

Chevy Volt, Buick LaCrosse, Ford Flex Top AAA List for Comfort, Affordability

Fuel economy, comfort and performance are the three top car qualities identified by AAA Auto Buying experts as they tested hundreds of vehicles to come up with AAA's top picks for commuters.

Domestic automakers were well represented in the listing, which was broken down into categories ranging from compacts to sedans to minivans. In each case, AAA experts aimed to find vehicles that would offer a comfortable, affordable commute to the many Americans who drive to their jobs daily.

"Many Americans are spending several hours every week in their vehicle to get to and from work," said John Nielson, director, AAA Automotive Engineering & Repair. "Having a vehicle that is reliable, fuel-efficient and comfortable can really make a difference in your everyday routine."

Starting with compact vehicles, AAA recommended the Chevrolet Volt, Toyota Prius and Volkswagen Jetta SportWagen TDI. AAA experts said the four-passenger, plug-in electric Chevrolet Volt "side-steps range anxiety with a gasoline

engine on board to run a generator."

They noted the newest version of this compact car allows the driver to force operation of the gasoline engine, ideal for someone whose commute starts on a highway, where running on gasoline power is more efficient, and ends in a city, where battery power is the more cost-effective option.

"The car is exceptionally quiet, handles well and boasts great acceleration, but rear seat room is tight if you plan to carpool," the experts continued.

In the sedan segment, Buick LaCrosse and Ford Fusion vied with the Audi A4, Hyundai Genesis and Nissan Altima as top choices.

According to AAA, the LaCrosse offers excellent performance, a steady ride, comfortable seating, responsive handling and an excellent V6-based drivetrain, making the car an ideal choice for carpool commuting. They noted the LaCrosse also comes with an even more fuel-efficient four-cylinder eAssist drivetrain as an option.

AAA Auto Buying experts commented that the Ford Fusion,

Ford's entry in the affordably priced family sedan category, has been completely redesigned for 2013, sporting a sleek exterior, a notably upgraded interior and new drivetrain options. Buyers can choose from three engines – a base 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine and two optional turbocharged engines, either 1.6 or 2.0 liters.

According to AAA, the 2.0-liter turbocharged engine puts out 240 hp, or as much as many V6s. Front-wheel drive is standard on the Fusion; all-wheel drive is an option.

"This Fusion could easily have passed for a luxury car not too many years ago," was a comment from AAA Buying experts.

In the Crossover division, AAA gave top marks to the Ford Flex and the Toyota Highlander.

Commenting on the Flex, AAA auto buying experts cited the vehicle's roomy design, allowing ample space for passengers or packages. They described the ride as "quiet and well controlled" while giving a nod of approval to the EcoBoost version of available V6 powerplants.



2013 Ford Flex



2013 Chevrolet Volt

Products to Wear Mustang Logo Honoring Car's 50 Years

The Ford Mustang will soon become the newest member of a very exclusive club – vehicles in continuous production for 50 years.

To help mark this milestone, 50 companies will sell products like watches, T-shirts, model cars and more that celebrate the Mustang's first 50 years.

"During its first 49 years of production, Mustang has come to evoke a variety of emotions in our customers – freedom, independence and being true to one's self – just to name a few," said John Nens, Ford's team lead for Global Brand Licensing.

"We're marking this Mustang milestone with a distinctive collection of licensed products from select manufacturers that will carry the unique 'Mustang 50 Years' logo."

The logo was crafted by Ford designer Michael Thomson. It features the Mustang's trademark galloping pony in silhouette over the characters, "50 YEARS." This new icon has a clean and sophisticated appearance in either white on black or black on white. Only 50 companies will be licensed to create products bearing this special logo including

high-quality die cast models, videogames, watches and apparel.

"We're working closely with our licensees to ensure every item reflects the unique qualities of Mustang," said Nens. "Like the car itself, we want our licensed products to convey an attitude of strength, passion and the highest quality."

Over upcoming weeks and months, other Ford licensees will reveal a variety of Mustang products featuring the Mustang 50 Years logo to mark this special moment in automotive history and "kick off the next 50 years of Mustang," said Ford officials.

Celebrating its centennial this year, Union, N.J.-based Schott NYC was one of the first manufacturers to sign on for the 50 Years licensing program. Irving and Jack Schott established their company the same year Ford began producing the Model T on the first moving assembly line.

Great-grandson and COO Jason Schott runs the family business today, along with his mother Roz Schott, president, and his uncle, Steven L. Colin, CEO, producing premium jackets, shirts and accessories.

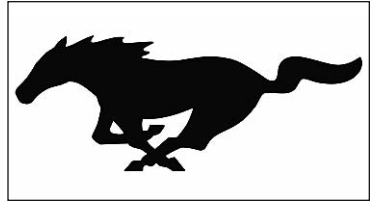
During World War II, Schott NYC dedicated its entire capacity to making sheepskin bomber jackets, leather flight jackets and peacoats for American soldiers, sailors and pilots fighting overseas. Among those who went into battle in Schott jackets were the pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group, better known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

"I can't think of a better partner with whom to celebrate our 100th anniversary," said Jason

Schott. "We are honored to collaborate with an iconic family business that shares our commitment to domestic production."

While the Ford Mustang is classically identified with the wild horse of the American West, it was actually named for the famed North American P-51 fighter plane, the preferred mount of the Tuskegee Airmen in the final year of the war.

Over the next half-century, the Schott Perfecto leather jacket fig-



Mustang logo turns 50

ured prominently in iconic images of Marlon Brando, James Dean, Peter Fonda, the Ramones and Bruce Springsteen. Today Jay-Z, Lady Gaga and Adam Levine can all be spotted in Schott jackets.



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RICH MILNE rmilne@moranautomotive.com
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