Honda CR-V Takes Top Spot In New Compact Crossover SUV Comparison, According To KBB.com

Comprehensive New-Car Assessment Reveals CR-V Bests Chevy Equinox, Ford Escape, Mazda CX-5, Toyota RAV4

IRVINE, Calif., Sept. 12, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- The Honda CR-V is the winner of Kelley Blue Book's all-new2012/2013 Compact Crossover SUV Comparison according to the expert editors of KBB.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information.

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Concerns about fuel prices may have tempered America's love affair with sport-utility vehicles, but it has by no means brought it to an end. Instead, many Americans seem to be aligning their vehicle shopping based on a realistic assessment of their needs and economic situation. As a consequence, compact SUVs have become one of the hottest vehicle categories in a slowly reviving U.S. auto market.

Since 2007, sales of compact crossovers have increased by more than 50 percent, while sales of mid-size SUVs have declined by 70 percent through the same period. In terms of changing market share since 2007, compact crossovers have gained 4.5 points of share relative to a 5 point decline for mid-size SUVs. Today, small crossovers outsell mid-size SUVs nearly 5-to-1.

The expert editors of Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com compared five of the top contenders in the affordable compact SUV class. Three are newly redesigned vehicles: the Ford Escape, Honda CR-V and Mazda CX-5. Meanwhile, the current design of the Chevy Equinox has been available to shoppers since the 2010 model year, and the Toyota RAV4 is the group's veteran, with its current design dating back to 2006.

KBB.com's editors put these popular vehicles through their paces for a head-to-head car comparison test. They poked, prodded, slammed doors, checked connectivity, cargo holds, front seats, back seats, fit, finish and window stickers. Then they collectively debated details, argued merits, and ultimately came to a consensus.

"In KBB.com's recent comparison test of new compact crossover SUVs, the Honda CR-V emerged as the clear winner and demonstrated why it has become one of the best-selling vehicles in America in recent years," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book. "Car shoppers continue to embrace the growing compact crossover SUV class, finding that their perfect balance of utility and economy delivers just what consumers both need and want in their next new vehicle. The Honda CR-V takes first place for its blend of smooth ride and power, competitive fuel economy, outstanding assembly quality, first-rate materials, quiet operation, exceptional comfort and excellent value story."

KBB.com's 2012/2013 Compact Crossover SUV Comparison: Sneak Peek at Editor's Comments

(Vehicles below are listed alphabetically)

2012 Chevrolet Equinox FWD LTZ
The Chevrolet Equinox competes in the compact category, but it's by far the biggest kid on this playground, as well as the heaviest. It's also the only vehicle in our test group to come to the starting line with a V6 engine -- 3.0 liters, 264 horsepower, 222 lb-ft of torque -- adding $1,500 to the bottom line...

2013 Ford Escape SE
The Escape is brand new for 2013, and represents a dramatic change of direction. New foundations, adapted from the front-wheel drive Ford Focus. And a decidedly new look, slick and contemporary, replacing the blocky, truckish look of the previous generation. The Escape's new chassis was the starting point for a very agile dynamic profile -- prompt responses in quick maneuvers, good control of body motions...

2012 Honda CR-V EX-L Navi
With the exception of 2011, when Japan's catastrophic earthquake and Thailand flooding choked production down to a trickle, the CR-V has been the bestseller in this class for years, and often the bestseller of all SUVs, great and small. Which raises the tricky question of what's next? Honda essentially invented the segment in 1995 with the first-generation CR-V, and subsequent generations have kept the Civic-based crossover at the front of the pack. Introduced last fall, Honda's response to the "what's next" challenge was conservative, even cautious. The wheelbase is unchanged at 103.1 inches -- shortest in this group -- while length and height shrink an inch, to 178.1 and 65.1, respectively. This puts the CR-V at the small end of our test-SUV spectrum, but in typical Honda fashion its interior volume seems to belie the exterior dimensions...

2013 Mazda CX-5 Grand Touring
Launched earlier this year, the CX-5 represents a bold departure for Mazda, wrapped in one of the more obscure slogans in automotive marketing history: Skyactiv Technology. So what does that mean? Basically, Mazda's new system is a total vehicle approach -- in a word, holistic -- to engineering and design, integrating all elements: engine, transmission, chassis, bodyshell,

suspension, brakes, steering, everything...

2012 Toyota RAV4 LTD
The Toyota RAV4 has been with us since 1996, and has maintained a strong presence in the compact SUV class ever since. Although its novel semi-convertible and 3-door variants have long since disappeared, it continues to hold at least one trump card versus its many competitors -- an optional third-row seat...

To see the specific rankings, comparison details and full editorial commentary for all five vehicles in KBB.com's all-new compact SUV comparison, visit http://www.kbb.com/car-news/all-the-latest/small-suvs-big-capabilities-20122013-compact-crossover-comparison/.

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