

2007 Explorer Sport Trac Exterior/Interior

SPORT TRAC OFFERS CLASS-EXCLUSIVE AMENITIES AND CLASS-LEADING ACCOMMODATIONS

- Longer wheelbase and wider track deliver class-leading interior accommodations, including the most rear legroom in its competitive set
- Interior appointments shared with the 2006 Explorer, inspired by the “tough luxury” of the Ford F-150
- High-end available amenities include power-adjustable pedals, two-tone leather seating, 10-way power-adjustable front seats, and heated windshield
- NVH improvements deliver class-leading interior quietness

Most Sport Trac competitors are based on compact pickups, and as such feature utilitarian interiors commensurate with starting prices less than \$15,000.

By comparison, the 2007 Sport Trac’s all-new interior features the same level of craftsmanship, materials quality, and refinement as the 2006 Explorer. The result sets the standard for this class that the competition will be hard-pressed to match.

Those are not the only standards set by the Sport Trac. In addition, it offers the most legroom in its class, the quietest interior, and amenities like power-adjustable pedals, floor-mounted shifter, redundant steering wheel controls, MP3 audio, two-tone leather seating surfaces, and a heated windshield.

Wider track and longer wheelbase deliver class-leading accommodations

For 2007, the all-new Sport Trac increases in size, with the wheelbase stretching to 130.5 inches – 4.5 inches longer than the previous Sport Trac, and 16.8 inches longer than the 2006 Explorer. In addition, the front track increased 2.4 inches, to 60.9 inches, and the rear track has increased 3.5 inches, to 61.8. As a result, the Sport Trac offers a more spacious interior, including the most rear legroom and combined legroom in its class:

	Rear legroom	Combined legroom
2007 Sport Trac:	36.8 in.	79.3 in.
2005 Toyota Tacoma Double Cab:	32.6 in.	74.3 in.
2005 Nissan Frontier Crew Cab:	33.6 in.	76.0 in.
2005 Chevrolet Colorado Crew Cab:	34.8 in.	78.8 in.
2005 Dodge Dakota Quad Cab:	36.4 in.	78.3 in.
2006 Honda Ridgeline:	36.4 in.	77.2 in.

In addition, Sport Trac offers up to two inches more front and rear shoulder room than most of its competitors.

Not all of the package improvements are visible, however. The 2007 Explorer Sport Trac features a class-leading suite of safety features (*see the Safety Section for complete details*), many of which were incorporated into the interior without compromising passenger accommodations.

Sport Trac interior shared with Explorer, inspired by F-150

The 2007 Sport Trac continues Ford Motor Company’s increased investment in—and attention to—interior quality. As such, the Sport Trac advances the interior renaissance first started by the 2004 Ford F-150.

“The introduction of ‘tough luxury’ on the latest Ford F-150 completely changed the rules for pickup truck interiors,” says Peter Horbury, vice president, Design. “People are spending much more time in their vehicles, so they expect more of the comfort, style and amenities from homes to be offered in vehicle interiors.”

Before the introduction of the current Ford F-150, truck interiors were Spartan, utilitarian spaces with tradesmen sensibilities. Good truck interiors were not judged by craftsmanship and materials quality, but rather by how easy it was to switch gears and use controls while wearing heavy work gloves.

“We really pushed the envelope of what a truck interior could be with the 2004 F-150,” says Pat Schiavone, design director of Ford Truck North America when the F-150 and 2007 Sport Trac were designed (Schiavone is now responsible for Ford car design). “The F-150 interiors featured a bold confidence and tough, visual strength necessary for a pickup. However, they also added a level of sophistication and craftsmanship that was unheard of in a pickup.”

According to Chelsia Lau, Explorer Sport Trac design director, the Explorer and Sport Trac advance the F-150 interior themes, resulting in an interior that feels both more rugged and more refined:

“The interior really defines the ‘tough luxury’ theme. The overall design has a clean and modern feel. Instrumentation has an intuitive layout and functional features are accentuated by strong geometric shapes. A prominent center stack makes a bold statement that echoes the exterior power bulge. Deeper, more expressive grains enhance the visual and tactile quality.”

