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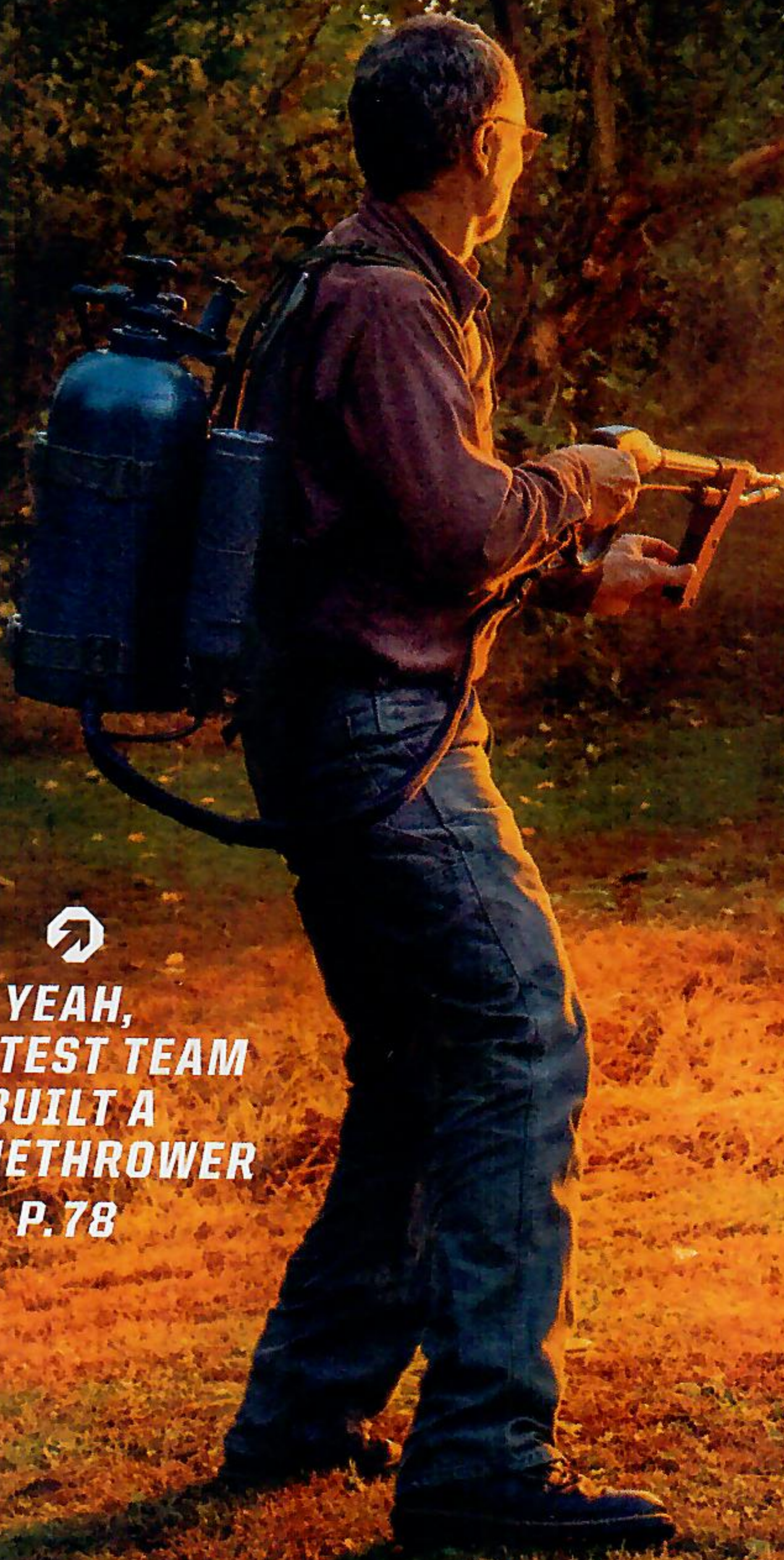
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## The New Chevy Silverado 1500 Offers a Tough Choice: Gas or Diesel?

**I**F YOU WANT A NEW SILVER-ado, and you've got an extra \$2,495 to spend on upgrading from the 5.3-liter V-8 engine, then Chevy has a dilemma for you. For that money, you have your choice of a 6.2-liter gas V-8, or a 3.0-liter Duramax diesel inline-six. So, which one do you get?

Superficially, the choice comes down to horsepower or fuel economy. A 4x4 with the V-8 gets 17 mpg combined, while the diesel gets 25 mpg combined. On the other hand, the V-8 makes 420 horsepower to the diesel's 277. The gas truck is quick and thirsty, while the diesel is slower and thriftier. But that's not all there is to it.

While the big V-8 is unquestionably quicker when you're going wide-open-throttle, the two engines don't feel wildly different in normal driving. Both engines make plenty of torque—460 lb-ft of it—but the diesel delivers it by 1,500 rpm, while the gas engine needs to rev up to 4,100 rpm. As a result, the smaller six feels effortlessly powerful, while the 6.2-liter always seems to be working harder (because it is).

