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# BLUE BOOK BRIEFING

MAY 2012

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The latest video and written news stories by the editorial staff of Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com

### NEW-VEHICLE REVIEWS ON KBB.COM:

All-new and updated video and written reviews from the editorial staff of Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com, and links to consumer reviews and ratings on kbb.com

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## INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

### Green is Not the Color of Money

- Jack R. Nerad, vice president, executive editorial director and executive market analyst, Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com

Earth Day has come and gone. The planet has gotten a year older, and we at Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com have chosen the 10 Best Green Cars for 2012. As a longtime observer of both the green scene and the vagaries of the auto industry, I would have to say this collection of green cars is the best the industry has ever offered. The variety of cars that can justifiably carry an environmentally friendly label is marvelous. Our list this year includes two pure electrics (Nissan LEAF and Mitsubishi i), two conventional hybrids (Toyota Prius c and Lexus CT 200h), one mild hybrid (Chevrolet Malibu Eco), a clean diesel (Volkswagen Passat), an electrically driven plug-in (Chevrolet Volt) and two conventional gasoline-powered vehicles that achieve stellar fuel economy (Scion iQ and Hyundai Elantra). The tenth member of the list is the Honda Civic, which is a triple green threat (savior) offering a high-mileage gasoline version, a natural gas version and a hybrid model. The technical and engineering achievement of each of the 10 cars on the list – and most especially those that don't have conventional gasoline-powered engines – truly is phenomenal. These are terrific cars, which makes it all the more disappointing that, by-and-large, American consumers aren't buying them.

Yes, in the wake of higher fuel prices, Kelley Blue Book has seen increased demand for hybrids and other environmentally friendly vehicles, but the fact of the matter is that such sales represent a very small slice of total vehicle sales. It is true that some of the cars on our 10 Best list are enjoying sales success. The Hyundai Elantra is a winner in the marketplace, as is the new VW Passat, whose turbodiesel variant is in high demand. But the less-conventional vehicles – with the exception of the Toyota Prius line – just don't seem to be resonating with the public.

When we group the “dedicated” electric and electrically assisted vehicles, it amounts to just 2.1 percent of overall light-vehicle sales. Yes, that share

number is up from 1.7 percent over the same period in 2011, but it is obvious that despite all the positive publicity these cars get in the general media and from the president on down, consumers just aren't turning to them in any numbers. Of course, there are a few “non-dedicated” hybrid and electric versions of current models that offer some marginal additional market share, but the inescapable conclusion is that American consumers overwhelmingly buy conventional gasoline-powered vehicles.

What has to be most troubling to auto manufacturers is they have poured billions into the development of new “green” vehicle types like the all-electrics, plug-ins and hybrids, only to see them largely ignored. Certainly, the current crop of green cars is far and away the best crop of such cars we have ever seen, yet the public – while espousing “green” attitudes in opinion polls – has not put its money where its mouth is. Of course, that's not the first time this has happened, and we have to believe it won't be the last. Meanwhile, the auto industry will have to sort through this dichotomy as it confronts the increasingly difficult-to-achieve future fuel economy requirements.

“YES, IN THE WAKE OF HIGHER FUEL PRICES, KELLEY BLUE BOOK HAS SEEN INCREASED DEMAND FOR HYBRIDS AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY VEHICLES, BUT THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT SUCH SALES REPRESENT A VERY SMALL SLICE OF TOTAL VEHICLE SALES.”

- JACK R. NERAD

## LATEST NEWS STORIES ON KBB.COM:

Check out the very latest news stories by visiting [kbb.com](http://kbb.com) and clicking the the *Kbb Top Picks* tab on the home page. The following latest news stories by kbb.com's editorial staff went live on the site or were updated during April 2012.

