

Today's General Motors

Over the last several weeks we've run a series of articles designed to demonstrate that all vehicle manufacturers have their share of challenges and problems. We've done so because some people continue to hold onto the perception that import cars are great and domestic cars are bad. You may ask, why is that? Well... for decades GM led the nation with the most quality built and popular vehicles. In the '60s and '70s, foreign cars began appearing in America. People soon found that they were poorly built, unreliable, expensive to fix and prone to rust out. However, in the '80s, some of these foreign manufacturers caught the vision and began building much better vehicles. Their quality improved while American-made vehicles

stayed about the same. Foreign vehicles began selling in larger numbers as people who didn't seem to remember how poorly built those same foreign cars were just a few years previous, began thinking that foreign cars were the greatest thing since sliced bread. Further, they began paying thousands of dollars more for foreign cars than a comparable domestic model.

In the '90s General Motors realized they had stood still too long and began to battle back. Today GM has the most efficient factories in the world which once again build vehicles with world-class quality reflecting an unsurpassed safety, comfort, reliability and good fuel mileage. Forget the '80s and '90s, compare today's Chevrolets, Buicks, Pontiacs and GMC trucks to any foreign or domestic vehicle feature for feature including: fuel mileage, safety features, purchase price, reliability, and great resale value. You'll not only be impressed, but you will also understand why more Americans by GM vehicles than any other make.

As always, I welcome your feedback, please feel free to e-mail me at chuck@nicholsonauto.com.

Thanks, Chuck Nicholson



2007 Motor Trend's truck of the year

Today, Motor Trend magazine bestowed its prestigious "truck of the year" award on the all new 2007 Chevy Silverado.

This is the third time since 1999 the Silverado has received the coveted award, making it the only three-time winner in the 18 year history of the award.

Motor Trend editor-in-chief Angus MacKenzie praised the new Silverado for offering "traditional values people want in a pickup-it's rugged, durable and versatile, but is also stylish and comfortable... and has done a great job of maintaining the Silverado's reputation for value."

GM's full-size 2007 Silverado and GMC Sierra 1500 pickups have been extensively reengineered and restyled. The sheet metal is all new and for the first time, the Silverado and GMC Sierra pickups have distinctly different exterior styling.

Notable features: GM targeted ride, handling, noise, safety and fuel economy for improvement. The frame was reengineered for greater strength and stiffness. "The body and chassis has been engineered for at least 250,000 miles of service," said Jolly Burau, chief engineer for full-size trucks. Stability control is standard on 1500 crew cab models and optional on extend-



cab models. A side curtain air bag is optional on all models. Rear-parking assist, a navigational system and adjustable pedals are among the car-like features that have been added.

Buyers "also wanted a lot more storage on the inside of the cab," said Lorraine Babiar, and GMC Sierra product manager. All models have two gloveboxes. Some models equipped with three across seating have storage in the center armrest and a stor-

age bin under the seat.

Some versions of the 5.3 and the 6.0 L V-8 engines are equipped with cylinder deactivation for improved fuel mileage. In addition, GM offers engines capable of running on Ethanol as well as gasoline.

GM started shipping the new truck in October. As the new truck hits the market, customers are responding. Silverado, already the top selling share-

ware model, solid sales increased 18 percent in November over the same month last year, and that trend is expected to grow as the new trucks fully penetrate the market. This will keep Chevrolet's 4,100 dealers humming through the holiday season and into 2007.

Chevrolet Silverado 1500 ranked number one in the 2006 JD Power and Associates Initial Quality Study. The 2007 Silverado and Sierra 1500 have the pedigree to repeat the performance.

GM 100,000 mile warranty

In September 2006, General Motors announced that it has extended its coverage on all 2007 model vehicles to a five year/100,000 mile power drivetrain limited warranty with no deductible that is fully transferable. "We've been telling everyone how strong GM's car trucks are in terms of value, design and durability. Now we're going to back it up" said Rick Wagoner chairman and chief executive officer of GM. "This new warranty, combined with GM's outstanding quality, competitive pricing, relevant technologies and a strong turnaround plan reflects the confidence we have in the quality of our cars and trucks," he added.

