

For Immediate Release

Contacts: Danica Laub, Mazda North American Operations, 949.727.6220
Tim Gilman, Mazda Information Bureau, 949.223.2313
Jeremy Barnes, Mazda North American Operations, 949.727.6844

2009 MAZDA TRIBUTE: REFRESHED WITH NEW, MORE POWERFUL ENGINE CHOICES

Offering more traditional sport-utility vehicle (SUV) styling than Mazda's other SUVs, CX-7 and CX-9, the 2009 Tribute rounds out the Mazda family of unibody-based crossover SUVs, making it the perfect choice for buyers in search of traditional, go-anywhere rugged styling.

Completely redesigned both inside and out for 2008, the 2009 Mazda Tribute adds many new exterior, interior and safety features and two new engines. The 2009 Tribute i now come with a 2.5-liter iVCT 4-cylinder engine which produces 171 horsepower (an increase of 18 horsepower) and 171 lb-ft torque (an increase of 19 lb-ft torque). Tribute s features a new 240-horsepower (an increase of 40 horsepower) 3.0-liter iVCT V6 with 223 lb-ft torque (an increase of 30 lb-ft torque). A new 6-speed automatic transmission is standard on s models (optional on i models) and front and rear stabilizer bars are added for 2009.

Redesigned comfort seats with new seat shape and front and rear foam are standard for 2009. Touring and Grand Touring models add a new AM/FM/6-disc stereo with auto volume control and seven speakers and steering wheel with audio control switches. Grand Touring adds standard satellite radio, electrochromatic rearview mirror and one-touch open/close moonroof. In addition, all models add an "Easy Fuel" capless fuel filler and daytime running lamps.

"In 2008 Tribute took on a whole new look with a redesigned interior and exterior. Now for 2009, Tribute takes on a whole new attitude with improved performance attributes and functional features," said Drew Hagestad, Tribute vehicle line manager for Mazda North American Operations (MNAO). "With its enhanced performance, Tribute complements the Mazda CX-7 and CX-9 and offers Mazda buyers an alternative choice in SUV functionality."

POWER WORTHY OF AN SUV

The 2009 Mazda Tribute gets a serious injection of power with use of two new engines. Its driver appeal comes from a host of sports-oriented features, including the standard 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine, found in the Tribute i. Its aluminum block and head helps keeps weight down, benefiting handling and improving the power-to-weight ratio.

With 171 horsepower at 6,000 rpm and 171 lb-ft of torque at 4,500 rpm, it is one of the most powerful four-cylinder engines in the SUV market. It is one of the most sophisticated too: light, efficient and refined. Double overhead camshafts improve engine breathing and high-revving response, which in turn improves performance and fuel economy. It also uses a variable induction system that delivers more power when the driver demands it, enhancing torque at lower revs and maximizing power at higher revs. The pistons are lightweight as well, improving throttle response, smoothness and the engine's ability to rev. The new 2.5-liter 4-cylinder is rated ULEV/Tier2 Bin 5.

An easy-shifting five-speed manual gearbox, which has short, sporty gear changes, is standard on the Tribute i. It uses multi-cone synchronizers (dual-cone for first and second, single for third through fifth) to reduce shift effort and a cable-shift for improved gear-change precision. The gear lever is positioned at an ideal height on the center console to be as near as possible to the driver's right hand.

New for 2009 is an available six-speed electronically controlled automatic transmission. As with the manual gearbox, the automatic's gear lever is mounted in the center console, for sporty operation. Cruise control is standard on all Tribute models equipped with automatic transmissions.

The 2009 Tribute s comes standard with a smooth 3.0-liter V6, producing 240 horsepower at 6,550 rpm and a gutsy 223 lb-ft of torque at 4,500 rpm. The extra power over the 2.5 means even-more effortless freeway performance and more power for pulling heavy loads. The V6 has aluminum heads and block, for reduced weight - to improve performance and handling - and better structural rigidity, to reduce vibration and improve refinement. As with the 2.5 four-cylinder, it uses double overhead camshafts to control the valves and improve engine breathing - which in turn boosts performance and gas mileage. The six-speed automatic transmission is standard. The new 3.0-liter V6 is rated ULEV/Tier2 Bin 4.

