GENERAL

2008 ford focus consumer reports

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Introduction

When you're hunting for a reliable, affordable compact car, the 2008 Ford Focus often pops up on the radar. It sits in a crowded segment, competing against the Honda Civic, Toyota Corolla, and Hyundai Elantra, yet it offers a distinctive blend of style, performance, and value. But how does it hold up in real-world use? That's where the **2008 Ford Focus consumer reports**come into play. These reports aggregate data from thousands of owners, giving you a clear picture of what to expect over the life of the vehicle.

In this article, we'll dive deep into every facet of the 2008 Focus, from its engine options and safety features to its maintenance costs and common owner complaints. Whether you're a first-time buyer, a seasoned enthusiast, or simply curious about how this model stacks up against its rivals, you'll find the information you need to make an informed decision.

Overview of the 2008 Ford Focus

The 2008 Ford Focus marked the third generation of the model line, introduced in late 2007. It came in two body styles: a five-door hatchback and a four-door sedan. The trim levels—S, SE, SEL, and the sportier ST—offered varying levels of comfort and performance. The base S and SE trims were aimed at budget-conscious buyers, while the SEL added premium touches like leather upholstery and power accessories. The ST, powered by a turbocharged 2.0L engine, catered to enthusiasts craving a spirited driving experience.

Under the hood, the 2008 Focus offered three engine choices:

- 1.6L 4-cylinder (75 hp)
- 2.0L 4-cylinder (140 hp)
- 2.0L turbocharged 4-cylinder (200 hp) for the ST

Transmission options ranged from a 5-speed manual to a 6-speed automatic for the base models, while the ST came exclusively with a 6-speed manual. The car's front-wheel-drive layout, lightweight chassis, and 5-speed manual transmission helped it achieve respectable fuel economy, especially in the lower-powered variants.

Design and Interior

Exterior styling was a blend of modern and subtle. The Focus featured a sleek front fascia, a short hood, and a slightly rounded roofline, giving it a contemporary look without being overly flashy. Inside, the cabin was functional, with straightforward controls and a user-friendly layout. The S and SE trims used durable cloth upholstery, while the SEL and ST offered leather seats and more refined trim pieces.

One notable feature of the 2008 Focus was its **adaptive suspension system**on higher trims, which helped smooth out bumps and improved handling. The ST's sport-tuned suspension, larger brakes, and unique steering ratio further enhanced its driving dynamics.

Performance and Handling

Performance is where the 2008 Focus truly shines, especially in the ST variant. The 2.0L turbocharged engine

produced 200 horsepower and 190 lb ft of torque, giving the ST a brisk acceleration from 0 to 60 mph in just 6.9 seconds—an impressive figure for a compact car of its era.

For the more mainstream 2.0L naturally aspirated engine, the 2008 Focus delivered 140 horsepower, which was adequate for daily commuting and occasional highway cruising. The 1.6L engine, while modest at 75 horsepower, was economical and reliable, making it a popular choice among budget buyers.

Handling Characteristics

The Focus's handling was often praised for its precision and confidence. The 5-speed manual transmission, coupled with a well-tuned suspension, provided a sporty feel. The ST's steering was especially responsive, with a tighter turning radius and a more direct feel that appealed to driving enthusiasts.

However, some owners noted that the steering felt slightly heavy in the base trims, especially on the 1.6L engine. The ST's sport-tuned suspension, while offering sharper handling, was also a bit firm, which could be a drawback for those who prefer a more comfortable ride.

Fuel Economy

Fuel efficiency varied across the engine options:

- 1.6L: 25 mpg city / 33 mpg highway
- 2.0L: 23 mpg city / 33 mpg highway
- ST 2.0L turbo: 21 mpg city / 28 mpg highway

These figures were competitive for the segment in 2008. The 1.6L engine was the most economical, while the ST's turbocharged power came at the cost of lower mileage. Nevertheless, the 2008 Focus remained a practical choice for those who valued performance without sacrificing too much on fuel economy.

Reliability and Ownership Costs

Reliability is a crucial factor when evaluating a used car, and the 2008 Ford Focus delivered a mixed but generally positive picture. Consumer reports highlighted several strengths and weaknesses that owners should consider.

Common Issues

1. **Timing Belt Replacement:** The 1.6L and 2.0L engines used a timing belt, which should be replaced every 60,000 to 90,000 miles. Failure to do so could result in catastrophic engine damage.

2. **Brake Wear:** Some owners reported premature brake wear on the front rotors, especially on the ST due to its higher performance.