### **Videos Posted to kbb.com:**

[2013 Acura RLX Concept - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 BMW X1 - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Buick Enclave - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2014 Chevrolet Impala - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Chevrolet Traverse - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2012 Fiat 500 Abarth Video Review](#)

[2013 Hyundai Santa Fe - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[Infiniti LE Concept - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2012 Kia Optima Video Review](#)

[2013 Lexus ES - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Lincoln MKZ - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Nissan Altima - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2012 Porsche Cayman R Video Review](#)

[2013 Ram 1500 pickup - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Scion FR-S Video Review](#)

[2012 Shelby 1000 - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 SRT Viper - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2012 Subaru XV Crosstrek - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Toyota Avalon - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[Volkswagen Alltrack Concept - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

### **Written Stories Posted to kbb.com:**

[2012 Brand Image Awards](#)

[2012 Chevrolet Camaro 1LE unleashed](#)

[2012 Dodge Challenger Rallye Redline revealed](#)

[2012 Ford Focus Electric First Review: Plug-in progress](#)

[2012 GMC Sierra/Yukon Heritage Editions - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2012 Jeep Wrangler Unlimited Altitude Special Edition unveiled](#)

[2012 Jeep and Mopar show all for the 46th Jeep Moab Easter Safari](#)

[2012 Land Rover LR4 HSE Luxury Limited Edition Unveiled](#)

[2012 Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG 45th Anniversary coming this fall](#)

[2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2012 Shelby 1000 - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Acura ILX First Review: Bridge to Luxury](#)

[2013 Acura ILX starts at \\$26,795](#)

[2013 Acura RDX First Review: All-new and Much Improved](#)

[2013 Acura RLX Concept - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Aston Martin V8 Vantage line gets U.S. details confirmed](#)

[2013 BMW X1 - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Buick Enclave - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Cadillac SRX - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Chevrolet Black Diamond Avalanche to offer a high-value farewell](#)

[2013 Chevrolet Traverse - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Dodge Dart will start from \\$16,790](#)

[2013 Ford Explorer Sport - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Ford Focus Electric to be NASCAR's first-ever EV pace car](#)

[2013 Honda Crosstour Concept - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Hyundai Santa Fe - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Infiniti JX35 First Review: 3-Row Luxury Goes Electronic](#)

[2013 Jaguar XK Portfolio Pack - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Lexus ES350 and ES300h - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Lincoln MKZ - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Mercedes-Benz G550 and new G63 AMG revealed](#)

[2013 Mercedes-Benz GL-Class - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Mercedes-Benz SL550 First Review: Six-figure Star](#)

[2013 Mini Hyde Park and Green Park Special Editions unveiled, Clubvan coming](#)

**Written Stories Posted to kbb.com, Continued:**

[2013 Mitsubishi Outlander Sport - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Nissan Altima Sedan - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Nissan Sentra previewed in Beijing](#)

[2013 Porsche Cayenne Diesel - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Porsche Cayenne GTS unveiled - 420 HP coming this summer](#)

[2013 Ram 1500 pickup - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Ram 1500 pickup teased - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Range Rover Sport Supercharged Limited Edition Unveiled](#)

[2013 SRT Viper - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Subaru Legacy - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Subaru Outback - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Toyota Avalon - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2013 Toyota Venza - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[2014 Chevrolet Impala - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[Audi A6 L e-tron Concept revealed in Beijing](#)

[Audi RS Q3 Concept - big performance in a small package](#)

[Audi buys motorcycle maker Ducati](#)

[Audi creating unique e-sound for its future e-tron lineup](#)

[BMW i8 Concept Spyder revealed](#)

[BMW picks "eDrive" name for all future EVs and plug-in hybrid models](#)

[Cadillac testing semi-autonomous "Super Cruise" technology](#)

[Chrysler Group will offer first in-car wireless recharging on 2013 models](#)

[Ferdinand Alexander Porsche - Father of the 911](#)

[Fisker Atlantic Design Prototype - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[Fisker NINA range-extended EV teased](#)

[Honda Concept S foreshadows new production people mover](#)

[Infiniti LE Concept - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[Is this the 2013 Toyota Avalon?](#)

[Jaguar F-TYPE - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[Jaguar will add force-fed V6 and inline-four engines to its global lineup](#)

[KBB's new "Follow This Car" tracks changes in your vehicle's value](#)

[Kelley Blue Book named Online Auto Shopping Brand of the Year](#)

[Lamborghini Crossover SUV Concept teased for 2012 Beijing Auto Show](#)

[Lamborghini Urus Concept - this one-off has a production future](#)

[Lightweight heaven: Ford and Dow developing low-cost carbon fiber for next-gen cars](#)

