

Ford Territory TX

If you are looking for a good old Ford then this one is it! It's simple and clean from body design to bells and whistles and, if you are a Ford fan, then the Territory is one of the best to come out of the Ford stable in years.

TOW TEST

Winning the prestige Australian Car of the Year 2004 title as well as the Australian 2004 Design Award, the Ford Territory is refreshingly stylish offering the dynamics of a traditional sports utility vehicle with that of a family car.

Based on the Ford Falcon running gear with a big 4.0-litre, straight six cylinder engine offering 182 kW of power and 380 Nm of torque at 3 250 rpm - translates to a simple equation - the Ford Territory has the ability to tow our biggest caravans without much fuss.

But before we get into the towing performance let's look at the model range.

Three models

There are three models to choose from offering different levels of specification and drive train options.

Ford Territory offers the choice of an entry-level TX rear-wheel drive (as tested here) or there are two higher Ghia specification models, one offering rear wheel drive only and the other an all-wheel drive - for the enthusiast who wants to go to more rugged places.

The entry-level TX is equipped with traction control on the rear wheels, Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) with Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD) and front airbags for both driver and passenger.

Passenger comfort includes cloth covered seats, CD Player, air-conditioning, audio controls on the steering wheel, height and reach adjustable steering column, lockable under seat security bin as well as some 30 storage compartments (you may forget where you put things!), electrically operated windows on all

doors, electrically operated seats and something new - electrically adjustable floor pedals. Yes, if the angle of the accelerator and brake does not suit you then they can be adjusted to a different angle!

The Territory is also equipped with 17 inch styled alloy wheels.

The more luxurious Ghia version offers leather seats as standard and includes features such as cruise control, fog lamps, side curtain airbags and a reversing sensing system. There is also a six CD changer to keep you entertained on a long journey.

The all-wheel drive version features the same specification as the Ghia plus a few extras. This mainly revolves around the vehicles off-road ability and includes a Dynamic Stability Control (DSC) system which modulates braking and engine torque to enhance stability.

There is also Hill Descent Control (HDC) that regulates the vehicles speed in steep downhill conditions but, not to be left out, all vehicles have Grade Control Logic (GCL) which helps the driver prevent the need to "ride" the brakes when driving down a steep hill.

The Ford Territory features an Intelligent Protection System (IPS) that senses the severity of a crash and responds accordingly with dual stage deployment of passenger and driver airbags, seat-belt buckle status and the driver seat position.

Other standard safety features include a belt-minder alarm system, collapsible pedals, crumple zones and pyrotechnic seat belt pre-tensioners.

Service intervals are 15 000 km and a Ford Protect Maintenance Plan is standard with all models as is a three year/unlimited kilometre roadside assistance plan. There is a five year warranty on corrosion.



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE Petrol

Cylinders/capacity	6 /3.984 cm ³
Power I.S.O. (kW/revs)	182@ 5 000
Torque (Nm/revs)	380 @ 3 250

TRANSMISSION

Shift type	auto
Drive wheels	rear

ACCELERATION (seconds)

0-60 km/h	8.01sec
0-80 km/h	11.62
0-100 km/h	17.70

Top speed towing	140 km/h
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HILL CLIMB

200m climb over 2 km	1 min 35 secs
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OVERTAKING ABILITY (seconds)

60-80 km/h	5.08
80-100 km/h	6.27

BRAKING

60-0 km/h	1.0 sec
100-0 km/h	3.28

TOWBALL HEIGHT

Towball height with caravan	470 mm
Drop from rest with caravan	40 mm

FUEL CONSUMPTION

100 km/h	19l/100 km
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Simple yet elegant in layout and specification - even the basic model has controls for the radio on the steering wheel. Easy to drive, quiet, comfortable, good visibility... it all goes towards one of the nicest Fords we have driven.

As a Towcar

The Ford Territory TX has a tare weight of 2 025 kg which allows it to tow a Jurgens Exclusive with a GVM of 1 700 kg. That's a lot of caravan!

Driving through an automatic transmission expect acceleration from standstill to a 100 km/h in 17.78 seconds while overtaking it will

accelerate between 80 and 100 km/h in a quick 6.27 seconds.

Top speed towing was 140 km/h, and the advantage of a big SUV like this is the above average high speed stability. It's a comfortable towcar with very little rear end pitching of the caravan on the towball.

Brakes are good too, from 100 to zero in 3.28 seconds, stopping in a

straight line, and we liked the ability to adjust the brake pedal level to a comfortable height.

Visibility, being an SUV is superior to a standard car as well as rear view mirror visibility down the sides of the caravan.

Over our standard two kilometre hill climb it recorded one minute 34.86 seconds, which is fast for a caravan of this size and weight over this gradient and distance.

Fuel consumption, well, if you want the power to tow this size of caravan expect 19l/100 km, a small price to pay for peace of mind towing.

With the big tandem axled Jurgens Exclusive hitched onto the towball there was a tail drop of 40 mm, keeping it well within the required towball height for this caravan.

Our verdict: the nicest Ford we have driven, even better than the Falcon.

The TX is well suited to the outdoor recreational family, offering all the advantages of a big 4x4 with raised suspension, but not having the unnecessary expense of having a front differential to drive or waste power on.

Price: R309 500 ●