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All-New Ford Focus RS Makes Global Auto Show Debut; Pioneers Innovative AWD and Performance Technologies

- All-new Ford Focus RS makes global debut at Geneva Motor Show; introduces advanced performance technologies to deliver the ultimate fun-to-drive experience
- Third-generation Focus RS pioneers innovative Ford Performance All-Wheel Drive with Dynamic Torque Vectoring for class-leading cornering speed and at-limit handling
- Focus RS is first RS model with drive modes – including industry-first drift mode – and launch control
- High-performance hatch features specially engineered 2.3-liter EcoBoost[®] engine producing more than 315 horsepower, as well as most powerful RS brake system with Brembo front calipers

GENEVA, March 3, 2015 – The all-new Ford Focus RS makes its global debut today at the Geneva Motor Show. The high-performance road car pioneers innovative Ford Performance All-Wheel Drive, and delivers class-leading cornering speed for thrilling performance and unbridled driving enjoyment.

Focus RS introduces advanced performance technologies, and is the first Ford RS equipped with selectable drive modes – including industry-first drift mode, as well as launch control.

With a 2.3-liter EcoBoost[®] engine delivering well in excess of 315 horsepower, the high-performance road car features the most powerful Ford RS braking system ever. Its dramatic exterior design offers optimized aerodynamics and cooling, with 9 percent less drag than the previous Focus RS.

“The all-new Focus RS is a serious machine with high-performance technology and innovative engineering that sets new benchmarks for driving exhilaration on the road and track,” said Raj Nair, Ford Motor Company group vice president, Global Product Development.

“The RS line has a proud history of technical breakthroughs that have migrated to mainstream Fords to benefit all of our customers,” he added, “and the new Focus RS is no exception. It’s a great example of our passion for innovation through performance, and creating vehicles that make people’s hearts pound.”

Focus RS is the latest vehicle to be unveiled as part of a new era of Ford performance that will bring to customers globally more than 12 performance vehicles through 2020. In addition to pleasing enthusiasts, these vehicles help deliver the company’s One Ford plan for profitable growth, product excellence and innovation in every part of its business.

Developed by a small team of Ford Performance engineers in Europe and the United States, the high-performance hatch is the third-generation Focus RS, following models launched in 2002 and 2009. It’s the 30th car to wear the legendary RS badge, following such technology trendsetters as the 1970 16-valve Escort RS1600, 1985 turbocharged Sierra RS Cosworth with radical aerodynamics and 1992 Escort RS Cosworth with four-wheel drive.

This all-new Focus RS is the first RS model that will be sold in North America – produced for all markets at Ford’s Saarlouis, Germany, manufacturing plant beginning late this year.

“The new Focus RS represents Ford at its passionate best – delivering innovation, unmatched driving dynamics and stunning performance that was previously only available with high-priced performance luxury marques and exotics,” said Jim Farley, Ford Motor Company executive vice president and president, Europe, Middle East and Africa. “We are acutely aware of the benchmarks we’ve set ourselves with RS performance models through the years, and rest assured that this new car raises the game to a new level.

“Just as important is the fact that with technologies such as EcoBoost,” he added, “we are able to demonstrate how an innovation that powers almost every car in our range can also be the heartbeat of our finest performance cars.”

Gymkhana and World Rallycross star Ken Block was brought on as a consultant on the all-new Focus RS, and joined the Ford Performance team on the Geneva Motor Show stand.

Innovative Ford Performance All-Wheel Drive offers unmatched handling

The all-new Focus RS exploits innovative Ford Performance All-Wheel Drive with Dynamic Torque Vectoring to deliver a new level of handling capability and driver enjoyment – combining outstanding traction and grip with unmatched agility and cornering speed.

Ford Performance All-Wheel Drive is based on twin electronically controlled clutch packs on each side of the rear-drive unit. These manage the car's front/rear torque split, and can control side-to-side torque distribution on the rear axle – delivering the torque vectoring capability that has a dramatic impact on handling and cornering stability.

