

Ford B-MAX – No B Pillar, Stronger Doors

Ford has unveiled the B-MAX, their new small car concept at the Geneva Motor Show. The B-MAX has a unique new body design which eliminates the traditional B pillar and features twin rear sliding doors.

A UK introduction date is not yet known but it's likely to appear on our roads in 2012.

This innovative format - which has already been engineered for production - promises best-in-class access to the cabin together with unmatched convenience and flexibility, says Ford. Interior space has been maximised and designed to offer greater flexibility of use by car owners. The use of high quality materials highlights the Ford vision that small, practical cars can also be comfortable and well-equipped.

New Vision for Compact Vehicles

Based on Ford's global B-car platform - shared with the highly successful new Fiesta - the B-MAX is slightly more than 4 metres in length, is just 11cm longer than the Fiesta five-door and is 32cm shorter than the new C-MAX.

With this highly compact footprint, the B-MAX is ideally placed to meet the fast-growing demand for downsized cars that are better suited to congested urban conditions, but without sacrificing interior space and comfort.

'With the B-MAX we set out to create a vehicle that captures the spirit of a smaller S-MAX', said **Martin Smith, Ford of Europe's executive design director**. 'We wanted to show that a small car could be very spacious and practical inside, while still having the sleek, dynamic appearance that has made the S-MAX so popular'.

Unmatched Interior Versatility

With both front and rear doors open there is outstanding access to the interior, with a huge, clear aperture measuring over 1.5 metres wide. This is around twice the width offered by competitors with alternative door concepts, making it significantly easier to enter or exit the rear seats, attend to children in child seats, or load shopping.

Having folded the 60/40 split rear seats and the front passenger seat to create an extensive flat load floor, the side access is particularly convenient to load bulky items such as flat-pack furniture or even a bicycle. With the front passenger seat folded, the interior is capable of swallowing exceptionally long loads measuring up to 2.35 metres in length.

Sitting 11cm taller than Fiesta, the B-MAX also provides extremely generous accommodation for its occupants. Drivers benefit from a higher 'command' seating position, while rear seat legroom and headroom is significantly improved.

Engineered for Outstanding Safety

In developing the B-MAX's unique integrated B-pillar body design for production, Ford engineers have ensured that it delivers the same outstanding levels of crash protection as Ford products with a more conventional structure.

To deliver the required performance in side impacts, the structure of both front and rear doors has been significantly strengthened - with ultra-high-strength Boron steel in key load-bearing areas - so that the door frames work together to absorb energy like a 'virtual B pillar'.

Special safety interlocks and reinforced latch mechanisms ensure that the doors remain firmly fixed to the roof and floor structure during an impact, and enable the front and rear doors to act together to protect the occupants.

When these measures are combined with other structural enhancements to the bodyshell and the latest restraint system technologies, the result is a body design which meets the highest safety standards.

Ultra-low CO₂ Powertrain

The B-MAX is powered by an ultra-low-CO₂ powertrain, featuring a state-of-the-art three-cylinder 1.0-litre Ford EcoBoost petrol engine equipped with the Ford Auto-Start-Stop system.

This three-cylinder Ford EcoBoost represents the next addition to the global family of Ford EcoBoost engines. The 1.0-litre unit combines direct fuel injection, turbocharging and twin independent variable cam timing to achieve significant reductions in fuel-consumption and CO₂ emissions.

Designed to replace larger conventional four-cylinder petrol engines, the three-cylinder Ford EcoBoost engine is undergoing final development prior to its production launch.

'The B-MAX demonstrates Ford's commitment to providing customers with exciting and innovative vehicles', said **Stephen Odell, chairman and CEO, Ford of Europe**. 'We believe that the new concepts and technologies it showcases will have a major impact on the small car market'.

