Loaded for adventure.

BY JOE SAGE

ake the still relatively new (now in its third year) Nissan Titan pickup. Go for the heavier XD model. Opt for the big 555-lb-ft Cummins Turbo Diesel V8 engine. Go 4x4, of course. Pick the Crew Cab and bring along your friends. Wrap it all up in Pro-4X trim and add a few optional packages.

The price difference for XD is about two grand, for the Cummins diesel a bit over five grand, 4x4 drivetrain about three grand, and Crew Cab about five grand over Single Cab. Pro-4X is about eight grand above a base (S) model. Not bad at all, considering you're still at \$53k. You can spend more on Platinum Reserve trim, about ten grand more, if you want a more citified truck, though a great many of its luxe-touch features had been optioned into our Pro-4X for considerably less, and we'd be happy with this truck's ready-for-the-wilds (or town) attitude. There are a wide range of features—and personalities—in the Titan lineup.

Some of this truck's basics come hand in hand. Pro-4X trim is 4x4-only, so that's two decisions in one. The Cummins diesel is only available with the heavier XD trims, another twofer decision.

Titan was first released in Crew Cab only, pop-

ular as more people use pickups as they otherwise might a family sedan (at least at times). Next was the Single Cab, good for a worker or two hauling 4x8 materials in the lineup's only 8-foot bed. Then came the return of the King Cab (a classic name that's among the best for cab-and-a-half models). The King Cab may be a bargain at three grand less than Crew, depending on your normal head count.

Considering how far our sample's build has come from a base (non-XD) Titan S Single Cab gasoline 4x2 at \$30,030, its price is money well spent.

If you don't need the diesel's prodigious torque, but still like the heavier XD build, you can get this truck in gasoline for \$48,130. If you only look at XD to get the diesel, but don't need that or the heavier frame, you could drop to \$43,740 for a non-XD gasoline Titan, still with a Pro-4X 4x4 Crew Cab.

Diesels have developed devoted fans for a number of reasons, usually boiling down to their massive torque (in this case 555 lb-ft versus 394 with gasoline, although gasoline has 390 hp to diesel's 310); diesel's price at the pump (which was considerably less when the diesel craze started, but is now a total crap shoot); and a lingering perception

SPECIFICATIONS

.Cummins 5.0L turbo diesel DOHC V8 HP/TORQUE .310 hp / 555 lb-ft **RATTERY/AITERNATOR** .550A cold crank / 200A TRANSMISSION / DRIVETRAIN ... Aisin 6-spd auto / 4WD ...F: dbl-wishbone, 36mm stblzr bar R: multi-leaf, solid axle, 18mm stblzr bar Bilstein monotube coil-over shocks incl with Pro-4X STEERING......hydraulic recirc, engine spd variable assistvented discs: F 14.17x1.5 / R 14.37x1.2 in WHEELS/TIRES .18x7.5 alum alloy painted / LT275/65R18 LENGTH/WHEFLBASE TURNING CIRCLE **GROUND CLEARANCE** .F 8.8 / R 9.0 in APPRCH/BRKVR/DEPRT20.18 / 20.1 / 23.94 degrees WEIGHT / DISTRIBUTION F/R. .7246 lb / 60/40 TOW CAPACITY ...12.030 / gooseneck 11.330 lb FUEL / FUEL CAPACITY / MPGdiesel / 26.0 gal / na

PRO-4X UTILITY PKG: Utili-track channel system, 4 adjustable tie-down cleats, front/rear sonar, tailgate area illumination, 120V bed outlet, LED under-rail bed lighting, power slide/defrost rear window, Rockford Fosgate premium 12-spkr audio, electronic lock tailgate, bed step......1445
PRO-4X CONVENIENCE PKG: Leather seats w contrast stich & Pro-4X embroidery, 4-way pwr psngr seat, heated seats front/rear, power heat-tilt-tele wheel, seats-wheel-mirrors memory, compass on nav, remote start, auto-dim mirrors, HomeLink, NissanConnect via SiriusXM,3545

TOTAL \$60,960

diesel will get better fuel mileage (though that is being questioned by many these days, as gasoline engine technology improves by leaps and bounds).

We followed this truck's fuel gauge, refills and MPG readouts casually and were surprised to find no bragging points in this realm. We noticed the gauge was down about a third of a tank (almost 9 gallons if the readout is accurate) after our first 29 miles of driving, though we don't know how far it was driven to its drop-off at our office. Nonetheless, within another 15 miles, it read barely over half a tank. The fuel mileage readout was giving us startling averages of 7.5 or 8.7 mpg around town. (As a heavier-than-nominal-half-ton truck, the XD does not have EPA fuel mileage ratings.)

Unless you really are pulling stumps—or horses up I-17, or a really big boat out of Saguaro Lake—the gasoline model could put five grand back in your pocket toward fuel, anyway, or even toward some lunches at the lake. The diesel is geared lower, with a higher final drive ratio, so your particular geographical range, loads and even freeway driving style need to be considered, too.

As for XD versus the lighter Titan, we'd personally still buy the heavier frame for Arizona's rugged country. But for many buyers, that could be another tradeoff worth visiting.



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