

2005 Freestyle Overview

"Freestyle is the crossover done right. We didn't try to adapt an existing minivan or sport utility platform. Freestyle is built from the ground up as a crossover with class-leading spaciousness, seven-passenger comfort, versatility and all-wheel-drive capability. And through it all, Freestyle will deliver with the value that defines it as a Ford. We believe these strengths give Freestyle the strongest potential to define the crossover market -- much like the Ford Explorer defined SUVs a decade ago."

- Phil Martens

Group Vice President, Product Creation, Ford Motor Company

Right Crossover: Ford Freestyle Combines Package, Powertrain, Price

The Ford Freestyle is an innovative, purpose-built crossover vehicle designed to change the automotive landscape with the right package, the right powertrain and the right price when it hits the market in the fall. Freestyle blends the aspirational looks of a sport utility vehicle, the versatility of a minivan and the confidence of an all-wheel-drive sedan.

The all-new Freestyle sets an impressive benchmark for comfort, versatility and safety. It can carry seven adults in comfort. Its fully functional, fold-in-floor third-row seating provides flexible cargo-carrying capacity. And Freestyle is packed with industry-leading safety technology pioneered by Ford and Volvo, including an exclusive three-row Safety Canopy™ side curtain air-bag system.

The versatile new product is a cornerstone in Ford's Year of the Car in 2004. Freestyle is one of five new car and crossover products that will lead Ford showrooms into a dynamic 2005 model year as Ford dealers replace more than 60 percent of their total volume with fresh new vehicles by the end of 2004.

Freestyle - along with the new Ford Five Hundred - will help make Ford one of the industry's largest-volume producers of all-wheel-drive vehicles. It also establishes Ford's position as a leader in advanced transmissions, thanks to its all-new, continuously variable transmission (CVT) that offers smooth shifting, unmatched performance and fuel economy benefits.

Not a Minivan. Not an SUV. Not a Sedan. Freestyle Fits Every Lifestyle.

With attributes of a sport utility vehicle, minivan and sedan, Freestyle's flexibility makes it ideal for active families. The purpose-built crossover has the versatility it takes to be the first choice for typically varied lifestyle scenarios, from a trip to the do-it-yourself warehouse to a weekend skiing.

Freestyle's strengths include:

- The right package with crossover flexibility - dozens of seating configurations - for hauling people, cargo or any combination of both, plus the cargo capacity of a full-size sport utility vehicle with its seats folded
- Natural, upright command seating in all three rows for easy entry and exit, long-range comfort and maximum visibility
- Best-in-class second- and third-row legroom and third-row knee clearance thanks to purpose-built crossover architecture. No competitive vehicle offers as much combined passenger room in three rows of seating as Freestyle
- The right powertrain, with a standard V-6, continuously variable transmission and available all-wheel-drive system for assured all-weather traction and smooth torque delivery
- Crisp, assured handling, thanks to Freestyle's innovative, Volvo-inspired architecture with MacPherson struts, coil-over rear shocks, aluminum dual-piston front brake calipers,

- rack-and-pinion steering and carefully optimized suspension geometry
- Energy-channeling frame and body structures - also inspired by Volvo - that help protect occupants in collisions
- Optional safety package includes side air bags and the industry-leading Safety Canopy™, providing side-impact and rollover protection for all three rows of passengers. Freestyle's active safety technology, refined through more than 50,000 crash simulations, is expected to help the new crossover earn top safety ratings in government and independent testing.
- An impressive new level of interior craftsmanship - consistent with an increased investment in interior design across Ford's car lines - helps Freestyle offer multiple levels of comfort and luxury, from the SE and SEL to the top-of-the-line Limited.

What Consumers Want Most

"Offering as much interior space as most full-size sport utility vehicles, Freestyle is synonymous with roominess and flexibility," said J Mays, Ford group vice president, design. "But we know that versatile transportation doesn't have to look dull. So we designed this crossover to have a dash of the aspirational look of a sport utility vehicle and enough athleticism to convey that Freestyle is capable of taking you - and enough people and gear to make it interesting - wherever life may lead."

As the industry's volume leader, Ford has come to know what customers love most about their sport utility vehicles - and styling and upright seating with a commanding view of the road are near the top of their lists. Freestyle's rugged, yet refined exterior and "high-package" command seating draw inspiration from Ford's sport utility design DNA. Underneath it all is an optional all-wheel-drive system capable of handling challenging weather and road conditions.

Freestyle is expected to attract buyers who seek sedan-like comfort, drivability and ease of entry and exit, but who need the people- and cargo-hauling capability of a minivan - matched with the security of all-wheel drive.

Freestyle's interior features the greatest flexibility in the crossover class, with room for six or seven adults and a third row seat that folds flat into the floor. No competitive vehicle offers as much combined passenger room in three rows of seating as Freestyle.