The influence of the F-150 design can be seen on specific items, such as the bright-ringed gauges on the instrument panel and the circular air vents. It’s also very evident in the flow-through center console, with the prominent center-stack, clean symmetrical control and floor-mounted shift lever – a first for Sport Trac.

“Tough luxury” amenities include Tuflor™ rubber floor boards, two-tone leather seats, and heated windshield

The Sport Trac is available in two series: XLT and Limited. Both models feature a mix of rugged materials and class-exclusive amenities, furthering the “tough luxury” concept.

For example, the new Sport Trac retains a hallmark of the original model, with Tuflor™ floor covering. This rugged material offers hose-out, wipe-down convenience from muddy or snow-covered boots.

Sport Trac XLT models feature cloth seats trimmed in Camel or Light Stone, and a dark dot-matrix trim on the dash and interior door trim.

Limited models are available with exclusive two-tone cloth or leather-trimmed seats, and a more technical, carbon-matte finish on the interior trim. Limited buyers can also select available heated front seats and 10-way power-adjustable driver’s seat to fine-tune their seating comfort.

Sport Trac can also be had with an available heated windshield, a class-exclusive feature usually found only on high-end SUVs such as the Range Rover LR3.

The heated windshield features 548 micro-thin (.0009 inches) tungsten heating elements embedded in the glass. Electrical current passes through these elements, for almost instant windshield defrosting on icy winter mornings.

Finally, the standard CD player with MP3 compatibility can be upgraded to the available six-disc, in-dash CD player with powered subwoofer. For the ultimate in radio content, either AM/FM-stereo/CD audio system can be upgraded with an integrated SIRIUS satellite-radio receiver.

Dramatically improved seating comfort, exclusive power-adjustable pedals, and impressive interior quietness

As traffic congestion gets worse, Explorer owners seek more comfort as they typically have longer commutes and drive farther on weekend excursions.

“One of the most consistent things all Sport Trac owners have in common is they spend a lot of time on the road,” says Barry Redler, Ford SUV group marketing manager. “Their average commute is 70 miles round-trip every day, and they routinely take longer road trips, spending an average of 300-500 miles on the road at a stretch. Seating comfort, quietness and other amenities are vitally important to make the ride more pleasant for all passengers.”

The front bucket seats are all new, designed to take advantage of the additional cabin room for enhanced comfort for drivers and passengers. A new seat foam offers a better balance between initial cushion and firmness – a critical factor for long-term comfort behind the wheel.

The seat frames feature improved seat travel. Combined with the available power-adjustable pedals – exclusive in this segment – and tilting steering wheel, the Sport Trac can now be easily tailored to drivers ranging from the two-percentile female (4’ 11” tall) to the 99th-percentile male (6’ 5” tall).

The new front seat frames also benefit back-seat passengers. The seat frames are set wider, and with a higher clearance, offering a more comfortable footwell for those riding in the back.

The 60/40-split rear bench seat can seat three people comfortably. When not in use, the rear seats feature articulating headrests that flip forward for improved rearward visibility. The seat backs also flip forward for cargo carrying.

Finally, the Sport Trac also benefits from the same comprehensive approach to NVH that delivered class-leading quietness for the 2006 Explorer. The NVH team focused on every aspect of the vehicle, from the exterior, interior, chassis, and powertrain to quell noise, vibration and harshness. The result produces an interior that is five decibels quieter than the 2006 Honda Ridgeline in internal Ford testing (*see NVH feature story for complete details*).

NEW SPORT TRAC’S ADVENTUROUS DESIGN BALANCES PEOPLE AND CARGO, FORM AND FUNCTION

- New Sport Trac retains core elements, such as nostrils in front grille, integrated cab and cargo box, bed-rail tie downs and cargo-box powerpoint
- B-pillar forward shared with 2006 Explorer, including chrome-finished grille
- Profile defined by sweeping C-pillar, large wheel arches, and available 18-inch wheels
- 37.5-cubic foot composite bed features three integrated storage bins in the load floor, and the strongest D-pillar in Ford Motor Company
- Bed and available Cargo Cage bed extender and hard tonneau cover tested to meet Built Ford Tough standards

One of the most remarkable aspects of the 2007 Explorer Sport Trac is its fully integrated, cohesive design. The new Sport Trac does not look like an SUV with the roof chopped off, nor does it look like a four-door version of a compact pickup.

