

Kbb.com Editors, Consumers Choose Honda Civic 'Best Redesigned Vehicle of 2006'

KBB Editors Identify 10 Most Significant 2006 Redesigns, Consumers Weigh in on Favorites

Kelley Blue Book (www.kbb.com), the trusted resource for automotive information, today named the Honda Civic "Best Redesigned Vehicle of 2006." According to kbb.com editors, the all-new Civic is the most-improved vehicle on the U.S. market, making significant strides in exterior design, interior accommodations and mechanical excellence.

Kelley Blue Book has been naming the "Best Redesigned Vehicle" for each model year since 2003, but this time the editors of kbb.com decided to add the voice of the vehicle shopper to the award process. The kbb.com editors chose a list of 10 vehicles that were significantly redesigned for the 2006 model year and carry the model name of a previously available vehicle. Among the selection criteria were market-significant vehicles that maintained existing brand image, function and purpose, but made substantial advancements in the 2006 model-year redesign to improve appearance, comfort, technology and convenience.

After the kbb.com editors chose the 10 semi-finalists, consumers were given "before" (2004 or 2005 model-year) and "after" (2006 model year) photos of the 10 vehicles. They also were provided brief descriptions of significant changes made to the exterior, interior and mechanics of each model in a special study conducted on Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com. Then site visitors were asked to choose which vehicle made the most improvements to the 2006 model when compared to the previous model. Below are the results of the study:

Kbb.com "Best Redesigned Vehicle of 2006"

2006 Honda Civic	20%	2006 Volkswagen Passat	7%
2006 Lexus GS 300	18%	2006 Infiniti M45	7%
2006 BMW 3 Series	13%	2006 Mazda MX-5 Miata	7%
2006 Mitsubishi Eclipse	11%	2006 Mercedes ML-Class	5%
2005 Hyundai Sonata	9%	2006 Kia Rio	2%

"The bold new exterior design of the 2006 Honda Civic is much more attractive and expressive than the previous model, and consumers have responded to it right away," said Jack R. Nerad, editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book and kbb.com. "When you add a flashy-but-functional two-level instrument panel and an impressive boost in horsepower, you've got quite a winning combination."

The Civic's victory in the study was all the more significant because price was not a factor consumers were asked to consider. Yet, despite the fact the Civic was one of the least expensive vehicles on the semi-finalist list, it still bested several luxury vehicles including the Lexus GS 300, BMW 3 Series, Infiniti M45 and Mercedes-Benz ML-Class.

The positive result for the Mitsubishi Eclipse is good news for Mitsubishi, which recently has struggled in the U.S. market. The Eclipse not only garnered 11 percent of the total survey votes but it also attracted a young demographic, as a large percentage of respondents, under the age of 24, (22 percent) selected the vehicle as their choice for best redesigned vehicle.

Vehicles usually are redesigned every four to five years, although some brands wait longer to redesign their models. When a vehicle is redesigned, the value of the previous model often declines sharply.

"In the past many redesigns were simply cosmetic, performed to spur consumers

to buy the latest model-year vehicle without offering much in the way of substantive mechanical change," said Nerad. "These days the best of the redesigns offer both styling and design changes plus significant mechanical improvements in performance, fuel economy and safety."

After the "Best Redesigned Vehicle of 2006" award was won by domestic vehicles the past two years -- Ford F-150 and Ford Mustang -- this year no domestic model made the list of 10 semi-finalists. This was largely because the domestic manufacturers chose to add new model names and discontinue old ones, rather than redesigning current models.

Kelley Blue Book Marketing Research administered the "Best Redesigned Vehicle of 2006" survey from November 8 - 11, 2005 to 919 vehicle shoppers on kbb.com. For more information about Kelley Blue Book's "Best Redesigned Vehicle of 2006," visit www.kbb.com/redesign06.

About Kelley Blue Book (kbb.com)

Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com is America's most used and trusted vehicle pricing, values and information resource. The top-rated Web site provides the most up-to-date pricing and values for thousands of new and used vehicles, including the Blue Book® New Car Value, which reveals what people actually are paying for new cars. Since 1926, car buyers and sellers have relied upon Kelley Blue Book for authoritative and unbiased information to make well-informed automotive decisions. The company also reports vehicle prices and values via products and services, including the famous Blue Book® Official Guide and software products. Car buyers have rated kbb.com No. 1 in overall customer satisfaction and experience, according to a survey by Keynote Systems. Kbb.com also has been named the No. 1 automotive information site by Nielsen//NetRatings and the most visited auto site by J.D. Power and Associates seven years in a row. No other medium reaches more in-market vehicle shoppers than kbb.com; one in every three American car buyers complete their research on kbb.com.

SOURCE: Kelley Blue Book

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