

Fashionably Early

This Expedition is no ordinary grocery getter. It is faster than most sports cars and is capable of carrying six passengers with relative ease.



This Kenne Bell "Contempo" Expedition is more like a sports car, than a sport utility.

By Dan Sanchez
Photography: Dan Sanchez

When you consider that the Ford Expedition is one of the top selling SUVs in the nation, it's no wonder that the people who own this type of truck are so adamant about personalizing the SUV. Most full-size sport utility vehicles are intended for transporting several passengers and cargo in a safe and reliable manner, but when Kenne Bell got a hold of their 2004 model, they decided to turn it into more than just a grocery-getter.

Naturally, the company began by taking the factory 5.4-liter V-8 and updating it with a twin-screw supercharger. The 2.2-liter supercharger system gives the Expedition 386, dyno tested horsepower that gives the truck stellar performance on the road and makes it capable of towing greater loads without effort.

In addition to the supercharger, the engine uses the company's air intake system to provide cold air into the supercharger inlet, and it uses a Gibson dual-exhaust system to quickly expel the added exhaust pressure. A Kenne Bell Boost-A-Pump provides added fuel pressure according to boost levels and the company's Switch Chip allows the vehicle's electronic control module to operate on a stock or performance setting that can be changed from a dash mounted switch.

386 horsepower is an impressive number, but it can't be displayed like a gold watch or a Gucci purse. So the company decided to slightly outfit the Expedition with more appropriate attire. Proper posture always gives an aura of power and confidence but in this case, lower is better. Kenne Bell took the Expedition to Advantage Performance Center in Riverside, California, where they worked on the factory coil springs to lower the truck two inches. With the suspension in proper shape, the SUV needed a new pair of shoes. In this case it was a set of Katana Azzad, 24-inch diameter wheels that were mounted on BFGoodrich gForce KDW tires.



The twin-screw supercharger system on this SUV is responsible for pushing out 386 horsepower out of the 5.4-liter V-8.



In order to drive around in fashion, the Expedition had to be outfitted with the latest performance hardware. In this case, it is a set of Katana wheels and BFGoodrich tires.



Beige beige was replaced with vinyl inserts that match the coach. The transformation is not a custom upholstery job but was done with a simple Katzkin seat cover kit.



An Auto Meter gauge pod was used to house the Kenne Bell fuel pressure and boost pressure gauges.

The Expedition now looked more like a chic boulevard cruiser than a soccer mom's ride, but to further compliment the SUV, the Kenne Bell team added a Stull billet grille to the front of the Expedition. If a color and cut can do wonders to change a woman's appearance, you can imagine what it can do for an SUV. Although nothing was cut on this Expedition, some color was definitely added. In fact, it was several colors. The BASF Glasurit 95 paint changes color according to the angle and the amount of light hitting the vehicle's surface. The change is rather subtle, but the Expedition can go from a magenta, transform into orange, then red and finally gold as you walk pass it.

With such an exciting drivetrain and exterior, the only thing that was left, was a way to make the boring factory interior come alive, like the rest of the truck. A simple solution was to first outfit the Expedition with a couple of gauges that help monitor the supercharger's boost and fuel pressure. The Kenne Bell gauges have a white face and were mounted to an Auto Meter pillar pod. The factory beige interior was given a two-tone look with the addition of a Katzkin leather upholstery kit. The factory seat covers were removed and the Katzkin two-tone slate and beige leather kit was installed over the factory foam.

The end result of all these modifications is a super SUV that is not only fast but makes a high-profile fashion statement over the other SUVs that are on the road. What's it like to drive? We spent some time driving the Expedition and found that the only way to properly describe the power is "lightning-like," with quick acceleration once you stomp on the throttle. The twin-screw supercharger has a whining sound that lets you know it's working and before you know it, you're at highway speeds traveling down a residential zone. Aside from the power and acceleration, the Kenne Bell Expedition drives much like any other stock SUV and is easy to control and predictable in cornering. The larger wheel and tires do make you feel more of the road, but it's a small price to pay to have a great looking truck with a shiny pair of shoes to match. **FTW**



The interior is mostly stock, but the slight addition of color makes it look almost custom.



The lowered stance came from taking the SUV to Advantage Performance where some coil spring work was done to lower the Expedition two inches.



Up front, the factory plastic grille was removed and replaced with a polished Stallion grille insert.