Kelley Blue Book's Kbb.com Announces Top 10 Green Cars for 2009

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KBB Green Offers Alternative-Fuel Car Guide, Car-Finding Tools, Forums, Blogs

IRVINE, Calif., April 20 /PRNewswire/ -- Kelley Blue Book, www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces the expert editors of Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com name their 2009 picks for the Top 10 Green Cars. In an all-new story posted toKBB® Green, the kbb.com editors list a variety of fuel-efficient vehicles worthy of buyers' consideration. The coverage includes detailed EPA-estimated fuel economy numbers and editorial commentary on why each particular model made this year's list.

On last year's inaugural Top 10 Green Cars list, the kbb.com editors cited skyrocketing gas prices, a weak economy and growing environmental consciousness as the major reasons more car buyers were focusing on fuel economy. As we approach Earth Day 2009, gas prices have come back to Earth but the shaky economy is trumping most other concerns and causes, resulting in far fewer car buyers.

The current sales slump is unfortunate for many reasons, one of which is that 2009 is shaping up to be a banner year for fuel efficiency. The year's arrivals include an all-new Toyota Prius that is even more fuel-efficient than its world-beating predecessor, a new Prius alternative in the Honda Insight, and a range of new 50-state clean-diesel cars, among others. In addition to these newcomers, this year's Top 10 Green Cars list highlights some familiar faces, and the kbb.com editors again included a variety of vehicle shapes and sizes, because they recognize that not everyone who wants to get greener can go smaller. Just as buyers would, the editors considered characteristics like comfort, performance, utility and technology - not just fuel economy and price - in picking the winners.

"Despite the decline in auto sales and the stabilization of gas prices in recent months, we still think many new-car shoppers are interested in buying vehicles that are more fuel-efficient and better for the environment," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book and kbb.com. "More than ever, we're seeing a variety of environmentally friendly vehicles for the 2009 and 2010 model-years that offer intriguing technology. No matter what you or your family's vehicle needs may be, we're confident there is a 'Green' option available to suit your preferences and lifestyle."

Kbb.com's 2009 Top 10 Green Cars
(In order of combined EPA-estimated fuel economy)

Vehicle	City MPG	Highway MPG	Combined MPG
2010 Toyota Prius	51	48	50
2010 Honda Insight	40	43	41
2010 Ford Fusion Hybrid	41	36	39
2009 Volkswagen Jetta Sportwagen TDI	30	41	34
2009 MINI Cooper	28	37	32
2009 Ford Escape Hybrid	34	31	32
2009 Honda Fit	28	34	31
2009 BMW 335d	23	36	27
2009 Toyota Highlander Hybrid	27	25	26
2009 Chevrolet Silverado Hybrid	21	22	21

Kbb.com's Editorial Commentary on the 2009 Top 10 Green Cars

(In order of combined EPA-estimated fuel economy)

2010 Toyota Prius

The third-generation Prius has arrived with sleeker looks, added creature comforts, upgraded performance and even-better fuel economy. Despite a larger engine, 24 additional horsepower and quicker acceleration, the new Prius manages to deliver four more miles per gallon than its predecessor. The coolest new option is a glass moonroof with a solar-powered ventilation system, but the list also includes voice-activated navigation and Dynamic Radar Cruise Control with Lane Keep Assist.

2010 Honda Insight

With a starting sticker price of $20,470, the all-new Honda Insight is the least expensive full-production hybrid available in the United States. Even the top-level Insight EX with Navigation that includes features like a voice-activated navigation system, Bluetooth phone connectivity, upgraded audio system and electronic stability control is just $23,770. These figures should give the Insight a clear price advantage compared to the newest Prius, for which pricing has yet to be announced. But why does Honda's fuel-miser look so much like Toyota's? Is it because the consumer thinks that's what a hybrid looks like or for the same reason an Airbus looks so much like a Boeing?

2010 Ford Fusion Hybrid

The Ford Fusion is getting better with age, and perhaps the best addition is the hybrid version. For the 2010 model year, the lineup benefits from new exterior styling and an interior redesign, which grace the new hybrid version that handily out-economizes both the Toyota Camry Hybrid (33 city/34 hwy mpg) and the Chevy Malibu (26 city/34 hwy mpg). We were fans of the Fusion before, but even bigger believers after seeing and driving the latest iterations.