According to Rob Minton, a company spokesman, the new warranty will play an extremely beneficial role in the fleet and commercial aspect of GM's business. "Because of the constant use of commercial vehicles, it is common for owners to exceed the warranty mileage limits of vehicles before the time limit," he explained. "This new program extends the mileage limit to 100,000 miles." Light duty vehicles sold to small businesses, commercial fleets and rental companies are included, with the exception of limousine, hearse and livery vehicles, which have their own specific warranty.

GM will also extend the existing roadside assistance plan to 100,000 miles or five years, in addition to providing courtesy transportation for a covered warranty repair.

Dramatic improvement in GM quality makes the extended warranty possible. GM warranty repairs have decreased 40 percent during the last five years.

GM placed 11 models in the top three of their segments and had two models top their segments in the J.D. Power and Associates initial quality study released earlier this year.

In the Strategic Vision 2006 total Quality Index Study, five GM models top their segments, which executives said is more wins than any other manufacturer for the second consecutive year.

GM dealers also ranked among the leaders in the most recent J.D. Power and Associates consumer service Index study, which measures customer satisfaction among new vehicle owners with dealer service departments during the first three years of vehicle ownership.

GM also said it had a dedicated Web site, www.gm.com/warranty, to provide consumers with additional details about the program

Domestics gain in reliability

USA Today-November 10, 2006

"Some domestic car models have become at least as reliable as their Asian counterparts," says Consumer Reports annual car reliability survey, out Thursday. "Chevrolet Tahoe and GMC Yukon SUVs, redesigned as new models for the 2007 model year, merited most reliable ratings." "All cars in some ways suffer from teething

problems in their first year of manufacture," said David Champion, senior director of Consumer Reports auto testing division. "Here we see domestic models coming out that are really much higher quality than we've seen in the past".

The Buick Lucerne scored above average in the large cars category. "The Buick Lucerne scored higher than the Toyota Avalon."

October '06 better than '05

USA Today-Lower gas prices boosted truck sales in October '06 helping some automakers post sales gains compared with a dismal October last year.

General Motors led all automakers with a 17.3 percent increase, fueled by a 32.9 percent rise in pickup and SUV sales, according to Auto-data.

Overall for the industry, auto sales gained 6.1

percent with sales of light trucks up 14.8 percent and cars down 2.9 percent. The breakdown:

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| General Motors | up 17.3 percent |
| Mercedes-Benz | up 12.2 percent |
| Toyota | up 9.2 percent |
| Ford Motor Company | up 8.0 percent |
| Nissan | down 3.9 percent |
| Honda | down 0.2 percent |
| Chrysler | down 1.6 percent |

General Motors supports America

Some of our foreign competitors are making a big deal about their new U.S. plants and how much they contribute to the U.S. economy: But the real deal is far different.

According to recent research:

- Every day, 1 million people earn their livings by helping General Motors build and sell cars in North America.
- 457,000 retirees and spouses rely on pension

checks from GM every month.

- GM supports 100 U.S. jobs per vehicle sold in this country, compared to Japanese manufacturers, which average just 13.3.
- GM's recent capital investments in the U.S. amount to approximately \$40 billion; that's more than Toyota, Honda and Nissan combined.
- GM's contributions to the U.S. gross national product are four times those of Toyota.

- For vehicles sold in North America, the domestic parts content of GM products is 82 percent. Compare that to Toyota at 41 percent, Honda at 49 percent, Nissan at 38 percent and BMW at 11 percent.

It's obvious: GM's enormous impact on the economic well being of this country - and the day-to-day lives of millions of Americans - shows that it is truly putting its money where its mouth is.

Key fob checks fuel level, tire pressure

GM's new key fob can check fuel level & tire pressures.

For sleepless car owners who decide they need to check their tire pressure in the middle of the night, General Motors has a solution.

GM plans to introduce a remote-control key fob next April that will allow drivers to not only determine the pressure in each tire, but also check the odometer reading, see if there's enough fuel in the tank to make it to work in the morning, change the radio station settings and see if they remembered to lock the car doors, to name a few.

"One of the overarching themes people told us they wanted was security

and safety," GM spokesman Tom Henderson says. "Being able to reassure themselves about their vehicles without leaving the house is one way to satisfy that."

The feature builds on GM's expertise as the first automaker to introduce remote start, which made its debut in the 2004 Chevrolet Malibu and now is available from other automakers and as an add-on accessory.

