Used H1s: Gas vs Diesel

"What is the best year for a used Hummer? I'm looking for a used H1 and came across a great deal on a ow mileage gas owered ummer. Are ere any ncerns with a s engine that I uld be wary Since gas ered mers were available for ef time, I'm ering if it ue to ms, or lack rest from mmer nity. "

AM General produced H1's with gas engines in 1995 and 1996. All the diesels prior to 1996 are N/A (naturally aspirated) diesels as opposed to turbo diesels, which were introduced in 1996. The drive train on all of the 95 and newer trucks is pretty much the same until 1998 when they changed the differential ratio. I've owned 3 Hummers; a 95-gas wagon; a 96 Turbo Diesel wagon and I presently own a 1998 Turbo Diesel wagon.

The 5.7L (350 cu. in.) TBI gas engine installed by AMG is the 1995 GM LO5 version, GM Assembly no. 10205700 with a 3 page list of AMG add/delete components to nstallation in the Hummer. The s into GM's Medium Duty Truck/ e engine classification. When the ine was installed in 1995 the had to be beefed up because the produced a greater torque spike and 6.5L N/A diesel engines of

ly choices were gas or N/A I purchase a gas truck? I ything about diesels and ng I knew how to work on. t about all 4wd's made are lt that I could get fuel ut on the trail in remote hance of a diesel truck bout zero. The 350 Chevy most common engine ever paired anywhere in the ne doesn't last as long as a aced dirt-cheap. There are nade for this engine than existence. It's quieter and blem in the coldest k can be sound then a diesel. The fuel e gas adjusts the altitude, while the N/A smoke at high

isn't much difference formance of a gas vs. er I bought my new tunity to go to AMG and compare one of their N/A diesel trucks to my gas on their obstacle course. What I found is that each engine has it's own distinct feel. A gas truck will allow much more compression engine braking then a diesel because of inherent design differences. This made steep descents much easier to control, which is very important when 4 wheeling. The diesel engine is harder to stall than a gas engine, due to the high torque at low RPM's a diesel operates at. I took my gas truck to Colorado and Moab Utah a number of times and had no problem going anywhere I wanted. I did observe that both the gas, and N/A diesels, will run out of power climbing steep hills, and pulling stuck vehicles in the mountains at high altitude.

The negatives about a gas powered Hummer are: You can only ford through 24" of water, unlike a diesel, which can go to 30" because the diesel starter is waterproof. A gas engine has a high voltage spark ignition that can get wet and stall while the diesel does not. The gas engine produces much more heat that rises up into the cabin. The gas engine produces its power at 2700 RPM, so it's necessary to put your foot down a little more when going over obstacles. The diesel truck achieves its peak torque at 1700 rpm. That means that when pulling or climbing at peak torque the diesel truck is moving at just over half of the speed of the gas truck, which allows for better control.

My gas truck got about 4 mpg off the road in the Colorado Mountains, while the more efficient diesel can get 10 - 12 mpg. All Hummer H1's built before 1996 have one fuel tank. The tank on a gas truck holds 23 gallons while the diesel tanks hold 25. The gas trucks hold less because the fuel pump is in the tank and there has to be room for vapor expansion. Having a 23-gallon tank getting 4 to 7 mpg motivated me to look into installing an auxiliary tank. A couple companies made diesel tanks that fit in the fender well but I discovered that gasoline is much more volatile then diesel fuel so by law you can't mount a gasoline tank outside the frame rails. In '96, AMG added an additional 17-gallon tank to all their H1's. I researched adding the auxiliary tank to my 95, but It required changing the exhaust, trailer hitch, cutting the body for the second fuel filler, adding all the electrics to handle 2 tanks, and way more money then it was worth so I ended up carrying a 5 gallon jerry can.

The on-road performance of both, a gas truck and the N/A diesel, is what really leaves a lot to be desired. You might go 0 to 60 in 45 seconds. You can't pass on the highway, and your maximum speed going up hill on high mountain passes is around 40. When I had my 95-gas wagon I examined ways to increase the performance of the stock engine. The objective was torque at low rpm's. Most modifications to gas engines increase the horsepower at high rpm's. After experimenting with a program chip, which didn't do anything, I found that the solution to the problem is to install a supercharger. A supercharger would allow me to keep the truck stock and increase the horsepower from 180 to almost 300, and do it at low Rpm's. Whipple made a kit that consisted of a new intake manifold, the supercharger, a new air filter assembly, pulley, fuel pump and programming chip. It requires premium fuel. The unit was around $5000 and a good installation is $1,800 unless you do it yourself. The 350 block used in the Hummer is a heavy truck unit with 4 bolt mains and should take the added stress with no problem. I drove a Whipple charged truck and clocked it 0 to 60 in 13.5 seconds. It drives around town and moves in and out of traffic like a nimble Jeep. The owner has had it installed for years now with no problems. There were only about 20 of these Hummer supercharger kits sold since 1995, and they are no longer made, although you can still pick them up used.

After a couple of years of agonizing about fuel capacity, mileage and power, I bought a 96 Turbo Diesel. I had to eat my words. One of the best moves AMG made was to equip the Hummer with a Turbo Diesel. I never owned a diesel vehicle until I got my 96 wagon. It's now my opinion that an 8000 lb truck really needs a turbo diesel. The major difference is gobs of torque at low rpm's. My 96 got 11.5 in the city, and 15 on the road going under 67 with the air off. The truck hardly uses any fuel when off the road. It just idles along putting out all kinds of torque at 1800 rpm. At high altitudes the turbo runs very clean and puts out power to spare. The turbo diesel is much better on the road because of it's increased power. My 96 could maintain 55 mph going over Loveland pass in Colorado. My 95-gas truck could barely go 45. I got high centered in the mountains and strapped up to an N/A diesel. He just plain ran out of power trying to pull me out. His tires weren't spinning and his truck wasn't moving, just a lot of black smoke.

It turns out that diesel fuel is pretty easy to find. With all the diesel Semi's, pickup's, RV's and farm equipment, pumps are available everywhere. The diesel doesn't smell because modern diesels burn clean. The only thing I can say is they are harder to start when it's cold and it was a lot harder to sound insulate then the gas. All the diesel Hummers come with block heaters so you can plug them in when it gets really cold. I also recommend using Stanadyne performance fuel additive in the winter and occasionally in the summer to clean and lubricate the injector pump.