



2010 Ford Fusion

2010 Hyundai Tucson



2010 Honda Fit

# Sizzling SUMMER RIDES

Sleek New Models  
Heat up Katy Roads

*Written by Don Armstrong*

Summer 2010 promises to be a lot better than '09, both for Katy families and the car industry in general. In this issue of Katy Magazine, we look at a few new models that will peak the interest of each driving member of your family.



2010 Dodge Nitro



2010 VW Golf TDI



2010 Chevy Malibu

### GET GLAM IN A NITRO

Keeping the kids happy is always important, even when buying a car, and the Dodge Nitro might just help fill the bill. The Nitro's distinct mini-truck styling sets it apart from other mid-size sport utility offerings. A formidable upright grille, fender flares, boxy styling, and wheels pushed out to each corner give the Nitro a very distinct appearance. The base SE model interior exudes a child-proof appearance, but opting for the more upscale SXT will give mom and dad a touch more glam for nights on the town without the kids.

Power comes in two forms, a 3.7-liter V-6 that delivers 210 horsepower or a more robust 4.0-liter V-6 delivering 260 horsepower. The latter is available only in the SXT model. Rear-wheel or a part-time four-wheel drive set-up is available with either a four- or five-speed automatic transmission. Combined fuel mileage for both engines is 18. This is Dodge's first venture into the highly competitive mid-size SUV market and with a \$21,590 starting price, the Nitro is poised to do well.

### MUST-DRIVE MALIBU

Before the introduction of the current Malibu, Chevrolet seemed to flounder behind Honda, Toyota, and Nissan in the mid-size sedan category. Since its introduction three years ago, this all-American has earned a right to be on the short-list of must-drives when shopping for a solid contender in this segment.

Chevy's now-familiar dual grille look has proved popular and Malibu's sleek, yet conservative, body styling is selling well. There are varying degrees of interior niceness, depending on the model you choose, but all feature an attractive dash design that harkens back to the early Corvette, a kind of twin scalloped affair.

There are four models from which to choose - the LS, LT1, LT2, and top-of-the-line LTZ. The LS and LT1 are equipped with the 2.4-liter, 169-horsepower I-4 that gets 22 miles per gallon city and 30 miles per gallon highway. The LT2 is offered with the 3.6-liter V-6 that is good for 262 horsepower and gets 17 miles per gallon city and 26 miles per gallon highway. The LTZ gets the V-6 exclusively. The Malibu LS starts at \$21,825. If you're hunting for a young-family sedan, then this Malibu may be for you.

### GO GREEN IN A GOLF

The 2010 Volkswagen Golf is a smart-looking shoe that doesn't have a pretentious bone in its body, giving the owner a true German-engineered experience at a fraction of the usual price. There have been hundreds of variations of the three-door hatchback, so VW doesn't break any new ground in the styling department. The Golf's sleek, aerodynamic silhouette pretty much speaks for itself.

The interior, however, shines with superior fit, finish, and quality materials. Rear seat legroom is always an issue in a car like this, so unless you plan to haul someone other than your kids and their friends in the back seat, perhaps one of our other cars will better suit your needs.

A 2.5-liter, five-cylinder gasoline engine is standard, but our choice comes in the form of a diesel. The 2.0-liter, fuel-sipping power plant emits 25% less greenhouse gas and achieves more than 30% better fuel economy compared to a similar gasoline engine. Better still, it achieves 30 miles per gallon city and 41 miles per gallon highway. Starting at \$22,155, this may be the perfect, all-around do-gooder.

## MORE MODELS FOR YOUR KATY FAMILY

### HONDA FIT

Starting at \$15,700, the Fit has a price advantage over the VW, but comes only in a four-door version. It does, however, return an impressive 30 miles per gallon city-highway rating on regular gasoline. Here's one for the masses.

### FORD FUSION

The completely revamped Fusion is another American car that is worth a look-see. More powerful, fuel-efficient engines along with other tweaks have auto writers trying to find something to complain about. Starts at \$19,695.

### HYUNDAI TUCSON

If you test-drove one in the past, Hyundai heard your complaints and addressed each one. The redesigned 2010 Tucson boasts new, more fuel-efficient engines, higher quality materials, and a better ride. Begins at \$18,995. 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 Writers Association.*

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