GM says it will be first to offer remote two-way, communication with the vehicle using a liquid-crystal display on the fob. The fob will operate at four to six times the range of competitors' keyless entry systems, GM says.

Versatile: New fob can check gas level from afar.

"The same technology, with some changes, should eventually be able to remind drivers if they forget and leave children in the car. GM says its two-way fob will cost less than \$100 to replace if it's lost or broken, and it should be hard to break," Henderson says. "For testing, it's been dropped, dunked underwater and sprayed with saltwater."

GM says the feature probably will be considered a bargain. Consumer test panels showed that interest in the feature rose, rather than fell, when panel members were told what GM planned to charge.

Buick...an elegant package

Buick's most premium model, the Lucerne, brings a fresh approach to the entry-luxury vehicle segment.

Lucerne's elegant, contemporary lines convey quality, luxury and performance by offering innovative safety, comfort and convenience features customers could expect to find in a high end luxury car.

Available in three models, the CX, CXL and CXS, Lucerne combines high level technology, refined ride and handling, and luxury features with a spacious, quiet and comfortable interior.

Lucerne offers new and unexpected optional performance capabilities with the return of V-8 power to Buick and the most advanced suspension ever in a Buick car - Magnetic Ride Control, paired with StabiliTrak and brake assist.

Lucerne offers a complete range of comfort and convenience optional features befitting Buick's premium image, such as heated and cooled front seats; factory-

installed remote start; Ultrasonic Rear Parking Assist; a rain sensing windshield wiper system; heated windshield washer fluid application; a nine-speaker, 280-watt Harman Kardon audio system; six-disc in-dash CD changer with MP3 capability; DVD map navigation; and QuietTuning throughout.

Lucerne is also the first Buick to offer OnStar Turn-By-Turn Navigation, OnStar's new voice-guided navigation system. With one touch of the OnStar button, this new technology allows consumers to talk to an advisor live, who in turn sends complete step-by-step driving instructions to customers' vehicles through their OnStar systems. Audio directions are then automatically played through Lucerne's stereo as needed. One year of Directions and Connections with Turn-By-Turn service is now standard equipment on all 2007 model-year Buick vehicles.

Silverado and Grand Prix earn segment awards

The Pontiac Grand Prix and Chevy Silverado: on the front lines of GM's quality campaign.

For the fifth consecutive year, General Motors received the Gold Plant Quality Award in the J.D. Power and Associates 2006 Initial Quality Study (IQS)SM - recognizing GM's plant quality leadership in North/South America. The award went to the Oshawa 2 plant, which builds the Pontiac Grand Prix and Buick LaCrosse, for the second year in a row.

GM also earned two segment awards in the IQS. The Chevy Silverado LD was the highest ranked among all Large Pickups and the Pontiac

Grand Prix was the industry's highest ranked Large Car. Overall, GM had 11 vehicles that were among the top three in their respective segments. In addition to Grand Prix and Silverado, they are: Chevy Corvette, Monte Carlo, Silverado HD and Tahoe; Buick Rainier; GMC Savana, Sierra HD and Yukon; and Hummer H2.

What's more, the study shows that GM is the best-performing domestic manufacturer in the area of initial quality. "These results demonstrate that GM builds quality products," said Jamie Hresko, vice president of quality for GM North America, noting that GM puts 4.5 million customers behind the wheel of new cars and trucks every year. "Beyond our

performance in the IQS - an important measure of new vehicle quality - our warranty performance indicates that 40 percent fewer of those vehicles are returned for service, which clearly speaks to our quality gains."

The 2006 IQS is based on responses from 63,607 purchasers and lessees of new 2006 model year cars and trucks who were surveyed after 90 days of ownership. This industry benchmark, now in its 20th year, was redesigned for 2006. The redesign was implemented to drive further improvement by all manufacturers, create greater differentiation across all vehicle lines and be more relevant to new vehicle entries, such as crossovers, and new technologies.

GM plans new V-8 diesel

The diesel engine is about to get a starring role at General Motors.

GM is building a new V-8 diesel for light-duty trucks and SUVs that is expected to meet Federal Tier 2 and California emissions standards and be available in all 50 states as early as 2010. At a press event last week at GM's Milford, Mich., proving grounds, Charles Freese, GM's executive director of diesel engineering, said the new engine should boost the fuel economy gain of a vehicle such as the Chevrolet Tahoe by about 25 percent. That would enable the 5,000-pound SUV to get around 26 mpg on the highway.

