Kelley Blue Book Crosses Into Virtual Gaming To Announce 2021 Best Buy Award Winners

Annual Awards Name Kia Seltos as the Best New Model for 2021

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 8, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- What better time than end-of-year to expand your horizons and embark on the car shopping journey? Following head-to-head testing, evaluation and data analysis of 2021 model-year vehicles across 17 major categories, Kelley Blue Book® revealed today the 2021 Best Buy Award winners—with the coveted trophy for the Best New Model for 2021 awarded to the Kia Seltos.



Following a year like no other, where cars have become a safe haven and even an escape, Kelley Blue Book is giving consumers an exciting new way to experience the 2021 Best Buy Awards with the launch of KBB.com HQ, a fully immersive virtual island created within the popular video game *Animal Crossing: New Horizons*. Players who visit the island can snap share-worthy photos, grab cool merchandise from the shop and participate in games and activities like virtually fishing in the ocean and rivers. As players fish out items to keep the water clean, Kelley Blue Book will donate up to $10,000 to American Rivers to help preserve rivers across the country.

"Car buying is meant to be an enjoyable experience, and what better way to celebrate the 2021 Best Buy Awards than through engaging with consumers in a way we've never done before with an activity that's not only fun, but has also been a small escape from everything going on during 2020," said Greta Crowley, vice president of marketing for Kelley Blue Book. "Games based on life simulation have surged during this time and we're excited to venture into the gaming world for the 2021 Best Buy Awards. For those on the hunt for their next vehicle, we've designed the Best Buy Awards to instill confidence in the car shopping journey and help buyers narrow down their consideration set by defining the best of the best, so there is sure to be a car for everyone."

Players can visit KBB.com HQ in *Animal Crossing: New Horizons* from December 8 through December 17 between 3:00 p.m. – midnight ET each day to celebrate the 2021 Best Buy Awards with "Kelley," the island tour guide. Visit Kelley Blue Book's Twitter to get more information on how to get a custom code to enter the island.

The annual Best Buy Awards are determined based on a year-long regimen of expert vehicle evaluation and testing of nearly every new vehicle available in the U.S., along with analysis of a broad array of vehicle-related data, including vehicle pricing, 5-Year Cost to Own data—which includes depreciation, insurance, maintenance, financing, fuel, fees and taxes for new cars—consumer reviews and ratings and vehicle sales information. To be considered for Kelley Blue Book's highest accolade, Best New Model, the vehicle must be an all-new or

redesigned vehicle and offer a strong value proposition to consumers based on pricing, innovation, and available standard technology and safety features.

2021 Kelley Blue Book Best Buy Award Winners

Best New Model: 2021 Kia Seltos
The 2021 Kia Seltos has become the new benchmark in the subcompact SUV segment. The Seltos is full of surprises, starting with its stylish, refined interior. Not only is the Seltos available with class-above convenience and connectivity features like a 10.25-inch touch screen with navigation and Bose premium audio, but there is plenty of rear-seat legroom, even for tall passengers.

Compact Car: 2021 Hyundai Elantra
In a tough segment, the all-new Elantra has come out on top. How? Hyundai has brought the refinement and quality of its larger siblings (the Sonata and the Palisade SUV come to mind) into the realm of the compact sedan. In addition to a stout chassis and attractive styling, the new Elantra boasts excellent driving manners and a thoroughly modern interior.

Midsize Car: 2021 Honda Accord
The Honda Accord continues to stand out for its roomy cabin, particularly the rear seat, large trunk, and advanced powertrains, including a hybrid that delivers up to 48 mpg. The Accord is the complete package, from its affordable price through to its traditionally high resale value.

Subcompact SUV: 2021 Kia Seltos
The all-new 2021 Kia Seltos is this year's winner, thanks to its impressive roster of modern tech, a choice of two excellent engines, and striking good looks. It also has plenty of space – boasting best-in-class cargo area and excellent rear-seat legroom.

Compact SUV: 2021 Toyota RAV4
No matter which RAV4 you choose, they have something in common: Easy manners and great practicality. The RAV4 is a pleasant partner in both the city and beyond. Non hybrid models use a well-matched 8-speed automatic transmission that feels more natural than the CVTs of competitors.

Midsize SUV – Two-Row: 2021 Hyundai Santa Fe
The Hyundai Santa Fe was all new just two years ago and already an excellent choice among 2-row/5-passenger midsize SUVs, proved by its Best Buy Award win last year. But for 2021, Hyundai has made it even better with significant revisions.

