



Small package with big benefits

Dave Cox takes the 240hp 4x2 FSD700AMT for a test drive

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Psychiatric assessment

Did you know that most big vehicle manufacturers have psychiatrists on their design teams. Yes, strange but true. This is a clever move as it provides guidance when choosing the right colours. What colour makes people happy, angry, sad or even sleepy? And what about which lines or curves are going to give the prospective buyer the right message about the sort of vehicle he or she is buying – is it going to look hard and tough or sleek and sexy or maybe small and nifty? I asked a psychiatrist friend to give me an idea on what they might take into account when talking vehicles and not just a big blob of ink in the middle of a page and then ask what

it means to me. I wanted something specific to vehicles and this is what he gave me.

The colour of your car and you

- Red:** Outgoing, fiery and energetic
 - Orange:** Flirty and fun
 - Green:** Easygoing and laid back
 - Blue:** Reliable and calm
 - Grey/Silver:** Hard working and ambitious
 - Black:** Dignified, stylish, mysterious
 - Yellow:** Sporty & spontaneous
 - White:** Dependable and conservative
- You decide how accurate it is.

THE TEST Isuzu FSD700AMT Awesome!

Well the good guys at Commercial Autos in Hamilton let me take the little 240hp 4x2 FSD700AMT for a test drive the other day and I must say – what a little honey!

Now personally I have never been a fan of small trucks. They always seem to come across as minimalistic, designed as a small truck to carry small

things, hence, the cab layout and design have never seemed to have much thought put into them. I can remember seeing Alan Whetton (ex-All Black) at the Auckland wharves coiling himself up like a contortionist in a magic show just to get into his little truck. And Isuzu, I feel, has conquered that problem well and truly.

First off the doors open wide, 90degrees actually, and make access to the cab extremely easy. This has

been helped by the design team making the A-pillar in a more upright position rather than it slanting back and cutting into that door opening area. The grab handles are long and generous so well that it doesn't matter if you're Tattoo from *Fantasy Island* or Ali Williams from Auckland Island, you will have no difficulty getting into the cab of this truck. Excellent!

Once inside and seated on the very comfy ISRI 6860 air suspension seat with heaps of different adjustments, I note



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Who this truck is suited to:

Milk vendors
Local bread delivery
Small parcel freight or courier
Factory/furniture home delivery

Pluses

Automated transmission
Four x bag, air suspension
Mirrors
Wide door openings (easy access)

Minuses

Mirror adjustment switches



that this is one of the top-of-the-line seats and has an adjustment through the shoulder blade area so you can get it nice and snug fitting to your back. The seatbelts are mounted in the seat instead of the cab pillar, which makes for comfort riding when bobbing up and down over uneven road surfaces.

The sense of space inside the cab is great and the dash layout is practical and functional, and large plastic areas make it very easy to keep clean and tidy. Isuzu has also put cup holders in the dash so even the hardest of hardcore truckies have somewhere to put the lattes they've just bought from the servo. It comes standard with driver's side airbag and keyless entry, which is also ignition chipped so unless you use the right key with the right

chip there is no way anyone can steal this truck.

The mirrors on these new GEN 6 Isuzu trucks are brilliant, with a large flat glass in the top two-thirds and a convex glass in the bottom portion. I do wonder why it has put the mirror adjustment switches on the centre console behind the park brake so you have to look over your left shoulder to use them. Why are they not on the door trims like most vehicles have?

There is also this neat little switch on the dash that you would only use when stopped on the steepest hills in one of our major cities and some clever car driver has stopped two-inches from your back bumper. It is called HSA (Hill Start Aid) slow/fast clutch engagement control. With this switch turned on, the

clutch engages slowly so you can pull away on the hill without rolling backwards. Also Isuzu still has the nifty little seat in the middle, which, when folded down, has a large storage space in the back of it. There are also storage spaces in the dash that could hold an R/T or C/B.

The six-speed Automated Manual Transmission (AMT) is magic. The gear lever is mounted nicely in the centre console and the change from sequential manual gear changing to the fully automated change is as simple as pulling the lever from one side through the transmission gate to the other side – very easy and user friendly.

