

Springtime
FAMILY SEDANS



New 2010 Models
Spring onto Katy Roads

Written By Don Armstrong

Buick LaCrosse



Ford Taurus



Mazda 6



Nissan Altima



Toyota Camry Hybrid

Katy in springtime is nothing short of fabulous, a time for renewal and a great time to shop for a new car. Automakers are building the best vehicles in history, and putting them on display at the recent Houston Auto Show only whets our appetites. In this edition of Katy Magazine, we take a look at some of the most popular sedans now in dealer showrooms.

Head-Turning Taurus

Believe it or not, there was a day when the introduction of an all-new car model was a celebration, replete with balloons, free hot dogs and soda, and dozens of moms and dads crowding showrooms for the big unveiling. Those days may be gone, but there is a lot of excitement surrounding the all-new Taurus at Ford stores around Katy.

The 2010 Taurus isn't a rehash of another model in the Ford company stable. Instead, this unique full-size four-door is a sleek, good looking all-American with all of the right ingredients to wow sedan fans back into the Ford fold. Its distinct grille, bulging hood, high beltline, short greenhouse, and deck lid give the Taurus a muscular appearance. The twin-brow dash and sweeping center console are cutting edge, with controls easy to find. And let's not forget Ford's Sync system, the best intuitive interface in the car business. A 263 horsepower, 3.5-liter V-6 powers the five-place Taurus. A six-speed automatic helps deliver 18 miles per gallon city and 28 miles per gallon highway. The Taurus starts at \$25,170.

Luxurious LaCrosse

The completely redesigned Buick LaCrosse is finally a competitor in the midsize sedan market. Although a bit taller than the outgoing

model, the 2010 LaCrosse is roughly the same overall size as the '09 model. The signature Buick grille, wrap-around composite headlamps, and steeply raked windshield begin the makeover. A large, sloping expanse of rear glass and high trunk lid may limit rear visibility, but the optional parking sensors and backup camera negate any compromises here.

Inside, the LaCrosse gets high marks for design, workmanship, and quality, key components that were lacking in too many of Buick's previous models. The dash is a beautifully sculpted work of art with a single sun brow over the instrument cluster. A thin piece of faux wood trim separates the two-toned upper and lower components. The center console melds nicely into the dash without interfering with its sweeping design in the five-passenger cabin.

Three engines are offered including the 280 horsepower, 3.6-liter V-6 married to a six-speed automatic transmission. Pricing on the 2010 Buick LaCrosse begins at \$27,085.

Stylish Mazda 6

The 2010 Mazda 6 begins its second year of production after a complete redesign last year. Overly pronounced front fender arches make their own statement on the 6, integrating the headlamps and hood into a unique front clip. The gently sloping roofline adds a sense of elegance and modern style. The dash isn't as sophisticated as that in the Taurus and LaCrosse, but still seems to handle intuitiveness, style, and function quite well. Seating for five in this midsize is what you'd expect, with ample rear seat legroom, as long as the front seats aren't pushed all the way back.



There are no less than seven trim levels available and depending on which one you choose, you'll get either an inline four-cylinder engine or a V-6. For our sedan comparison, we'll stick with the 3.7-liter V-6 that produces 272 horsepower and gets 17 miles per gallon city and 25 miles per gallon highway. Although a manual transmission is available with the four-cylinder model, a five-speed automatic is married to the V-6. Entry level pricing starts at \$18,450, while the V-6 equipped upper-end models begin at \$26,450.

Katy Loves These Sedans, Too

Honda Accord

Our love affair with this solid contender may have waned a bit. While many competitors have caught this formidable foe, Honda continues to turn out dependable transportation. The EX V-6 starts at \$26,805.

Nissan Altima

One of the more sporty handling sedans, the Nissan Altima continues to gain ground in the midsize category. New for 2010 is a refreshed front end. The 3.5 SR V-6 model gets a CVT transmission and starts at \$24,520.

Toyota Camry Hybrid

Although we've been comparing V-6's, this hybrid is worth noting since it fits our price comparison, and it gets 34 miles per gallon with its gas/electric combo. Beginning at \$26,150 the Camry Hybrid will have you seeing green in no time. **KM**

DON ARMSTRONG'S knowledge and life-long love affair with motorsports has earned him the reputation of being one of the area's most respected automotive journalists. He's a member of the Texas Auto Writer's Association.

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