Kelley Blue Book Announces Winners of 2009 Brand Image Awards

Awards Honor Top New-Car Brands Based on KBB Market Research Consumer Perception Data

IRVINE, Calif., March 12 /PRNewswire/ -- Kelley Blue Bookwww.kbb.com, the leading provider of new- and used-car information, today announces the winners of the 2009 Brand Image Awards. The Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Awards recognize automakers' outstanding achievements in creating and maintaining brand attributes that capture the attention and enthusiasm of the new-vehicle buying public.

The 2009 Brand Image Awards, presented to the top brands in 10 categories, are based on consumer automotive perception data from Kelley Blue Book Market Research's Brand Watch study. Brand Watch is an online brand perception tracking study tapping into 12,000+ in-market new-vehicle shoppers annually on Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com. The highly comprehensive Brand Watch report provides a detailed look at in-market new-vehicle shoppers' perceptions of brands, and important factors driving their purchase decisions while they are in the midst of the shopping process. The results of an entire year of Brand Watch research and consumer opinions determine the 2009 Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Award winners.

"The phrase 'perception is reality' can ring truer than many think when it comes to the opinions of new-car shoppers," said Rick Wainschel, senior vice president of marketing and analytics for Kelley Blue Book and kbb.com. "The winners of the annual Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Awards showcase the strengths of various automotive brands in the minds of consumers, providing great insight for all auto manufacturers, marketers and agencies on what is clearly resonating with the car-buying public today."

KELLEY BLUE BOOK'S 2009 BRAND IMAGE AWARD WINNERS

Best Value Brand: Toyota

Coolest Brand: BMW

Most Family-Friendly Brand: Toyota

Most Rugged Truck Brand: Ford

Best Performance Brand: BMW

Best Comfort Brand: Cadillac

Best Exterior Design Brand - Luxury: BMW

Best Exterior Design Brand - Non-Luxury: Nissan

Best Interior Design Brand: Cadillac

Best Prestige Brand: Mercedes-Benz

"The winners of this year's Brand Image Awards exemplify automotive brands that are on the right track, making a great impression with consumers not just on a specific model level, but across the entire brand lineup," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book and kbb.com. "For 2009, brands that won in multiple award categories, such as BMW, Cadillac and Toyota, are the leaders in strong, positive consumer perception."

Kbb.com Editorial Comments About 2009 Brand Image Award Winners

Best Value Brand: Toyota

Offering sensible sticker prices, renowned reliability and strong resale performance, Toyota has all three facets of automotive value -- buying, owning and selling -- covered. Smart shopping never goes out of style, and Toyota has built a reputation for building some of the smartest buys on the road.

Coolest Brand: BMW

What's cool to the kids is often irrelevant to their elders. And what's cool to those elders is usually treated as toxic by the kids. Not BMW, though. The German automaker's sporty, stylish and snootier-than-average cars and crossovers are as cool and desirable to not-yet-licensed tweens as they are to young-at-heart retirees.

Most Family Friendly Brand: Toyota

Brands perceived as family-friendly are usually strong scorers in the value department, too. So it's not surprising to see this year's Best Value Brand also take home a win in the family-vehicle category. Toyota also performs well in safety and offers more three-row vehicles (six of them) than any other brand.

Most Rugged Truck Brand: Ford

The Ford F-150 has been the best-selling vehicle in the country for 27 years in a row. In a vehicle segment where "best" often equates to "toughest," it would be difficult if not impossible to maintain that kind of track record without building the most rugged truck around.

Best Performance Brand: BMW

Fill in the blanks: The Ultimate _____ _____. A key reason that BMW's long-running tagline is so recognizable and effective (as evidenced to some degree by this award), is that its cars consistently deliver on the promise. From the company's high-performance M vehicles to its three-row crossover, every single vehicle wearing a BMW badge is among the quickest, most agile vehicles in its category.

Best Comfort Brand: Cadillac

Cadillac's lineup is more athletic than ever, but the brand has been linked with plush ride and whisper quiet so closely and for so long that people continue to equate it first and foremost with comfort. Today, Cadillac vehicles no longer deliver comfort via button-tufted velour or wallowing ride, but by more modern means like effortless power and quiet, high-quality interiors that are rich and contemporary.

Best Interior Design Brand: Cadillac

If there's an underdog winner in this year's Brand Image Awards, this is it. Only a few years ago, the quality and styling inside a Cadillac fell far short of what you'd find in competitors like Audi and Mercedes-Benz. With the introduction of the second-generation CTS sedan, though, Cadillac jumped right back into the game it dominated a few decades ago.

Best Exterior Design Brand - Luxury: BMW

Describing BMW's exterior styling as polarizing is like describing the early 2009 economy as difficult. But as great designs will do, the so-called "flame surfacing" found across the lineup continues to gain more and more acceptance and admiration (and win more awards). Parking next to a BMW, fans of the brand's styling will contend, is a sure way to make most any competitor look boring.

Best Exterior Design Brand - Non-Luxury: Nissan

From the iconic Z sports car to the standout Murano crossover and even the Quest

minivan, Nissan designs and builds some of the most recognizable vehicles on the road. And underneath all that boldly styled sheetmetal are vehicles that consistently demonstrate above-average athleticism, which only serves to deepen their attractiveness.

Best Prestige Brand: Mercedes-Benz

Many automotive brands have gone to great lengths to polish their images and convey prestige, but it is still impossible to find an automotive brand regarded as more prestigious than Mercedes-Benz. While the fabled brand offers performance, technology, safety or style, more than that, the three-pointed star symbolizes opulence, affluence and luxury.

For more information about the 2009 Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Awards, please visit www.kbb.com/2009brandimageawards.

For Brand Watch sales inquiries on any vehicle segment or brand, please contact Kelly Kim, director of marketing research services, at 949-268-2756 or kkim@kbb.com.

About Kelley Blue Book (www.kbb.com)

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, www.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. According to the C.A. Walker Research Solutions, Inc. - 2008 Spring Automotive Web Site Usefulness Study, kbb.com is the most useful automotive information Web site among new and used vehicle shoppers, and half of online vehicle shoppers visit kbb.com. Kbb.com is a leading provider of new car prices, car reviews and news, used car blue book values, auto classifieds and car dealer locations. No other medium reaches more in-market vehicle shoppers than kbb.com.

SOURCE: Kelley Blue Book

Web site: http://www.kbb.com/

---

https://mediaroom.kbb.com/press-releases?item=105842