The control unit in the rear-drive unit continuously varies the front/rear and side-to-side torque distribution to suit the driving situation – monitoring inputs from multiple vehicle sensors 100 times per second. A maximum of 70 percent of the drive torque can be diverted to the rear axle. Up to 100 percent of available torque at the rear axle can be sent to each rear wheel.

In cornering situations, the rear-drive unit pre-emptively diverts torque to the outer rear wheel immediately based on inputs such as steering wheel angle, lateral acceleration, yaw and speed. This torque transfer has the effect of “driving” the car into a bend – achieving improved turn-in and stability while virtually eliminating understeer.

The system is tuned to deliver exceptional grip – with lateral acceleration exceeding 1 g – along with class-leading cornering speed and acceleration out of a bend. With neutral and adjustable limit handling and the ability to achieve controlled oversteer drifts at the track, Focus RS delivers the ultimate fun-to-drive experience.

“This all-wheel-drive system is a breakthrough technology – capable of delivering supreme cornering and handling at the limit,” said Dave Pericak, director, Global Ford Performance. “We ripped up the rulebook that says all-wheel-drive hatchbacks cannot be fun to drive, and created a car that will surprise and reward in equal measure.”

To deliver optimum driving dynamics, Ford Performance All-Wheel Drive has been calibrated alongside the car's advanced Electronic Stability Control, in particular, the brake-based torque-vectoring system that works in parallel with the torque-vectoring all-wheel drive.

Other exclusive chassis features include a sport suspension with stiffer spring rates and more efficient bushes and antiroll bars than those found in Focus ST, and two-mode switchable dampers, which offer a firmer setting for track driving. Carefully tuned electric power-assisted steering, in combination with an optimized front suspension knuckle design and shorter steering link arms, delivers connected and responsive steering with outstanding feel.

“Focus ST and Fiesta ST showed we can achieve sporty steering feel with an electric power-assisted steering system, and the RS raises the bar,” said Pericak. “We set out to provide enthusiast drivers with steering that is very direct, precise and well balanced – and the RS delivers.”

Ford worked with Michelin to develop a choice of high-performance 235/35R-19 tires to complement Focus RS driving dynamics – a standard Pilot Super Sport for everyday use and, for the first time on RS, an optional Pilot Sport Cup 2 for enhanced vehicle dynamics on the track.

The car’s exterior design has been developed to support the dynamic objectives as well. Aerodynamic optimization of the front splitter, rear spoiler and underbody eliminates lift forces, and the final design delivers balanced performance with zero-lift front and rear, for optimum high-speed handling and stability.

With a drag coefficient of 0.35, the shape of the new model is 6 percent more aerodynamic than the previous Focus RS, and with its more compact frontal area, the car generates 9 percent less drag – improving high-speed performance and reducing fuel consumption.

Advanced performance technologies

The all-new Focus RS offers advanced performance and driver-assist technologies to help ensure its extreme driving capabilities are more accessible and easy to use.

The driver can select from four different drive modes to configure the car to deliver optimum performance in road or circuit driving conditions – normal, sport, track or a special drift mode.

Modes can be chosen using a carefully located switch alongside the gear lever, with specific settings for the all-wheel-drive system, damper controls, Electronic Stability Control, steering and engine response, and exhaust sound.

Drift mode features specially developed calibration for all-wheel drive that modifies torque distribution to help the driver achieve controlled oversteer drifts under circuit conditions.

For ultimate performance right from the start line, launch control configures the car’s chassis and powertrain systems to deliver the fastest possible acceleration – regardless of track conditions. The driver selects launch control from the cluster menu, engages first gear, applies full throttle and then releases the clutch. The car then delivers optimum drive – distributing torque through the all-wheel-drive system, maintaining maximum torque using the turbo overboost function, managing traction control and setting the dampers.

