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# BLUE BOOK BRIEFING

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## In This Issue:

### INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

Timely commentary from James Bell, executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com: LET'S MAKE A DEAL!

### LATEST NEWS STORIES ON KBB.COM & KBB® GREEN:

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

### WHAT'S NEW:

Kbb.com Treats Car Shoppers by Naming 10 Trick New Car Features for Halloween

AutoTrader.com to Purchase Kelley Blue Book

Kbb.com Poll: Drivers Reluctant to Put Phones Down While Behind the Wheel

## INDUSTRY INSIGHTS:

### Let's Make a Deal!

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

Since the collapse of the automobile industry in 2008, speculation on the timing and depth of its recovery has taken on almost mythic proportions. There are many sources of reputable data and educated opinions, but ultimately, today's consumer is the only one that knows. Shopping for a new car is a disruptive, uncomfortable and often confusing experience for many buyers, and when the impact of our currently tepid general economy is included, many will not commit to being fully "in market" and ready to buy until the right vehicle at the right price comes along.

In a recent study of car shoppers on Kelley Blue Book's www.kbb.com, 72 percent of new-car shoppers reported waiting for the right deal before making their final purchase decision. Even more interesting is the fact that 43 percent of new-car shoppers are still undecided on the vehicle that they are going to buy or lease. Moreover, 27 percent said that their search criteria have changed during the shopping process, and 28 percent of those respondents have even modified the type of vehicle they are looking for. Data like this tells us that the automotive market in late 2010 and early 2011 will continue to be difficult to anticipate, but also ripe with opportunity. Those manufacturers that are able to invest in aggressive marketing campaigns and deep incentive programs will find shoppers hungry for deals and special opportunities.

However, even if today's buyer finds a perfect vehicle and deal, this does not always mean that the sale is coming soon. In fact, more than half of new-car shoppers in the recent kbb.com study have delayed purchase over the last 12 months, and 41 percent of those have held off seven months or more.

The industry stands at a very interesting point in its history, as many of the vehicles on the market today are among the highest quality ever produced. The use of advanced technology and innovative materials are allowing vehicles to deliver better performance with fewer harmful emissions and ever-increasing fuel economy. On paper, this industry should be booming thanks to a potent combination of amazing and appealing product with ultra-competitive manufacturers and dealers all fighting for consumer attention.

**IN A RECENT STUDY ON KBB.COM,  
72 PERCENT OF NEW-CAR SHOPPERS  
REPORTED WAITING FOR THE RIGHT DEAL  
BEFORE MAKING THEIR FINAL  
PURCHASE DECISION.**

- JAMES BELL

But thanks to the sentiment expressed by many of the shoppers in the recent kbb.com study, this is not the case. Until today's shoppers feel confidence in the economy and their jobs, and they feel they have found the perfect vehicle for their needs at the best price, we will continue our slow recovery.

The role of OEM-supplied information, third-party unbiased resources and peer-to-peer recommendations is crucial for today's buyers, but providing such information in simple and actionable ways is becoming just as important. Many shoppers are simply looking for direct and trusted guidance as fewer and fewer transactions, from cars to smart phones to vacuum cleaners, are completed without in-depth investigation and a sense that the best deal possible has been uncovered. Here at Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com, we look forward to continuing to aid consumers with their car-shopping information needs.

## LATEST NEWS STORIES ON KBB.COM & KBB GREEN:

Check out the very latest news stories by visiting [www.kbb.com](http://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 October 2010.

