Beat: Automobiles

GENEVA MOTOR SHOW - 2016 FORD FOCUS RS

LAUNCH CONTROL AND DRIFT BUTTON

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USPA NEWS - Third-generation all-wheel-drive Ford Focus RS will powered by a 2.3-litre EcoBoost engine producing 316bhp, and will come with launch control and a 'drift' button.

The third-generation hot hatchback, which will be powered by a turbocharged 2.3-litre engine producing “more than 316bhp“, has received its first public at the Geneva motor show. The Focus RS will channel its power through a variable all-wheel drive system as part of a raft of technical innovations designed to make it the highest-performing RS model yet built.
The so-called All-Wheel-Drive with Dynamic Torque Vectoring system is by far the most significant mechanical upgrade for the RS over other Focuses, including the ST.

It is also a surprise because the early indications where that Ford had decided to stick with a two-wheel drive system for the car after trying both set-ups during development work led by Europe´s Ford Performance division. Ford claims the system provides “class-leading corner speed, limit handling and a unique drift capability“.
The all-wheel drive system is based around twin electronically controlled clutch packs. These are located on each side of the Rear Drive Unit (or RDU, which works like a limited-slip differential).

The RDU uses sensors that monitor conditions 100 times per second to distribute power continuously between the “¨front and back wheels and on either side of the rear axle. Up to 100 per cent of the available torque can be sent to either wheel.
The system diverts torque to the outer rear wheel during cornering, aiding turn-in and stability. Ford says this “virtually eliminates understeer“ and lateral grip in excess of 1g is possible. Ford also says the system helps to “provide neutral and adjustable limit handling and the ability to achieve controlled oversteer drifts at the track“.

The 2.3-litre four-cylinder Ecoboost engine is an uprated version of the unit available in the new Ford Mustang. Changes from the Mustang engine include a low-inertia twin-scroll turbocharger with a larger compressor to aid airflow, plus a notably larger intercooler and air intake.
The Focus RS´s engine is linked to a six-speed manual gearbox that has had its shift action shortened for faster, more accurate changes. The transmission and clutch have also been uprated to cope with levels of torque that are confirmed only as “increased“ over the Mustang´s 320lb ft. Current reports suggest as much as 340bhp could be possible from the engine.

In addition, and in the quest for high-temperature durability, the cylinder head is made of an upgraded alloy and mounted on a strengthened head gasket. For the same reason, the cylinder block also has stronger high-tensile cast iron liners. A significantly larger radiator than in the Focus ST aids cooling.
The engine´s power figure of more than 316bhp is the only performance figure released to date and remains subject to ratification. However, it establishes the Focus RS Mk3 as the most powerful “˜standard´ Focus RS to date. The Mk1 Focus RS had 212bhp and the Mk2 had 301bhp. However, the special-edition Focus RS500 had 345bhp.

The new Focus RS will be sold as a five-door model only, in line with Ford´s global strategy for the entire Focus range. Inevitably, though, the Focus RS is significantly upgraded, even from the Focus ST.
Most significantly, the chassis has been retuned, with the use of stiffer spring rates, bushes and anti-roll bars, and two-mode dampers that can be switched between road and track settings.
To emphasise the track capabilities of the new Focus RS, it will be available with a specially developed semi-slick tyre for the first time. All buyers will have a choice of standard or lightweight forged 19in multi-spoke alloy wheels, which can be shod with either Michelin Pilot Super Sport 235/35 RD tyres or Pilot Sport Cup 2 semi-slicks.

The interior also gets several upgrades, including Recaro sports seats, a flat-bottomed, leather-clad steering wheel, alloy pedals and a simpler dashboard layout than on standard cars. This includes a standard 8.0in colour touchscreen and Ford´s Sync2 connectivity system.

The new Focus RS - the 30th Ford to be badged “˜RS´ since the Ford 15M RS launched the high-performance series in 1968 - will enter production late this year with first sales beginning next Spring. It is expected to cost about £30,000.

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V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): David Franciamore

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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