

# BIG MEDICINE

Just what the doctor ordered. *by Joe Sage*

You probably know the Ram 1500 TRX fundamentals by now—prodigious power, torque, speed and off-road chops, all pulled together perfectly in one truck. It also has somewhat prodigious price and thirst, but it's all worth every penny.

We've eased into the Ram TRX in kind of a slow dance, though each step has been immersive and impressive. First we chased rumors, like everybody. Then came the big reveal, held online due to pandemic travel and event restrictions—and such an impact it had, even without driving it yet, we made it our September/October 2020 cover feature.

A takeaway from then: "As stewards of off-road standard-bearers Ram 2500 Power Wagon and Ram 1500 Rebel, as well as huge HEMI V8 and Eco-Diesel powerplants, and with corporate cousins

Dodge and Jeep both applying 700-plus-hp specialty HEMIs ever more broadly, it's just natural to fold together all of the above" in the Ram 1500 TRX. Everything is extra special in this truck: engine, transmission, transfer case, frame, suspension, wheels, tires, body work, even its premium interior.

Next was the TAWA Texas Truck Rodeo in October, a rare live event (featured in our November-December 2020 issue). Even that had two steps—first a special day with an in-depth, hands-on presentation, creekside in Austin's Hill Country. The next day, finally, brought wheel time! TRX won its class here, the prime contributor to the overall Truck of Texas trophy going to the full Ram 1500 lineup.

Shortly after Texas came the delayed full-bore launch drive in Reno-Tahoe (and we were all set to

go, until an emergency kicked in at home).

Fate has now rolled around again, with a shiny new red TRX arriving at our office here in Arizona—all ours to play with for a week. You learn a lot in that time—really get out and dig into things. We get a feel for its performance, behavior and convenience around town, and we get it off-road for something perhaps even more intense than the Texas Truck Rodeo. In between, we try its acceleration, brakes and handling in the full range of normal pavement speeds. And, if interested, we can get a good feel for the thirst level that may come with an Olympic-strength 702-hp 4x4 pickup.

Great as launch drives and comparo events are, it's that full week on your own that really starts to give you a sense of what it would be like to live with a vehicle if you called it your own.

This is a rare build, a truck you can equally appropriately show up with in high country cowboy country, at the swankiest of clubs, or on the rough-

est of trails and sandiest of dunes. This truck can do anything off-road and can do anything at speed. TRX comes with a trailer brake controller, 8100-lb capacity, and ours a compelling tow package with trailer light and tire info. (If you need to tow in five digits, there are other trucks in the Ram lineup, but they won't beat the TRX off-road/speed formula.)

This truck that can do anything has only one or two items on the other side of the balance sheet: it's not cheap, and it's thirsty. With its powertrain and capabilities, its love of gasoline is no surprise and an appropriate price to pay (we never broke 10 mpg on its readout, though we didn't reset after inheriting it in the 8s, and we certainly did not hyper-mile). As for its purchase price, it's easy to think of this as a 90-thousand-dollar truck, as with our appropriately and desirably optioned truck. This isn't surprising, when you think of it in terms of anything from Challenger Hellcat Redeye to Grand Cherokee Trackhawk. When you look at TRX's base price of \$69,995, which includes every fundamental of this build, it's downright reasonable. (For more perspec-



tive, check out TRX VIN 001 in this issue, auctioned for charity at Barrett-Jackson for \$410,000.)

Rather than Ram's customary instrument panel-mounted rotary controller, TRX has a conventional console-mounted shift lever, creating room on the dash for a cluster of core special features: 4WD options (low-high-auto-axle lock, notably no 2WD), drive modes (sport, snow, tow, mud, Baja, auto), traction control and—yes, it has a HEMI—launch. Its flat-bottomed wheel has supercar-worthy paddle shift. Binnacle readouts offer a wealth of additional performance and off-road data.

