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Kbb.com: Toyota Regains Top Spot for Most-Considered Brand; Ford, Honda Close Behind
Android™ App Joins Suite of Top Mobile Applications from kbb.com, Just in Time for Year-End Car Shopping

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Retrospections and Projections Top Five Auto Industry Trends of 2010 & 2011

- James Bell, executive market analyst, Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com

Inspiration can come from many different places, but it almost feels like a requirement to pass from one year to the next with a Top 10 list of some sort. The automobile industry has been very dynamic in 2010 and, going into 2011, is poised to become even more competitive as the general economy and consumer sentiment settles in to a more encouraging pace. We thought it might be helpful to identify what we think are the Top Five trends and issues in the automotive industry from 2010, and then project what Top Five issues the industry will be talking about in 2011.

2010

Preparation for "The New Efficiency" - It seems a day in 2010 did not go by here in the halls of Kelley Blue Book without discussion of the next wave of vehicles available for sale to the general public that transport solely on electrical power, use fuel-efficient gasoline engines, or some combination of the two. The early starring roles have gone to the BEV Nissan Leaf and the PHEV Chevrolet Volt, as both were able to meet previously announced deadlines and deliver vehicles to paying customers before the end of 2010. These were gigantic accomplishments, as both vehicles represent nothing less than a revolution in material procurement, production processes and customer expectations.

Impact of Stable Fuel Prices - Even though battle lines were drawn in 2010 by the coming wave of fuel-efficient hybrids and fuel-sipping internal combustion engines, most often lead by "direct injection" technology, average fuel prices across the United States hovered in the \$3.00 per gallon range.

While this price seems high compared to the less than \$2.00 per gallon average of early 2005, it is obvious that consumers have adjusted and are even starting to reconsider larger and less-efficient vehicles for their next purchase. The result so far has been a depressed market for new and used fuel-sipping vehicles, but as we all know, this trend can flip if and when fuel prices start a climb that many consumers quietly predict.

Recalls - Beyond Toyota's headline-grabbing "unintended acceleration" issues and its resulting stream of recalls, we also saw increased recall activity from just about every other auto manufacturer, large and small, in 2010. For many OEMs, the "Toyota Lesson" spurred a new rush to transparency in order to avoid a similar fate, but the din of recall after recall became not much more than numb background noise to many in the media, and probably more importantly, the consumer.

Financial Stability - While GM's successful IPO and rebound from bankruptcy grabbed many of the headlines, it is important to note that every manufacturer has worked diligently since the collapse of 2008 to approach 2011 and beyond with much more flexibility and confidence. In the case of GM, Ford and Chrysler, all were able to wash away or pay down previously strangling levels of debt and reset both production contracts and wage standards with their worker's unions.

“WHEN 2010'S HISTORY BOOKS ARE WRITTEN, THE COVER OF THE AUTOMOTIVE CHAPTER SHOULD FEATURE A PHOTO OF THE ALL-NEW HYUNDAI SONATA...”
- JAMES BELL

The delicate balance of supply versus demand became an “action item,” and the higher residual values enjoyed by those manufacturers who took this factor seriously will provide higher levels of customer satisfaction as well as the ability to offer aggressive lease rates to fuel future market-share growth.

Hyundai - When 2010's history books are written, the cover of the automotive chapter should feature a photo of the all-new Sonata. We vividly recall being smitten with the look, design and refinement of this new midsize sedan when it was introduced at the Los Angeles Auto Show in late 2009, but we had no idea that the car would also resonate to such a high degree with shoppers across the United States. As of this writing, Hyundai was poised to sell more than 200,000 Sonatas in 2010, in a market virtually controlled by the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord. It also climbed from number 29 in 2009 to number 5 in 2010 among all new vehicles researched on Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com, and the Sonata was named a finalist by the North American Car of the Year jury.

(Continued on Page 2)

2011

The "Real" Impact of Plug-Ins – While we do not expect sales of the 2011 Chevrolet Volt and Nissan Leaf to set market share records or steal many sales from internal combustion vehicles for years to come, the fact that they are available for drivers to own and enjoy in many markets across the country is THE BIG STORY. 2011 will stand as a "tipping point" year where shoppers were able to not only enjoy tremendous choice in regard to product quality, innovation and design, but also select their next vehicle based on the method of propulsion that best meets their anticipated needs. We think this is nothing short of revolutionary.

U.S. Government Regulation of Telematics – How many times have you seen the car ahead of you swerve a few times or rush to a panic stop just before causing an accident? For years, that probably meant that the driver had been drinking alcohol or was falling asleep. Today, such behavior probably means the driver was entering an address into the navigation system or texting or checking sports scores or updating their Facebook page. All of these activities and more will continue to compete with simple piloting of the vehicle in 2011 and beyond, unless the U.S. Government steps in with regulations on the use of telematics. Just as total horsepower or overall miles-per-gallon define certain competitive segments, advanced telematics will become the next big battleground for selling to a younger generation of buyers accustomed to being "connected" 24/7.