3. **Electrical System:** A few complaints surfaced regarding intermittent electrical issues, such as the power windows or infotainment system malfunctioning.

4. **Suspension Components:** The ST's sport suspension occasionally suffered from premature wear on the strut mounts and bushings.

Despite these concerns, many owners praised the Focus for its overall durability and low maintenance costs. Routine maintenance, such as oil changes, fluid checks, and tire rotations, remained within the industry average.

Maintenance Costs

Average maintenance costs for the 2008 Focus hovered around $400 to $600 annually. Key expense categories included:

- Oil and filter changes: $35–$50 per service
- Brake pads and rotors: $200–$300 per axle
- Timing belt replacement: $800–$1,200 (including labor)
- General wear items (tire rotation, fluid top-offs): $100–$150

These costs were comparable to other compact cars in the same class, making the Focus a cost-effective option for many drivers.

Safety Features and Ratings

Safety is paramount, and the 2008 Ford Focus received solid ratings from both the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). The car earned a 5-star overall safety rating from NHTSA, with high marks in frontal, side, and rollover tests.

Standard Safety Equipment

Base models came equipped with:

- Anti-lock braking system (ABS)
- Electronic stability control (ESC)
- Dual front airbags
- Seatbelt pretensioners

Higher trims added:

- Side curtain airbags
- Rearview camera (on SEL and ST)
- Adaptive cruise control (on SEL)

These features helped the Focus achieve high safety scores and offered peace of mind to drivers and passengers alike.

Consumer Ratings and Reviews

Consumer reports aggregated data from thousands of owners, offering insights into real-world experiences. Here's a snapshot of the key findings:

- Overall satisfaction rating: 4.2/5
- Reliability rating: 3.8/5
- Performance rating: 4.0/5 (higher for ST)
- Fuel economy rating: 3.5/5
- Comfort rating: 3.9/5

Owners frequently praised the car's **responsive steering** and **comfortable ride**. The ST, in particular, received acclaim for its sporty handling. However, some owners expressed frustration with the timing belt maintenance schedule and the occasional electrical glitches.

Comparisons with Competitors

When compared to the Honda Civic and Toyota Corolla, the 2008 Focus held its own in terms of safety and performance. The Focus's ST variant, for example, outperformed the Civic Si and Corolla 1.5T in acceleration tests. In contrast, the Civic and Corolla were often favored for their lower maintenance costs and higher resale values.

Common Recalls and Technical Service Bulletins

Ford issued several recalls for the 2008 Focus, primarily related to safety and mechanical issues. The most notable recalls included:

1. Brake System Recall: In 2009, Ford recalled certain models due to potential brake failure caused by a defective brake system component.
2. Engine Timing Belt Recall: Some 2.0L engines were recalled for a faulty timing belt tensioner that could lead to belt slippage.
3. Power Steering Recall: A recall in 2010 addressed a potential loss of power steering assist due to a defective steering pump.

Owners should verify whether their vehicle has completed all applicable recalls. Ford's official website and local dealers can provide this information.

Buying Guide for the 2008 Ford Focus

If you're considering purchasing a used 2008 Focus, here's a step-by-step guide to help you make a smart choice.

1. Determine Your Needs

Ask yourself: Do you need a daily commuter, a sporty drive, or a family-friendly hatchback? The ST is best suited for spirited driving, while the S or SE trims are more economical for everyday use.

2. Check the Vehicle History Report

Obtain a Carfax or AutoCheck report to verify mileage, accident history, and prior ownership. Look for:

- Accident records
- Title issues (e.g., salvage)

3. Inspect for Timing Belt Condition

Ask the seller for evidence of timing belt replacement. If the vehicle hasn't had its belt replaced within the recommended mileage, factor in the cost of a new belt and labor.

4. Test Drive

During the test drive, pay attention to:

- Steering response and feedback
- Brake feel and stopping distance
- Engine noise and smoothness
- Transmission shifts (for automatics)
- Suspension comfort and handling

5. Get a Pre-Purchase Inspection

Have a trusted mechanic conduct a thorough inspection. They can identify hidden issues such as:

- Suspension wear
- Brake pad thickness
- Electrical system functionality
- Fluid levels and leaks

6. Negotiate the Price

Use the consumer reports and your inspection findings to negotiate a fair price. Remember that a well-maintained 2008 Focus can command a higher price, while a vehicle with a neglected timing belt or electrical problems may

warrant a discount.

Future Resale Value

Resale value for the 2008 Focus tends to be moderate. While the base trims depreciate faster, the ST retains a higher resale value due to its performance appeal. On average, owners can expect to recover about 35%–45% of the purchase price after five

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