(cont'd)

*If you're a fan of vehicle design—styling and engineering, form and function, and how they all come together—you'll find plenty to catch your eye in the TRX. Its styling overall is an instant winner, and its details are the gifts that keep giving.*

## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY .....	Sterling Heights, Michigan
CAB & BED ..Crew Cab (2/3), nominal 5'7" bed	
ENGINE .....	6.2L HEMI® supercharged V8 (376 cu.in), 16v pushrod OHV, sodium-filled exhaust valves, hollow stem intake valves, 16 conventional lifters all w roller tips; sequential multiport electronic returnless FI; deep-skirt cast iron block w cross-bolted main bearing caps, alum-alloy heads w hemispherical combustion chambers
HP/TORQUE .....	702 hp / 650 lb-ft
ALTERNATOR .....	250 amp
TRANSMISSION ..Torqueflite 8HP95 8-spd auto, adaptive electronic control, full manual via gear selector or paddle shifters, six TRX-unique modes: Sport, Snow, Tow, Mud, Baja and Auto (feat perf shifting & gear holding)	
DRIVETRAIN .....	4x4
TRANSFER CASE .....	2-spd elec: 4HI, locked; neutral; 4LO, locked; torque split variable by mode (25/75 Baja to 50/50 rock in 4LO)
AXLES .....	F: 8.5; R: Dana 60 w avail open, lim slip or electronic locking diff; 3.55 ratio
EXHAUST ..dual 3" straight-thru w 5" black tips	
ZERO-TO-60 / ZERO-TO-100 .....	4.5 / 10.5 sec
QUARTER-MILE .....	12.8 sec at 108 mph
TOP SPEED .....	118 mph
SUSPENSION ..F: upper & lower A-arms, coils, Bilstein e2 Blackhawk active performance shocks; R: five-link w track bar, coils, Bilstein e2 Blackhawk active damping twin-tube performance shocks, solid axle	
STEERING .....	elec power steering
BRAKES .....	F: 15x1.2 inverted hat (outboard vent) rotors w 2.2" two-piston pin-slider caliper & ABS; R: 15x0.87 disc w 2.2" single-piston pin-slider caliper & ABS; power assist: dual-rate tandem diaphragm vacuum
WHEELS ..18x9 cast alum, black paint/polish; beadlock-capable available (opt on ours)	
TIRES .....	35-in Goodyear Wrangler Territory All-Terrain off-road w full-size spare
LENGTH / WHEELBASE .....	232.9 / 145.1 in
TURNING CIRCLE .....	48.3 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE (F/R AXLES) .....	9.4 / 8.0 in; w skidplate 11.8 in
APPR / DEP / BRKOVER .....	30.2 / 23.5 / 21.9°
HEADROOM (F/R) .....	40.9 / 39.8 in
LEGROOM (F/R) .....	40.9 / 45.2 in
PAYLOAD .....	1310 lb
TOW CAPACITY .....	8100 lb
OIL / COOLANT CAPACITY .....	7.0 / 15.0 qt
FUEL / CAPACITY .....	91 oct prem req'd / 33 gal
MPG .....	10/14/12 (city/hwy/comb)
<b>BASE PRICE .....</b>	<b>\$69,995</b>
LOWER TWO-TONE PAINT .....	250
TECH GROUP: heads-up display, auto-dim digital display inside rear view mirror, LED center high-mount stop lamp .....	1095
TRAILER TOW GROUP: trailer light check, trailer tire pressure monitoring system .....	195
ADVANCED SAFETY GROUP: pedestrian/cyclist emergency braking, adaptive cruise w stop & go, lane keep assist .....	995
BED UTILITY GROUP: (all Mopar®): deployable bed-step, four adjustable cargo tie-down hooks, spray-in bedliner .....	845
TRX CARBON FIBER PKG: leather & carbon flat-bottom steering wheel, real carbon fiber interior accents .....	1295
TRX LEVEL 2 EQUIP GRP: leather-trimmed bucket seats .....	7920
AUDIO: Harman Kardon 19-sprk premium .....	1195
MOPAR® ROCK RAILS .....	995
WHEELS: 18x9 alum beadlock capable .....	1895
BED-MOUNT MOPAR® TIRE CARRIER .....	995
DESTINATION CHARGE .....	1695
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$89,365</b>





We're always suckers for cab clearance lights, usually found on HD pickups. So how 'bout marker lights in the 702-hp HEMI's hood scoop? Love 'em!

The TRX has a camera-based inside rearview mirror, though you can easily flip it back to a real mirror. (Despite the unobstructed view of a camera mirror, we prefer both-at-infinity vision without re-focusing between windshield and a real mirror.)

