Kbb.com Releases 'Freshman Car Class: 10 New Names for 2011'

Editors Provide Information on Brand-New Vehicle Nameplates Shoppers Should Know in the New Year

IRVINE, Calif., Dec. 29, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- Kelley Blue Bookwww.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces the Freshman Car Class: 10 New Names for 2011, listing brand-new vehicle nameplates shoppers should know in the New Year.

Even though well-known vehicle mainstays like the Honda Odyssey and Volkwagen Jetta are newly redesigned for 2011, there's a crop of even *newer* cars arriving this year, too. While the intrigue of a redesign stems from a vehicle's familiarity, a brand-new nameplate is exciting for its newness and often represents an automaker's foray into a new niche or the beginning of a new design direction. The expert editors of Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com provide a helpful look at the newest of the new in a story recently published to kbb.com titled Freshman Car Class: 10 New Names for 2011.

"Many automakers are releasing all-new vehicle nameplates for 2011, increasing the large volume of choices available to shoppers in the market for a new car," said Jason Allan, editor of online content for Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com. "From all-new propulsion options in vehicles like the Chevrolet Volt and Nissan Leaf, to all-new luxury models from the likes of Audi, Lexus and even Hyundai, to sensible small-car choices from Scion, Ford and Mini, in-market car shoppers can ring in the New Year knowing there surely is a new vehicle available in 2011 to fit their needs and desires."

Sample Selections from Kbb.com's 'Freshman Car Class: 10 New Names for 2011'

2011 Audi A7

The four-door coupe started as an oxymoron and turned into a body style. The Audi A7 is the latest member of the club founded – or at least named – by Mercedes-Benz in 2004 with the introduction of the CLS and its unique combination of four doors and low, sloping roofline. Audi's version differs in that it's technically a hatchback, but it otherwise answers the same question.

2011 Hyundai Equus

Designed to compete with flagship sedans like the Lexus LS, the 2011 Hyundai Equus picks up where the Hyundai Genesis sedan leaves off and raises the game to a larger and more luxurious new level. With a 385-horspower V8 engine mated to a six-speed automatic transmission and an array of luxury options including a reclining rear seat, refrigerated rear console and a 17-speaker Lexicon sound system, the Equus definitely doesn't fall short on the features front. With a starting price shy of $60,000, the Hyundai Equus offers the same kind of value for which the brand has long been known.

2011 Lexus CT 200h

In a nutshell, the Lexus CT 200h is an Audi A3 competitor with a Prius powertrain and a Toyota Matrix/Mazda3 look. Featuring the same 134-horsepower gas-electric hybrid powertrain found in the mileage-maxing Toyota Prius, the CT 200h is expected to return 42 combined miles per gallon. Its sporty looks belie the fact that it takes 9.8 seconds to get to 60 miles per hour, but the instant torque of the electric motor combines with a sport-tuned suspension to deliver more performance than most drivers demand in the real world.

2011 Mini Countryman

Although the idea of designing a Mini crossover may seem as silly as ordering a diet soda and a double cheeseburger, we like the results. The Mini Countryman has the same razor-sharp driving dynamics and engine options as its smaller Cooper counterparts, but offers two extra doors, a higher ride height and a lot more passenger and cargo room. With the availability of all-wheel drive and a starting price tag of around $22,000, we think the big new Mini will do well in the land of super-sizing.

2011 Scion iQ

The Scion iQ microcar first premiered at the 2009 New York Auto Show amongst the fanfare and strong sales of the Smart Fortwo. Smart sales have since cooled, making it harder to predict how the iQ will be received by the American car-buying public. Known for its small, quirky cars, Scion's iQ will fit right into the fleet and is expected to be priced low, promising fuel economy near 40 miles per gallon. Plus it will offer the technology and easy personalization that helped put Scion on the map.

To view the entire list of 10 New Names for 2011 from the expert editors of Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com, including commentary on each vehicle, visit http://www.kbb.com/car-news/all-the-latest/freshman-car-class-10-new-names-for-2011.

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