Kbb.com Names Top 10 Coolest New Cars Under $18,000

Versatile, Technology-Filled Vehicles Lead in Growing Entry-Level Segment

The expert editors at Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com (http://www.kbb.com/), the leading provider of new- and used-vehicle information, today announce their picks for the Top 10 Coolest New Cars Under $18,000. The vehicles that made Kelley Blue Book's 2008 list of Top 10 Coolest New Cars Under $18,000 -- typically a gas-sipping bunch -- arguably are cooler than they have ever been. More fun, more practical and more amenity-laden than ever before, today's entry-level vehicles deliver more than simply affordable and efficient transportation.

Versatility and technology are growing trends in the under-$18,000 segment. Eight of the cars on this year's list are flexible five-door hatchbacks, or available as such. The collective options list includes navigation, hard-drive music storage, voice-controlled iPod integration, Bluetooth phone connectivity, push-button start and leather seating -- some of which were introduced on high-end luxury cars just a few years ago.

"The vehicles on our Top 10 Coolest New Cars Under $18,000 list are very fun to drive and feature-filled; first-time buyers and frugal down-sizers have never had it so good," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com. "Manufacturers are finding ways to nicely equip their entry-level vehicles while still keeping the price reasonably low, and consumers are reaping the benefits more and more each year."

In choosing the 2008 list of Top 10 Coolest New Cars Under $18,000, the kbb.com editors used the same set of criteria that many consumers use in examining this category: safety, fuel economy, interior size, comfort, technology, the vehicle's fun-to-drive-factor, as well as the decidedly subjective "cool" factor. The editors compiled the list of qualifying vehicles using Kelley Blue Book's New Car Blue Book Values, which reflect real-world transaction prices and provide a more useful comparison point than Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP). Every vehicle on the list can be purchased for less than $18,000.

Top 10 Coolest New Cars Under $18,000

Vehicle	MSRP	New Car Blue Book Value
2008 Ford Focus	$15,280	$14,942
2008 Honda Fit	$14,585	$14,585
2008 Jeep Patriot	$16,055	$15,894
2008 Mazda3	$17,230	$16,799
2008 Mitsubishi Lancer	$14,615	$14,396
2009 Pontiac Vibe	$15,895	$15,895
2008 Scion xB	$16,270	$16,351
2008 Subaru Impreza	$17,640	$17,375
2008 Suzuki SX4	$15,395	$15,164
2008 Volkswagen Rabbit	$16,250	$16,088

Vehicles are listed in alphabetical order. New Car Blue Book Values represent transaction values, or what others are actually paying for this vehicle. The listed New Car Blue Book Values were taken from kbb.com during the week of April 1, 2008. New Car Blue Book Values are updated weekly on kbb.com. Adding optional equipment at the time of purchase will increase the price of the vehicle.

Kbb.com Editorial Comments on the Top 10 Coolest New Cars Under $18,000
2008 Ford Focus

"Cool" might not be the first word that pops into your head upon seeing the new Ford Focus, but don't judge this book by its cover. The Focus sedan and coupe are the most affordable cars in which you can get the SYNC music and phone integration system that allows you, for instance, to play any song in your digital

library simply by saying its name. That's cool.

MSRP: $15,280 *NEW CAR BLUE BOOK VALUE: $14,942

2008 Honda Fit

With gas prices on the rise, small cars like the Honda Fit are gaining in popularity. The Fit sips gasoline and offers the sportiest driving experience available in an econo-car. Plus, the seats can be configured in multiple arrangements, so it can easily hold things like your friends, your gear or a medium-sized alpaca (according to a photo on Honda's Web site, anyway).

MSRP: $14,585 *NEW CAR BLUE BOOK VALUE: $14,585

2008 Jeep Patriot

The Jeep Patriot has a classic look reminiscent of the departed Jeep Cherokee plus a functional interior and a sub-$18,000 price tag -- even when equipped with four-wheel drive. Combined with highway fuel economy up to 28 miles per gallon, the Patriot delivers a cool mix of SUV-like versatility and car-like efficiency for buyers on a budget.

MSRP: $16,055 *NEW CAR BLUE BOOK VALUE: $15,894

2008 Mazda3

On our list for the fifth year in a row and still in its first generation, the Mazda3 is the current elder statesman of cool compact cars. Available in four- and five-door layouts, the dynamic Mazda3 is responsive, quick and stylish, but also comfortable, efficient and practical.

MSRP: $17,230 *NEW CAR BLUE BOOK VALUE: $16,799

2008 Mitsubishi Lancer

The Mitsubishi Lancer's aggressive, rally-inspired looks belie a starting price of less than $15,000. The low cost of entry will leave many buyers with enough extra cash to add cool options like a hard-drive navigation system, an impressive premium audio system or perhaps a stylish spoiler.

MSRP: $14,615 *NEW CAR BLUE BOOK VALUE: $14,396

2009 Pontiac Vibe

The hot-looking Pontiac Vibe has always delivered a very cool combination of affordability, versatility and fuel economy. Compared with its predecessor, the new-for-'09, second-generation Vibe boasts a sportier look inside and out, more powerful engines and even a lower starting price.

MSRP: $15,895 *NEW CAR BLUE BOOK VALUE: $15,895

2008 Scion xB

The original "box on wheels" grew rounder, larger and more powerful for 2008, but the xB remains a distinctively styled non-conformist. Cool standard features include steering-wheel mounted audio controls, iPod integration and a choice of three wheel designs for instant customization at the dealership.

MSRP: $16,270 *NEW CAR BLUE BOOK VALUE: $16,351

2008 Subaru Impreza

With 170 horsepower, all-wheel drive and a double-wishbone rear suspension, the Subaru Impreza sedan adds a sporty and capable touch to our cool car selections. The five-door variant has a similar base price and suits those in need of more cargo room for their active lifestyles.

MSRP: $17,640 *NEW CAR BLUE BOOK VALUE: $17,375

2008 Suzuki SX4

This is the second year in a row that Suzuki's small crossover has made our list of cool cars under $18,000. In addition to a sporty exterior and roomy, stylish interior, the SX4 still has the distinction of being the least expensive all-wheel-drive vehicle sold in America.

MSRP: $15,395 *NEW CAR BLUE BOOK VALUE: $15,164

2008 Volkswagen Rabbit

The versatile and affordable Volkswagen Rabbit hopped its way onto our list with its perky 2.5-liter engine, comfortable ride, sharp handling and a level of interior refinement rivaling that of some much pricier vehicles.

MSRP: $16,250 *NEW CAR BLUE BOOK VALUE: $16,088

New-Vehicle Research Tools Available on Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com

-- Full expert reviews of new 2008 (and some 2009) model year vehicles, including print and video
-- Pricing, specifications and information on optional features
-- Resale value information
-- Safety data
-- Rebates and incentives information
-- Side-by-side comparison tool
-- Consumer reviews and ratings
-- Photos and 360-degree views
-- Dealer price quote

For more information about the Top 10 Coolest New Cars Under $18,000, visit http://www.kbb.com/coolcars08.

About Kelley Blue Book (http://www.kbb.com/sitemap)

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 Web site, kbb.com, provides the most up-to-date pricing and values, including the New Car Blue Book® Value, which reveals what people actually 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. Kbb.com is rated the No. 1 automotive information site by Nielsen//NetRatings and the most visited auto site by J.D. Power and Associates eight years in a row. No other medium reaches more in-market vehicle shoppers than kbb.com; nearly one in every three American car buyers performs their research on kbb.com.

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