

Corvette, Cruze Engines Zoom into 'Top 10'

The list is out and the Big Three ended up grabbing half the spots in the 2014 *Ward's* top 10 Engines Awards.

Chrysler did well and was honored for the engine used in the Fiat 500e. In describing the engine, author Tom Murphy wrote that it was a fair question to ask "how a car with no engine can find a spot" on *Ward's* list.

"It's a valid question we confronted when hybrid-electrics arrived in the late 1990s and again when the first battery-electrics went on sale three years ago. That's when we awarded both the Nissan Leaf and Chevrolet Volt extended-range EV, insisting every type of propulsion system, be it gasoline, diesel or all-electric, deserves equal consideration," Murphy wrote.

"If it turns the wheels with enough force to make a vehicle fun to drive, then we consider it in the hunt. Which explains why the Fiat 500e finds itself in the winner's circle as only the second EV ever recognized in our competition.

"The Leaf was the first, in 2011, because *WardsAuto* editors found it so familiar in terms of the drive experience – the brake feel, acceleration and ability to keep up with highway traffic.

"The 500e evolves the principle even further, using the same size battery (24-kWh lithium-ion) to generate 111 hp (4 hp more than Leaf). And even though the Leaf makes 40 lb.-ft. more torque than the 500e, it sure is hard to tell from behind the wheel."

Murphy wrote that Chrysler and Fiat are to be congratulated for taking a chance on an electrified city car.

Chrysler's 3.0L EcoDiesel DOHC V6 engine also made the list. Murphy wrote that the light-duty diesel V6 is the way to go for two main reasons: They are more fuel-efficient than gasoline V8s and they trump them in torque, too, by a wide margin. The Ram diesel can tow 7,400 lbs. And diesels are most efficient compared with gasoline engines when pulling heavy loads.

But, Murphy wrote, for too long, Americans were afraid of diesels because they thought they polluted and they didn't work well. Chrysler's engine puts a lie to those stereotypes and the company should be congratulated for using its European expertise to bring state-of-the-art diesel technology to North America.

Ford's 1.0L EcoBoost DOHC I-3 engine also made *Ward's* list.

Writer Drew Winter called the engine the first 3-cyl. engine offered in the U.S. that is fun to drive. Ford was able to find a solution to the problems of pitch and yaw that often plague such engines.

"Instead of a balance shaft, engineers intentionally 'unbalanced' the flywheel and crank pulley in conjunction with optimizing the engine mounts to offset the engine shaking forces," Winter wrote. "Then engineers hit the ball out of the park when they made this 3-cyl. desirable rather than just acceptable. It has high peak torque at low rpm,

but it also likes to rev freely and has a robust exhaust note, making it fun to run through the gears. You don't expect this kind of driving pleasure from a car with a base price slightly more than \$16,000."

Ultimately, Winter wrote, Ford did well and now other OEMs are gearing up to produce 3-cyl. engines, and they should "send Ford a thank-you note" for its work.

GM was honored for its 6.2L LT1 OHV DI V8 as well as its 2.0L Turbodiesel DOHC I-4 engines.

Murphy wrote that nine years ago, Chevrolet group vice president Tom Stephens was disappointed that the Corvette's small-block V8 didn't make *Ward's* top 10 engine list. This year that wasn't a problem.

"WardsAuto editors unanimously rave about the drive ex-

perience in the Corvette, saying the LT1 makes this seventh-generation coupe 'the best 'Vette yet' and an 'instant classic,' with a 'silky smoothness' and an exhaust note that resembles 'a sip of 15-year-old single-malt,'" Murphy wrote.

Murphy added that the fuel efficiency achieved with the LT1, coupled with its power, is an impressive achievement worth noting.

Winter also had great things to say about the GM 2.0L Turbo diesel DOHC I-4, which exceeds its official fuel economy rating. In addition to "being fun to drive and offering the best highway fuel economy of any non-hybrid vehicle in the U.S., the Cruze turbodiesel also features the most advanced emissions control system of any diesel in its competitive set."

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Chrysler Canada Sales Still Grow

Chrysler Canada enjoyed its 50th consecutive month of year-over-year sales growth, representing the longest sales streak in the company's history. January 2014 sales were 17,698 compared with 17,013 in January 2013, which represents a 4 per cent increase.

"In the history of Chrysler Canada, we have never had a stronger product lineup to fuel our efforts, leading to 50 months of year-over-year sales growth," said Dave Buckingham, COO, Chrysler Canada.