We didn't take the TRX high-speed dune running, but we gave it a good run in the dirt, hills and ruts. In either locale, one of its big advantages is sophisticated independent suspension supported by Bilstein active damping specially built for this truck. It also dominates with its 35-inch tire and wheel fitment (its Goodyears were also developed specifically for this truck), as well as a generous formula of ground clearance, angles and—just in case—skid plates. Dunes remain on our to-do list.

We learned just as much about the TRX en route to and from our off-highway time, encountering a few bottlenecks in both directions, caused by rigs towing big boat or house trailers. Passing lanes come on the uphill climbs, and you have to know your capabilities to take on a whole string. We knew what we had under our foot, by spec, but here was the real thing—and indeed it has the power, glorious power, to put that logjam quickly behind you. Of note is how well the TRX controls such a significant burst of torque—enough power to send several tons of a lesser truck into a spin and barrel roll, but not this one. Top to bottom, inside out, they have totally tamed this hungry tiger.

You might think this big truck would be a handful around town, but it's a familiar size, and its power is nicely tuned for normal driving. We parked, accelerated, cornered and changed lanes



as we would any big pickup. In a U-turn on a landscape-divided boulevard, we anticipated a quick three-point turn (turning circle specs at 48.3 feet), but easily did it in one quick turn, not even infringing upon the bike lane on the other side. Handling is magnificent, smooth and straight as an all-wheel-drive sports coupe. Visually, your hood more than fills your lane between two lines, but we had any automatic lane-keeping turned off and easily tracked perfectly, even with those huge off-road tires. The engine and exhaust notes are perfect—deep and muscular, a little over the top but not at all overdone, exactly like the truck itself.

With its speed and strength, the TRX is fully capable of specialized duty, but owning it is very much like going to the gym—you train to lift heavy things and run fast, but even if you don't do those often enough, it makes every day better. ■

## POWERTRAIN

### ENGINE

- 6.2L HEMI® supercharged V8
- Dual-path air induction system, largest air filter in segment (by 4x), w dual elements
- 702 hp, 650 lb-ft of torque
- 0-to-60 in 4.5 sec, 0-to-100 in 10.5 sec
- Quarter-mile 12.9 sec at 108 mph
- Top speed 118 mph (tire-limited)

### TRANSMISSION

- Torqueflite 8HP95 8-spd automatic
- Manumatic / paddle shifters
- TRX-unique drive modes:  
Sport, Snow, Tow, Mud, Baja, Auto
- Final drive ratio 2.62
- Axle ratios 3.55

### TRANSFER CASE

- BW 48-13 full-time 2-spd electric
- 4 auto, 4 hi, locked, neutral, 4 lo, locked
- Torque split (F/R): variable 40/60 auto, 45/55 snow, 45/55 tow, 30/70 sport, 25/75 Baja, 45/55 mud/sand, 50/50 rock (in 4L)
- Low range ratio 2.64

## BUILD / SUSPENSION / CHASSIS

- Sterling Heights Assembly, Michigan
- Ladder-type frame, steel cab, double-wall steel pickup box
- Crew Cab, 5'7" bed
- Electric power steering
- Front suspension: independent high-strength forged aluminum upper & lower A-arms, coils, 2.5" Bilstein Black Hawk e2 active damp performance shock, active damping, special caster & camber cycle engineering
- Rear suspension: five-link w track bar, coils, 2.5" Bilstein Black Hawk e2 active damp twin-tube shocks, Dana 60 solid rear axle, 3.55 ratio, w full-floating hubs & axle-hop damper; electronic locking rear differential
- Purpose-built 18x9" aluminum wheels, available standard or beadlock-capable, and 325/65/R18 35" all-terrain tires
- Brakes: dual-rate tandem diaphragm vacuum power assist. Front 12x1.2" inverted hat outboard vent rotors w 2.2" two-piston pin-slider caliper. Rear 15x0.87" disc w 2.2" single-piston pin-slider caliper. ABS

## CAPABILITY / OFF-ROAD / TOW

- Approach 30.2 degrees
- Departure 23.5 degrees
- Breakover 21.9 degrees
- Ground clearance w skid plate 11.8 in
- Front/rear axle clearance 9.4 / 8.0 in
- Water fording 32 in
- Payload 1310 lb
- Tow capacity 8100 lb
- Trailer brake
- Trailer Reverse Steer Control available
- Fuel tank 33 gallons