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The Tribute's sporty behavior also comes from its unibody construction and the fully independent coil-sprung suspension, as used on many sports cars. Many rival SUVs use truck-like body-on-frame chassis, which flex more and provide a much less stable platform for the suspension. The Tribute's unibody construction provides superb structural rigidity, improving ride and handling, as well as contributing to fewer rattles and a much tauter driving feel.

The fully independent coil sprung suspension - MacPherson struts at the front, multi-link at the rear - ensures each wheel responds independently to road conditions, increasing the sure-footedness of the vehicle, improving handling and road holding. It gives the vehicle more poise in difficult conditions, including at high-speeds and on unpaved surfaces, and also improves ride comfort. New front and rear stabilizer bars are added for 2009.

The track, front (61.1 inches) and rear (60.4 inches) is wide, which also benefits stability, handling and road holding. Nitrogen gas-charged shock absorbers give superb wheel control, on- or off-road, and maintain their composure even after tough use. The Tribute handles like a well-sorted sedan, but with all the extra benefits of an SUV.

Another sports car touch is the use of rack-and-pinion steering for greater steering precision and response. Variable power assistance means low-speed maneuvering, such as parking, is easy. Yet at higher speeds, reduced power assistance preserves road feel and steering feedback. Electric Power Steering (EPS), which improves vehicle sensitivity, is standard, and, improves NVH and fuel economy by eliminating the power steering pump.

All Tributes have ventilated 11.9-inch front discs for strong heat dissipation which improves braking performance after repeated use, such as a long downhill stretch with many bends. Both Tribute i and s models are equipped with standard Anti-lock Brakes (ABS) to prevent wheel lock-up and skids, and to help maintain steering control under braking. The four-channel system is more advanced than a conventional three-channel set-up, as every wheel has its own sensor to provide individual braking control. Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD) varies the distribution of braking force between the front and rear wheels depending on the load to stop the vehicle as quickly as possible.

Inside the cabin, new color combinations, seating surfaces and ergonomic enhancements improve the overall driver and passenger experience. Interior fabrics made with 35 percent recycled yarns can be found in all Tribute Sport and Touring models, while Tribute Grand Touring models come standard with 100 percent vinyl-free seating surfaces - a first for non-luxury SUVs in North America.

RUGGED GOOD LOOKS

Part of being a great sports vehicle is great sporty design, and the Tribute scores well here. Tributes makes a powerful statement with a rugged, tough exterior design. Offering a more traditional SUV styling than Mazda's other SUVs, CX-7 and CX-9. Outside, the body has a taut athletic skin with a high belt line. Wheels are 16-inch seven-spoke alloys with 16-inch P235/70R tires. For 2009, all models add the "Easy Fuel" capless fuel filler system.

Tribute's interior is upscale and comfortable. The main instruments - including the tachometer - are chrome ringed, sports car-style. Redesigned comfort seats with new seat shape and front and rear foam are standard for 2009. The driver's and front passenger's seats have pronounced side bolsters to hold you in place during cornering. Touring and Grand Touring models add a new AM/FM/6-disc stereo with auto volume control and seven speakers and steering wheel with audio control switches. Grand Touring adds standard satellite radio, electrochromatic rearview mirror and one-touch open/close moonroof.

THREE TRIM LEVELS SIMPLIFY CHOICES

The well-equipped, entry-level Sport trim offers all the convenience, safety and utility today's young SUV buyers demand. Standard features include automatic headlights, 16-inch alloy wheels, fog lights, air conditioning, AM/FM/CD audio system, remote keyless entry system and power mirrors, door locks and windows. Cruise control is standard on vehicles equipped with automatic transmissions. A roof rack and auto-dimming rear view mirror complete with compass, or Homelink® are also available.

The mid-level Touring trim builds on the Sport trim with the addition of privacy glass, a standard roof rack, six-way power adjustable driver's seat with adjustable lumbar and height support, overhead console with dual storage bins and front seatback map pockets. Available options include a seven-speaker premium audio system with six-disc CD changer and cargo area cover.

Offering the highest level of comfort and convenience found in the Tribute lineup, the fully loaded Grand Touring trim comes standard with everything found on the Sport and Touring trims, plus Satellite radio and much more. Additional standard exterior features include heated side-view mirrors and a power-sliding moonroof. A more sophisticated and cozy interior features leather-trimmed seats, heated front seats, an AM/FM/six-disc CD audio system with seven speakers and auto volume control, retractable cargo cover and leather-wrapped steering wheel.