2009 Volkswagen Jetta Sportwagen TDI

In some circles, TDI is the sexiest acronym in all the automotosphere. Some months ago, Volkswagen's familiar diesel moniker disappeared from the automaker's top-selling Jetta, but it has made a triumphant return for the 2009 model year. This time, the Jetta TDI and Jetta Sportwagen TDI (and soon, Golf TDI) will be available in all 50 states, a development that surely helped the Jetta TDI take home the 2009 Green Car of the Year award**.** Returning fuel economy that's roughly 40 percent better than its gas-powered counterpart, the Jetta Sportwagen TDI combines utility on par with a small SUV, world-class fuel economy and European driving dynamics in one well-rounded green machine.

2009 MINI Cooper

The MINI Cooper balances fun and efficiency like nothing else on the road. Responsive steering, a sport-tuned suspension and diminutive dimensions combine to deliver a driving experience that instantly evokes allusions to the proverbial go kart. Combine that kind of athleticism with highway fuel economy up to 37 miles per gallon - and a personality bigger than the car itself - and you've got a unique brand of feel-good fun.

2009 Ford Escape Hybrid

We like compact crossovers for their smart mix of utility and efficiency, and the 2009 Ford Escape Hybrid is the most fuel-efficient SUV in the country. After undergoing a major overhaul for the 2008 model year, the Ford Escape Hybrid is improved again for 2009 with smoother braking and electric-to-gas transitions, plus a one-mile-per-gallon improvement in highway fuel economy.

2009 Honda Fit

The Toyota Yaris remains the category's mileage champ, but the Honda Fit so handily outshines its competitors in our eyes that it's making the list again this

year. We're especially fond of the Sport model and its performance-tuned suspension and paddle shifters, but even base models are fun. If you're more interested in pure practicality than driving pleasure, be sure to check out the Fit's flexible back seat and impressive cargo-carrying abilities. The Honda Fit may be a little car, but it's a lot of car.

2009 BMW 335d

BMW's new diesel-powered 3 Series is one of those cars you really do have to drive to believe. First off, its zero-to-60 mph time of 6.0 seconds is only four tenths slower than that of the category's gas-powered gold standard, BMW's own 335i. For most buyers, that's a small performance price to pay for an increase in fuel economy of about 35 percent (the 335i is rated at 17 city/26 highway mpg). Throw in all the driving feel and cornering ability that have made the 3 Series a living legend, and you've got the greatest diesel car America's ever seen.

2009 Toyota Highlander Hybrid

The Highlander Hybrid remains the most fuel-efficient three-row vehicle available today, earning it an automatic bid at the top of many families' shopping lists. On top of room for seven and exceptional fuel economy, the Highlander Hybrid offers proven reliability and the added all-weather confidence of standard all-wheel drive.

2009 Chevrolet Silverado Hybrid

If maximum fuel economy is your primary concern, then buying a pickup truck doesn't make much sense. But what if you need the utility of a pickup truck? Shouldn't you, too, be able to enjoy the benefits of modern hybrid technology? General Motors thinks so. That's why GM's Two-Mode hybrid system is now available in the Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra. Despite delivering up to a 50-percent improvement in city fuel economy, GM's hybrid pickup retains its essential truckness by offering nearly 1,500 pounds of payload capacity, a 6,100-pound tow rating and a big full size bed. For those with more people to haul than cargo, the same gas-electric powertrain is available in the Chevy Tahoe Hybrid SUV.

For more information on all of the 2009 Top 10 Green Cars, visit www.kbb.com/greencars09.

About KBB Green

Kelley Blue Book's Green section allows new-car shoppers to obtain information about alternative-fuel technologies, such as hydrogen cars, diesel cars, hybrid cars, natural gas cars, electric cars and flex fuel/ethanol vehicles, as well as fuel-sipping gasoline cars. Kbb.com's vehicle experts also keep consumers up-to-date on the latest Green news and information from around the automotive world. The video section of KBB Green offers an in-depth, inside look at the latest eco-friendly vehicles on the market from both the Kelley Blue Book perspective and the carmakers' themselves. KBB Green also features helpful tools such as the Perfect Car Finder® and the Fuel Efficiency Challenge.

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

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