To achieve maximum acceleration through the gears, a performance shift light in the instrument cluster alerts the driver when the optimum upshift point of 5,900 rpm approaches, flashing if the engine hits the limit of 6,800 rpm.

“The all-new Focus RS is exhilarating to drive,” said Pericak, “a car offering performance that’s accessible to all. It’s easy and enjoyable to use every day.”

For enhanced braking performance in hard track driving, the all-new Focus RS features 13.78-inch ventilated front discs, up from 13.23 inches on the previous Focus RS. Lightweight aluminum Brembo four-piston monobloc calipers are painted in distinctive RS blue with a Brembo logo available.

To help minimize fade even under sustained track use, brake cooling is maximized through dedicated cooling ducts fed from the front fascia, twin “jet tunnels” in the underbody and airflow guides on the lower suspension arms. The front discs feature aerodynamically optimized ventilation fins for enhanced cooling.

Unique powertrain for high performance

EcoBoost technology powers nearly every new Ford vehicle. Projected to deliver well in excess of 315 horsepower, the 2.3-liter EcoBoost engine for the all-new Focus RS shares its fundamental structure with the all-aluminum four-cylinder engine in the all-new Mustang. But this engine is significantly upgraded through a comprehensive package of design changes.

Increased output is generated by a new low-inertia twin-scroll turbocharger with larger compressor that delivers significantly greater airflow, along with a much bigger intercooler to maximize charge density. Engine breathing is enhanced through a less restrictive intake design, and a large-bore high-performance exhaust system with an electronically controlled valve in the tailpipe helps optimize the balance of back pressure and noise output.

The cylinder head is produced from an upgraded alloy material capable of withstanding higher temperatures, and is mounted on a more robust head gasket with improved thermal capability. The cylinder block employs stronger high-tensile cast-iron liners.

Engine cooling has been given the highest priority. Engineers created additional space within the front of the vehicle to house a significantly larger radiator pack – the biggest ever fitted to a Focus – that provides the level of cooling demanded for hard circuit use.

Meticulous calibration ensures the power unit delivers excellent low-end responsiveness with a powerful mid-range pull, climbing to a free-revving top end up to a maximum rev limit of 6,800 rpm.

Inspiring performance demands an inspiring soundtrack. Ford Performance engineers have tuned the RS to deliver a rewarding and sporty sound character in spirited driving, with the distinctive bumbles and pops that are an RS signature.

“This very special 2.3-liter EcoBoost unit will inspire drivers as they feel the surge of the turbo, and reward them as they take it to redline – all delivered with a stirring sound guaranteed to put a smile on your face,” said Pericak.

The six-speed manual has been optimized for the enthusiast driver with a shorter gear lever and revised mechanism to deliver faster, more accurate shifts. Both transmission and clutch are upgraded with stronger components to cope with the engine’s increased torque output.

With its high-efficiency EcoBoost design featuring direct fuel injection, twin independent variable camshaft timing and advanced turbocharging, the engine delivers significantly improved fuel consumption. With standard Auto Start-Stop, preliminary figures indicate CO₂ emissions will be significantly reduced compared to the previous model.

High-performance design for stunning looks with optimum function

Focus RS exterior design is both dramatic and functional, with a more powerful and muscular character. Designers worked closely with Ford Performance to ensure the necessary functional attributes were achieved, focusing on aerodynamic downforce and balance delivered by the design, as well as the cooling demands of the powertrain and brakes.

“This is the ultimate Focus – stunning to look at and entirely fit for purpose,” said Joel Piaskowski, Design director, Ford of Europe. “RS models have always been striking, high-performance cars where function is paramount. This new Focus RS is true to that heritage.”

Based on the new Focus, the RS model features a powerful new front-end appearance, with a bold upper trapezoidal grille above the deep splitter incorporating the largest possible apertures for engine cooling. Standard bi-xenon HID headlamps offer brilliant illumination in all road conditions. A wide, muscular stance is emphasized by the lower wings and large outboard openings on each side of the car, which feed the brake cooling ducts and house vertically mounted fog lamps.

