

Cadillac, Chevrolet, Ram Ranked in '10 Best Interiors'

by Irena Granaas

Two GM products and a Chrysler truck made the *WardsAuto* list of 10 Best Interiors for 2013.

The list was unveiled April 15 and includes among the winning vehicles the Cadillac XTS luxury sedan, Chevrolet Spark mini car and the Ram 1500 Laramie Longhorn. The winners will be honored May 22 at a ceremony held at the WardsAuto Interior Conference at The Henry hotel in Dearborn.

WardsAuto editors spent February and March evaluating 46 vehicles featuring interiors that were all-new or significantly refreshed in coming up with the leading 10 interiors.

They drove the vehicles on their routine commutes and submitted scoresheets ranking each interior on specific criteria, including comfort, safety, fit-and-finish, ergonomics, value and overall design.

"This year's batch of winners really drives home the point that auto interiors are vital in the battle for consumers' hearts and minds," said *WardsAuto* World Editor-in-Chief Drew Winter.

"It wasn't uncommon all that long ago for automakers to view interiors as the best place to take cost out of a program. They eventually figured out that's a big mistake because people spent a lot more time looking at the inside of their car than the outside."

According to GM, its vehicles received nine nominations, more than any other automaker in this category.

Annalisa Bluhm, communications manager for Chevrolet small cars, said a number of design and engineering decisions locked in a win for the 2013 Spark.

"We're very excited and honored to receive this recognition," she said. "We knew we had something special with the Spark. From a design and engineering perspective, we knew we wanted to infuse the Spark with a youthful, tech-forward personality."

The Spark's interior features color accents echoing the car's exterior paint hue on door panels and dashboard. What Bluhm describes as an industry-first, the Spark offers a high-definition infotainment system featuring GM's Siri electronic assistant that lets users make and answer calls, check email and more eyes-free, and a dedicated navigation app.

"I think it was those choices that really set the Spark apart and are really resonating with industry experts," Bluhm said.

Winter, in his online video review, praised the Cadillac XTS' interior redo.

"The new Cadillac XTS has an awful lot of new, modern, state-of-the-art kinds of things we look for in a luxury automobile," he said. "What they've really done is they've pulled down some of the features from Bentleys and other really high-end vehicles, and made them part of the new XTS."

Winter cited the detailed leather stitching, the "really modern" LED center stack instrument gauges that are reconfigurable, and the interior's generous head room and leg room among other highlights.

"Cadillac is expanding and elevating our vehicle portfolio, so we're delighted to be recognized for the XTS luxury sedan's interior. The XTS's quality, design and technology make for a truly luxurious driving experience," said Cadillac spokesperson Jordana Strosberg.

Klaus Busse, Chrysler head of interior design, discussed the winning interior of the Ram 1500 Laramie Longhorn:

"With the 2013 Ram 1500, we

integrated new features and technology to an already best-in-class interior and we are honored that *WardsAuto* has chosen the Ram 1500 Laramie Longhorn for Ward's 10 Best Interiors list," said Busse. "We've added unique materials and richer colors to give Ram customers a premium feel while staying true to the hardy nature of a Ram truck."

Winter found much to like in his review.

"The instrument cluster (of the Ram 1500) looks like a fine chronograph. Both front and rear seats are heated, as well as the full circumference of the steering wheel. The wood trim is natural-looking and of the highest quality. Other amenities are too numerous to mention," Winter said.

"If Bentley made a pickup truck, this is what the cabin would look like."

In addition to the awards being presented at the WardsAuto Interiors Conference, Wards expects to have all 10 winning vehicles on display at the event for attendees to experience and judge the interiors for themselves.

The ceremony will include a



Ram interior



The Chevy Spark interior has swatches of lighter color matching the car's exterior on door panels and dashboard.

live video review inside each vehicle, highlighting the key features that earned each interior its honor.

Chrysler Brand Sponsors Detroit Jazz Festival

The Detroit Jazz Festival announced the Chrysler brand is once again taking on the role as the official presenting sponsor of the world's largest free jazz festival, which is a major out-of-state tourist attraction for the City of Detroit.

For the second year in a row, the Chrysler brand will serve as presenting sponsor of the Festival, again extending its "Imported from Detroit" campaign. In addition to bringing jazz to music enthusiasts, the Detroit Jazz Festival seeks to positively impact the Detroit region and its communities, and partnering with the Chrysler brand helps the Festival's mission and the purpose of "Imported from Detroit" campaign, which is designed to celebrate the spirit and determination of Detroit and its residents.

This year's festival, the 34th, will be held over Labor Day Weekend - Aug. 30 through Sept. 2. For more information on the festival, visit detroitjazzfest.com.

Chevrolet Cruze Diesel Delivers 46 MPG Highway - GM

There is more than one way for an OEM to achieve greater fleet fuel efficiency numbers besides electric motors. And one of those ways is diesel.

Advances in the composition of diesel fuel and in engine technology have made diesel vehicles a real "green" alternative.

GM just reported that the new 2014 Chevrolet Cruze Clean Turbo Diesel, delivers an industry-best EPA-estimated 46 MPG on the highway, which is better than any non-hybrid passenger car in America, GM officials said. It will be available in certain cities this spring and nationwide and in Canada in early fall.

Equipped with a six-speed automatic transmission, the latest addition to the Cruze powertrain family has an estimated range of 700 highway miles on one tank of diesel fuel based on the EPA highway estimate and the vehicle's fuel tank capacity. That's about 10 hours of highway driving, GM said.

"We harnessed generations of diesel expertise to adapt our world-class global engine for the North American market," said Gary Altman, chief engineer, Chevrolet Cruze Diesel. "The Cruze Diesel is the best diesel passenger car out there. Chevrolet is redefining the meaning of

great fuel economy with this car."

With a starting price of \$25,695, including an \$810 destination charge, the Chevrolet Cruze Diesel is a better value than a similarly equipped VW Jetta TDI automatic, according to GM. Compared with Jetta, the Cruze Diesel offers standard equipment that includes the Chevrolet MyLink infotainment system, larger 17-inch alloy wheels, leather-appointed seating, a longer five-year 100,000-mile powertrain limited warranty, and a two-year maintenance plan.

Cruze Diesel also does well in performance, GM officials said,

with a segment-leading estimated 148 horsepower and estimated 258 lb.-ft. of torque, and can go 0-60 in about 8.6 seconds. Its advanced 2.0L turbo-diesel engine has an overboost feature capable of increasing torque to an estimated 280 lb.-ft. for short bursts of stronger acceleration when needed, such as entering freeway traffic.

Cruze Diesel is powered by the cleanest diesel passenger car engine produced by General Motors. The vehicle generates 90 percent less Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) and particulate emissions when com-



2014 Cruze Diesel

pared with previous-generation diesels. Chevrolet has sold more than 2 million Cruze models globally since it was launched in mid-2010. More than 33,000 of those were diesel powered.



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