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## 2010 Ford Taurus

The Ford Taurus sedan was criticized for being too conservative and boring when it was redesigned and introduced as the Ford Five Hundred for the 2003 model year. When sales suffered, Ford went back to the Taurus name for 2008 and spiffed the car up with some minor freshening. But that didn't change its overly conservative looks. In spite of its new name, or rather a return to the old name, it was still a staid family car with a high seating position and a tall roof.

Now, Ford is aiming to turn the Taurus into sportier, more attractive car that can be the company's flagship.

The 2010 Ford Taurus has a lower, sportier design. The roof line was dropped three inches and the driving position was lowered two inches. The exterior design is more interesting, with a new three-bar grille, shorter front and rear overhangs, a wedge shape defined by the beltline, and a rear end influenced by the Ford Interceptor concept shown in Detroit in 2007.

The Taurus continues on the D3 platform developed by Volvo and also used for the Lincoln MKS sedan. That's good news because it's a solid platform.

The Taurus is expected to be sportier than the Lincoln, however, thanks to a new rear suspension design and larger brakes. The Taurus uses a suspension configuration called SR1, which Ford says provides a superior balance between cornering and handling, reduces weight and enables the use of 19- and 20-inch wheels, though 17s and possibly 18s will also be offered.

The 2010 Ford Taurus will continue with a choice of front-wheel drive or all-wheel drive, and it'll come in the familiar SE, SEL and Limited trim levels.

The standard engine will be Ford's proven 250-horsepower 3.5-liter V6. Ford's EcoBoost twin-turbocharged 3.5-liter V6, which will make 355 horsepower and 350 pound-feet of torque in other products, will also be available, though not initially. All models will come with a six-speed automatic transmission, but SEL and Limited models will add Ford's SelectShift, which adds manual shift capability through the shifter or a pair of steering wheel paddles. SelectShift also includes a rev-matching feature to make downshifts smoother for performance driving.

The flagship and sportier design themes extend to the interior. Ford says the interior has some Mustang trim cues, and that the materials are worthy of a German luxury sedan. The center console is laid dramatically forward, flowing seamlessly into the center console.

Amenities and technologies will abound. Among the luxury options will be lumbar-massaging multi-contour front seats and Sony-brand audio. Technology features will include a voice-activated navigation system, Ford's Sync system, Ford's MyKey parental programmability and radar-based adaptive cruise control. MyKey will allow parents and fleet managers to activate a restricted driving mode that keeps all safety systems active and has a persistent Beltminder and an earlier low-fuel warning. It can also be set to limit top speed to 80 mph and sound warnings at 45, 55 and 65 mph.

The high-tech cruise system also includes collision warning with brake support. This system provides a warning when traffic ahead slows quickly and precharges the brakes, which can help reduce stopping distances.

But that's not all for high-tech safety features. Also available will be Ford's Blind Spot Information System (BLIS) and Ford's new Cross Traffic Aler. BLIS uses radar modules in the rear quarter panels that monitor traffic in the blind spot zones. When detected, the blind-spot warning alerts the driver with lights in the side mirrors. We've found this feature useful on the Audi Q7, Range Rover, and other vehicles. Cross Traffic Alert uses the same radar modules to monitor traffic crossing behind when the vehicle is backing out of a parking space. It also warns the driver with lights in the side mirrors.

While the starting price of \$25,995 isn't higher than the current Taurus, all those tech and safety features will certainly raise the price for a fully equipped model.

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