“The 2007 Sport Trac looks like it started with a white sheet of paper, rather than a modification of an existing design,” says Scott Strong, design director, Ford SUV and Crossovers. “The team built off the strengths of the 2006 Explorer design, without it looking like pieces that were cut and

pasted.”

The Sport Trac features carryover Explorer components from the B-pillar forward. From the B-pillar back, Sport Trac is completely unique, with full rear doors and a 37.5-cubic-foot composite cargo bed. To balance cargo volume and people space, engineers stretched the wheelbase to 130.5 inches – 4.5 inches longer than the previous Sport Trac, and 16.7 inches longer than the 2006 Explorer.

Designers used two tools to create a balanced, unified design: First, designers paid painstaking attention to details, such as matching the cargo bed contours to those of the doors and front quarter panels, creating a consistent play of light and shadows across the profile; second, designers agreed that form and function had to be equally important.

“That’s true of any good design,” says Chelsia Lau, Explorer Sport Trac design director. “The forms and shapes must convey the character and intent of the design. However, they must also contribute to the function and performance of the product.”

This was particularly true with Sport Trac. Current owners clearly love the distinctive, functional design of their Sport Tracs.

“Sport Trac buyers have no use for simple ornamentation,” says Barry Redler, SUV Group Marketing Manager. “They use the tie downs, the roof rails and the rubber interior floor on a regular basis, so functionality is just as important as form to Sport Trac owners.”

Chrome grille bracketed by twin “nostrils” defines the face of the 2007 Sport Trac

The design story for the 2007 Sport Trac begins with the front fascia. Both XLT and Limited versions of the Sport Trac feature the same, chrome-finished, three-bar grille.

The twin nostrils flanking the grille opening are a core design element for the Sport Trac, introduced on the original 2001 model. In addition, the nostrils and four-bar element visually connect the new Sport Trac to the Ford Truck family, as a similar design vocabulary is evident on some F-Series and Super Duty models.

“This grille really connects Sport Trac to the ‘tough luxury’ aspect of Ford Motor Company trucks,” says Lau. “The bold design symbolizes the strength and capability of the Sport Trac, but the chrome-finish and elegant execution deliver an underlying tone of sophistication that really gives this truck an aspirational quality.”

Adding to the grille’s prominence is a chiseled chamfer, or “ribbon,” that runs along either side of the aluminum hood’s powerdome. The ribbon begins near the base of the windshield and runs forward, following the power bulge as it cascades to meet the grille. On its downward run, the ribbon flanks the grille opening until reaching the top of the bumper. The hood is a great indicator of the Sport Trac’s first V-8, a 292-horsepower, 4.6-liter 3-valve engine under the hood.

Flanking the grille are new dual-beam headlamps. The rounded areas for each beam’s reflectors continue the geometric theme of the grille, while the turn signals “bite” into the fascia, creating a signature look for the Explorer family.

The bumper features a central overrider section, to accommodate longer front frame rails for improved safety protection. This overrider creates a tailored, athletic appearance by lessening front overhang at the corners.

The strong vertical elements of the front fascia further emphasize the Sport Trac’s wider track. Compared to the previous Sport Trac, the front track has increased 2.4 inches, to 60.9 inches. The rear track has increased 3.5 inches, to 61.8. In addition to creating more interior space, this wider footprint helps balance the proportions of the new model, and establishes a strong, planted stance.

The increased stance works with strong design elements, such as pronounced wheel arches and large wheels, to give the new Sport Trac an athletic, capable image from any viewpoint.

Attention to detail creates a balanced, integrated profile

While the chrome-finished grille defines the face of the new Sport Trac, the profile is defined by the C-pillar. The Sport Trac's C-pillar represents the line of demarcation, creating a dedicated volume for passengers, and another for cargo. The C-pillar features a smooth arch connecting the cabin and cargo box, which continues up over the rear door panel.

This design detail is the hallmark of the Sport Trac, setting it apart from the utilitarian design of most four-door pickups, which have squared-off, vertical separations between the bed and cab. Yet, the Sport Trac design team never considered creating an integrated cabin and bed. They felt such a design was too carlike, and out of context with the Sport Trac's character. Instead, the team took advantage of the separation to accentuate the truck functionality of the Sport Trac.

