



5 Reasons Why We Love The GMC Syclone (5 Reasons Why We'd Rather Have The 1st Gen Ford F-150 SVT Lightning)

Two classic trucks with a history of speed and power have been cemented in history, but which one should you buy?

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Trucks have not always been known for speed and performance. They used to be desired for their towing and payload capabilities. That all changed in the early 90s with a few performance truck options which include the GMC Syclone and the 1st generation of the Ford F-150 SVT Lightning.


These two performance trucks are great in different categories, with an argument being made for each as to which is the better truck. One is smaller and quicker, while the other is a larger,

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Syclone: Quick Little Truck



The GMC Syclone was introduced in 1991 as a performance version of the Sonoma truck. The Syclone came with a turbocharged V6 engine that packed a punch.

 GMC 2 - Mecum

Via: Mecum

The combination of the smaller sized truck and 280 hp engine with all-wheel-drive, the Syclone blasts from 0-60 in only 4.3 seconds. The power keeps pushing the truck to a quarter-mile time of 13.4. Those are pretty quick numbers for a smaller, V6-powered truck.



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Lightning: Sturdy, Powerful Feel

The Ford Lightning truck couldn't keep up with the Syclone when it came to straight-line speed, but it made up for it with nice sturdy speed and agility. The Lightning was a much larger truck, which gave it a sturdier feel but also allowed for a larger engine.


 Sturdy F150 2 - Ford Trucks

Via: Ford Trucks

The Lightning was stuffed with a powerful, low-RPM torque 351 Windsor engine that gave it a strong feel at launch. The Lightning was also equipped with 4.10 rear axle gears, a strong transmission, and lowered suspension. This combination provides a powerful truck that can accelerate and corner more like a sports car than a full-size truck.

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Syclone: Special Editions Were Available

 GMC Special 2 - PPGpacecares

Via: Ppgpacecares

Special editions make a vehicle cooler by offering a package that not everyone might have. The Indy Syclone and PPG Syclone were not widely available but still a cool thought. The Indy Syclone was just a sticker package and used as a pace car for the Indy 500. The PPG was just one of the three Indy Syclones that was a multi-tone paint scheme and some upgrades like a racing fuel cell and water-cooled brakes, just to name a few.

The Marlboro Syclone was the result of the Marlboro Racing Contest, in which ten winners received this special edition truck. The truck started as a black Syclone that was painted red with the white stripes, matching interior, upgraded sound system, lowered suspension, a targa-style roof panel and many other unique options. This was definitely a unique special edition truck.




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Lightning: More Comfortable

 F150 Interior - FAA Classic Cars

Via: FAA Classic Cars


The Ford Lightning was a more comfortable truck on the inside as well as the ride. As the Lightning was a full-size truck, it provided a much smoother ride than a smaller truck along with the suspension upgrades that came with the SVT truck.

 F150 Interior 2 - Mecum

 Via: Mecum


The interior came with large bucket seats that snuggled nicely in the large cab of the Lightning. The F150 offered plenty of leg and shoulder room, as well as a smoother, more modern dash compared to the Syclone's.

Syclone: Great Sleeper Car

 GMC Sleeper - Barrett Jackson

Via: Barrett Jackson

The Syclone was a great sleeper car as it was built off the Sonoma truck and did not look extremely different than a traditional truck to the standard observer. There were less than 3000 Syclones produced, so not everyone knew what they were looking at.


 GMC Sleeper 2 - Barrett Jackson

Via: Barrett Jackson

Those who made the mistake of thinking the Syclone was just a regular little truck would soon be schooled. If you challenged this truck on the streets or at the track, you would have most likely been answered with a quick response and a loss of the race.

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Lightning: Reliability

 F150 Reliability - Mecum


Via: Mecum

The Syclone's turbochargers had reports of being unreliable and breaking. Forced induction engines come with risks associated with the extra power brought into the engine, and was not as proven of an engine as the Ford had. The larger, time-tested Lightning is the winner in the reliability column.

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The Syclone was equipped with all-wheel-drive. All-wheel-drive is an excellent option that most gearheads would love on their cars or trucks, both for performance and for safety.


 GMC 1 - Mecum

Via: Mecum

also a nice option to have when driving in adverse conditions like rain or light snow, especially since there is hardly any weight over the rear wheels.


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Lightning: Practicality As A Truck

 F150 Payload - Mecum

Via: Mecum

The Ford Lightning takes the win as far as practicality as a truck. It is a full-size truck with a powerful engine and large bed. Compare this to the smaller sized Syclone and there isn't much of an argument.

 F150 Payload 2 - Mecum

Via: Mecum

The Lightning has a towing capacity of 8,000 pounds vs the towing capacity of only 2,000 pounds for the Syclone. The Syclone offered a 500 pound payload capacity, which was slightly less than the 745 pounds of the Lightning. The SVT Lightning is also much more capable of off-road applications, except for where the lower suspension would come in to play. GMC actually warned potential buyers that the Syclone should not be used off-road.


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Syclone: Rare And Unique

 GMC Rare - Mecum

 Via: Museum

much harder to find.


 GMC Rare 2 - Mecum

Via: Mecum

There were only 2,995 produced in 1991 and 3 produced in 1992 with one of those being used as a crash-test vehicle. Several of these trucks were made into special editions and 150 were exported to the Middle East. Getting your hands on a Syclone is not impossible, but certainly rare.


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Lightning: Easier To Get Your Hands On

 Easy F150 - Mecum

Via: Mecum

The 1st generation of the Ford Lightning ran for three years and produced over 11,000 trucks. That is almost four times the amount of the Sycloones produced, making them significantly easier to find.

 Easy F150 2 - Mecum

 Via: Missouri

These trucks were popular and widely available. It's not like there was one on every corner, and even today, you don't see one every day or even every week. However, plenty of F-150 SVT Lightnings were produced and are still available to purchase from auctions, dealerships, and individual buyers.

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Vincent has been an automotive enthusiast since being a kid growing up in Europe and Asia. With his time overseas coupled with years spent in the US, he has an appreciation for a variety of automobiles. When not...

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