
VORTEC
DOT 3

Eight Cylinders for a Hallelujah!

A real American car has eight cylinders. That statement leaves no wiggling room, especially if the car comes from the stables of General Motors.

In 1955, the small-block V8 was introduced in several Chevrolet models in the form of a 265-cubic inch engine delivering 165 hp (163 bhp). Half a century later, Detroit could look back on more than 90 million small-block engines with no end in sight, despite all the discussions about the depletion of our fossil fuel reserves.

The basic principle remains unchanged today: The classic 90-degree cylinder angle is unaltered as is the single camshaft rotating in the bottom of the engine that drives just two valves per cylinder via old-fashioned pushrods.

That same old principle also had to work for the HUMMER H2, because the boxy giant is a) from GM and b) a real American car has eight cylinders.

Vortec 6000 6.0L V-8 is the exact name of the eight-cylinder engine, which with a displacement of 5,967 cc or 364 cubic inches in US-speak took on the fighting weight of well over three metric tons. The United States of America are a big country compared to which even the HUMMER is small. No wonder that the engine of the H2 is still considered a small-block V8.

The most successful combustion engine design of all times is not even present in its most powerful incarnation: The engine with a compression ratio of 9.4:1 develops 325 hp / 242 kW (321 bhp) at 5,200 rpm, if one is to believe the manufacturer's figures. Other figures between 316 and 330 horses have also made the rounds – you can't really expect General Motors to be sure.

It would have been easy to avoid such discussions altogether: The refined H2 brethren Cadillac Escalade was also powered by a Vortec 6000 6.0L V-8, yet it carried the "High Output" badge on its birth certificate. Fans of muscle cars of old know that these two words are synonymous with a higher compression ratio. With a ratio of then 10.0:1, this second-most popular chariot among gangster rappers delivers 345 or 350 horses – again it depends on whom you ask at GM – to a heavy right foot.

And the H2 could surely use the additional vitamins. We already mentioned the extra pounds on the frame that even the most streamlined aerodynamics cannot make up for.

With a sprint time of 10.2, 10.5 or 11.0 seconds (again, it depends on your source at GM!) from rest to 100 km/h (62 mph), the HUMMER proudly beats out subcompacts like the Nissan Micra. Their hour comes at 160 km/h (99 mph) when the computer in the H2 won't allow any further acceleration because the BF Goodrich tires are incapable of handling the heavyweight going any faster.

But that is definitely not the decisive criterion for judging the qualities of the six-liter powerplant fairly. The small large V8 is a civilized playmate that does have enough punch to accelerate the vehicle swiftly if necessary.