Midsize SUV – Three Row: 2021 Kia Telluride
The 2021 Kia Telluride is our Best Buy not just because of all the bells and whistles available here, but that many of these features come with such an affordable price tag. The base price for the Telluride is below the average transaction price of all new vehicles, which is pretty remarkable when you consider the size of the Telluride and the class in which it competes.

Full-Size SUV: 2021 Ford Expedition
The 2021 Ford Expedition continues with a proven formula based on a rugged ladder frame with independent rear suspension. As such, the big aluminum-bodied Ford shines as a comfortable truck-based family hauler that's at home in the daily grind or when doing work like towing a trailer to a campsite.

Pickup Truck – Midsize: 2021 Toyota Tacoma
The tough, rugged Toyota Tacoma is built to last. Even as newer models have arrived on the scene, the Tacoma remains a favorite, thanks to its reliability, excellent resale value, and wide range of models designed to suit the needs of just about every midsize truck buyer.

Pickup Truck – Full-Size: 2021 Ford F-150
The Ford F-150 has been a Best Buy Award winner seven years in a row, staying in this top spot because it continues to advance the full-size truck segment. New for 2021, the F-150 has best-in-class towing and payload capacity. It also offers

the only full hybrid powertrain available in a pickup, with 430 horsepower and more than 700 miles of range.

Minivan: 2021 Toyota Sienna
The 2021 Toyota Sienna assumes the crown this year on the strength of its new design, standard hybrid powertrain that racks up some impressive mileage, available all-wheel drive, and the comfort and flexibility of its interior. Beyond the mechanical changes, Toyota also boasts a good track record when it comes to quality, reliability and solid resale value at the end of your ownership experience.

Electric Vehicle: 2021 Hyundai Kona Electric
Hyundai's secret is that it managed to make it simple to forget that you were driving an electric car. The Hyundai Kona Electric is certainly a spirited little ute with instant-on acceleration that allows you to light up the front tires almost at will. The rest of the time, while commuting, shopping, heading into the big city at the end of the day to see a drive-in movie, or just cruising along the coast for a few hours, you'll find yourself completely satisfied.

Plug-in Hybrid Vehicle: 2021 Toyota RAV4 Prime
With the combination of the 2.5-liter 4-cylinder engine and tri-motor setup checking in with a total of 302 horsepower, the 2021 Toyota RAV4 Prime sprints to a very impressive zero-to-60-mph time of just 5.7 seconds. When you pair that truth with the little SUV's fuel economy of 40 mpg in city driving and 40 mpg on the highway, you've got an AWD "performance" SUV that can also take you towards 600 miles with a full charge and a full tank of gas.

Luxury Car: 2021 Lexus ES
The 2021 Lexus ES continues to offer a blend of elegant styling, a high-quality interior, refined road manners, and pricing that makes it a value in a segment where the competition is only getting stiffer. There are plenty of choices among luxury 4-door models, even as the mass market midsize sedan competitive set continues to shrink.

Subcompact Luxury SUV: 2021 Mercedes-Benz GLA
At a time when this segment is hotter than ever, Mercedes committed itself to doing great things at the entry level, replacing the old GLA with a model that's shorter, but roomier, and packed style and substance. The new 2021 Mercedes-Benz GLA strikes a modern look that is more SUV than ever, while still lathering lots of Mercedes-Benz elegance and ability.

Compact Luxury SUV: 2021 Audi Q5
The 2021 Audi Q5 has the goods to satisfy a wide variety of buyers. Whether you desire innovative technology, great safety systems, engaging driving manners or all-around practicality – all awash in the premium experience expected in an Audi – the Q5 delivers.

Midsize Luxury SUV: 2021 Genesis GV80
The GV80 is the first SUV from Genesis, and it's a big hit. This 2- or 3-row SUV exudes elegance inside and out, and its outstanding chassis blends excellent daily ride comfort with great composure on winding roads. Available with a turbocharged 2.5-liter 4-cylinder engine or a twin-turbo 3.5-liter V6, the rear- or all-wheel-drive GV80 also has a robust infotainment system (with a 14.5-inch touchscreen) and a thorough standard safety suite that includes automatic emergency braking and adaptive cruise control. All that, plus a 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain warranty.

For full coverage of the 2021 Kelley Blue Book Best Buy Awards, including additional editorial comments about each model, photos, video reviews, pricing details, listings and more, visit https://www.kbb.com/awards/best-buy-awards/.

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