Big Players in the Compact Segment – If fuel prices continue their stable run through 2011, many pundits will say "What were they thinking?" as new compact sedans and hatchbacks make their appearance at auto shows and in showrooms across the country. This segment has been the domain of the Toyota Corolla and Honda Civic for many years, but the domestics, Koreans and all who compete in the compact space have seen enough. 2010 saw the introduction of a refreshed MINI Cooper, as well as the all-new and very competitive Chevrolet Cruze and Hyundai Elantra. 2011 will bring us the all-new Ford Focus, Fiat 500 and Buick Verano. Honda will show us an all-new Civic concept later this month in Detroit, and Toyota unveiled a very mild update to the Corolla during November's L.A. Auto Show. However, if the previously mentioned fuel prices remain steady, all of these small cars may struggle to find a big audience.

The Rise of the Educated Buyer – Gone are the days when a car buyer would simply walk into a dealership, toss the salesperson the keys to his trade-in, and say "What can you do for me?" 2011's savvy shopper will spend more time than ever online doing research on sites like Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com, and will know as much about the vehicles in a particular showroom, the latest offers and incentives, and the overall competitive landscape, as their salesperson – if not more. Some dealers will see this increased level of interest and knowledge as a threat, but only if they continue rely on the old tricks and tactics that have sullied their reputations.

Smart dealers will realize that 2011's buyer has spent the last few years getting their own financial house in order, and therefore is not willing to jeopardize such hard work with an unreasonable and/or impulse purchase. In fact, sales volume will increase for those dealers that embrace 2011's engaged buyer and accentuate a transparent and fair transaction and sales process.

Rush Back to "The Good ol' Days" – Even though many forecasters are being bullish and projecting 2011's new car and truck sales on the high side of 12 million, with Morgan Stanley suggesting a high of 14 million, we caution the industry to carry on with a "slow but steady" attitude and pace. Accessing monthly sales totals and projecting SAAR is a popular pastime in this business, but a rapid return to the days of 17+ million sales per year would not be healthy. It is important to recall that many sales back in the "good ol' days" were to less-than-worthy credit risks, bought with resale value-busting incentive dollars, and bolstered with high rental and/or fleet volume. Future success in this business will be determined by the ability to maintain a profit within reasonable sales volumes across several segments, and any growth beyond that level should be considered "gravy."

LATEST NEWS STORIES ON KBB.COM :

Check out the very latest news stories by visiting www.kbb.com and scrolling down to the Latest News & Articles link on the home page. The following latest news stories by kbb.com's editorial staff went live on the site or were updated during December 2010.

Written Stories Posted to kbb.com:

[2011 Best Redesigned Vehicle](#)

[2011 BMW X3 - First Drive Review](#)

[2011 Chevrolet Volt gets a triple dose of EPA mileage numbers](#)

[2011 Chevrolet Volt will use parts made from recycled Gulf-spill oil](#)

[2011 Chrysler 300 - 2011 Detroit Auto Show](#)

[2011 Detroit Auto Show](#)

[2011 Ford Explorer Review -- A new era begins](#)

[2011 Honda Insight lineup adds a high-value variant](#)

[2011 Infiniti M - First drive review](#)

[2011 Jaguar XJ Review](#)

[2011 Kia Optima - First Drive Review](#)

[2011 Nissan LEAF wins European Car of the Year award](#)

[2011 Porsche Cayenne Review: Lighter, more powerful, more Porsche](#)

[2012 Audi A6 -- First look](#)

[2012 BMW 1 Series - First look](#)

[2012 BMW 1 Series M Coupe -- First look](#)

[2012 Chevrolet Sonic - An Aveo by any other name](#)

[2012 Dodge Viper confirmed, Chrysler IPO expected in 2011](#)

[2012 Ford C-MAX - 2011 Detroit Auto Show](#)

[2012 Hyundai Azera -- First look](#)

[2012 Mercedes-Benz C-Class Sedan - 2011 Detroit Auto Show](#)

[2012 Nissan Versa previewed in all-new Sunny](#)

[2012 Volkswagens to rock with Fender Premium Audio](#)

[2013 Buick Verano pricing/package update](#)

[2013 Dodge Viper -- update](#)

[Chevrolet Sail Electric Concept revealed in China](#)

[Chrysler accelerates new product launch schedule](#)

[F1 goes greener - will switch to 1.6 turbo-four power in 2013](#)

[First Chevrolet Volt retail customer takes delivery](#)

[First retail customer takes delivery of a 2011 Nissan LEAF](#)