[Mercedes-Benz Concept Style Coupe previews new production model](#)

[New KBB study: High gas prices have buyers rethinking their choices](#)

[New Polk study finds hybrids struggle to attract repeat buyers](#)

[Terrafugia Transition Production Prototype - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[Toyota's new development program to cut costs, improve appeal](#)

[Toyota Dear Qin Concept](#)

[Toyota Racing unveils Scion FR-S Speedster](#)

[Volkswagen Alltrack Concept - 2012 New York Auto Show](#)

[Volkswagen E-Bugster Concept flips its lid for Beijing](#)

The following new-vehicle reviews written by kbb.com's editorial staff went live on the site or were updated during April 2012. To see any new-vehicle review from kbb.com's editorial staff, please visit [kbb.com](http://kbb.com) and click on the *Car Reviews* tab, then select the make and model.

### [2012 Acura RDX](#)

Now that the market offers a healthy variety of desirable compact luxury SUVs, one could easily overlook the segment's value-oriented veteran, the Acura RDX. Basically sharing a platform with the popular Honda CR-V, the 2012 Acura RDX outclasses its corporate stablemate with available Super Handling All-Wheel Drive (AWD), a more refined interior and a turbocharged engine with a robust 260 lb-ft of torque. Boasting the lowest starting price of its competitors and one of the highest residual values in its class makes the Acura RDX a smart choice for most small luxury SUV shoppers...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click [here](#).

### [2012 Cadillac Escalade](#)

While the automotive landscape continues to shift towards smaller, lighter and more-efficient vehicles, the full-size luxury SUV segment remains relatively unscathed by this recent market shift. The Escalade nameplate remains as popular as ever, and the 2012 lineup satisfies America's appetite for excessively large vehicles with four capacious offerings, including the classic Escalade and its more efficient Hybrid accomplice, a long-wheelbase ESV variant, and the versatile, yet stately, EXT open-bed truck...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click [here](#).

### [2012 GMC Savana Passenger Cargo Van](#)

When you pass your local GMC dealer and see a row of full-size Savana Vans parked out front, you probably don't think twice about them, unless of course you run a small delivery business, or are a plumber or contractor or some such vocation. But, with its versatile interiors, the 2012 GMC Savana 1500, 2500 and 3500 can accommodate up to 15 people in relative comfort, or serve as the stage for one rocking conversion van ready to roll across America...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click [here](#).

### [2012 Land Rover Range Rover Sport](#)

Smaller (and less costly) than its Range Rover big brother, the Range Rover Sport SUV employs the same engine options. The Range Rover Sport focuses its intentions more on the road than the rough, but it can still handle the muck with aplomb thanks to its permanent 4-wheel drive and terrain management system...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click [here](#).

### [2012 Lincoln MKX](#)

The 2012 Lincoln MKX is a powerful, refined and luxurious midsize SUV that is based on the Ford Edge. Introduced in 2007, it faces newer and better competitors in this popular segment that includes the Lexus RX, BMW X3, Cadillac SRX, Audi Q5, Mercedes-Benz GLK, Infiniti FX and Volvo XC60. The Lincoln MKX is only available with two rows of seats, but thanks to its wide dimensions offers comfortable seating for up to five...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click [here](#).

### [2012 Mini Countryman](#)

The 2012 Mini Countryman is the "Jumbo Shrimp" of automotive world. With an elevated seating position and ample cargo space, the Countryman's dimensions strike the balance between the Mini Clubman and conventional small SUVs. Competing against segment powerhouses like the Honda CR-V and Ford Escape, it may appear as if Mini brought a knife to a gunfight.

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click [here](#).

### [2012 Mitsubishi Galant](#)

2012 marks the final year of production for the Galant mid-size sedan as Mitsubishi focuses on making smaller cars and more aggressive rivals such as Hyundai and Kia grab market share in this highly competitive segment. As 5-passenger mid-size sedans go, the Galant often takes a back seat to market leaders Toyota Camry, Honda Accord and Nissan Altima. Yet the car does offer some features as standard that others don't, such as an automatic transmission and keyless entry on ES models and navigation with a backup camera on SE versions...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click [here](#).