Freese would not give the displacement of the engine. He did say it is larger than the 3.0-liter but smaller than the current 6.6-liter Duramax I diesel used in heavy-duty versions of the Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickups. The new engine is designed to fit in the space of GM's current 5.3-liter gasoline engine. Engineers installed an early hand-built prototype of the engine in a blue Buick Rainier SUV and let journalists test it on the proving grounds.

There was no way to tell the engine was a diesel unless you put your ear near the hood. It ran as smoothly and quietly as a gasoline engine. The test engine is rated at 330 hp and develops 620 pounds-feet of torque. The engine has double-overhead cams and four-valves per cylinder and uses a selective catalytic reduction or urea injection system to clean the exhaust.

Pontiac G6 convertible: A game-changer for Pontiac

The Pontiac G6 convertible is one of summer's hottest, newest rides.

The new 2006 Pontiac G6 convertible, now in dealer showrooms, is more than the industry's first four passenger coupe featuring an all-weather retractable hardtop with a starting MSRP of under \$29,000. The G6 convertible essentially establishes a new category within the midsize passenger car segment: a non-luxury performance vehicle combining true open-air driving with the security and refinement of a fixed-top coupe.

Available in GT (201 hp) and GTP (227 hp) models, the G6 convertible features one of the most innovative retractable hardtops in the industry. It offers uncompromised rear seat entry/egress and all the spaciousness and performance capabilities expected of a Pontiac.

"The G6 convertible is a game changer for the industry and for Pontiac," said Pontiac Marketing Director Mark-Hans Richer. "As the newest mem-

ber of the successful G6 family, the convertible offers performance coupe enthusiasts the thrill of open-air driving at a price point below any other retractable hardtop on the market."

Retractable top

The key to the G6 convertible's appeal is the top system. Convertible engineering specialist Karmann Technical Development L.L.C. was instrumental in developing the sophisticated two-piece, clamshell-style retractable hardtop that is very user-friendly. It takes approximately 30 seconds to transform the G6 from coupe to convertible, or vice versa, with the touch of a single button.

A double-hinged trunk lid facilitates stowing the top. Opening like a conventional trunk for cargo storage, the deck lid is reverse-hinged to accept the folding hardtop. When the retractable hardtop is up, there is 12.6 cubic feet of trunk space. Even when the top is stowed, there is still 2.2 cubic feet of cargo space in the trunk.

OnStar: GM navigation system

More than 2 million General Motors vehicles will come with factory-installed navigation systems by 2007.

GM will seek to broaden the market for navigation systems through its OnStar telematics network. It plans to offer OnStar's Turn-by-Turn Navigation system as an affordable alternative to systems that use an embedded screen in a vehicle. In the OnStar system, a customer talks with a live advisor.

In an interview with Automotive News, OnStar President Chet Huber said GM will offer its navigation system as a \$100 option during the first year of service on a majority of GM vehicles. The service will be free for the first year on most Buicks and Cadillacs.

After that, customers will pay \$299 a year for the navigation system along with OnStar standard services. If a consumer does not want to renew the Turn-by-Turn system, it's \$199 a year for OnStar standard service.

Huber said a customer can renew the navigation system on a month-by-month basis.

"It's a terrific way to bring navigation services to the broadest market," Huber said. "It seems to be

a highly valued system among consumers. The fact that people are willing to spend an additional \$2,000 on an embedded-screen system today indicates our feature should help sell cars."

After talking with a consumer, an OnStar advisor sends step-by-step directions to the customer's vehicle through OnStar.

The car digitally records the step-by-step instructions, and the audio directions are played automatically through the vehicle's stereo as needed, triggered by the OnStar system's global positioning satellite capabilities.

"It can take you around the city or from coast to coast," Huber said.

He said demand for in-vehicle navigation systems is rising. In the 2005 model year, 1.2 million vehicles were equipped with factory-installed navigation systems, according to a J.D. Power and Associates estimate. That's a 41 percent increase over the 2004 model year, Huber said.

"GM installed the navigation technology on some 2006 models at the end of the model year," Huber said. "By 2008, all GM vehicles will have the technology."

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