[Ford plant will be first to build gas and green under one roof](#)

[GMC Sierra All Terrain HD Concept - 2011 Detroit Auto Show](#)

[Group Lotus buys majority stake in Renault F1 team](#)

[Honda Civic Concept previews all-new 2012 remake](#)

[Honda and Mazda back new low-cost 'B-spec' race series](#)

[Honda starts EV test program](#)

[Honda will drop slow-selling Element after 2011 model year](#)

[Hot Volkswagen Golf R Coming To America in 2012](#)

[KBB.com study: Range/recharge concerns limit buyer interest in EVs](#)

[Kia KV7 concept coming to Detroit on gull wings](#)

[Mercedes Will Build Next-Gen C-Class in the U.S.](#)

[Mini Paceman Concept - 2011 Detroit Auto Show](#)

[Mitsubishi teases new global small car -will arrive here by 2013](#)

[NHTSA calling for backup cameras in all vehicles by 2014](#)

[Nissan LEAF Aero Style Concept to debut at Tokyo Auto Salon 2011](#)

[Pioneer Electronics finds Willie tops 'Favorite Road Trip Song' poll](#)

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[Porsche Cajun will become little brother to the Cayenne SUV](#)

[Redesigned Toyota Vitz offers early look at U.S. 2012 Yaris model](#)

[Rinspeed BamBoo Concept -- First look](#)

[SYNC AppLink now available for the 2011 Ford Fiesta](#)

[Stunning Lancia Stratos one-off update: Will spawn GT2 racing model](#)

[Top 10 Holiday Car Deals 2010](#)

[Xtrac reveals cheaper, simpler take on the dual-clutch transmission](#)

Videos Posted to kbb.com:

[*KBB Chats with Adam Carolla*](#)

[*Chevrolet Cruze Video Review*](#)

[*2012 Range Rover Evoque Five-Door - 2010 Los Angeles Auto Show*](#)

[*Scion tC Video Review*](#)

[*2011 Volkswagen CC Video Review*](#)

NEW-VEHICLE REVIEWS ON KBB.COM :

The following new-vehicle reviews written by kbb.com's editorial staff went live on the site or were updated during December 2010. To see any new-vehicle review from kbb.com's editorial staff, please visit www.kbb.com and click on the News and Reviews tab, then select the make and model.

[*2011 BMW X3*](#)

The original BMW X3 "Sport Activity Vehicle" debuted in 2003, and was one of the pioneers of the luxury small crossover craze, influencing brands like Acura, Infiniti and Mercedes-Benz to follow in their footsteps. But the years took their toll on the X3. Although it continued to improve year after year, without a full redesign, it began to look a little less fresh compared to the competition's newer crop of vehicles. Here's the good news: That all changes with the 2011 BMW X3. It sports a fresh look, a sporty - but not overly harsh ride, and a host of new luxury and convenience features...

[*2011 Buick Enclave*](#)

Over the years Buick has worked hard to change its image that it's a builder of cars that are long on comfort, but short on excitement. It is a little surprising, then, to encounter the 2011 Buick Enclave, a family-friendly eight-passenger crossover SUV that proves Buick can build an exciting vehicle. The well-established Enclave is Buick's entry into the growing luxury SUV category and competes with such premium brands as Lexus, Acura, Audi and Volvo. With eye-catching exterior styling, a highly usable interior and a remarkably quiet cabin the Buick Enclave has what it takes to be a viable competitor in this hot segment...

[*2011 Buick Lucerne*](#)

Although not quite an image breaker like the legendary Grand National, the Lucerne, along with its new stable mates the Regal and LaCrosse, is nevertheless changing people's mind about the Buick brand. Gone from the company flagship is the stereotypical cushy ride, soft seats and numb steering, replaced by a Cadillac-derived chassis outfitted with two potent engine options and a sophisticated sense of style. Although classified as a "near-luxury" car, the Lucerne's combination of affordable pricing and rich content offers those considering a Lincoln, Acura or Volvo a legitimate alternative with some serious cost savings...

[*2011 Cadillac CTS Sedan*](#)

When GM set out in the late 1990s to resurrect its once-proud Cadillac brand, the public process began with Evoq, the 1999 stealth-fighter concept sports car that eventually evolved into the production 2004 XLR. The car's sharp creased lines became Cadillac's new design language, and nowhere is this language spoken more clearly than with the entry-level CTS Sedan. Now in its second generation, the creases have been smoothed out a bit, and the car's interior-a sore point for many years-is now widely hailed as one of the best in recent Cadillac history. Most importantly, for the first time in a very long time, Cadillac is now a name comfortably tossed around in the company of such luxury giants and BMW, Mercedes-Benz and Audi. For 2011, a sleek coupe joins the sedan and wagon (reviewed separately), bringing the CTS line into full competition with its European and Asian competitors...

