A Pickup That Corners

Maverick Lobo Puts a Sporty Spin on Small Trucks

By Derek Price
CARGAZING.COM



The 2026 Ford Maverick combines compact pickup proportions with a useful cargo bed, giving buyers an alternative to larger trucks for everyday driving and hauling.

The Ford Maverick has always struck me as a truck for people who know what they actually need a truck to do.

It has a bed for hauling messy things, a cabin for carrying people and a compact size that doesn't feel like you're maneuvering an aircraft carrier. For a lot of everyday jobs, that's plenty of truck.

Now Ford has given its smallest pickup a new task: making corners fun.

The Maverick Lobo is a street truck, lowered and tuned for pavement rather than lifted for the trail. After spending a week with one, I can tell you Ford got the driving part right. I'm just less enthusiastic about what happened to the price.

First, the fun part. This is the most handling-focused pickup on the market today, and you can tell from the driver's seat. Point it into a bend and it changes direction with the eagerness of a sporty compact car, keeping body roll in check in a way most trucks simply don't.

It's the kind of pickup that makes you take notice of a curving road instead of merely following it.

Ford lowered the Lobo compared with the regular Maverick and tuned its suspension and steering for on-road performance. A special rear drive unit can shift power between the rear wheels to help the truck turn, and upgraded brakes add stopping hardware to match its sporty mission.

There's even a Lobo driving mode intended for closed courses. It adjusts the system that helps the truck corner and reduces stability-control intervention. Ford says to save it for a track, not the morning commute.

The turbocharged engine gives the chassis an eager partner. Its turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder makes 250 horsepower and 277 pound-feet of torque, delivered through a seven-speed automatic transmission and all-wheel drive. In this compact pickup, that power turns into quick acceleration.

The transmission has paddle shifters, too, for drivers who want a more active role in choosing gears. EPA fuel economy is 21 mpg in the city and 30 on the highway, not bad at all.

I like the way the Lobo looks, with its lower stance and dark wheels giving the familiar Maverick shape a more purposeful appearance. Apparently, I'm not alone in thinking Ford has made something special here. The Lobo was named 2026 North American Truck of the Year.

Inside, my tester had a 13.2-inch center screen, seating for five and a moonroof. The blue and lime accents bring some personality to a cabin that still has the useful storage and straightforward layout a small-truck buyer needs.

And yes, it's still a truck.

There's a real pickup bed in back for home-improvement supplies, yard debris or whatever else you'd rather not put inside an SUV. Visibility is excellent, and the Maverick's manageable size makes it easier to maneuver on the road than the big pickups that have become the default in so many driveways.

That's why I've been such a fan of the Maverick from the start. Trucks used to be affordable tools for doing a job, and Ford brought that idea back when the original Maverick arrived with a starting price around $20,000.

Even the midsize Ford Ranger has grown too large for plenty of small jobs. Hyundai's Santa Cruz also offers a compact alternative, but there still aren't many choices for people who want an accessible pickup without stepping up to a full-size truck.

The Lobo, unfortunately, stretches the definition of accessible. My tester's base price was $41,425, roughly twice the original Maverick's starting price, and options and delivery pushed it to $45,870. That's a lot of money for the truck that made its name as an affordable alternative.

To be fair, the Lobo is a specialized, well-equipped version, not the entry point to the Maverick lineup. If you want the least expensive path to a small Ford pickup, this isn't it.

For anyone willing to spend that much on a street truck, Ford has delivered plenty of entertainment.

I enjoyed the Lobo, and I hope more manufacturers follow the Maverick's lead with smaller, affordable trucks for people who need a useful bed without all the full-size excess.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT WAS TESTED?
2026 Ford Maverick Lobo AWD ($41,425). Options: Tonneau cover ($1,260), spare tire ($115), satellite radio ($300), wheels ($100), connectivity package ($745), keypad ($230). Price as tested (including $1,695 destination charge): $45,870

BY THE NUMBERS
Wheelbase: 121.0 in.
Length: 200.9 in.
Width: 72.6 in.
Height: 67.7 in.
Engine: 2.0-liter turbocharged four-cylinder (250 hp, 277 lb.-ft.)
Transmission: Seven-speed automatic
MPG: 21 city, 30 highway

RATINGS
Style: 9
Performance: 8
Price: 6
Handling: 9
Ride: 7
Comfort: 7
Quality: 8
Overall: 8

WHY BUY IT?
The Maverick Lobo gives drivers who enjoy a winding road sharp handling and distinctive street-truck styling with the everyday usefulness of a small pickup bed.



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Inside, the Maverick offers seating for five, a large center touchscreen and practical storage for the items drivers carry every day.

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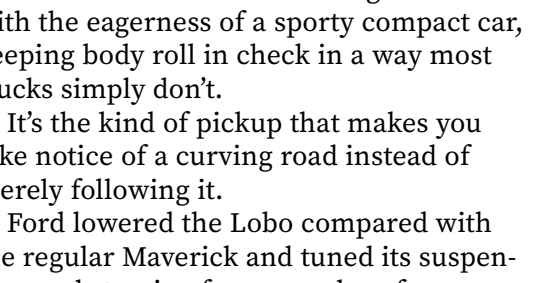
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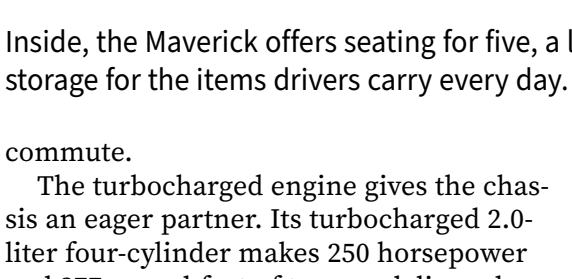
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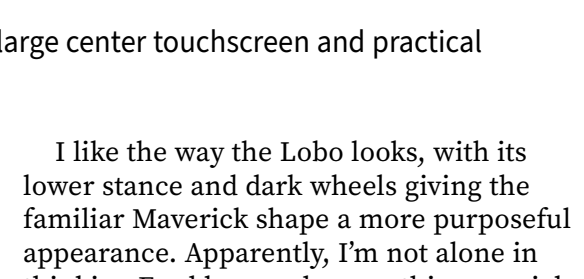
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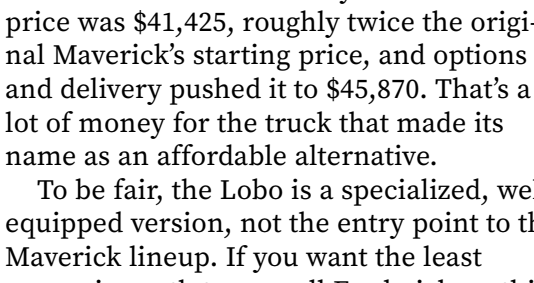
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A CLOSER LOOK









AT A GLANCE FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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