### Written Stories Posted to kbb.com:

[2011 Chevrolet Volt -- Facts and features at a glance](#)  
[2011 Chevrolet Volt update -- gas engine can supplemental power](#)  
[2011 Chrysler 200 -- First look](#)  
[2011 Dodge Charger -- First look](#)  
[2011 Dodge Journey -- First look](#)  
[2011 Ferrari SA Aperta -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[2011 Honda Jazz Hybrid -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[2011 Lexus CT 200h: Slow or smart?](#)  
[2011 Lexus CT 200h F Sport -- Enthusiast-grade hybrid hatch revealed](#)  
[2011 Mitsubishi Outlander Sport to offer online virtual test drives](#)  
[2011 Nissan LEAF hits 20,000-vehicle reservation milestone](#)  
[2011 Toyota Highlander gets new look and significant enhancements](#)  
[2011 Volvo S60: The Naughty Volvo is Really Quite Nice](#)  
[2012 Nissan GT-R -- First look](#)  
[2012 Nissan Versa -- First look](#)  
[2012 Range Rover Evoque -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[2012 Saab 9-4X -- Los Angeles Auto Show preview](#)  
[2012 Volkswagen Eos -- First look](#)  
[2012 Volvo S60 T5 -- more affordable variant debuts early next year](#)  
[2013 Infiniti EV confirmed for U.S.](#)  
[Audi Quattro Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Audi e-tron Spyder Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Audi and Rentech demonstrate real-world potential of synthetic diesel fuel](#)  
[BMW 5 Series and Hyundai Sonata shine in new 2011 NHTSA crash tests](#)  
[Exagon Furtive-eGT takes electricity to a new level](#)  
[Five Star Safety Ratings: Deconstructing a Crash Test](#)  
[Five Star Safety Ratings Overhauled for 2011](#)  
[Ford reveals more about the 2.0-liter for the 2012 Ford Focus](#)  
[Honda takes fifth consecutive 'Greenest Automaker' title](#)  
[Infiniti IPL G Convertible Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Jaguar C-X75 Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[KBB Video Contest: Best of the 'Different' Vehicles](#)  
[Lamborghini Gallardo LP570-4 Blancpain Edition](#)  
[Lamborghini Sesto Elemento -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Lexus shows off its ultimate driving simulator](#)  
[Lotus City Car Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Lotus Elan Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Lotus Elise Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Lotus Esprit Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Lotus Eterne Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Mercedes-Benz SL-Class owners cop most-likely-to-be-ticketed honors](#)  
[Mini Scooter E Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[New smart five-door coming to the U.S. -- first look](#)  
[Nissan Townpod Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Saab signs deal for BMW engines](#)  
[Smart scooter Concept -- Paris Auto Show](#)  
[Subaru details all-new boxer engine family](#)  
[Toyota/Lexus interiors will feature new-gen "Ecological Plastic" parts](#)  
[Tesla signs \\$60-million deal to develop electrics for Toyota RAV4 EV](#)  
[Toyota teases upcoming Prius MPV model](#)  
[VW shows new teasers of New Midsize Sedan](#)

### Videos Posted to kbb.com:

[Ford Mustang Video Review](#)  
[Ford Taurus Video Review](#)  
[Jeep Grand Cherokee Video Review](#)

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

### [2011 Acura TL](#)

If you placed the current Acura TL next to the first generation TL, you'd be hard pressed to equate the two as related. Why, you ask? Because the current TL exudes substantially more attitude than its predecessor, that's why. Gone is the attractive yet sedate styling of previous design, replaced by a bolder sedan wearing a love-it-or-hate-it grille that is now the face of Acura. In addition to six more inches of body length, the latest TL also features more powerful engine choices, an available sport-tuned SH-AWD (Super-Handling All-Wheel Drive) variant, and a Technology Package that can blow out eardrums as easily as it guides drivers away from stressful traffic congestion. Though not as engaging as competitors such as the BMW 3 Series and Infiniti G37, the Acura TL continues to impress with its reasonable price, quality feel and all-around abilities...

### [2011 Ford F-150](#)

That the F-150 is the best selling truck in America for 33-years running tells you Ford must be doing something right when it comes to their full-size pickup line. Ever increasing competition, however, has forced Ford to step up its game, especially in the one area the F-150 has shown vulnerability in the past: Power. In what Ford bills as the most extensive powertrain overhaul in the 62-year history of the F-Series pickup, a total of four all-new engines and a new six-speed automatic transmission move the F-150 to the top of the horsepower and fuel economy charts. But Ford has not forgot the core purpose of its fabled truck, and knows that the bulk of its sales will come from buyers who genuinely need the unique aspects full-size pickups offer – big payload and towing capacities among them – instead of those who simply want to be seen in a pickup. With this in mind, Ford engineers have built in class-leading capabilities in both these areas while, at the same time, boosting fuel economy across the board. But don't think they skimped on creature comforts, as the 2011 Ford F-150 offers increasing levels of luxury from among its 35 variants...