[*2011 Ford Explorer*](#)

Completely redesigned to better meet the wants and needs of today's increasingly sophisticated buyers, the 2011 Ford Explorer shares little but its name with a vehicle that ushered in the modern SUV era when it arrived 20 years ago. Still mid-size, the fifth-generation Explorer straddles the line between a traditional sport utility and contemporary crossover by moving from body-on-frame to unitized design. That transition yields a four-door/seven-passenger package which is significantly lighter yet stronger and more fuel-efficient than the 2010 iteration while providing greater comfort, luxury, and refinement plus state-of-the-art technology and safety features. Available in base/XLT/Limited trims, front- or four-wheel drive and offering a standard V6 engine, the 2011 Ford Explorer will face off against key rivals like the Chevrolet Equinox/GMC Acadia, Dodge Durango, Honda Pilot Jeep Grand Cherokee and Toyota 4Runner...

[*2011 GMC Acadia*](#)

Although it is the first crossover SUV ever sold by GMC, the 2011 GMC Acadia actually shares most of its structure and many of its features with the Chevrolet Traverse and Buick Enclave. The Acadia successfully combines the appearance and capabilities of an SUV with an added measure of practicality and efficiency. It seats up to eight people, has ample room for luggage or cargo and offers good fuel economy. Considering that most SUVs never leave paved roads, GMC expects the Acadia's street-focused ride, handling and available all-wheel drive to make up for its lack of off-road capability. The Acadia's competitors include the Honda Pilot, Toyota Highlander, Subaru Tribeca and the Ford Flex...

[*2011 GMC Canyon*](#)

The 2011 GMC Canyon is the mirror image of its sister vehicle, the Chevrolet Colorado. GMC adds a few upscale touches, but, for the most part, the two are interchangeable at every level. As with the Colorado, the Canyon offers customers a compact truck big on value, with a choice of four, five or eight-cylinder engines, two-wheel or four-wheel drive and three configurations: Regular Cab, Extended Cab and Crew Cab. Though generally not as powerful or roomy as the imports, the Canyon does have its strong points, namely an affordable base price and relatively good fuel economy...

[*2011 Honda Civic Sedan and Coupe*](#)

As Honda's best-known and best-loved car line, the 2011 Civic Sedan and Coupe continue to set the bar in the compact-car arena. Long considered the standard by which all other compacts are measured, the Civic is able to lure buyers thanks to its impressive fuel economy, unrivaled reliability and repair history and class-leading resale values. And, despite its five-year old design, the Civic's exterior styling is still one of the car's most appealing attributes. With its sharply raked windshield and low profile, the sleek Civic Coupe looks like nothing else on the road. The car's appeal to younger drivers has put Honda back into the good graces of the tuner and aftermarket crowd...

2011 Honda Odyssey

Minivan may not be the sexiest word in the automotive lexicon, but when life dictates a need for something functional, fuel efficient and family friendly, the 2011 Honda Odyssey is tough to beat. Its “lightning-bolt” beltline design ensures that you won’t lose it in a Disneyland parking lot, and available features – like a widescreen rear-seat entertainment system with a 12-speaker, 650-watt 5.1 surround sound system – guarantee that you’ll have street cred with your kids’ carpool buddies. Plus, when you find yourself kid-free for the night, comfortable seating for up to eight adults makes it the perfect party bus...

2011 Hyundai Accent

Introduced in 1994, the Hyundai Accent led U.S. entry-level car sales from 2000-2005, mostly due to its value for the money and an aggressive warranty. A trend toward smaller, less expensive vehicles has brought a slew of new competitors to the field, including Korean partner Kia’s Rio, Honda’s Fit, Nissan’s Versa, Toyota’s Yaris, Ford’s Fiesta and Chevrolet’s Aveo. Still, not many can touch the Accent’s low price and amazingly long warranty, or the fact that J.D Powers awarded the 2010 Accent top honors in its Initial Quality Survey for the sub-compact category. Those with an eye for style as well as thrift may find more to like with the Accent than its newer, but pricier, rivals...

2011 Hyundai Azera

Hyundai’s evolution from an entry-level upstart to a full-line manufacturer of quality automobiles is nothing short of amazing, as evidenced by the 2011 Azera. Designed to compete with the Buick Lucerne and Toyota Avalon, the Azera offers a desirable array of features, including a huge rear seat and a choice of two strong V6 engines, all at an unbeatable price. One of the most powerful V6 Hyundai has ever built, the company takes pride in pointing out the Azera Limited equipped with the 3.8-liter engine offers more standard horsepower than the BMW 528i...

