

2010 TRUCK KING COMPARRISION DODGE RAM 1500 and Brand Overview

Back in 1932 a sculptor named Avard Fairbanks met with Walter P. Chrysler and tried to sell him a bust of a bighorn ram as Dodge symbol. Fairbanks explained the animal was “king of the trail,” in his presentation; but Chrysler was unconvinced till Fairbanks added “Besides, if you saw one on the trail in front of you, you’d think – ‘Dodge!’” Chrysler immediately agreed. In 1981 the ram moved beyond a symbol and the Dodge Ram pickup was born.

The most recent generation of the Ram debuted last year as a 2009 model and I first had a chance to drive on in California where (like many places I’m sure) the Dodge Ram has serious fans; like the guy who ran up to me in the Starbucks parking lot to show off his Ram logo tattoo. Then like a kid on Christmas he circled the two-tone Crew Cab Ram I was driving; finally commenting – “man, that’s pretty”.

What my tattooed friend was reacting to is the subtle (yet powerful) redesign of the Ram “big-rig” look that first dropped in ’94. With some rounding of the fenders and a forward-tilt to the cross-hair grille the truck has kept its silhouette yet by pulling the lights back over the new one-piece bumper it’s taken on a fast, rakish, slippery look. But, without a doubt, the biggest difference is in the interior design. This new interior features redesigned bolstered seats, soft-touch material in two and even three colour patterns (rather than nasty hard gray plastic). A new center console, upper and lower glove boxes and a sculpted dashboard feature chrome, leather and cloth accents – including items like real saddle stitching across the dash. Other available options include power adjustable pedals, double the number of previous storage spaces and first-time items like heated and cooled front seats; heated rear seats and a heated steering wheel.

In a departure from traditional full-size pickup design Dodge has given its new Ram a coil spring rear suspension that in a word has changed the ride of the solid rear axle for the better. Over washboard roads the coils soak up the impacts and the rear wheels don’t snap and dance as they did with the leaf springs.

Another key element in this new Ram design is something called “RamBox”. These are two weatherproof, lockable storage bins that run the length of a 5-foot 7-inch box and are as wide as the wheel well – creating a space big enough for a full set of golf clubs. The inside width of the truck bed stays at that magical 4-foot number despite the intrusion of these storage spaces. And the way the lids are integrated into the box looks pretty nice. This item will be an option on the new Crew Cab only.

This sort of striking design feature is a Dodge hallmark and frankly no one has been better at mining its history for model ideas. Look at the past few years where Dodge has come up with variations of its Ram – like the Daytona, the Rumble Bee, and the Power Wagon.

The Power Wagon, born in WWII, is now built using a standard 2500 series HD Ram frame and the 5.7L Hemi. Dodge then adds locking front and rear differentials, an electronically disconnecting sway bar, high-pressure Bilstein monotube shocks, heavy front and rear springs, skid plates and underbody protection, special off-road tires, an integrated 12,000 lb electric winch and they’ve increased the ride height from ground to door is 24 inches. This is a true 4X4.

But Dodge is not all show either – they have shown they have the go as well. In 1994 a Dodge Ram 2500 with Cummins ReCon Power shattered the misconception that all vehicles with diesel engines were slow. With Richard Petty behind the wheel the truck set two Land Speed Records: 133.929 mph for a mile from a standing start and 141.256 for a flying mile. In 2004 the Dodge Ram SRT-10 (right off the assembly line), set a new world speed record for unmodified pickup trucks. The 154.587 mph speed record was certified by both Guinness World Records and the Sports Car Club of America.

2010 looks to be a carryover year for the Ram, but with the new body, interior and a good selection of components they are in good shape. Rams are available with the 3.7L V6 and four-speed automatic; a 4.7L V8 with a five-speed automatic and the 5.7L Hemi with the five-speed automatic. Four rear axle ratios available, three bed lengths and three cabs: Regular Cab, Quad Cab and Crew 1500.

Test Vehicle was a 2009 Dodge Ram 1500 Laramie: base price \$45,640.00

Optional Equipment:	3.92 Axle Ratio	\$525.00
	Leather trimmed Bucket Seats	\$1,000.00
	Protection Group	\$200.00
	Class IV Hitch	\$200.00

Price as tested: \$47,565.00

Changes coming for 2010 model year:

- A new R/T model will be the performance leader, Dodge says, with 0-96 km/h of under six seconds.
- New SXT Appearance Group and TRX models offered
- A demand transfer case will be added to the Sport model
- New Trailer Brake Control option will be available
- Fuel Saver indicator will now be a standard gauge.
- **Trucks should be available by October '09.**