

LIKES	DISLIKES
Sporty new styling New engine delivers excellent power and torque on standard unleaded fuel	Heavy city fuel consumption Driveline lacks some refinement

After spending quite a few years in the shadows of Holden and its popular range of Commodore family cars, Ford has struck back with an exciting new range of locally produced Falcon models. The BA model Falcon represents an investment by Ford in the order of \$500 million. The new models offer comprehensive styling, powertrain, suspension, interior and safety related changes, and look set to challenge Holden for sales supremacy in the family car class.

The styling of the new Falcon is a big improvement over the superseded AU series; however, perhaps the most significant upgrade has taken place beneath the skin of the Falcon. Ford has introduced a range of new engine options in the Falcon that includes a 4.0 litre double overhead camshaft (DOHC) six cylinder engine, a turbocharged version of the six and a new 5.4 litre V8 engine. The new engines deliver significantly more power and torque, and thereby offering improved performance across the board for all models in the Falcon range.

The new 5.4 litre V8 engine comes from Ford's Windsor plant in Canada and is available in a number of different configurations. The standard V8 engine is called the Barra 220. It is a single overhead camshaft (SOHC) engine with three valves per cylinder that develops 220 kW of power and 470 Nm of torque. The engine that powers the XR8 evaluated for this report is a more potent DOHC unit that features four valves per cylinder. Designated the Boss 260, this engine produces a very healthy 260 kW of power and 500 Nm of torque.

Ford's XR range of sporty Falcons now consists of three different variants with the introduction of the turbocharged XR6 that complements its naturally aspirated six cylinder and V8 stablemates. Pricing for Ford's sporting XR Falcon range starts at \$38,155 for the naturally aspirated XR6, with the XR8 priced from \$50,130. A five speed manual transmission is standard on both models, although the new sequential sports shift automatic is available for an extra \$920.

While Ford's XR models are easily recognised as a sporting version of the Falcon due to their body enhancements and larger diameter alloy wheels, they are also loaded with a host of additional features that makes them a particularly well equipped vehicle for the money. Some of the XR8's more notable standard features include power steering, air conditioning, 17 inch alloy wheels, electric windows and mirrors, cruise control, sports suspension, limited slip differential, CD stereo, remote central locking,

body kit and sports seats.

The body structure of the BA Falcon has undergone a number of changes that work together with various safety upgrades to provide improved levels of passenger safety. Some of the standard safety features include dual stage front airbags, traction control, anti-lock brakes, seatbelt pretensioners and steering wheel mounted stereo controls.

The BA Falcon has an abundance of interior space, as it really is a family size car. New interiors are both modern and functional, with the XR models featuring a distinctively sporty theme. One of the highlights of the interior is a new Interior Command Centre (prominently located in the centre of the dash) that clearly displays audio, heating and ventilation system information. While the bulge in the bonnet for the V8 engine is reasonably subtle when viewed from outside the vehicle, it is a prominent feature in the driver's field of view.

The release of Ford's new V8 engined BA Falcon models trailed the launch of their six cylinder siblings. By all accounts, the new 5.4 litre V8 is a lively performer that has been worth the wait.

The V8 engine in the XR8 produces a very sweet and refined burble at low engine speeds that belies its top end performance. The V8 delivers more power and torque than the new turbocharged six cylinder engine, although the torque spread is not quite as broad. Our performance tests conducted on closed roads showed that the XR8 was able to just pip the XR6 Turbo when accelerating from rest through the gears. Conversely, in gear acceleration tests revealed that the XR6 Turbo was slightly quicker (no doubt as a result of its broader torque delivery).

The BA Falcon's new Control Blade independent rear suspension and sports settings give the XR8 a good handling package without sacrificing ride comfort. All-new brakes with a larger pad area and more rigid calipers provide reduced stopping distances and excellent resistance to fade. Our test vehicle displayed some driveline noises that detracted from what was otherwise quite a refined vehicle.

**SUMMARY:**

Ford's new BA Falcon is set to take it to Holden's Commodore with an exciting range of new models. The XR8 is powered by Ford's new Boss 260 kW engine that delivers plenty of performance in quite an impressive manner. Sporty new exterior styling, improved safety, and a high level of comfort and space are highlights of the new model.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS	
<b>ENGINE</b>	
Type.....	V8, DOHC, 32 valves
Capacity in litres.....	5.408
Induction.....	Multipoint fuel injection
Fuel recommendation.....	ULP
Claimed max. power....	260 kW at 5250 rpm
Claimed max. torque....	500 Nm at 4250 rpm
Specific power output.....	48.1 kW/litre
<b>TRANSMISSION</b>	
Type.....	Five speed manual
Driving wheels.....	Rear
Speed per 1000 rpm in top gear....	56.0 km/h
<b>WHEELS</b>	
.....	Alloy, 8.0J x 17
Tyres.....	235/45 ZR17
Spare.....	Full size alloy
<b>STEERING</b>	
Type.....	Power assisted rack and pinion
Turns lock to lock.....	2.75
Turning circle (measured).....	11.5 metres
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
Mass.....	1740 kg
Length.....	4944 mm
Width (incl. mirrors 2140 mm).....	1864 mm
Height.....	1444 mm
Ground clearance (measured).....	112 mm
Seating capacity.....	5
Fuel tank capacity.....	68 litres
<b>TOWING</b>	
Max. towed mass (trailer plus load)...	1200 kg
Max. towball download (laden trailer)...	120 kg
<b>NRMA THEFT RATING</b>	
Points on 0-120 scale (high score best).....	67.5
<b>WARRANTY</b> .....	Three years, 100 000 km
<b>MANUFACTURED IN</b> .....	Australia
<b>TEST RESULTS</b>	
<b>ACCELERATION</b>	
50 - 80 km/h (in 3rd).....	3.7 sec
60 - 100 km/h (in 3rd).....	4.9 sec
0 - 80 km/h.....	4.8 sec
0 - 100 km/h.....	6.4 sec
0 - 400 metres.....	14.7 sec
<b>FUEL CONSUMPTION (litres/100 km)</b>	
Best recorded during testing.....	11.0
Worst recorded during testing.....	17.6
Average on test.....	14.3
<b>BRAKING</b>	
Distance to stop from 80 km/h...	26.1 metres
<b>NOISE</b>	
Interior at constant 80 km/h.....	68 dB(A)

Test vehicle supplied by Ford Motor Company

Call Technical Advice on 1300 655 443 for additional information on this vehicle, and for other automotive advice.

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