Shoppers Choose Best Road Trip Vehicles

Editors of Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com Choose 10 Great New Road Trip Cars, Shoppers Rank Top Choices

As Memorial Day weekend traditionally kicks off the summer driving season, thousands of Americans will take to the open highway for a road trip. The road test editors of Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com chose 10 current vehicles they thought would be well suited for road trips and then asked shoppers which of these vehicles they would most like to take on the road this summer. The results have been tallied and the chart below displays consumers' rankings:

Rank	Choice	Percentage
1	Land Rover Range Rover Sport	16%
2	Ford Mustang Shelby Cobra GT500	14%
3	Honda Civic Hybrid	12%
4	Chevrolet Corvette Z06	12%
5	Porsche Cayman S	12%
6	Volvo C70	11%
7	Mercedes-Benz R-Class	9%
8	Toyota FJ Cruiser	7%
9	Pontiac Solstice	5%
10	Mazda MX-5 Miata	2%

This year's top spots are taken by five very different models -- Land Rover's functional SUV, the Range Rover Sport; Ford's performance-oriented Mustang Shelby Cobra GT500; Honda's fuel-efficient Civic Hybrid; Chevrolet's iconic sports car, the Corvette Z06; and Porsche's latest entry into the sports luxury market, the Cayman S.

"The differences among the consumers' favorites reflect varying opinions on what makes a great road trip vehicle," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and market analyst for Kelley Blue Book and kbb.com. "To some, cargo space and passenger comfort matter most. To others, fuel economy is a key consideration, while still others seek the pure enjoyment of driving. But make no mistake, there are no losers on this list; we'd love to take a long drive in any one of them."

Kbb.com Editors' Comments on Each Vehicle:

Land Rover Range Rover Sport -- If your upcoming road trip takes you off road -- say to the top of a mountain or across a remote desert -- we can think of no better vehicle than the Range Rover Sport. With its incredible Terrain Response system and other niceties like Hill Descent Control coupled with the available 4.2-liter supercharged V8 engine, this is a posh tourer that is as smart as it looks.

Ford Mustang Shelby Cobra GT500 -- If you spend your free time daydreaming about the three R's -- retro, racing and road trips -- then your next interstate excursion should pan out behind the wheel of the Ford Shelby Cobra GT500. Look for the mega-Mustang this summer with 475 horsepower and a possible starting price in the neighborhood of $40,000.

Honda Civic Hybrid -- If 49 mpg city/51 mpg highway doesn't get your attention, perhaps the array of standard features, such as multiple audio entertainment and safety technology will. And it still looks like a Civic. Bottom line: you can hit the road feeling secure in a reliable hybrid that doesn't stick out like a sore (green) thumb.

Chevrolet Corvette Z06 -- The number 427 is magic to Corvette fans, and the magic continues with the current Chevrolet Corvette Z06, whose engine displaces 427 cubic inches. More to the point for this exercise, it offers 505 horsepower, enough to turn any Interstate highway into the launching ramp for your fondest dreams.

Porsche Cayman S -- One thing that makes a road trip all the better is a sweet companion, and you won't find a companion much sweeter than the new, mid-engine Porsche Cayman S. Courtesy of a willing 292-horsepower

3.4-liter "boxer" engine and its exquisite handling, the Cayman S does everything you want it to when you want it to. Perfect.

Volvo C70 -- If you find yourself torn between the quiet comfort of a coupe and the al fresco freedom of a convertible while dreaming up your next journey of a thousand miles, the all-new Volvo C70 has arrived just in time. In addition to a sophisticated three-piece retractable hardtop, the C70 offers enough seats that you can split the gas tab four ways.

Mercedes-Benz R-Class -- Because sometimes getting several people there in high-end comfort matters, the Mercedes-Benz R-Class exists. With luxurious second row "captain's seats," your back seat passengers enjoy the same creature comforts afforded the driver -- individual seat adjustments, reading lights, armrests, air vents and cup holders.

Toyota FJ Cruiser -- This serious off-road vehicle sports a retro design and bright, attention-getting color combos (all with white top) born from its original FJ40 Cruiser roots. It's also a pleasure to drive on the road with plenty of power from its 4.0-liter V6 engine.

Pontiac Solstice -- This home-grown, boldly styled two-seat roadster might be the most gawked-at new vehicle that hits the highway this year. Drop the top and squeeze the gas pedal, and you'll be having too much fun to notice all the attention.

Mazda MX-5 Miata -- The great thing about driving a classic car before it's a classic is that it hasn't yet been dated by time or technology. On the more humdrum highway stretches of a road trip, Mazda's venerated two-seat roadster returns 30 mpg. On mountain shortcuts it plasters a big goofy grin on your mug.

Kelley Blue Book's "Best Road Trip Vehicle" survey was administered by Kelley Blue Book Marketing Research via the Internet on kbb.com to more than 600 participants on April 24-28, 2006.

About Kelley Blue Book (kbb.com)

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SOURCE: Kelley Blue Book

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