This might confound your expectations, but the diesel is smoother than the gas engine. A straight-six is inherently balanced, and the diesel's advanced fuel-injection system smothers all but a trace of compression-ignition clatter. The fuel-injection system runs at 36,250 psi, with nine-hole injectors delivering fuel up to 10 times per combustion cycle. With that kind of precision, you can fine-tune not only power output, but noise and refinement as well. The difference between the engines is most noticeable in part-throttle cruising on flat roads, where the diesel is near-



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COURTESY CHEVROLET



MAKE/MODEL

2020 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500

BASE PRICE

\$29,895

[Engine upgrade:

\$2,495]

ENGINE

6.2-liter gas V-8: 420 hp and 460 lb-ft  
of torque / 3.0-liter diesel I-6: 277

hp and 460 lb-ft of torque

MAX TOWING

13,400 pounds [gas] /

9,300 pounds [diesel]

EPA FUEL ECONOMY (4X4)

16 mpg city, 20 mpg highway

[gas] / 23 mpg city, 29 mpg

highway [diesel]



SHOULD YOU GO  
HEAVY-DUTY?

If you need your truck to double as a thrifty highway commuter, go with the 1500 Duramax diesel. But if you need to tow 35,500 pounds, there's a truck for that too—the 3500 HD. ¶ The heavy-duty pickup wars are an ongoing exercise in one-upmanship. Everybody lays claim to superlatives for as long as they last. Years ago, when Chevy's 6.6-liter Duramax diesel hit 397 horsepower, Ford immediately re-rated its engine to 400 horsepower. I figured with the 2020 HD trucks, Chevy would torpedo the Ram's 1,000 lb-ft of torque by tuning its trucks to, I don't know, 1,005 lb-ft? But no. They're not playing that game. The diesel trucks make 445 horsepower and 910 lb-ft of torque. Ford once again bumped its numbers just ahead of Chevy and Ram for 2020 with 475 horsepower and 1,050 lb-ft of torque, allowing them to claim best-in-class horsepower. So Chevy is just getting stomped by everyone, huh? ¶ Well, no. The most bodacious of the HD trucks, the crew cab dually 4x4, runs 0–60 in 7.4 seconds, two seconds ahead of the equivalent Ram. That advantage remains even when towing an 18,000-pound trailer. A big part of the credit goes to the Chevy's new Allison 10-speed automatic. That's a hard thing to brag about, though: Best-in-class number of gears isn't really a thing. But GM's point is that we should stop obsessing over towing stats and concentrate on how the trucks actually work in the real world.





silent, while the V-8 is cutting cylinders. That increases efficiency, but noticeably changes the exhaust note and vibration that makes it way to the cabin.

Towing is one area where the V-8 has a definite advantage, with the 6.2's tow rating topping out at 13,400 pounds to the diesel's 9,300 pounds. If you're towing the sort of boat or RV that's in that gray area at the top of a 1500 truck's rating, the 6.2 is the better bet. However, towing at altitude might send the advantage back toward the Duramax. Its turbocharger can compensate for altitude, while a naturally aspirated engine will lose power the higher you climb.

One more thing to consider: money. The straight-six and the V-8 might cost the same up front, but this is one of the rare cases where the diesel will start saving you money the moment you leave the lot. While the 6.2 requires premium fuel, which is at a national average price of \$3.17 per gallon, the Diesel is at \$2.93 per gallon. Over the first 10,000 miles (assuming the EPA combined numbers), the diesel will save you \$692. You'll need to top off with diesel exhaust fluid every now and then, but that won't put much of a dent in the fiscal advantage, even with mixed-use driving. On the highway, the diesel's even better, with the rear-wheel-drive trucks earning an almost-suspicious 33 mpg.

While we appreciate a scorching 0-60 time and better tow rating as much as anyone, this one's a no-brainer: If you're going to step up from the 5.3 in a Silverado, go for effortless torque and extreme economy. Get the diesel. **PM**

**MORE CAMERAS** / Cameras in front and cameras behind. A camera for the bed, and one for the inside of your trailer. The cleverest angle is "invisible trailer," a view that makes it appear as though you're looking straight through the back of your trailer. No more wondering if there's a car lurking off the rear corner of your boat before you change lanes.



**HITCH VIEW** / Usually when you're lining up your hitch ball, you have to remember that your truck will lurch forward a couple inches after you put it in park. GM's solution: When you've got the rear camera set for hitch view, the truck automatically engages the e-brake when you shift from reverse to park. No lurch. Nice.





**MAX TOW RATING** / One Duramax truck was hooked up to a trailer that purportedly weighed 35,500 pounds—the new maximum tow rating, which is achieved with a rear-wheel-drive regular-cab long-bed dually.

**TOW RATING BADGE** / Every individual truck also now has its tow rating stamped on a VIN badge on the door sill, which eliminates a lot of confusion, given that tow ratings vary depending on engine, driveline, bed length, rear axle ratio, interior color, and the position of Jupiter.

**TRAILER ALARM** / When a trailer is hooked up and the truck is locked, disconnecting the trailer will set off an alarm and send a notification to your phone. Now you don't have to worry about backing up against a wall to make your trailer hard to steal out of the hotel parking lot.

COURTESY CHEVROLET