### [2011 Lincoln MKZ Hybrid](#)

Lincoln claims the 2011 MKZ Hybrid is the most fuel-efficient luxury sedan in America, beating its likely closest competitor, the Lexus HS 250h, by six mpg during city driving. The company also says the MKZ Hybrid tops the Lexus with room for one more passenger, along with more standard luxury and segment-exclusive safety features. Indeed, the Lexus will be this car's main competition, considering they're priced within \$800 of each other. But the new Lincoln could also conceivably do battle with cheaper competition from Toyota (Camry Hybrid), or possibly within its own brand ranks (Ford Fusion Hybrid). The MKZ Hybrid is offered in one trim level...

### [2011 Nissan Altima Sedan](#)

Now entering its fifth generation of production, the Nissan Altima remains a strong – albeit aging – contender in the lucrative family sedan segment. Spun from Nissan/Renault's robust D-Platform architecture, this stylish front-drive four-door continues as the volume leader in the division's lineup, having been joined by a limited-production, gasoline-electric Hybrid variant as well as a sporty Coupe model (both reviewed separately). Even in conventional form, the Altima Sedan covers a lot of competitive ground, offering three trim levels, both four- and six-cylinder power and an advanced Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT). That wide selection helps it face off against the current best-seller, Toyota's popular Camry, as well as the Chevrolet Malibu and Honda Accord – both formidable foes...

### [2011 Nissan JUKE](#)

Intent on expanding its presence in the increasingly popular compact crossover market with a vehicle that stands out from an admittedly formidable pack, Nissan created the new 2011 Juke. While over-the-top exterior styling is the most blatant tipoff to its unconventional approach, this versatile five-door hauler also packs a potent turbocharged engine and enthusiast-oriented suspension that are impressively complemented by a megaload of primo features. As its final ace in the hole, Nissan's bold attempt to win the hearts – and wallets – of young and primarily male active lifestyles, opens at a sub-\$20,000 price point. In the case of the entry-level front-drive Juke S, that figure includes a standard Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT). Even the range-topping leather-lined and fully loaded all-wheel-drive Juke SL barely cracks the \$25K mark...

### [2011 Nissan Maxima](#)

Sliding into the narrow segment between the family-oriented Altima Sedan and the luxury-performance Infiniti G37 Sedan, the 2011 Nissan Maxima competes against, among others, the Volkswagen CC, Mazda MAZDA6, Ford Taurus SHO and Chrysler 300. Nissan built this front-drive four-door to please both performance and luxury-sedan fans alike, and it scores on both points. Although marginally smaller in size than the Taurus or 300, the 2011 Maxima exudes a sporty coupe vibe from the outside while retaining its roominess on the inside. With its aggressive look and impressive power, Nissan correctly touts this latest incarnation of the Maxima as the return of the “four-door sports car...”

### [2011 Toyota Camry](#)

Largely due to its solid reputation for quality and reliability, Toyota's midsize Camry has been the best-selling car in America for twelve of the last thirteen years. Although the Honda Accord continues as the Camry's main rival, a host of new sedans, including the Hyundai Sonata, Ford Fusion and Chevrolet Malibu, threaten to chip away at the champion's throne. Still, the Camry's varied configurations – such as the sporty SE, which offers 10 additional horsepower over the base Camry four-cylinder plus suspension tuning biased toward delivering crisper handling response – promise to keep the competition on its toes. Engine choices include a 169-horsepower, 2.5-liter four-cylinder (179 horsepower on SE) or a 268-horsepower 3.5-liter V6. There's also a hybrid model which is reviewed separately...

### [2011 Toyota Tundra](#)

The 2011 Toyota Tundra has dared to tread on sacred territory, namely the domestic full-size pickup market, and done so with surprising success. The Tundra matches or beats most of its domestic full-size competition when it comes to size, performance and price. The U.S.-built Tundra features standard side airbags, trailer sway control and electronic stability control and is the first full-sized pickup to earn the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's Top Safety Pick award. The Tundra competes directly with full-sized pickups from Chevrolet, Ford, Dodge, GMC and Nissan...