Rounding out the crossover equation is sedan-like performance and comfort. Freestyle finds the right formula by combining a European-inspired chassis with a premium car-like cabin that driver and passengers will find easy to enter and exit.

The powertrain tandem of Ford's new wide-ratio, continuously variable transmission and its newly refined Duratec 30 V-6 engine offers surprising acceleration with exceptional fuel economy.

Design and Package: Flexibility Defines Freestyle

Flexibility is at the heart of the all-new Ford Freestyle, which was designed from the inside out with occupants clearly in mind. Freestyle offers innovative storage solutions and dozens of seating configurations to accommodate various combinations of passengers and cargo.

Up front, Freestyle's instrument panel gives the driver and passenger the look, feel and attitude of an off-road-ready sport utility vehicle complete with a robust grab-handle mounted on the passenger side. The contrasting center stack contains all climate and audio controls and is topped with two round air registers reminiscent of the rugged yet refined Ford Expedition design. The flow-through center console houses the floor shifter, two ample cup holders and roomy center storage console. The front bucket seats provide excellent lumbar and lateral support, have adjustable head restraints and are covered in high-quality fabric or optional leather surfaces.

Freestyle provides best-in-class legroom in the second and third rows. The second row is the place to

be for long trips, with reclining captain's chairs or 60/40 split-fold seatbacks for added comfort. When captain's chairs are selected, second-row seats are mounted on optional adjustable tracks to increase legroom.

The third row is uncharacteristically comfortable for a crossover vehicle thanks to an innovative package design that includes a raised greenhouse over the third row, combined with a well-packaged independent rear suspension below the floor. Additionally, engineers designed the backs of the second-row seats and optional console to accommodate foot space for third-row passengers. No other vehicle in the segment offers as much total legroom in the first, second and third rows.

"With Freestyle, the goal was 'Not a bad seat in the house,'" said Martens. "We wanted to optimize roominess all around and maintain a comfortable H-point."

The "H-point" is the position of an occupant's hip in relation to the ground and the vehicle's floor. In Freestyle, the H-points are closer to the ground to ease ingress and egress. At the same time, the distance from the H-point to the interior floor is greater than that of its competitors, providing Freestyle's more comfortable, upright seating position.

The third row offers similar people-centered dimensions, with more distance from the H-point to the floor and far more legroom than the competition. In most vehicles in the class, adult-size third-row passengers must sit with their knees wedged tightly against the seatbacks in front of them. Freestyle gives adult passengers real, usable space, with real knee clearance.

Family Design

"If Freestyle bears a resemblance to Ford's sport utility family, it should, and that's a good thing," said Mays. Indeed, Ford is capitalizing on the popularity of its sport utility lineup by designing Freestyle to fit within its No.1-selling family of vehicles.

Yet Freestyle's design is more sculpted than chiseled, more 'capable' than rugged, explain its designers. It was designed to set it apart from minivans with its long hood, high beltline, large wheels and tires, aggressive "grille-guard"-style lower fascia, flared wheel arches, large side mirrors and hefty strap-style door handles.

Freestyle will be offered in three familiar series, starting with a well-equipped SE that includes premium features like 17-inch wheels. The SEL adds appearance accents, as well as dual-zone air conditioning, electronic message center, leather-wrapped steering wheel and shift knob and premium sound system. The top-of-the-line Limited series includes a monochromatic exterior, heated exterior mirrors and interior amenities like an Audiophile sound system, perforated leather seating surfaces and heated seats for driver and passenger.

Particular attention has been paid to the interior of the Freestyle. Interior craftsmanship stands out as a Ford hallmark with all of its new cars in 2004. From the SE and SEL to the top-of-the-line Limited, Freestyle offers multiple levels of comfort and luxury, all with craftsmanship, precision and use of fine materials at the forefront.

Unique perforated leather seating surfaces, with built-in heating elements, give the Limited series a European look. The center stack is faced in a hydrographic burl-pattern wood grain on Limited models. The SE and SEL feature a high-tech, carbon-fiber-look for a sportier, more rugged theme. The mid- and high series also offer a leather-wrapped, console-mounted shift handle and leather-trimmed steering wheel with redundant audio controls.

Although pricing has not been finalized, Freestyle will be positioned very competitively in its class, continuing with Ford's traditional value proposition.

Storage Solutions Abound

One result of designing Freestyle around its users is its abundance of clever storage solutions. For example, a recessed lid atop the instrument panel pops open at the touch of a finger to reveal a convenient storage bin. An optional overhead console in the front row provides room for sunglasses and garage door openers and includes a convex "conversation mirror," a popular feature borrowed from Ford's minivan family that lets the driver direct an eye towards rear-seat passengers.

The first-row console features a power point, handy for recharging portable devices like mobile phones or laptop computers. A small cutout prevents the charger cord from getting pinched when the console lid is closed.