2011 Hyundai Genesis Sedan

After entering the U.S. market with an inexpensive (some might say cheap) subcompact car more than 20 years ago, Hyundai has continued a climb upscale. Recently, the brand took its most ambitious step in that direction ever with the introduction of the Hyundai Genesis, a luxury sedan with the amenities of vehicles costing thousands of dollars more. Though intended to compete against the likes of the Chrysler 300C, Lexus ES 350 and the Volkswagen CC, the new Genesis actually channels attributes of even more expensive models, like the BMW 5 Series and the Mercedes-Benz E-Class. Powered by either advanced V6 or V8 engines, the rear-drive Genesis is filled with upscale items like adaptive front lighting, proximity key with push-button start and a truly amazing Lexicon 7.1 surround-sound audio system...

2011 Infiniti M

Artfully blending style, performance, luxury and value, the all-new 2011 Infiniti M packs quite the proverbial punch. Competing with the BMW 5 Series, Mercedes-Benz E-Class, Lexus GS and Audi A6, the M houses more horsepower under the hood - in V6 or V8 guise - than the competition, and still manages to return respectable fuel economy numbers. But, power aside, perhaps the biggest selling point on the Infiniti M is what you get for the money - standard features like iPod connectivity, a rearview camera, Satellite Radio, keyless entry and start and heated front seats – all things that are usually sold as options on many other cars in its segment. Really, the Infiniti M could be boiled down into just a few words: value luxury with performance...

2011 Jaguar XJ

The Jaguar XJ features one of the most iconic and enduring designs in the history of the automobile or anything else. Not unlike the poster child for evolutionary design change, the Porsche 911, the modern-day Jaguar XJ is instantly recognizable as a successor to the original. Until now. The sportier, more contemporary design direction that revealed itself in the latest Jaguar XK Coupe and Convertible, then the XF Sedan, has now been applied to Jaguar’s flagship sedan. No longer old-fashioned and quirky, the Jaguar XJ is now a wholly relevant and viable option to any of today’s modern flagships. There’s a new cat on the block, and he moved into the house previously occupied by that eccentric, flamboyant old guy. We think he died...

2011 Lincoln MKZ

In 2006, Ford introduced its Ford Fusion mid-size sedan and its divisional platform-mates the Mercury Milan and Lincoln Zephyr, all based on Japanese-partner Mazda’s well-respected MAZDA6 front-wheel-drive architecture. Building on this proven platform, Lincoln combines the most powerful 3.5-liter V6 Ford engine available (the same used in the Fusion Sport), the six-speed SelectShift automatic transmission and available “intelligent” all-wheel drive to create the mid-size 2011 Lincoln MKZ (pronounced “M-K-Z”) luxury sedan. Although the name is confusingly similar to the MKX crossover and new MKS luxury sedan, Lincoln simply follows a long line of luxury manufacturers whose marketers prefer letters and numbers to easily-recognizable names...

2011 Lincoln Navigator

When Lincoln launched the original Navigator, it was America’s first full-size luxury SUV. GM soon followed with the Cadillac Escalade, and has followed with much-improved second- and third-generation versions. As expected, the battle was resumed a few years later with the launch of the significantly improved Navigator and long-bodied Navigator L in 2007. Although this long-time rivalry still simmers, a number of new players have joined the game, including the Infiniti QX56, Mercedes GL 450 and Lexus LX 570. Though luxury SUV sales may not quite be where they used to, the Navigator still has much to offer those who need room for eight and/or a desire to tow heavy loads. And the Navigator still has some clear advantages over the Escalade, namely the function and operation of its second- and third-row seats. Both rows fold flat into the floor, and the PowerFold feature flattens the back row at the touch of a button...

2011 Subaru Forester

With volatile gas prices compelling many large SUV owners to abandon their fuel-hungry rides, small crossovers like the third-generation 2011 Subaru Forester have never looked better. An agile vehicle built to handle practically anything man or nature can put before its tires, the latest iteration has a much more contemporary-looking exterior complemented by a more spacious interior and a smoother, quieter ride. And with a respectable four-cylinder Boxer engine under the hood and Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive as standard, the Forester offers the capability of an SUV with fuel economy that won’t break the bank. This segment has seen a lot of growth in the last few years, but the Forester can go places the Toyota RAV4, Honda CR-V and Nissan Rogue can’t...

2011 Subaru Impreza

The Subaru Impreza is a uniquely reliable and capable compact car. It’s one of the most affordable all-wheel-drive vehicles available, delivering added confidence in dicey road conditions, and features an interior that outclasses many of its competitors’. Priced only marginally more than similarly equipped models from Toyota, Mazda, Ford, VW and Honda, the Impreza’s standard Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive system for which Subaru is renowned is certainly a plus in snow-bound climates and gives the affordable Impreza a leg up on its front-wheel-drive competitors...