### [2011 Toyota Yaris](#)

For 2011, the Yaris continues as Toyota's subcompact value leader, which makes sense since it's also Toyota's only sub-compact offering. Having replaced the slow-selling Echo a few years back, the Yaris has gained in popularity and, although it remains the smallest and least expensive vehicle in the Toyota brand line-up, it is still packed with value. Set to do battle with the Honda Fit, Ford Fiesta, Mazda MAZDA2 and lesser rivals like the Chevrolet Aveo and Kia Rio, the Yaris must cover a lot of ground. Of the three distinctly different Yaris models, it's the Liftback that make the more expressive design statement and, although the Sedan is nearly 19 inches longer than the Liftback, all three vehicles share the same chassis, engine and drivetrain...

### [2011 Volkswagen Tiguan](#)

When Volkswagen first launched the Tiguan, it called the little SUV the GTI of compact SUVs; a bold statement considering the hot hatchback's legendary handling abilities, but not completely without merit. For 2011, that statement has been dialed back a bit, but the Tiguan remains a true performance-oriented compact SUV with real off-road ability. Powered by a 200-horsepower 2.0-liter turbocharged engine, the Tiguan provides more hustle than a CR-V or RAV4, but is pretty evenly matched when placed against Subaru's turbocharged Forester XT. Compared to the competition, the Tiguan has a lot going for it, including a substantial number of standard safety and comfort features, terrific performance and great styling. Starting out around \$24,500 for the base model and topping out well past the \$37,000 mark for a loaded SEL, steep pricing may unfortunately turn out to be the Tiguan's Achilles' heel...

### [2011 Volkswagen Jetta](#)

In many respects, the all-new 2011 Volkswagen Jetta is a lesser car than its predecessor. The standard engine is far less powerful, the rear suspension is less sophisticated and the interior is no longer over-the-top refined. But it is roomier and more affordable, and that's just what Volkswagen thinks America wants. Yes, some of the Jetta's more discriminating devotees will be disappointed, but the new model will attract far more buyers than it loses. And even with the cost-cutting, the Jetta is still fun to drive and still has one of the category's finest interiors. Last three words: Outsider moving in...

## Kbb.com Treats Shoppers by Naming 10 Trick New Car Features for Halloween

### Editors Honor Innovative Spirit of Halloween with List of New 2011 Features that Make a Car Stand Out

IRVINE, Calif., Oct. 28, 2010 – Halloween is about trick-or-treating, and in the case of many 2011 cars the new “trick” features are real treats. To honor these innovations, the expert editors from Kelley Blue Book [www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com), the leading provider of [new car](#) and [used car](#) information, today name the [10 Trick New Car Features](#) that make a new car stand out for 2011. The story profiles 10 innovative (“trick”) features available on some 2011 models that proud new-car owners will be excited to bring up in conversation. They’re the kinds of features that, once consumers have them, they may wonder how they ever functioned without them... [MORE](#)

## AutoTrader.com to Purchase Kelley Blue Book

ATLANTA and IRVINE, Calif. – October 26, 2010 – AutoTrader.com, the Internet’s ultimate automotive marketplace and consumer information website, announces that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Kelley Blue Book ([www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com)), one of the most recognized and influential brands in the automotive industry. As part of the deal, AutoTrader.com will also acquire Kelley Blue Book’s sister companies CDMdata and CDM Dealer Services... [MORE](#)

## Kbb.com Poll: Drivers Reluctant to Put Phones Down While Behind the Wheel

### Distracted Drivers Admit to Eating, Texting and Grooming while on the Road

IRVINE, Calif., Oct. 18, 2010 – Kelley Blue Book [www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com), the leading provider of [new car](#) and [used car](#) information, today reports the results of a kbb.com home page quick poll revealing distracted driver behaviors. The latest poll shows that despite continuing warnings from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) about the potential dangers of in-vehicle cell phone use, the average driver still seems reluctant to stop using one while on the road.

The recently completed kbb.com quick poll(1) found that of nearly 7,700 online respondents, 22 percent admitted to having used a hand-held cell phone during the past 30 days, while 10 percent said they had used some form of hands-free/Bluetooth device... [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](http://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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