

2006 Harley-Davidson F-150 Special Features



"For the 2006 Ford Harley™ F-150, we've really leaned into the custom look of classic monochromatic black and chrome. And we've made it even more of a standout with pace-making cues like the bold custom grille and massive forged rims."

– Willie G. Davidson, Senior Vice President and Chief Styling Officer, Harley-Davidson

2006 FORD HARLEY-DAVIDSON™ F-150 TAKES A STAND ON BIG, BOLD WHEELS

Everything about the 2006 Ford Harley-Davidson™ F-150 is big, bad and bold. And that goes double for its wheels.

The limited-edition truck stands on 22-inch, polished, forged aluminum wheels – a first for Ford, and the largest wheels ever provided on a production F-150. They feature a unique split five-spoke design, crowned with the distinctive Bar & Shield logo on the center cap. The new wheels are exclusive to the 2006 Ford Harley-Davidson™ F-150.

Big, bold and strong

"In designing the wheels, we looked closely at trends in three areas – the traditional street-rod circuit, the West Coast tuner scene, and the world of custom motorcycles," says Gary Braddock, Ford Product Design chief designer. "We confirmed that there is no better way to make a big, bold and strong visual statement than with the wheels. A larger rim size gives instant attitude, and when you add a tire that has low sidewall height, then that attitude just gets stronger."



Aware that Harley-Davidson™ motorcycle owners often customize their wheels, Ford developed one-of-a-kind polished and forged aluminum 22-inch wheels for the 2006 Ford Harley-Davidson™ F-150.

Taking another cue from the world of Harley-Davidson, in which motorcycle owners sometimes commission one-of-a-kind wheel sets for their bikes, Ford Product Design created the new wheels specifically for the Ford Harley-Davidson™ F-150, using a computer-aided-design (CAD) process that allowed design drawings to be relayed directly to engineers for the closest collaboration possible.

"Our CAD process allows us to produce a foam model of the wheel directly from the drawing," says Gary Braddock. "We then paint that model, put a tire with it, and stand it next to the vehicle to see how the elements work together. It's much faster than clay modeling, and it allows for rapid visualization of a design. While we sometimes go through six or more wheel models for a new vehicle, in this case we had a very clear idea of what we wanted up-front, and we had our final design after two models."

Appearance and performance

Custom, oversize rims have a heritage that runs all the way back to the dry-lake racing scene in post-war California, when racers used big "disk" wheels to reduce aerodynamic drag. More recently, tuner enthusiasts have emulated the look of Formula One racing wheels in their creations, using ultra-low-profile tires that have very little sidewall compliance.

"That's something that has to be carefully considered when you are designing wheels for a production vehicle," says Gary Braddock. "Large rims definitely can affect ride characteristics. And we also had to take into consideration more mundane items, such as how the wheels would weather repeated rides through automatic car washes, and how they are affected by weather. A strong wheel design has to look right – but it has to test right, as well."

That is especially true on a pickup truck, a "workhorse" used for hauling loads, towing a trailer, and other utilitarian chores.

"Jounce – up-and-down movement – is something you have to be especially aware of when putting larger rims on a truck," says Braddock. "Ride quality can be affected by heavier wheels. That is why the 2006 Harley-Davidson™ F-150 wheels are forged, rather than cast. Forging produces a stronger aluminum, allowing us to use less material in the wheel and retain strength without adding excess weight."

Honest materials

That, said Braddock, plays into another ethic that is very much a part of the Harley-Davidson ethos – an appreciation for honest materials.

"Harley-Davidson™ motorcycle owners expect material that is what it appears to be," says Braddock. "If a part appears to be chromed, they want real chrome. If a material looks like leather, they expect it to be leather. So our wheels had to be much more than 'bling' – more than eye candy. The closer the enthusiast looks at our 22-inch polished forged aluminum wheels, and the more the enthusiast knows about them, the better they get. That's the Harley-Davidson way. And that's the F-150 way, as well."



Honest materials, like real chrome and leather, is what owners of the 2006 Ford Harley-Davidson™ F-150 expect, and will receive when the truck is launched this fall.