"We established a strong theme with the C-pillar on the first Sport Trac," says Lau. From the profile, it's clear the Sport Trac is one-half truck and one-half SUV. Most competitors emphasize cargo capacity, with the second-row seats designed for occasional use."

The long 130.5-inch wheelbase enabled designers to provide equal emphasis on passenger comfort and cargo volume. In fact, Sport Trac offers the most second-row legroom its class, and the most front and rear combined legroom in its class (see interior section of statistics).

In addition, the profile exhibits the craftsmanship and attention to detail that sets the Sport Trac apart from its competitors.

"Our freedom was from the B-pillar back," says Lau. "So we spent a great deal of time integrating the bed and cab to create the balanced proportions and complementary interactions of light and shadow."

First, the team raised the bed height, so that it created a smooth, vertical plane from the cowl through the beltline and into the bed rails. Strong, pronounced rear wheel arches and fender flares match those of the front quarter panel. The contour of the rear quarter panels was carefully refined, creating a consistent light reflection across the full profile.

The taller bed rail also helps balance the proportions of front and rear quarter panels, minimizing the effect of the lengthened wheelbase. The wheelbase is further masked by the integration of the runningboards and roof rails.

"The roof rails and step bars have a much larger section than before, and a more robust design," says Lau. "They work in harmony with the chamfered line connecting the wheel wells, and connect the front and rear of the vehicle."

Here, too, the larger wheels and wheel arches help create a balanced, planted stance. The standard wheels are 16 x 7 inches, wrapped in P235/70R16 tires. For the first time, the Sport Trac is also available with 17-inch or 18-inch wheels.

In addition, the bed features three integrated tie-down cleats on each bed rail. This is another core design element of Sport Trac, and serves both an aesthetic and functional purpose. The tie downs are larger than before, and have a stronger, more robust form language that adds visual interest to the bed rails. In addition, the cleats feature a wider span, so they can more easily accommodate larger-diameter ropes and tie-down hooks.

The runningboards feature rubber uppers that incorporate raised plates, dubbed "chiclets" by the design team. These rectangular pads serve a dual purpose, creating visual interest and providing

addition traction when the rails may be wet or muddy.

Rear fascia continues attention to detail

These dual-purpose chiclets are also featured on the Sport Trac's rear step bumper.

The first true bumper fascia on a pickup box contributes to the clean, integrated design of the Sport Trac.

Traditional pickup trucks hang a "floating" bumper from the frame. Because of manufacturing tolerances and the potential for body flex, there can be up to an inch of margin, or gap, between the bumper and body. The Sport Trac's bumper fascia is cleanly integrated, wrapping around the bumper corners and into the cargo box, contributing to the "tough luxury" theme.

The tailgate also contributes to the attractive detailing of the Sport Trac. The carryover tailgate from the F-150 Styleside is bracketed by geometric lamps similar to those on the full-size truck. The white reverse lights are set on the same vertical plane as the tailgate's large blue oval and "candy bar" nameplate.

"These are not arbitrary, random graphics," says Strong. "This is another example of using subtle unifying design elements to complete the design. You don't really notice them on the first glance. But, they still give strength to the design, much like the belt you wear with your suit."

Profile on Chelsia Lau, design director, Explorer Sport Trac:

Chelsia Lau served as the design director for the Explorer family, overseeing the creation of the 2006 Explorer, and then the adaptation of the Explorer design to fit the 2007 Sport Trac.

"With the Sport Trac, half of the vehicle was already designed. Our flexibility was limited to the B-pillar back. Although we started with an existing architecture and design elements, we were able to produce a vehicle that is uncompromised, and has its own distinctive character."

"It's really a functional difference between Explorer and Sport Trac. Both offer similar, capable outdoor characters. But Explorer is more focused on carrying people, where Sport Trac places equal emphasis on cargo and people."

"They share a lot of the same vocabulary, but we accentuated different characteristics. Both are capable, rugged, and adventurous vehicles. The Sport Trac really emphasizes the fun and adventure that are more subdued in Explorer. If Explorer is at home parked in front of a ski lodge in Aspen, the Sport Trac is parked next to the surf at Long Beach."