### [2012 Mitsubishi Lancer](#)

The 2012 Mitsubishi Lancer sedans and Sportback wagon are perhaps the sportiest cars in the profoundly competitive compact-car segment. While there are plenty of more-fuel-efficient choices in the category, few can match the vibrant driving experience and diverse model range provided by the Lancer. From the basic ES sedan to the versatile 5-door Sportback to the high-performance Evolution variant, the Mitsubishi Lancer is an enticing carrot for compact-car shoppers searching for something practical that also looks and handles like a sports car...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click [here](#).

### [2012 Mitsubishi Outlander Sport](#)

For the Outlander Sport, Mitsubishi borrowed a portion of the SUV's name and all of the wheelbase from its more established older brother, the Outlander, but despite a similar name, the 2012 Outlander Sport is very much its own vehicle. The Sport burst into Mitsubishi's lineup in 2011 and has already found competition in the highly competitive sport-utility vehicle market from other recent arrivals such as the Mini Countryman and Nissan Juke, not to mention slightly bigger SUVs like the Honda CR-V...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click [here](#).

### [2012 Toyota Prius C](#)

Taking Hybrid Synergy Drive (HSD) technology down to its smallest size yet, the 2012 Toyota Prius C - for "City" - arrives on the scene as the latest and most fuel-efficient member of the automaker's ever-expanding Prius family. With a starting price below \$20,000, this subcompact 5-door hatchback also is the most affordable...

To read the latest Consumer Reviews & Ratings on this vehicle, click [here](#).

## WHAT'S NEW

# Kelley Blue Book: April New-Car Sales Recovery Demonstrates Continued Strength At 1,148,000 Units, 14.0 Million SAAR

## 2012 Outlook Strong on Demand; Inventory Could Pose Problems Down the Road

IRVINE, Calif., April 27, 2012 - Kelley Blue Book [www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com), the leading provider of [new car](#) and [used car](#) information, projects new-vehicle sales to reach 1,148,000 units, or 14.0 million seasonally adjusted sales rate (SAAR), in April 2012. This will account for a less than 1 percent decline in volume relative to April 2011, when the industry posted sales of nearly 1,158,000. However, the daily selling rate will improve by 11.6 percent with three fewer selling days this year compared to 2011, coming in at nearly 47,800 units, and just shy of the 50,100 posted in March... [MORE](#)

# Kelley Blue Book's Kbb.com Named Online Auto Shopping Brand Of The Year In 2012 Harris Poll EquiTrend Study

## Kbb.com Highest Ranked Brand among Competition in Survey Results of More Than 38,500 U.S. Consumers

IRVINE, Calif., April 24, 2012 - Kelley Blue Book [www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com), the leading provider of [new car](#) and [used car](#) information, today announces it recently was awarded Online Auto Shopping Brand of the Year by the 2012 Harris Poll EquiTrend® study. Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com ranked highest in brand equity among the six competitors evaluated in the online auto shopping category in the annual study of more than 38,500 U.S. consumers conducted by Harris Interactive.

The Harris Poll Brand of the Year is the top-ranked brand in its category of Brand Equity, which provides an understanding of a brand's overall strength and is determined by a calculation of quality, familiarity and purchase consideration. Brands high in brand equity, such as Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com, excel in the connection they establish with consumers in elements such as the brand's ability to meet expectations, to be trusted, to be relevant to consumers' lives, and in the positive emotional reactions consumers have to the brand... [MORE](#)

## Kelley Blue Book: Rising Used-Car Values Aid New-Vehicle Sales

**April Blue Book Market Report Advises Dealers Not to Overpay on Used Fuel-Efficient Models in Months Ahead**

IRVINE, Calif., April 23, 2012 - Kelley Blue Book [www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com), the leading provider of [new car](#) and [used car](#) information, today reports that rising used-car values are aiding new-vehicle sales. According to Kelley Blue Book's [Blue Book Market Report for April 2012](#), after a sluggish start to the year, gains in used-car values have accelerated in recent weeks. Rising used-car values likely have played a role in supporting the increase in new-vehicle sales in recent months, especially sales of [fuel-efficient vehicles](#)... [MORE](#)

## Kbb.com Survey: More Than Half of New-Car Shoppers Say Gas Prices Affecting Vehicle Purchase Considerations

**Consumer Outlook Worsens for Gas Prices; High Mileage on Current Ride, Needing Better Fuel Economy Cited as Top Reasons for New-Car Shopping**

IRVINE, Calif., April 19, 2012 - According to the latest Kelley Blue Book [www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com) Market Intelligence survey on consumer sentiment from Q1 2012, more than half (66 percent) of new-car shoppers have either changed their minds about which vehicle they are considering, or are thinking about vehicles they normally would not have considered, due to rising gas prices.