UTILITY FOR WORK OR PLAY

Designed for real-world driving, the Tribute is at home cruising on the freeway, tackling unpaved roads or in the rough-and-tough urban jungle. Car-like front-wheel drive is standard. If extra traction is necessary – either for off-road driving or pulling heavy loads in slippery conditions – the Tribute is available with Mazda's innovative Active Torque Control Coupling (ATCC) four-wheel-drive system. This ingenious system is available on both four-cylinder and V6 Tribute models equipped with automatic transmissions.

A sophisticated computer monitors the engine, wheel speeds and transmission, and automatically transfers torque between the front and rear wheels. The split to the rear wheels varies between zero and 50 percent. It senses where traction is strongest and delivers the appropriate amount of torque for optimal grip.

Unlike mechanical systems, which react only to wheel slip, ATCC predicts wheel spin, and prevents it from happening in the first place. It changes continually, to suit ever-changing driving conditions, and is also completely automatic, so no driver settings or adjustment is necessary. It reacts faster than a hydraulic system because there is no lag time waiting for a viscous fluid to heat up before splitting power between the axles. The system is also useful on-road – such as in snow or heavy rain, or any time where there is a potential for loss of traction. Compared with less sophisticated four-wheel drive systems, ATCC improves driving responsiveness, handling and fuel economy.

Like all good SUVs, the Tribute has a commanding driving position, great visibility, good ground clearance, a tall roof and large cargo area. The elevated seating position, and superb visibility means you get a better view of the road when weather conditions are bad, such as heavy driving rain.

The vehicle seats five adults in comfort. For extra versatility, there are up to four storage areas within easy reach of the driver's seat, and five near the front passenger. In addition, a center console storage compartment with removable bins offers enough space to store a laptop. Both front doors have storage compartments, as do the backs of each front seat.

There is 29.2 cubic feet of carrying space behind the rear seat when it is up, and 66.3 cubic feet when the seatback is reclined. The rear seat is asymmetrically split 60:40, which improves carrying versatility. For extra practicality, the tailgate features a rear window that lifts separately, ideal for loading less heavy objects.

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Safety is a priority. The all-steel unibody construction is not only very rigid, it is also enormously strong. The crumple zones and 'Triple H' construction are designed to absorb and redirect energy away from the passenger cabin. 'Triple H' refers to the H-shaped structures in the sides, floor and roof that provide a rigid cell around the cockpit. Side impact door beams are also fitted, to further improve safety in a side impact. Added for 2009 are daytime running lamps.

The Tribute comes with advanced dual-stage front airbags that use various sensors to deploy each front airbag with the right amount of force to deal with the impact. For the driver, sensors measure seatbelt usage and the fore/aft seating position. For the front passenger, sensors first measure the weight in the seat to determine if the seat is occupied and if it is, the sensors turn on the passenger airbag and measure seatbelt usage. Front side impact airbags, fitted into the seats rather than the doors - so they work equally effectively, irrespective of seat position - are standard. Side-impact air curtains with rollover protection, (rollover is not the primary purpose, it is one of the purposes), are also standard.

Front seat belts have pre-tensioners to reduce slack in the early moments of an impact. In the rear, all three seats have three-point belts and adjustable head restraints for extra safety. For additional safety, Dynamic Stability Control (DSC), Roll Stability Control (RSC), Traction Control System and a tire pressure monitoring system are also standard. Whether the driving conditions are dry and fast or slippery and moderately paced, exceptional handling is assured.

All 2009 Tributes come with a roadside assistance program. With a call to a toll-free number, owners can access roadside assistance 24 hours a day, 365 days a year throughout the United States and Canada. In addition, a comprehensive three-year/36,000-mile warranty covers every part on the vehicle except those subject to normal wear. Also, all 2009 Mazdas receive a five-year/60,000 mile powertrain warranty and a five-year/unlimited-mileage corrosion warranty.

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Headquartered in Irvine, Calif., Mazda North American Operations oversees the sales, marketing, parts and customer service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States, Canada and Mexico through nearly 900 dealers. Operations in Canada are managed by Mazda Canada, Inc., located in Ontario, Canada, and in Mexico by Mazda Motor de Mexico in Mexico City.

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