[2011 Subaru Impreza WRX](#)

The Subaru Impreza WRX is one of the great bang-for-the-buck performers of all time. A turbocharged boxer-4 engine produces 265 horsepower and 244 pound-feet of torque, and a proven all-wheel drive system makes it easier to turn all that muscle into speed. For 2011, Subaru has enhanced the WRX's exterior, giving it the same wide body stance and bulging fenders as the high-performance WRX STI, while keeping the price firmly planted in the affordable realm WRX enthusiasts have come to expect...

[2011 Subaru Impreza WRX STI](#)

The Subaru Impreza WRX is one of the great bang-for-the-buck performers of all time. A turbocharged boxer-4 engine produces 265 horsepower and 244 pound-feet of torque, and a proven all-wheel drive system makes it easier to turn all that muscle into speed. For 2011, Subaru has enhanced the WRX's exterior, giving it the same wide body stance and bulging fenders as the high-performance WRX STI, while keeping the price firmly planted in the affordable realm WRX enthusiasts have come to expect...

[2011 Subaru Legacy](#)

Thanks to a full redesign in 2010, the larger and more stylish Subaru Legacy is a more viable alternative than ever to category stalwarts like the Honda Accord and Toyota Camry. Judging by 2010's sales figures, it appears the redesign has paid off: Both the Legacy and its wagon counterpart, the Outback, have caught on big with the public. Combining good fuel economy, top safety ratings and the sure-footed traction provided by its standard Symmetrical All-Wheel-Drive, the Legacy is an extremely attractive family sedan, especially when one considers the base model's sub-\$21,000 starting price...

[2011 Subaru Outback](#)

The 2010 Subaru Outback is the perfect anti-SUV and one of the best-selling wagons in America. It's as agile as most mid-size sedans, but offers much of the off-road and cargo capabilities of a larger vehicle. It also offers a raised seating position that some consider a just-right balance between that of a car and an SUV. New from the ground up in 2010, the fifth generation Outback remains true to the original concept yet achieves major improvements in the areas of interior room, fuel economy and flexibility. As with all Subarus, the Outback comes standard with Symmetrical All Wheel Drive, a proven system that allows this rugged wagon to conquer the toughest terrain and deepest snow...

[2011 Subaru Tribeca](#)

There are a number of seven-passenger SUVs on the market, so what's so special about the 2011 Subaru Tribeca? For starters, every Tribeca is equipped with an advanced and capable all-wheel-drive system, a comforting thought for those whose daily commute sometimes includes deep snow and heavy rain. The Tribeca's unique boxer engine design lowers the vehicle's center of gravity and improves vehicle stability, and the Tribeca rates well in the government's front- and side-impact crash tests. Finally, the Tribeca's roomy interior coddles its passengers and stimulates its driver with loads of features, although the same enthusiasm is harder to generate when it comes to the Tribeca's exterior styling...

[2011 Volvo S60](#)

In summing up the 2011 Volvo S60 it is tempting to play the safety card early. After all, the Volvo brand has become synonymous with safety, and the S60 offers one of the most innovative safety systems ever introduced. Pedestrian Detection with Full Auto Brake won't win many "catchiest name" contests, but it will save lives. Simply to dwell on the car's considerable safety initiatives, though, wouldn't do it justice. "Dynamic" and "emotional" are the key words Volvo engineers and designers use to describe their newest creation, and after driving it we can certainly understand why. Not only is the S60 the most attractive Volvo sedan ever, it is also much more fun to drive that the brand's safety reputation might suggest...

WHAT'S NEW:

Kbb.com Releases 'Freshman Car Class: 10 New Names for 2011'

Editors Provide Information on Brand-New Vehicle Nameplates Shoppers Should Know in the New Year

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 29, 2010 -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces the [Freshman Car Class: 10 New Names for 2011](#), listing brand-new vehicle nameplates shoppers should know in the New Year.

Even though well-known vehicle mainstays like the Honda Odyssey and Volkswagen Jetta are newly redesigned for 2011, there's a crop of even newer cars arriving this year, too. While the intrigue of a redesign stems from a vehicle's familiarity, a brand-new nameplate is exciting for its newness and often represents an automaker's foray into a new niche or the beginning of a new design direction. The expert editors of Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com provide a helpful look at the newest of the new in a story recently published to kbb.com titled Freshman Car Class: 10 New Names for 2011. [MORE...](#)

Kbb.com Video Wins 'Best Audio-Visual' Honors at 2010 Dean Batchelor Awards

**'Best of the Year' Award from Motor Press Guild Praises Kbb.com's 2010 Ford F-150 Raptor Video;
Latest in Collection of Accolades Mounting for Kbb.com's Informative, Entertaining Videos**

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 28, 2010 -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces that kbb.com's popular [2010 Ford F-150 Raptor video](#) recently won the 'Best Audio-Visual' award during the 2010 Dean Batchelor Awards from the Los Angeles-based Motor Press Guild (MPG), the largest automotive media association in North America.

