

# Special blend by Joe Sage

The nexus of product planning and pricing can hold great fascination, and Stellantis has always been a great example, each brand offering a staggering range of models from proud starter to over-the-top performer and everything in between, yet each one a notable value, none stepping on the next one's toes, making it always clear when it's time to step up a notch in pursuit of your goals and desires, and tending to avoid overlap.

A seven-model lineup (if you count Tradesman and Tradesman HFE as one, and Big Horn and Lone Star twins as one), from \$36,500 to TRX at \$78,890, is what makes this Ram build so intriguing.

Big Horn and Lone Star are the second-most-affordable models (above only the Tradesmen). The new BackCountry Edition (created via a \$2695 package) adds a variety of factory off-road and style features. A standard 4x4 Off-Road Group includes

tow hooks; skid plates for front suspension, transfer case, power steering and fuel tank; rear electronic locking axle; off-road calibrated shocks; hill descent control; and all-terrain tires. A Bed Utility Group, also included, adds adjustable tie downs, bed extender (with RamBox only) deployable bed step, bed lighting and spray-in bed liner. Visuals include two-tone black paint and black badging; black 18-inch wheels; black headlamp bezels, mirrors, running boards and exhaust tips; and a body-color grille surround and tonneau cover. The interior has black cloth/vinyl bucket seats, a BackCountry badge in the glovebox area, and Mopar all-weather slush mats. All BackCountry builds are 4x4.

You could stop there, with much added to your

Big Horn or Lone Star and a price still well shy of the next-up Laramie. But our sample kept adding, as you can see with the option details in our sidebar (and in the long model name above). Available as Crew Cab with 5-foot-7 bed (ours) or Quad Cab with 6-foot-4 bed and with the 5.7L V8 or 5.7 V8 with eTorque mild hybrid (also on ours, at \$2295), ours also adds air suspension (\$1805).

We are delighted to have the 33-gallon tank (\$445); that's hard to find on a 1500, new or used, and costs thousands to retrofit, though it can reduce five stops to just three on many routes with widely spaced towns through the Western states.

We're now up to about the price of the Laramie, in some ways with more, but also still with that cloth/vinyl interior and no keyless entry or power-folding mirrors. Much more is added to ours from

there, the total now passing Rebel and Limited Longhorn, and this is where it's really worth pausing to compare the lesser-model-adding-more versus the greater-model-adding-less approach, neither of which is necessarily as simple as it sounds.

Some buyers actually prefer a simpler interior at any price or in any build—less to worry about with mud and dirt or rough and tumble. Features added from there can be done purely for their own sake, hang the expense. And you can still come out ahead on the balance sheet, given more self-control than on our sample. It reminds us of a few years back, when you could get a base Ram 2500 Tradesman with a Power Wagon package—saving some dough on an extra-capable build, the bonus for some being having a bit of a sleeper, as well.

No clearance specs are given for this tire size, though air suspension can eclipse all that, anyway. Approach/departure/breakover specs are given with air suspension, but again only with standard tires.

If only this one had keyless entry and power-folding mirrors. Lack of those is a constant nuisance, and we could only mutter "64 grand." Those two details and all this analysis aside, it is of course a great truck and for some an opportunity. Check it out while you can. And try your own build. ■



## 2022 RAM 1500 LINEUP

Tradesman	4x2	4x4
Tradesman HFE	\$36,500	\$40,000
Big Horn	41,815	45,315
Lone Star	41,815	45,315
Laramie	50,240	53,740
Rebel	51,385	54,885
Limited Longhorn	57,970	61,470
Limited 10th Anniv Ed	62,685	66,185
TRX		78,890

- Other builds: Lone Star BackCountry Edition, Laramie G/T, Rebel G/T, Longhorn SouthFork
- To be added for 2023: Limited Elite Edition
- Coming: RAM 1500 BEV

## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Sterling Heights, Michigan
ENGINE / TRANSMISSION	.....Mexico / US
PARTS CONTENT	.....63% US-Can / 28% Mex
ENGINE	.....5.7L V8 HEMI® MDS-VVT eTorque
HYBRID BATTERY	.....48v 12-cell Li-Ion
HP/TORQUE	.....395 hp / 410 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....10.5:1
TRANSMISSION	.....3HP75 8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN / TRANSFER CASE	.....4x4, BW 48-12 part-time, 2H/4H/4LO, electric shift
AXLE RATIO	.....3.92
SUSPENSION	.....F: (std) upper/lower A-arms, coils, twin-tube shocks, stblzr bar (air susp replaces shocks/coils); R: (std) five-link w track bar, coils, twin-tube shocks, stblzr bar, solid axle (air susp replaces coils)
STEERING	.....elect pwr
BRAKES	.....F: 14.9x1.2 vented w 57mm 2-piston caliper; R: 14x8x0.87 disc w 57mm 1-piston
WHEELS	.....18x8.0 black painted aluminum
TIRES	.....LT275/65R18C OWL on/off-road
BOX SIZE (NOMINAL)	.....5 ft 7 in
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....232.9 / 144.6 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....(w skid plates) 8.2 in
APPR/DEP/BRKVR	.....w air suspension and skid plates, std tires: 23.3/27.2/21.0° max
TURNING CIRCLE	.....46.2 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....40.9 / 39.8 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....40.9 / 45.2 in
WEIGHT	.....5246 lb
GVWR	.....7100 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....11,270 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....recmd 89 oct unl / 33 gal
MPG	.....18/22/19 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	.....\$44,900
PAINT: Billet Silver Metallic Clearcoat	.....200
5.7L V8 HEMI® MDS VVT ETORQUE	.....2295
3.92 REAR AXLE RATIO	.....95
33-GAL FUEL TANK	.....445
4-CORNER AIR SUSPENSION	.....1805
TECH GROUP: HUD, dig mirror, LED chmsl	.....1095
PREMIUM LIGHTING GROUP	.....995
TRAILER-TOW GRP: light check, reverse steering control, tpms, brake-controller	.....995
LEVEL 1 SAFETY GRP: pedestrian emerg braking, adv brake assist, full-speed fwd-collision warning-plus, lane keep assist	.....595
BACKCOUNTRY PKG: raised ride ht, 18x8.0 black paint alum wheels, LT275/65R18C OWL on/off road tires, black headlamp bezels, Mopar black side steps, Mopar deployable bed-step, Mopar adj cargo tie-downs, spray-in bedliner, tri-fold tonneau, lower two-tone, electronic lock rear axle, f/r Mopar rubber mats, skid plates (front suspension, fuel tank, steering, transfer case), body-color grille surround, painted f/r bumpers, tow hooks, cloth/vinyl buckets, BackCountry IP badge, off-road pages, hill descent control	.....2695
BIG HORN LEVEL 2 EQUIP GRP: remote start, heated front seats & st wheel, 8-way pwr driver seat w 2-way pwr lumbar, pwr adjust pedals, 2nd row in-floor storage, rear pwr slide window, media hub w charge ports, class IV receiver, 4G hot spot, 2 115V outlets, dual zone climate, Apple/Android, front/rear park assist w stop	.....2500
REAR UNDER-SEAT STORAGE	.....125
TRAILER TOW MIRRORS: pwr/manual fold	.....245
REAR WHEELHOUSE LINERS	.....195
ENGINE BLOCK HEATER	.....95
9 AMPLIFIED SPKRS W SUBWOOFER	.....695
UCONNECT®5 W 12-IN DISPLAY: connected travel and traffic, 4G wifi hot spot, SiriusXM w 6-mo sub, Apple/Android	.....1095
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1695
TOTAL	.....\$63,760

(Note: base price has increased; see chart.)

WINNER: TAWA Texas Truck Rodeo: Title Award: Texas Truck of the Year (Ram 1500 overall)