I decided to take it for a spin through Hamilton to see how well suited it is to the rigours of stop/start

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city traffic lights, but before I move off there is this tricky and very clever little safety device that won't let me select a gear unless my foot is on the brake. This is great because I am sure we have all witnessed the lazy driver who can't be bothered climbing into the cab and starts the truck standing outside, not knowing if it is in gear or not. I rolled out onto SH 1 and straight away the word that comes to mind is: awesome! The 240hp motor matched with the automated gearbox is a pleasure to drive.

First I left it in the manual sequential range so I could have a bit of fun changing up and down as I approached the first set of roundabouts into Hamilton. The changes are smooth and seamless. This, like all good automated boxes, will not let you select a gear if it is out of its rev range. As I approached heavier traffic congestion I flicked it into the auto mode, and once again the ease of

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driving this little beauty is evident. Auto mode leaves the driver free to concentrate on the hazards and dangers that can be encountered in every-day traffic. From a driving instructor's point of view, I find this a very good safety factor as I have encountered many drivers over the years that get focused on gear selection and miss picking up on the hazards that are around.

Another major attraction of this truck is the four-airbag suspension, which gives a superb ride and can be electronically controlled from a remote in the cab and will always return to its default height once the truck is travelling at more than 20k. This is an

excellent setup and complements the truck very well. And like all environmentally conscious manufacturers Isuzu has its Diesel Particulate Diffuser (DPD) fitted to the exhaust system. Isuzu claims, as I have said before, that DPD allows you to hold a piece of white paper over the end of the exhaust and it will not show any emissions on it.

Finally it is nice to see it shod on 265/70 19.5 tyres, giving it a nice low ride height that in turn equals a low centre of gravity, thus helping with the overall stability.

So in summing up – a well thought-out little truck that drives extremely well. 9/10. ■

ISUZU F Series

GEN6

FUTURE DRIVEN

**ISUZU**
FS*700

MAIN SPECIFICATIONS

| Model | FSR700 | FSR700 AMT | FSD700 | FSD700 AMT |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|--------|------------|
| Code | FS101 | FS102 | FS103 | FS104 |
| Configuration | 4 x 2 | | | |
| Gross Vehicle Mass | 14,000Kg | | | |
| Gross Combination Mass | 20,000Kg | | | |
| Maximum towed mass braked | 12,500 Kg | | | |
| Maximum towed mass unbraked | 2,000 Kg | | | |
| Gradeability at GVM/GCM (1st gear) | 24/14% | 29/17% | 24/14% | 29/17% |
| Est. Engine RPM @ 90 Km/h | 1965 | 1990 | 1965 | 1990 |
| Turning circle kerb to kerb (m) | 19.9 | | | |

DRIVELINE SPECIFICATIONS

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|
| Engine Model | 6HK1-TCN | | | |
| Type | 6 cylinder 24 valve, gear driven SOHC. EuroIV exhaust emission compliant | | | |
| Displacement (cc) | 7,790 | | | |
| Compression ratio | 17.5:1 | | | |
| Max power (DIN Nett) | 176kW 240PS (JIS Gross 182kW, 248PS) @ 2400 RPM | | | |
| Max torque (DIN Nett) | 706N.m (JIS Gross 731N.m) @ 1450 RPM | | | |
| Transmission model | MLD6W | MZX6P | MLD6W | MXZ6P |
| Forward gears | 6 | | | |

KERB MASS* (kg)

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Front | 2,480 | 2,465 | 2,490 | 2,470 |
| Rear | 1,465 | 1,455 | 1,520 | 1,520 |
| Total | 3,945 | 3,920 | 4,010 | 3,990 |

* Cab chassis as supplied from the factory and 10 litres of fuel

DIMENSIONS (mm)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|--|
| WB: Wheelbase | 5,560 | | |
| OAL: Overall length | 9,155 | | |
| CW: Cab width | 2,120 | | |
| OAH: Overall height | 2,665 | 2,590 | |
| EA: Rear of engine to rear axis | 4,575 | | |
| CE: Cab to rear of frame | 7,090 | | |
| FOH: Front overhang | 1,170 | | |
| ROH: Rear overhang | 2,425 | | |
| FT: Front track | 1,805 | | |
| RT: Rear track | 1,660 | | |
| ORT: Overall rear tyres | 2,215 | | |
| FW: Frame width @ Rear | 840 | | |
| RFH: Frame height at rear axis | 885 | 790 | |
| AF: Front axle to rear cab | 896 | | |