The second-row seats fold down and then flip forward to provide easier access to the third row. The third-row seat folds, flips toward the rear of the car and stows in the cargo floor, creating a level load surface. Levers and straps are clearly labeled for intuitive operation of the folding rear seat, which is available as a full bench or 50/50 split. Second-row seating is available as captain's chairs or 60/40 split bench.

Driving Dynamics

Freestyle's architecture is inspired from a Volvo design, with class-leading torsional rigidity and fully independent suspension to assure quick, responsive handling and a quiet ride. Power comes from Ford's proven Duratec 30 3.0-liter V-6 engine, matched to an all-new continuously variable transmission produced through Ford's joint venture with ZF-Batavia. The combination of stiff chassis, high-torque V-6 and wide-ratio transmission adds up to surprising acceleration and drivability in the Freestyle.

Freestyle will be available with an all-wheel-drive system option. This application uses an electronically controlled, electro-hydraulic Haldex limited-slip coupling positioned just ahead of the rear differential to transfer virtually all available torque to the rear wheels whenever the front wheels slip.

Electronic controls that gather information from the anti-lock braking system and other sensors allow the all-wheel-drive system to react within 50 milliseconds - much faster and more seamless than systems that rely on viscous couplings. Traction control also is available, providing torque transfer from side-to-side. When all-wheel drive isn't needed, Freestyle functions as a front-wheel-drive vehicle.

Its newly refined Duratec 30 engine offers exceptional emissions performance, meeting the much tougher federal Tier II, Bin 5 definition and California LEV II standards for low-emission vehicles.

For comparison, the Environmental Protection Agency's Tier II, Bin 5 designation allows only 5.3 pounds of smog-forming tailpipe emissions over 50,000 miles of driving. The federal Ultra-Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) standard allows 11.7 pounds of smog-forming pollutants.

Freestyle's CVT offers advantages not found in traditional automatic transmissions. It uses two variable-size pulleys - one for input from the engine, the other for output to the drive wheels - connected by a metal chain, and constantly varies the effective size of the two pulleys to meet the driving demands of the moment. Electronic powertrain controls, including a sensor on the electronic throttle, constantly monitor the demand for power. When more torque is needed for acceleration or to maintain speed up a steep hill, the transmission seamlessly responds by creating the right gear ratio from an infinite number of possibilities, allowing the Duratec 30 engine to operate at optimum speed.

For ease of ownership, the Duratec 30 doesn't require a tune-up in its first 100,000 miles of

operation. The CVT doesn't require maintenance for its first 60,000 miles.

New Standard in Occupant Protection

With the all-new Ford Freestyle crossover vehicle, Ford Motor Company builds on its industry-leading Personal Safety System™, adding new features - including best practices adapted from Volvo - that address impact protection.

Freestyle will be available with Ford's innovative Safety Canopy™, an industry exclusive that offers head protection for all three rows of occupants in side impacts and rollovers.

Ford's industry-leading Safety Canopy™ and other Ford and Volvo safety technologies are expected to help Freestyle earn top crash-test ratings. These independent tests will be conducted after Freestyles reach U.S. showrooms.

Freestyle pays particular attention to side-impact protection, thanks in part to extensive computer crash modeling that allowed safety engineers to optimize the vehicle's energy-management structures. That included using laser-welding techniques to build side pillars that redirect crash forces underneath the vehicle's seats. This energy is further channeled through a cross-car tube derived from Volvo's Side Impact Protection System (SIPS).

As part of the vehicle's sport utility vehicle inspired "high package" seating configuration, the front seats are mounted atop the SIPS tube, which has the additional benefit of creating extra footroom for second-row passengers, improving comfort.

Ford positioned crash dummies in the third row during testing to assess impact performance. Because adults and children both can be expected to use the Freestyle's third-row seats, engineers employed test dummies representing a 6-year-old child, a small adult female and a 95th-percentile male to confirm appropriate protection for all size occupants.

Ford also breaks new safety ground with Freestyle's innovative adaptive steering column that collapses horizontally at two different speeds, based on whether the driver is belted or not. Air-bag deployment is tailored to the position of the driver's seat on the seat track. Using information from impact sensors and weight sensors in the front passenger seat, Freestyle's safety system can choose from one of two deployment speeds, or it can suppress the passenger air bag altogether.

Freestyle Part of Ford Product Barrage

Freestyle is one of five new cars and crossovers set to enter Ford showrooms in 2004. Joining it is the all-new Ford GT supercar, new 2005 Focus, all-new Five Hundred sedan and all-new Mustang.

Freestyle joins an already formidable lineup that includes the Explorer, Expedition and Excursion sport utilities - plus Freestar minivan - reinforcing Ford's industry-leadership position in six- and seven-passenger vehicles.

Ford is confident that Freestyle's "right price" will be key to its broad appeal to a new generation of middle-market American consumers. Pricing details will be announced in the fall.