

# New Buick Enclave Proves to be a Hit in Terms of Customer Loyalty

The redesigned 2013 Buick Enclave luxury crossover is the brand's best-selling model through the first quarter with retail sales up almost 40 percent.

And, it scores big as a second-time-around choice for nearly 4 in 10 owners trading in a first-generation Enclave.

The Enclave also continues to pull in first-time Buick buyers as it has since being introduced in 2007.

"The new Enclave is the first model in the second generation of the modern, rejuvenated Buick

brand," said Tony DiSalle, vice president of Buick Marketing.

"In previous years, we've talked about the new, younger, luxury-minded buyers coming to Buick for the first time. With the redesigned Enclave, we're still seeing those new buyers, but we're now also seeing the buyers who gave us a try with the first Enclave stay with us."

When the Enclave launched in 2007, customers taking surveys gave reasons like "value/price" and "familiarity with dealer" among their top reasons for buy-

ing the brand's other vehicles. Enclave owners consistently list things like "overall quality of vehicle," "ride comfort" and "overall exterior styling" as their top reasons for purchase.

Buick spokesperson Katie Bjork said that "individual model loyalty (38 percent) is nine percent better than the Toyota Highlander, 11 percent better than the Acura MDX and 22 percent better than the Ford Explorer.

"These returning buyers, along with the many more coming to Buick for the first time, are de-

manding the best," Bjork said.

First-time and repeat Enclave buyers are choosing more luxurious amenities. In fact, 8 percent more owners select the top-level Premium Group.

And standalone options like 20-inch wheels, rear seat entertainment, Bose audio, sunroof and navigation are more popular. For example, 15 percent more Enclaves have been ordered with navigation so far in the 2013 model year.

All in all, Bjork said, this kind of customer loyalty to a particu-

lar model is very good news for the Buick brand.

Since the new model arrived at dealerships in November, Enclave had its best retail sales month on record in December, followed by year-over-year retail growth of 57 percent in January and 22 percent in February.

"If you want a bellwether for where the Buick brand is heading, look no further than the Enclave," said DiSalle. "It's a very modern, very smart crossover that delivers what our luxury-minded customers want."

## Ford's Focus and Fiesta Top Vehicle Sales Worldwide

Call it the battle for the "super segment."

Ford's plan for growth in the United States is centered around four key vehicle segments: subcompact, compact cars, small utility vehicles and midsize sedans – together, what Ford calls the super segment.

These four vehicle segments, taken as a whole, represent a little more than 50 percent of total new vehicle sales in the U.S.

As recently as 2004, super segment sales were only 35 percent of the market. But Ford expects more growth in the super segment, as baby boomers continue to downsize their vehicle purchases and first-time millennial buyers enter the market. Combined, baby boomers and millennials account for more than 160 million people in the U.S.

Two of the four groups in the super segment are of particular interest – small utilities and sedans. Two-thirds of all buyers shop the Escape and Fusion when they first come into a Ford dealership.

"The super segment is where Ford plans to grow in North America," said Amy Marentic, group marketing manager, Global Small and Medium Cars.

"Escape and Fusion have gotten off to very strong starts since being all-new last year, and we expect continued strong interest in both.

"We're encouraged that we have very new products across the lineup, two of which – Focus and Fiesta – are best-selling vehicles worldwide."

Combined sales of Escape and Fusion totaled 51,985 vehicles in February 2013, edging out combined sales for Toyota Camry

and RAV4 (44,599 sales) and Honda Accord and CR-V (48,667 sales). Escape has been the best-selling small utility in the U.S. for the past two months.

By heavily reinvesting in the car portfolio since the middle of the last decade, Ford has been able to build market share.

From January through September of last year, Focus was the best-selling vehicle in the world (end-of-year data from all regions have not yet been reported), while Fiesta was No. 5 in global sales and the best-selling subcompact car in the world.

The combination of the newest lineup of super segment vehicles and increasingly competitive, fuel-efficient passenger cars is working: Ford's brand share of the super segment is running at a record 12.7 percent through the first two months of the year, more than double its share in 2005.

From 2005 to 2012, Ford brand sales in the super segment were up 123 percent.

Retail sales of Ford's super segment vehicles nationwide are up 33 percent in the first two months of 2013, with strongest growth coming from the West, up 56 percent, and the Southeast, which reported a 38 percent increase.

Conquest sales are another indicator of success. Defined as the percentage of owners leaving another brand for Ford, conquest rates range from 54 percent on Focus, 52 percent on Escape and 51 percent on Fusion, all the way up to 63 percent on Fiesta and 67 percent for Fusion Hybrid. More than half of Ford sales in these four segments are conquest sales.

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