

"Starsky & Hutch television Gran Torino is an arresting car"



by Bruno Bornino

The bright red and white Gran Torino roared down the narrow alley. It barely missed some garbage cans, and then came out onto a main street. Finally, it spun completely around and forced another car against the curb.

Starsky and Hutch were in action again. As usual, the famous television police officers captured the villains. S&H win every Wednesday night at 10 on WEWS-TV (Channel 5).

Their car is a winner too. Through the courtesy of Bob Gillingham Ford Inc., 8383 Brookpark Rd., Parma, I drove a replica of the Starsky and Hutch car. The only things missing were the police radio and siren, and - of course - the two handsome TV stars.



This is a limited production car. There were only 1,000 Starsky & Hutch Torinos produced for sales in the US, with 100 being built for the Canadian market. More than 100 have been sold in the greater Cleveland area. All of the S & H cars were made at Ford's Chicago assembly plant where Elites and Cougars are normally produced.

The car created immediate reaction everywhere I drove or even parked it. And most of it was positive.

Young people yelled, "Hey where's Starsky and Hutch?" Women seemed disappointed that their TV heroes weren't in the car. Older guys were either envious, or thought I was some kind of weirdo.

But in every case it attracts crowds. List price of the Gran Torino was \$4,461. Standard equipment included Cruiseo-Matic transmission, steel-belted radial tires, solid state ignition, power front disc brakes, power steering and carpeting.

Standard power plant in the eight cylinder car is a 351 cubic-inch-displacement with a two-barrel carburetor.

The replica I drove had \$776.20 in extra equipment, which included factory air (\$478), deluxe bumper (\$67), white walls (\$52), tinted glass (\$51), dual mirrors (\$46) and the Starsky and Hutch paint treatment (\$164.20).

Transportation and handling was another \$114, so the car's total price was \$5,351.20. Which isn't too bad when you compare prices with other intermediate models that don't perform as well, or aren't as much fun to drive.

I'm not even going to pretend that I attempted any of the stunts that Starsky and Hutch perform with their car each week. I was satisfied that overall handling was fine, and that the car responded well in every situation.

The S & H replica has the smooth "big car" ride, yet manages to squeeze 19 miles out of a gallon of unleaded gasoline on the highway. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rating for an automatic Torino in the city is 13 mpg, but I was closer to 15 mpg driving my daily University Heights-downtown work roundtrip. I also got 21 mpg on the highway to better the EPA rating.

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