The lauded video, first published to both Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com and the company's YouTube channel in April 2010, details the nine things one should definitely do behind the wheel of the Ford F-150 Raptor. The title of the video - 2010 Ford F-150 Raptor: On Land, Through Water, In the Air – suggests the adventurous visual treat revealed by kbb.com Video Road Test Editor Micah Muzio and contributing videographer/video editor Michel Delano during the five-minute feature video. [MORE...](#)

Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com Names 2010 Most-Researched New Vehicles, Brands with Greatest Share of Market Interest This Year

Sales Success Story Hyundai Sonata Makes Giant Leap to No. 5 on 2010's Top 20 Most-Researched New Cars List

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 22, 2010 -- Kelley Blue Book, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces the most-researched new vehicles of 2010 on the company's top-rated website, www.kbb.com. In addition, Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com reveals the top five brands with the greatest share of market interest for 2010.

This year marks the fifth consecutive year that Kelley Blue Book saw increased visitation to its website, with nearly 24 million more visits to kbb.com in 2010 versus 2009. Because kbb.com is one of the most-trafficked automotive research sites, visitation to specific vehicles has become a leading indicator of sales patterns for manufacturers. [MORE...](#)

Kbb.com Survey: Consumers Plan to Spend Less this Holiday Season; Nearly Half of Car Shoppers Delay Vehicle Purchase

Latest Data Shows Consumers' Economic Outlook Slightly More Optimistic When Looking at Year Ahead

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 21, 2010 -- According to the latest Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com Market Intelligence survey of consumer sentiment, shoppers are planning to spend less during the holidays this year. When consumers were asked about their holiday spending for the prior year and estimates for this year, nearly 40 percent of consumers surveyed said they are planning to spend noticeably less this holiday season (spending \$1,265 average) when compared to last year (spending \$1,372 average).

Taking a closer look at the amount consumers estimate to spend this year compared to last year, there is a noticeable shift in those who say they are planning to spend less than \$750 this holiday season (up 12 percentage points, from 40 percent to 52 percent). Additionally, only 14 percent of consumers indicate they plan to spend \$751-\$1,000 this holiday season (down from 24 percent who said this was the amount they spent last year). Nearly 20 percent of shoppers cutting back on their holiday spending this year say they are doing so due to an upcoming large purchase (such as a vehicle or a house). [MORE...](#)

Kbb.com Offers Full Sleigh of Mobile Applications, Car-Shopping and Buying Tips for On-the-Go Holiday Shoppers

**Kelley Blue Book Only Vehicle-Valuation Company with Apps on All Mobile Platforms;
App Users Gain Confidence in Purchase Decision with Trusted Kelley Blue Book® Values, Information**

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 20, 2010 -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces the availability of its mobile application lineup and offers shopping tips for this season's car shopper. Kbb.com offers free, interactive applications for iPhone, Windows Phone 7 and Android users. In addition, non-Smartphone users can access trusted Kelley Blue Book information from the company's mobile-optimized website.

Kbb.com's mobile applications and optimized website give all mobile phone users access to new- and used-car Kelley Blue Book Values, including MSRP, Invoice, Fair Purchase Price, Certified Pre-Owned, Suggested Retail, Private Party and Trade-In Values, which are helpful for making this a 'December to Remember.' Wherever they may be, car buyers and sellers can use this information in vehicle transaction negotiations to ensure they get the best deal possible during the holiday season. [MORE...](#)

Kbb.com Give New-Car Shoppers Gift of Top 10 Holiday Car Deals of 2010

Editors List Favorite Deals, Including Zero-Percent Financing, Zero-Down Lease Offers; Provide Commentary

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 17, 2010 -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces the [Top 10 Holiday Car Deals of 2010](#).

While automakers are well-known for their holiday-themed deals and marketing campaigns, with fancy names like 'December to Remember,' 'Platinum Celebration,' 'Limited Engagement' and more, a good deal is a good deal no matter what you call it, and this year there are plenty from which to choose. The expert editors of Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com recently collected 10 of their favorites, including a handful of enticing zero-percent financing and zero-down lease deals, and published the list to kbb.com so new-car shoppers could be well-informed before making a great deal on a new ride. [MORE...](#)

Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com Names Honda Odyssey '2011 Best Redesigned Vehicle'

Kbb.com Editors Commend Honda for Successfully Improving Vehicle Already at Pinnacle of its Class

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 16, 2010 -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces the 2011 Honda Odyssey has been named [2011 Best Redesigned Vehicle](#). The kbb.com editors praise the 2011 Honda Odyssey engineers and designers for successfully tackling the difficult task of improving and redesigning an already very-successful, hot-selling model that is widely regarded as the pinnacle of its class.

