stable and increasing auto sales mean that consumers with jobs are starting to spend again, and that's a good sign for the broader economic recovery. Once businesses see increased consumer spending, they will be more willing to hire workers, a factor that has held back the economic recovery for months.

The U.S. auto market is the most critical market for carmakers, because that's where their profits per vehicle are higher than anywhere else in the world. In China, the world's largest market and a place where auto sales are booming, buyers spend about \$10,000 less per car than American buyers. In the U.S., buyers are more inclined to pay for better stereo systems, heated or cooled seats, and

other perks that increase the cost of the car and pad the automaker's bottom line.

Ford says its customers are also adding in some costly extras. Transaction prices are up for the automaker as more buyers pay for options like Sync, the company's technology that enables drivers to control the radio and map with their voice, says George Pipas, manager of sales analysis.

Industrywide, transaction prices came down a bit in November, says car buying information service TrueCar.com, with automakers doling out year-end deals and holiday promotions.

Incentives jumped 6.4 percent compared with October, but were just slightly higher than last year. Automakers are focusing on low-interest loans and special lease programs to lure in customers, says Jesse Toprak, TrueCar's vice president of industry trends and insight.

It was that kind of deal that got Nathan Turner, a web designer at Quell Group, a suburban Detroit public relations firm, to buy a car this month. He leased a new Nissan Maxima for \$360 a month, \$20 a month less than his old Maxima lease for a car with a bigger engine and some upgrades.

Turner says his company is healthy, and he's not all that worried about losing his job. He has always been a big saver, putting away anywhere from 15 to 20 percent of his income, which made it easier to weather the downturn in the economy.

So when his Nissan dealer contacted him and said he could get a better car for less money, he decided it made sense.

“As long as I budget properly and watch my expenses, I can make purchases like this,” Turner said. His only regret? Buying a car with a bigger engine: “Now I'm gassing up once a week instead of once every two weeks.”

Auto writers Tom Krisher and Dee-Ann Durbin contributed to this report.

New Continental Sensor Tech Delivers Crash Data Super Fast

The latest passive safety innovations from supplier Continental continue to improve occupant protection in frontal and side-impact collisions.

Continental's new Crash Impact Sound Sensing technology is changing the way airbags deploy in frontal collisions – where occupant safety is measured in milliseconds – by using structure-borne noise as the determining factor, while the new clipSAT pressure satellites offer both time and cost advantages in installations for automakers.

Whereas today's impact sensors measure changes in acceleration or air pressure, Continental's new technology features a revolutionary new sensing principle, according to the Auburn Hills-based supplier.

Currently in production on a high-volume European platform, Crash Impact Sound Sensing measures the structure-borne noise generated in a collision.

Continental further estimates that a Crash Impact Sound Sensor can transmit

critical information about crash severity to a vehicle's restraints control module three times faster than an acceleration sensor.

“Our goal is to get as much data about a crash event to a vehicle's restraints module as quickly as possible so that the airbags and pre-tensioners can be fired with the right force at precisely the right time,” said Dean McConnell, head of business development for Continental's North American Passive Safety/Active Driver Assistance (PSAD) Business Unit.

“Every millisecond counts when it comes to optimizing crash protection.”

Data can be received by the restraints control module up to 15 milliseconds faster – which is significant considering that the firing decision must be made within 10-40 milliseconds in a front-impact decision.

Continental says that early testing suggests that one such Sound Sensing unit can replace two traditional acceleration sensors.

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