

THIS YEAR ONLY!

Dodge//SRT's 710-hp Hellcat SUV. by Joe Sage

Dodge//SRT introduced three wondrous machines at once last summer in a quarantine-era online event, each with over 700 hp, each upping the game in its already over-the-top existing lineup (see our Sept-Oct 2020 issue). Included were the 807-hp 2020 Dodge Challenger SRT Super Stock, latest among a wideranging Challenger SRT set (a dragstrip-capable but more street- and/or tire-friendly replacement of sorts for the Demon); the 797-hp 2021 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Red-eye Widebody, one-upping the existing SRT Hellcat (see our drive in the March-April issue: "There are no words"); and the one we're driving here, the 710-hp 2021 Dodge Durango SRT Hellcat, a step beyond the existing Durango SRT. Each bears a mod-

el-specifically engineered build of the supercharged 6.2-liter HEMI® high-output Hellcat V8.

The gen-three Durango dates back to 2011, but has lost none of its appeal. Its development began during the DaimlerChrysler era, which has always prompted us to note that it bears much of the same R&D as a Mercedes GL (now GLS) at half the price. This Hellcat closes that price gap, but then again it takes its power and performance to a level not seen in its increasingly distant cousin.

The 710-hp output of this Hellcat is well chosen and meticulously balanced, bringing you a three-row sport utility with the full meaning and impact of both of those words—sporty power and performance speaking for themselves, not intended to

be a rock crawler, yet perfectly capable of bringing you to your favorite dirt road fishing or picnic spot, all with utility that remarkably even maintains the model's category-topping 8700-lb tow capacity.

This Durango's many horses are precisely targeted through the power curve, delivered through a well-matched quick-shifting 8-speed automatic. While choosing its gears quickly and accurately at local speeds around town, the Hellcat consistently maintains its gently rich, throaty acoustics.

We had our Durango Hellcat scheduled for the week of the Texas Auto Roundup (also in this issue) and were pumped at the opportunity to perhaps make a road trip of it, as we had for the Texas Truck Rodeo last fall. As it turns out, the event and vehicle schedules both shifted a bit, and we ended up booking flights instead. But what a drive that might have been! Speaking of pumped, though, we'll never know what fuel mileage we might have

achieved on a long haul (and with prices climbing).

We did take it out for a few hours' run on two- and four-lane rural roads and highways here at home, zeroing the readout at start, not quite breaking 20 mpg. None of this really matters, of course, in the face of the Hellcat experience overall.

Our example was a bit of a sleeper, not bearing the available bold black stripes that would identify this model to just about anybody, but its soundtrack and the potency in the pedal beneath our foot tell the tale. (That cosmetic difference made it somewhat like having a NASCAR car in a civilian skin, reminding us of those commercials where an incognito Jeff Gordon surprises his riders.)

Even without those stripes, we found this was a major head-turner and thumbs-upper. Manageable as this muscular beast is, it does make you aware of its strength. A lot of people may buy this simply because it's a top dog model—for its badge honor and bragging rights. Like a musclebound bodybuilder, it may be more than some truly need to carry around all day every day just for show. But while the Durango Hellcat keeps its showoff factor fairly tame, its go factor knows few limits.

PRICING AS TESTED

BASE PRICE	\$80,995
PREMIUM INTERIOR GRP: suede headliner, premium instrument panel, forged carbon fiber interior accents.....	2495
SEATS: high performance Laguna leather.....	1595
RED SEAT BELTS	95
HARMAN KARDON AUDIO: 825-watt amp, 19 amped speakers w subwoofer.....	1085
POWER SUNROOF	1295
2ND ROW CONSOLE w armrest, storage, illum rear cupholders, 12v aux power outlet, USB charging port.....	595
REAR DVD ENT CNTR: rear seat video system with Blu-Ray compatible dual screen.....	1995
TRAILER TOW GROUP IV: Class IV receiver hitch, trailer brake controller, compact spare tire, 20x6.5 aluminum spare wheel.....	1195
TECHNOLOGY GRP: advanced brake assist, lane departure warning plus, full-spd fwd collision warning plus, adaptive cruise w stop.....	2395
BLIND SPOT & CROSS-PATH DETECT	495
DESTINATION CHARGE	1495
TOTAL	\$95,730

Note that you could shave about \$15 grand off our sticker total, though options and packages are, as always, reasonably priced. Our sample's interior finishes and tow options seem key for a final build appropriate to the vehicle's full character.

This very special Dodge Durango is a one-mod-year build only, so grab one if you can. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Jefferson Ave North, Detroit
ENGINE ASSEMBLY	Saltillo, Mexico
CONSTRUCTION	steel unibody
ROWS / SEATS	three / six (2/2/2)
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	710 hp / 645 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.5:1
TRANSMISSION	Torqueflite 8HP95 8-spd OD, driver-interactive manual control via steering wheel paddles and electronically modulated torque converter clutch
DRIVETRAIN	full-time AWD
TRANSFER CASE	MP3010 single-speed, electronic proportioning
AXLES	F: conventional differential, 7.7 dia ring gear, ratio 3.70:1; R: conventional differential, 9.1 dia ring gear, ratio 3.70:1
TORQUE SPLIT (F/R)	Auto: 40/60 Snow and Tow: 50/50 Sport: 35/65 Track: 30/70
EXHAUST	dual w crossover X-pipe and 4-in round nickel-chrome tips
ZERO-TO-60 MPH	3.5 sec
QUARTER-MILE	NHRA certified 11.5 sec
TOP SPEED	180 mph
SUSPENSION	F: SRT-tuned SLA indep w alum lower control arms, alum knuckle, alum clevis, coils, Bilstein adaptive damping w rebound control springs, upper & lower control arms, hollow stblzr bar; R: SRT-tuned multi-link, coils, Bilstein adaptive damping w rebound control springs, alum lower control arm, indep upper links (tension & camber) plus separate toe link, hollow stblzr bar
STEERING	16.7:1 ratio, 3.2 lock to lock
BRAKES	F: 15.7x1.42 two-piece alum performance rotor hat, directionally slotted w Brembo six-piston 1.57 fixed caliper & ABS, 498 swept area; R: 13.78x1.10 disc, Brembo four-piston 1.34 fixed caliper, 316 swept area
WHEELS	20x10 machined face, blk pockets
TIRES	P2925/45ZR20 Pirelli Scorpion Zero all-season performance (run-flat)
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	201.0 / 119.8 in
TURNING CIRCLE	41.0 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	(3.6L w265/60R18) 8.1 in
APPR / BRKOVER / DEP	18.5 / 17.3 / 20.2°
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	39.9 / 39.8 / 37.8 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	40.3 / 38.6 / 33.5 in
CARGO CAPACITY	17.2 / 43.3 / 85.1 cu.ft
WEIGHT	5710 lb
PAYLOAD	1590 lb
TOW CAPACITY	8700 lb
OIL / COOLANT CAPACITY	8.3 / 14.7 qt
FUEL / CAPACITY	91 oct prem req / 24.6 gal
MPG	12/17/13 (city/hwy/comb)

2021 DODGE DURANGO LINEUP

SXT / SXT Plus	293-hp 3.6L V6.....	\$33,340
GT / GT Plus	293-hp 3.6L V6.....	\$36,345
Citadel	3.6L V6 / opt 5.7L V8.....	48,095
R/T	360-hp 5.7L V8.....	45,595
SRT 392	475-hp 6.4L V8.....	64,245
SRT Hellcat	710-hp 6.2L s/c V8.....	80,995

SXT through Citadel RWD or AWD; SRT AWD only

