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Refined, Reliable and Ready for any Job

- New truck tested to demands of most abusive customers
- More refined interior to appeal to most discerning customers
- Ram test fleet accumulated more than 7.5 million miles

When it's comes to designing and building a high quality truck, Ram engineers and designers know that truck customers want refinement as well as long-term reliability and the 2013 Ram 1500 is ready to take on both challenges.

"When we're deciding what updates and improvements should go into a new truck, we go straight to the experts – truck customers," said Doug Betts, Senior Vice President, Quality — Chrysler Group LLC. "The opinions of our loyal Ram customers are very important to us, as are the opinions of the competition's customers."

As a result of this customer-centric approach, the new 2013 Ram 1500 offers best-in-class fuel efficiency, an even more refined and luxurious interior and all the features and capability hard-working truck owners' require. The Ram development team listened to a diverse range of truck owners. One group of customers, small-business owners, provided feedback on their diverse range of needs.

"The business owners demanded durability, capability and fuel economy in an affordable, low-maintenance, no-frills truck for their business fleets," explained Elizabeth Krear, Vehicle Line Quality Executive, Ram Truck. "But, when it comes to their daily driver, they will spare no expense for a well-crafted interior with the highest quality materials, advanced technologies and connectivity features, and smooth ride and handling dynamics."

All Ram Truck customers benefit from the development team's attention to detail.

The rough stuff

To ensure durability, the Ram development team put the new 2013 Ram 1500 to the test – actually thousands of checks and more than 7.5 million testing miles – to validate its performance, durability and reliability for the long haul.

Within the Chrysler Technology Center's state-of-the-art scientific labs in Auburn Hills, Mich., the 2013 Ram 1500 endured a battery of tests in the Acoustic Lab, the Noise/Vibration/Harshness Lab, the Electromagnetic Compatibility Facility, Wind Tunnel and the Road Test Simulator (RTS).

For example, the RTS recreates the abuse a truck endures at the hands of a 95th percentile driver – meaning someone who drives the vehicle in more severe conditions than 95 percent of all customers. The RTS can put a lifetime of wear and tear on a truck in about one month's time.

At the proving grounds, Ram trucks are further abused to make sure they can live up to the demands of a 95th percentile driver. For example, Ram Truck testers step on the brakes one million times, accelerate more than 10,000 times at wide-open throttle – 80 percent of the time at maximum payload and/or towing capacity, open and close the door 84,000 times, and even blow the horn 75,000 times . . . because that's what the most extreme customers do.

"We repeatedly test our trucks in worst-case scenarios so that our customers can be confident the Ram 1500 will perform well in whatever situation they encounter," Krear said. "Since 2011, we've added millions of additional testing miles for new truck development so that we can find and fix issues before we build any customer vehicles."

The 2013 Ram 1500 test fleet accumulated more than 7.5 million miles during development. Two million of those miles were acquired on public roads, paved and unpaved, as teams of drivers drove more than 50 trucks day and night, with many of the driving shifts towing at 85 percent of maximum load. The new Uconnect Access Media Center also gets a thorough test drive – by a passenger who runs through a 12-page checklist to test the functionality and reliability of the system as well as how compatible it is with a wide variety of mobile phones, music players and other media devices.

The refined result

While the 2013 Ram 1500 is built to withstand extreme loads and tough conditions, truck buyers do not need to sacrifice style, comfort and craftsmanship, whether they use the truck for work or play.

Knowing that many truck buyers make judgments about a vehicle's quality the first time they see it, the company's Perceived Quality (PQ) team creates appearance and craftsmanship targets so that the new Ram will make a good first impression with the most discerning truck shoppers.

The PQ team works with designers, engineers and suppliers to enhance the fit-and-finish, surface quality, material options and even the sound quality of moveable parts like doors and storage bins.

Krear said the designers paid particular attention to details like cup holders and storage bins. For example, the team added a damper to the glove box design so it would open slowly and smoothly rather than simply drop open with a thud. For a new pull-out storage drawer under the instrument panel, the team benchmarked desk and cabinet drawers since there were no comparable storage drawers on any competitive vehicles.

On the prior truck, some customers didn't like the location of the cup holders that pulled out from the instrument panel. So, the Ram designers moved the cup holders to an easier-to-reach spot on a pull-down armrest. Each cup holder has four small football-shaped cushions that securely, and quietly hold cups and containers of various shapes and sizes.

Whether it's designing a cup holder that keeps your coffee close at hand or making sure the truck tows its maximum load with ease for the next 150,000 miles, the Ram Truck team sweated every detail to provide a high quality truck that customers will be proud to recommend to their friends and family.

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