

DIESEL POWERED CARS: COMING AT YOU

The number of diesel powered cars on North American highways has been dropping steadily ever since their peak in the mid 1980s. For many motorists, diesel engines conjure up images of pollution, poor power, and unreliability.

However, one generation later and all that is about to change. New diesel powered vehicles will soon be arriving, in fact one is already here and receiving critical acclaim from auto enthusiasts.

Who can forget those diesel powered Chevrolet Caprices and Oldsmobile 98s that suddenly became very popular 25 years ago? If you are like many car owners, you want to forget those cars. What GM did back then was to take existing gasoline engines and convert them to diesel engines. These converted engines were loud, smoky, and very unreliable. They were unreliable to the point where GM had to pay tens of millions of dollars to replace failed engines with gasoline engines.

The memory of GM's diesel fiasco was never lost on drivers who have spurned diesels to the point where many automakers are no longer producing diesel engines. Mercedes, a strong seller of diesel powered cars in Europe, no longer sells a diesel powered car in North America. VW is the lone importer of diesel engines while the U.S. manufacturers only place high performance diesel engines in their larger vehicles such as pick up trucks.

Another area that has stopped diesel engines cold is air pollution. Very stringent emission regulations have all but wiped out the possibility that many of the smaller diesel engines could be sold in the U.S. However, a change is in the wind as new technology is now in place that will make diesel powered cars cleaner. In addition, with the high cost of gasoline now prevailing, a diesel powered car has much more of an appeal to it especially since fuel savings of 20-30% are possible.

DaimlerChrysler recently introduced a Jeep Liberty with an optionally equipped diesel engine and this compact SUV is selling well with the optional engine. Its new 2.8L diesel delivers fuel improvements as high as 32% over a comparable gas 4x4 model and pollution is kept to a minimum. In addition, the added torque is a favorite with some, especially those who need to pull a boat or a camper with the Jeep.

Volkswagen will be bringing additional diesel powered cars to the North American market over the next few years. Diesel powered Golfs, Jettas, and possibly several larger model VWs will soon be traversing the highways and byways of Canada and the U.S.

BMW and Mercedes are both likely to be importing diesel cars over the next few years. Both automakers are studying the market to see if compact models could sell in North America. Each proposed model line is currently sold in Europe and diesel engines are a popular option with these cars.

GM is also considering tapping its relationship with Isuzu to import engines to be placed in several compact models. Long a producer of diesel powered vehicles, Isuzu has pretty much exited the North American market, but could return in the form of Isuzu powered cars sold by GM.

Chrysler will likely take its favorable experience with its Jeep division and begin to offer diesel engines on other trucks and SUVs. At the same time the all new Dodge Caliber, a replacement for the Neon, may eventually offer a diesel engine too.

Ford seems to be content with expanding its hybrid offerings and no other Japanese or Korean manufacturers appear ready to jump into the diesel movement...yet.

Regardless, within five years the number of diesel cars on American and Canadian roads will likely triple. This can be a good thing for people wanting better fuel mileage, more torque, and a highly reliable engine.

For older diesel powered cars, they will continue to serve their purpose as owners discover how to extend their lives through useful aftermarket parts such as Bully Dog and competing products. With their rugged durability and well known reliability, a diesel powered car can easily reach a half of million miles or more before quitting.

Source : <http://www.hicow.com/compact-SUV/north-american/suvs-1.html>