

Persona and purpose

BY JOE SAGE

There's something inherently appealing about an SUV from GMC, the truck division of General Motors. By definition, it is expected to present a trucklike bearing, a stylishly rugged look and a sense of purpose. The whole SUV-crossover thing remains open to interpretation, but as GM's truck division, GMC keeps it simple on the consumer website: the compact Terrain, three-row Acadia and big Yukon are "SUVs," while Canyon and Sierra pickups are "trucks." Simple? To a point.

Terrain is a cousin to Chevrolet Equinox, which Chevy calls a crossover. GMC's media site follows the consumer site SUV-truck groupings for specifications, but for images pairs Terrain and Acadia as "crossovers," puts Yukon with the pickups as a "truck" and does not mention SUVs at all. That's inside baseball, but we mention it in the course of getting our arms around the Terrain's persona.

We had mood swings with the gen-one Terrain, in our first review poking fun at its blocky styling as looking like it was standing still even at speed (the inverse of what people often say about swoopy performance cars), then appreciated its burly Sierra pickup-like charm the second time around. We were interested to get our hands on this gen-two Terrain, to see which heartstrings it might pluck.

The new Terrain (now in its second model year) has been visually transformed. No longer blocky, it's

arguably more generic than gen-one, but is defined by its trademark, trucklike, 100 percent GMC grille.

If they've thought about it, as GMC clearly has, vehicles sent to us for evaluation are outfitted in ways that will show their best face or emphasize their purpose. This one, with metallic black paint, 19-inch black wheels and other Black Edition style points, plus gold-stitched black leather, rich woods and brushed metals inside, along with a full set of tech packages (priced at considerable value), suggests "premium" and "urban," while its roof rack with crossbars suggests "active lifestyle"—equal parts modern and a bit tough.

Its tech tends toward comfort, entertainment and electronic driver assist, all toward the urban side, while its selectable 2WD/4WD, traction control, decent ground clearance and (with this engine) 3500-pound tow capacity (with low-range control for towing downhill) suggest it's ready for a week-end of biking, kayaking and dirt or gravel roads.

We made many notes during the week about switches and controls we would reengineer. Its shift interface (a distracting center stack cluster of differently sized switches and buttons you push or pull to change among gears) was top among these, with small and largely hidden headlights controls and an odd parking brake switch also noted.

In an extremely competitive segment, it's the GMC Terrain's truck division character that may let it stand out the most. Call it a crossover, call it an SUV, but when the weekend beckons, you might just as likely say, "let's take my truck." ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	(opt) 2.0L 16v DOHC turbo four-cylinder
DRIVETRAIN	AWD (also avail FWD)
HP/TORQUE	252 hp / 260 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	9-spd automatic
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut w coils, direct-acting stblzr bar; R: four-link independent
STEERING	elec power assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	(2.0T) front 12.6, rear 11.3, low-drag calipers
WHEELS / TIRES	17"/18"/19" / P235/50R19
LENGTH / WB	182.3 / 107.3 in
TURNING CIRCLE	(17" > 19" wheels) 37.4 > 41.6 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	7.9 in
HEADROOM (F/R)	(w/o sunroof) 40 / 38.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	40.9 / 39.7 in
CARGO CAPACITY	29.6 / 63.3 / 81 cu.ft
WEIGHT	(2.0T AWD) 3756 lb
TOW CAPACITY	(2.0T) 3500 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	15.6 gal
MPG	21/26/23 (city/hwy/comb)

SLT INCLUDES: HID headlamps w LED signature lighting, leather steering wheel, keyless entry-start, fold-flat front passenger seat, 18" machined aluminum wheels w dark grey accents (our were upgraded to 19"), leather-appointed seats, heated front seats, dual-zone auto climate.

BASE PRICE	\$32,600
ENGINE: 2.0L Turbo	1495
BLACK EDITION: 19" gloss black alum wheels, gloss black roof rails, dark grille, black accents & trim badging	795
EBONY TWILIGHT METALLIC PAINT	395
PREFERRED PKG: dual exhausts, roof rack cross rails, hands-free liftgate, heated wheel, front psngr 6-way pwr seat w pwr lumbar, seat/mirrors memory, univ remote	1250
INTERIOR PROTECTION PKG: all-weather mats	200
INFOTAINMENT PKG II: nav, voice recog, Bose, HD	1180
TRAILERING EQUIPMENT w 7-wire connection	450
DRIVER ALERT PKG I: lane change, blind side, rear cross traffic, rear park assist, safety alert seat	445
DRIVER ALERT PKG II: adaptive cruise, low-speed & pedestrian auto brake, lane keep w lane depart warn, fwd collision alert, intel high beam, follow distance ind	745
DESTINATION CHARGE	1195
TOTAL	\$40,750

