While most of the east coast was digging out of the blizzard and preparing for the next blow, I found myself preparing to test-drive one of the most highly-anticipated cars to hit the market…first.

My assignment was the 2012 Ford Focus. At first glance, the sharp lines and the vibrant colors stopped me in my tracks. A bag of skittles had nothing on the array of selections I had to choose from; but there it was…a candy-coated gem…and it actually called my name…"Psst, Tosha!"

As the waves crashed against the rocks in Malibu (no I am not being animated or extra - we really did begin the drive a stone’s throw away from Pacific Ocean - don’t hate); the time was approaching to hit Pacific Coast Highway and own the road. Sporty and fearless all at the same

time, the Focus would soon offer the ideal driving experience up the coast and through the curvaceous hills of Malibu on that crisp day. The Focus actually had a split personality about it. On the one hand it was youthful and exuberant in its style; but it also had an ‘ageless’ quality about it. On the sexy side of 40, I didn’t feel like I was borrowing some kid’s car for the day, it suited me and I liked it.

My first choice was the hatchback model with the optional Titanium Series trim level…Baller! Sitting on top of 18 inch alloy, five point star rims and loaded with all the bells and whistles that you could ask for, this cutie pie had so much attitude…just-like-me! The attention grabbing lines whipped from the front to the back as it captured the personality and the sexy appeal of the all new Focus. The black grille adds a bit of mystique to the Focus; as well as a bit of hidden technology…we’ll get to that later.

Allowed to kick the tires a bit and explore the goodies, the all-new Focus was filled with surprise after surprise. After adjusting the mirror and seats it was time to check out some of the treats of the Focus. The instrument panels popped with some of the most vibrant colors as I scrolled through some of the SYNC features, but my heart really jumped when I saw the options of the Sony sound system encased in a piano-black console. With the Ford SYNC and MyFord Touch driver connect technology, the Focus will provide a segment-leading 8-inch touch screen for control over media along with the convenience of voice commands and steering wheel controls. Basically, a lot of what we love about the Sony brand will be incorporated in the 2012 Ford Focus making it the first premium small car to feature a branded and designed audio system from Sony….bam!

As part of the Focus Rally America, (a nation-wide drive to introduce the new Focus), I was one of a handful of drivers to experience the sweetness of Ford's latest offering. Odometer zeroed out, my trusty co-pilot on my right (shout of to Bumper2Bumper's Greg Morrison) with the designated route in hand, it was time to put this baby through the paces.

Not a fan of driving manual transmissions in the hellacious LA traffic, I opted for the automatic and it drove like a champ. The handling was tight and sure, even at roughly svelte 2,900 lbs. Finally some real driving was upon us. As the ocean to the left disappeared behind a green hillside, some of the most curvaceous roads were staring me in my face and I was ready! Roads that looked and drove like they were designed by someone on a sugar high allowed me to really get a feel of the power and agility of the Focus. Handling turns and bends with ease, the Focus felt very secure on those 'dead man drops' in the hills of Malibu. The Focus "elevates driving dynamics with standard electric power-assisted steering (EPAS), Control Blade rear suspension and torque vectoring control, making the vehicle feel more responsive and agile in corners…the top-of-the-line Ford Focus Titanium model features standard sport-tuned suspension."

Boasting 40 mpgs with the aid of a front grille that opens at highway speeds for greater fuel economy, the Focus ate up the road and was pretty impressive on gas usage.

One of the greatest parts of this trip was the opportunity to be a passenger; a rare opportunity. On the second leg, my driving partner opted for the 5-speed manual. "Throwing" between the gears was smooth and effortless. It was refreshing to watch pedestrians look at the car in awe and even a few early model Focus owners displayed a glimpse of envy as we passed them by. I had to chuckle myself as one even stared us down…of course in love and admiration.

All-in-all, the all new Ford Focus was a welcomed surprise and extremely fun to drive and ride in.

MSRP ranging from $16k to $24k, for more info visit www.ford.com

Check out Bumper2Bumper's review for additional information and specs on The All New Ford Focus at http://www.5min.com/Video/2012-Ford-Focus-Car-Review-516952103

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