At the rear, the fascia panel is dominated by an exceptionally large diffuser that optimizes airflow from under the car to reduce drag. It contains twin round high-performance exhaust outlets and, in Europe and Asia, a clear central fog lamp. The distinctive roof spoiler is carefully integrated with the car’s silhouette through body-colored side panels featuring a subtle embossed RS logo.

The dynamic side profile is emphasized by sculptured rocker panels and bold wheel lips that house a choice of multi-spoke 19-inch RS alloy wheels, including a high-performance, lightweight forged design finished in low-gloss black that offers enhanced strength and impact resistance with a weight savings of 1.3 pounds per wheel.

The high-performance character is reflected in the cockpit, with heavily bolstered, partial-leather Recaro sport seats as the centerpiece. Signature RS Recaro shell seats with authentic motorsport microfiber fabric panels are an option for customers in Europe and Asia while power leather seats will be available in North America.

The interior features the redesigned Focus control layout with its simpler, more intuitive design. SYNC[®] 3 connectivity provides access to audio, navigation, climate control and mobile phones via voice control and a high-definition, 8-inch color touch screen. SYNC can be specified with a rearview camera as well as a Sony premium sound system with 10 speakers including subwoofer.

The RS drive experience is reinforced by a new flat-bottomed steering wheel with soft-feel, leather-covered rim, alloy pedals and unique instrument graphics for the main cluster. Gauges above the center console display turbocharger boost pressure, oil temperature and oil pressure.

The distinctive blue RS theme is echoed throughout the cabin in the stitching on the seats, steering wheel, floor mats, interior trim, colored graphic on the gear shifter and in the RS logo itself – proudly displayed on the seats, steering wheel and door scuff plates.

Four striking colors for the exterior include Nitrous Blue, a vibrant four-coat metallic finish exclusive to RS, as well as Stealth Gray, Shadow Black, and Frozen White. The Geneva show car features the special Liquid Blue color scheme first seen on the all-new Ford GT revealed in January at the 2015 North American International Auto Show.

Rich heritage of innovation and performance

Since the first Ford RS models took to the road, the marque has been an essential element of Ford DNA – delivering technical innovation and performance for the road and track. Dating back to the early days of the company's success in Rallye Sport, the first RS models established a reputation for advanced technology and driving exhilaration that continues to this day.

“The all-new Focus RS is true to the core RS principles of innovative engineering and high performance,” said Joe Bakaj, vice president, Product Development, Ford of Europe. “Driving enthusiasts have always aspired to own RS vehicles, and this is a heritage that inspires everyone within Ford.”

Through the years, RS models have consistently pioneered innovative performance technologies, from powerful naturally aspirated and turbocharged powertrains to sophisticated aerodynamic aids to advanced front-wheel-drive and all-wheel-drive drivelines.

Vehicles pioneering all-wheel-drive technology include the exotic, mid-engined 1984 RS200 destined for Group B rallying, the 1990 Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4, the spectacular Escort RS Cosworth and 1994 Escort RS2000 4x4.

The original 215-horsepower Focus RS from 2002 featured a 2.0-liter turbocharged power unit and an advanced limited-slip differential. The second-generation model sent 305 horsepower through its front wheels with a groundbreaking RevoKnuckle suspension design.

About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company is a global automotive and mobility company based in Dearborn, Michigan. With about 199,000 employees and 67 plants worldwide, the company's core business includes designing, manufacturing, marketing, financing and servicing a full line of Ford cars, trucks, SUVs and electrified vehicles, as well as Lincoln luxury vehicles. At the same time, Ford is aggressively pursuing emerging opportunities through Ford Smart Mobility, the company's plan to be a leader in connectivity, mobility, autonomous vehicles, the customer experience, and data and analytics. For more information regarding Ford, its products worldwide or Ford Motor Credit Company, visit www.corporate.ford.com.