"The 2011 Honda Odyssey improves on its predecessor in every way imaginable, offering a better-looking, more contemporary exterior design, a sumptuous interior stuffed with innovative features, and class-leading fuel economy," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com. "Its safety, refinement, resale value and trouble-free nature are combined with a surprising level of fun-to-drive, so it is not difficult to see why Honda refers to the 2011 Odyssey as the 'ultimate in family transportation.'" [MORE...](#)

AutoTrader.com Announces Closing of Kelley Blue Book Acquisition

ATLANTA – December 15, 2010 – AutoTrader.com, the Internet's leading automotive marketplace and consumer information website, announced today the completion of its transaction to acquire Kelley Blue Book, www.kbb.com the leading provider of new-car and used-car information.

As announced previously, AutoTrader.com strongly believes in and will be maintaining Kelley Blue Book's independent and unbiased position in the marketplace. Furthermore, AutoTrader.com is committed to maintaining and strengthening Kelley Blue Book's role as The Trusted Resource® for vehicle valuation and other important information consumers, dealers, manufacturers, financial and governmental institutions rely upon. [MORE...](#)

Kelley Blue Book Announces Winners of 2011 Best Resale Value Awards

[Multi-Media News Release]

Kbb.com Offers Advice on Choosing New Vehicles Predicted to Hold Value Down the Road

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 15, 2010 -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used vehicle information, announces the all-new 2011 model-year vehicle winners of its annual Best Resale Value Awards, which recognize current and forthcoming vehicles for their projected retained value five years from now. Since depreciation (or loss of value) is typically a car-buyer's primary expense during ownership, these awards, like all of kbb.com's new- and used-vehicle information, are designed to help consumers make more informed car-buying decisions. [MORE...](#)

Kbb.com: Toyota Regains Top Spot for Most-Considered Brand; Ford, Honda Close Behind

Latest Market Intelligence Data Shows Subaru, Mitsubishi Climbing Among Certain Factors of Importance

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 13, 2010 -- According to the latest Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com Market Intelligence Brand Watch™ study, embattled automaker Toyota has regained the top spot as the most-considered auto brand among new-car shoppers. Toyota consistently captured the most-considered auto brand title from Q1 2007 through Q3 2009, but then fell to the number-two spot for Q4 2009 through Q2 2010, during which time the company experienced its high-profile recall crisis and domestic auto manufacturer Ford surged ahead to capture the top spot. In addition to being the most-considered auto brand overall (regardless of segment), for Q3 2010 Toyota is the most-considered brand in the non-luxury sedan/coupe/hatchback and non-luxury SUV/CUV segments, and consideration of Toyota trucks also considerably rebounded this quarter. [MORE...](#)

Android™ App Joins Suite of Top Mobile Applications from kbb.com, Just in Time for Year-End Car Shopping

Kbb.com Android App Includes Exclusive Vehicle Value Tracker

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 6, 2010 -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces the official launch of its app for Android mobile devices, in addition to its iPhone and Windows Phone 7 applications. The free, interactive app provides Android users with crucial car-buying and -selling information to help make confident purchase decisions. Since its launch in the Android Market on November 15, the app has received more than 50,000 downloads and is currently among the top 10 free Lifestyle applications.

Kbb.com's app also features a widget that can be positioned on the user's home screen to track their vehicle's value. Whether users want to track their trade-in value prior to buying a car or stay updated on their vehicle value's performance in the marketplace, the widget provides this up-to-date information. The widget can be accessed after downloading the app. Configure the widget by long-clicking on an empty space on the Android desktop, choose "Android Widgets," and then select the kbb.com widget from the menu. [MORE...](#)

[ABOUT KELLEY BLUE BOOK:](#)

Since 1926, Kelley Blue Book, The Trusted Resource®, has provided vehicle buyers and sellers with the new- and used-vehicle information they need to accomplish their goals with confidence. The company's top-rated website, www.kbb.com, provides the most up-to-date pricing and values, including the Fair Purchase Price, which reports what buyers are paying for new cars. The company also reports vehicle pricing and values via products and services, including software products and the famous Blue Book® Official Guide. According to the C.A. Walker Research Solutions, Inc. - 2009 Spring Automotive Website Usefulness Study, kbb.com is the most useful automotive information website among new- and used-vehicle shoppers, and half of online vehicle shoppers visit kbb.com. Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com also is a W3 Silver Award winner, sanctioned by the International Academy of Visual Arts. Kbb.com is a leading provider of new car prices, used car values, car reviews, new cars for sale, used cars for sale, and car dealer locations.

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