In addition, consumer expectations about gas prices have worsened quarter-over-quarter by 30 percent. In Q1 2012, 76 percent of new-car shoppers said they expect gas prices to get higher in the next 30 days, compared with Q4 2011, when only 46 percent of new-car shoppers expected gas prices to rise in the next 30 days... [MORE](#)

## Kelley Blue Book's Kbb.com Names 10 Best Green Cars of 2012

**Amidst Rising Gas Prices, Editors Recommend Top Picks for New Environmentally Friendly Vehicles**

IRVINE, Calif., April 18, 2012 - The expert editors from Kelley Blue Book's [www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com), the leading provider of [new car](#) and [used car](#) information, today announce the [10 Best Green Cars of 2012](#).

To view the multimedia assets associated with this release, please click [here](#).

In this annual list, especially timely this year due to rising gas prices and just in time for Earth Day 2012, the kbb.com editors present a variety of fuel-efficient vehicles worthy of buyers' consideration. New for 2012, the editors not only name what they feel are the 10 Best Green Cars of the year, but also rank their selections in the feature story on kbb.com... [MORE](#)

## Kbb.com Launches 'Follow This Car' Feature; Track Change in Vehicle's Value Over Time

**All-New Tool Provides Car Sellers Latest Valuation Information to Help Ensure Best Possible Deal**

IRVINE, Calif., April 17, 2012 - Kelley Blue Book [www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com), the leading provider of [new car](#) and [used car](#) information, today announces its all-new Follow This Car feature, allowing car sellers to be among the first to know when the value of their vehicle changes. With the ability to track up to five cars, consumers will be notified via email when a specified vehicle's value changes by more than 2 percent.

Updated weekly with clear expiration dates listed on kbb.com, Kelley Blue Book® Values provide car buyers and sellers with market-reflective information to help make the best possible vehicle buying and selling decisions. Follow This Car provides kbb.com site visitors the unique opportunity to follow their vehicle's value as it changes over time... [MORE](#)

## Domestics Dominate Kbb.com's 10 Most Comfortable New Cars Under \$30,000 List

Editors Name Reasonably Priced New Cars with Quiet Rides, Supportive Seating, Roomy Interiors

IRVINE, Calif., April 12, 2012 - The expert editors from Kelley Blue Book's [www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com), the leading provider of [new car](#) and [used car](#) information, today announce the [10 Most Comfortable Cars Under \\$30,000](#).

The feature story on kbb.com profiles 10 reasonably priced new vehicles that feature quiet rides, supportive seating and roomy interiors, among other new-vehicle creature comforts. The majority of the vehicles on the list (six out of 10) hail from American auto manufacturers, while the rest come from Japanese and German competitors. Kbb.com's editors rank the vehicles on the list in order of their most comfortable favorites... [MORE](#)

### About Kelley Blue Book ([www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com))

Founded in 1926, Kelley Blue Book, The Trusted Resource®, is the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the industry. Each week the company provides the most market-reflective values in the industry on its top-rated website [www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com), including its famous Blue Book® Trade-In and Suggested Retail Values and Fair Purchase Price, which reports what others are paying for new cars this week. The company also provides vehicle pricing and values through various products and services available to car dealers, auto manufacturers, finance and insurance companies as well as governmental agencies. Kbb.com provides consumer pricing and information on [minivans](#), [pickup trucks](#), [sedan](#), [hybrids](#), [electric cars](#), and [SUVs](#). Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com ranked highest in its category for brand equity and was named Online Auto Shopping Brand of the Year by the 2012 Harris Poll EquiTrend® study. Kelley Blue Book Co. Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of AutoTrader.com.