For Lau, this sense of fun and adventure also sets the Sport Trac apart from its competitive set:

"There's much more drama in the Sport Trac design. I think when people look at Sport Trac, they see fun and adventure and excitement. Most pickups are still utilitarian designs. They look like tools, intended more for work than for recreation."

Composite bed tested to Built Ford Tough standards

Although the Sport Trac design features a great deal of refinement and detailing, it is not merely a pretty face. The Sport Trac has been tested to the same Built Ford Tough standards of every Ford pickup, from the Ranger to the F-350 Super Duty. In addition to off-road and towing validation, the Sport Trac is subject to a battery of tests to verify the strength of its cargo box.

As with the original Sport Trac, the new model features a rust-proof, dent-proof composite bed. The entire box – with the exception of the F-150's tailgate – is constructed of sheet-molded composite (SMC). This delivers an estimated 20 percent weight savings over a traditional steel box. As before,

the Sport Trac features a 12-volt powerpoint in the cargo bed.

Ford engineers developed a complete battery of tests to validate the durability of the composite bed. These tests include:

- The Drum Drop: A full, 55-gallon drum is dropped on the bed from a height of 10 inches, to validate the strength and resistance to cracking of the bed floor
- Two Fat Farmers: Two 300-pound sandbags are set on top of the bed rails, to verify that the bed rails will not deform under excessive loads
- The Hay Bale test: The bed is overloaded with square and round bales of hay, to test the side rails rigidity, and the ability of the D-pillar to resist deformation

“We really set out to break the cargo box,” says Ryan Delaney, Sport Trac structures engineer for the cargo bed. “Verifying how it performs under severe abuse helps ensure that the bed will survive most customer use.”

These tests validated the benefits of the new, hydroformed D-pillar – a U-shaped steel beam that encircles the tailgate. This patent-pending design proved to be the strongest, stiffest design in Ford Motor Company’s portfolio. In addition, the new design reduces the number of parts from 15 to eight, and saves seven pounds compared with a traditional D-pillar made of stamped-steel components.

Also patent-pending is the manufacturing process for the inner panels. There are four main components of the bed: The floor panel, the headboard panel, and two side panels. Molded into these panels are three concealed storage bins. One large bin runs the width of the headboard, while two smaller bins are tucked just behind each of the wheel wells, each large enough to hold eight 12-ounce cans.

The rear bins feature protective skids and recessed knobs to help protect the latch mechanisms. The headboard bin features a remote access latch tucked into the driver’s-side bed rail. The remote cable release and a gas strut enable owners to easily open the bin from outside the cargo box. All three bins feature sealed lids and an integrated trough system that help prevent water from entering the bins. The lids pass Ford’s 20-minute soak test, which simulates a car wash or heavy downpour.

To verify the durability of the bins, engineers loaded the Sport Trac bed with loads of gravel, top soil, and sand well past the payload rating for an F-250, in an attempt to push the bins past the breaking point. However, the lids survived without cracking, and opened easily, despite the seams being packed with debris.

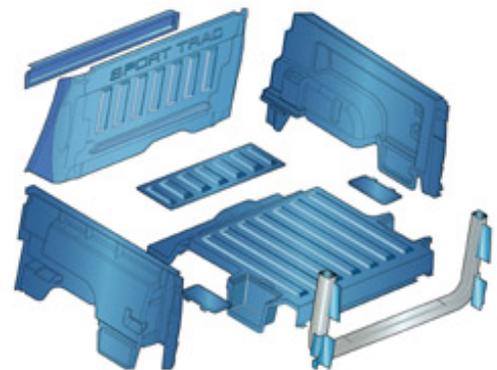
“It’s a tough little truck,” says Delaney.

Even the Sport Trac’s available Cargo Cage bed extender and water-resistant hard tonneau cover were subjected to a battery of durability tests to verify their strength, corrosion resistance, and wear under severe abuse.

About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company, a global automotive industry leader based in Dearborn , Mich. , manufactures

The 2007 Sport Trac cargo box interior walls and storage bins are constructed using four major SMC panels. Also shown is the hydroformed D-pillar, which delivers more strength, less parts and less weight than a comparable stamped-steel D-pillar.



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