

Shifting Gears

[Getting an Edge from Ford](#)

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By Roger Witherspoon

I was putting groceries into the back of the SUV when I noticed the teenager loading groceries behind another SUV parked two spots away staring at me. She said something and her mother poked her head around the rear of their car, smiled broadly, and gave her daughter a high five.

I thought it odd, shrugged it off, and got into the driver's seat. That's when the mother sauntered over, looked into the passenger side window and said "we've got an Edge, too!"

The influence of Derek Jeter, captain of the New York Yankees, and the tag line to the Ford Edge commercials he stars in (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qpem4xp9upQ>) is, apparently, more ubiquitous in the New York metropolitan area than the car itself. I did notice, however, that the Edge she and her daughter were shopping in was red, not white and black Yankee pinstripe.

But catchy ad lines aside, the Edge is a mid sized, well stocked SUV that's easy to look at and easy to like. Stylistically, it's hard to characterize. The front is short and stubby, with a wide-mouthed grill that seems to be smiling and blunts the more common long, flowing silhouette usually seen on popular SUVs from the Nissan Murano to the upscale Lexus RX or Porsche Cayenne. The effect, though, is an SUV that fits comfortably with modern styles without

copying or looking boxy.

Behind that chrome grin is a four-cylinder, 2.0-liter engine which produces just 240 horsepower and 270 pound-feet of torque. That is more than enough to give pep to this two-ton vehicle – I was half way through a very off-key rendition of an old Temptations hit song before I realized the speedometer had nudged past 90 miles per hour. There had been no engine whine or air noise to provide audible clues that my license was in danger, and its low, wide stance and traction control let it handle winding roads more like a sedan than an SUV. It is also helpful that the four cylinder engine drinks regular unleaded gasoline and carries an EPA estimate of 30 miles per gallon on the highway, and can tow up to 1,500 pounds.

For those who need their SUV for heavier duty work, however, there is a 3.7-liter, V-6 option providing 305 horsepower and 280 pound-feet of torque and a towing capacity of 2,000 pounds. The tradeoff is the bigger engine is thirsty – its mileage rating is 17 MPG in city driving and just 23 MPG on the open road.



Inside, the Edge has the amenities one might expect from a \$38,000 vehicle. The décor is a mix of plastic and leather, and the feel is one of unlimited space. The windows are extra large with narrow, unobtrusive, center posts. The Edge did not, however have a sun roof – which would have augmented the open-space feeling.

The leather wrapped steering wheel tilts, telescopes, can be heated, and has fingertip controls for Bluetooth, cruise control, audio, and voice commands. The seats are wide, thickly padded leather and, at the touch of a button, the front seats can be adjusted for comfort and the rear seats can fold flat. The front set can also be heated.

The center console is wide enough for the passengers to share the arm rest, and the cup holders in front can hold a pair of Big Gulps. There is a wide, eight-inch color touch screen and easy to see control surface which is backlit with soft blue lighting. As a result, one doesn't have to go searching for controls when driving at night. Behind the console is an open-sided storage area which can easily hold a small purse and cell phones, and has a power charging outlet.



Under the arm rest is a foot deep storage bin with a second power outlet, a pair of USB ports for music, a second power outlet, iPod, MP3 and video connections. For entertainment, the Edge also has a CD player, Sirius Satellite radio, or can utilize Bluetooth to play music stored on a smartphone. Whatever medium is used, the music comes through a 390-watt Sony sound system with 12 speakers that are easily capable of enveloping the cabin in your noise of choice or providing amplified boom for the average block party. The system can be activated either manually through the touch screen or console dials, or using the Ford SYNC voice commands. These vocal instructions, however, take some getting used to. The voice system is not necessarily intuitive and the SYNC robot lady is not especially helpful. I never could get her to increase the volume so the Temptations could sing louder than me. It takes time to memorize the command manual which, frankly, shouldn't be necessary.

The rear section has more than a yard of leg room space, making it a comfortable place for tall passengers to stretch and, when parked, enough floor space for toddlers to play in. The seats are adjustable and can lay back far enough for a comfortable nap. For hauling larger cargo, the seats will conveniently fold flat at the push of a button.

Overall, the Edge is a sound set of wheels, though at that price, it is going to have tough competition from Hyundai and Nissan in particular. Whether Jeter's acclaim on the baseball field will help in markets throughout the country where the Yankees are unloved competitors remains to be seen.



2012 Ford Edge

MSRP: **\$38,910**

EPA Mileage: **21 MPG City** **30 MPG Highway**

Towing Capacity: **1,500 Pounds**

Performance / Safety:

2.0 – Liter DOHC, 4-cylinder, aluminum block engine producing 240 horsepower and 270 pound-feet of torque; 6-speed automatic transmission; power rack and pinion steering; MacPherson strut front suspension; Independent rear suspension; power assisted disc brakes; front wheel drive; dual stage front airbags; side impact and safety canopy airbags.

Interior / Comfort:

AM/FM/Sirius Satellite Radio; CD and MP3 player; USB and iPod connections; Bluetooth; navigation system with 8-inch touch screen; tilt and telescoping, leather steering wheel with fingertip audio, voice, and cruise controls; SYNC voice command system; powered leather seats; heated front seats and steering wheel; power liftgate; fold flat rear seats.