



1931 50 Series



1949 Roadmaster



1963 Riviera

Buick Picks 'Best of Decade' To Help Mark Its 110 Years

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five-passenger touring models remaining most popular.

• 1923-1932: The 1931 Series 50 was the best-selling model in the year of another upsizing of powertrains – from six- to eight-cylinder engines. The more powerful engines, paired with a major design overhaul the year before, helped boost Buick's image during the Great Depression.

• 1933-1942: Harlow Curtice became Buick's president in 1933, and three years later, a model range including the 1936 Century showed his revolutionary vision for the brand. Its streamlined designs were a dramatic change and Buick's engines grew more powerful, making the Century the first Buick to reach 100 mph. Sales grew from 53,249 in 1935 to 168,596 in 1936 and continued to rise in the years to come.

• 1943-1952: Buick's most iconic design features, including signature waterfall grilles and port-holes, date to the 1949 Roadmaster. One of the most collectible Buicks of all time, the Roadmaster even became a Hollywood star in the 1988 film, "Rain Man."

• 1953-1962: Buick celebrated its 50th birthday with the 1953 Skylark, an opulent, limited-production convertible with advanced design and technology. Each had Italian wire wheels and the owner's name engraved on the steering wheel. The same year also marked the first year of

Buick V8 engines and a new twin-turbine Dynaflo automatic transmission.

• 1963-1972: Buick's most famous production design is the 1963 Riviera, a powerful sport coupe said to be inspired by a Rolls-Royce that Buick design boss Bill Mitchell saw through a fog in London.

• 1973-1982: Amid an oil crisis, the 1975 Regal offered a standard V6 engine at a time when other mid-size sedans offered only gas-thirstier V8s.

• 1983-1992: Buick's lightweight, high-tech V6 engines, mixed with the brand's success in NASCAR, resulted in the brand's most iconic performance car, the 1987 GNX. Its 276-hp turbocharged and intercooled V6 delivered 0-60 mph acceleration in just 4.6 seconds, according to *Car and Driver* magazine.

• 1993-2002: A 1999 Century was Buick's first model built in China for the local market. Although Buick has a long reputation as a prestigious brand in China (one in six cars on Shanghai roads in 1930 were Buicks, according to the city's government), production there has driven the brand's success over the past decade. China is now Buick's largest market, with 700,007 vehicles sold in 2012.

• 2003-2012: The 2008 Enclave luxury crossover ushered in Buick's current design language and brand focus. Along with the LaCrosse luxury sedan, which went on sale as a 2010 model, the

Enclave introduced buyers to a new era of Buicks with "leading design, quietness, quality and safety."

Personally, Richards said, his favorite Buick of all time is the Grand National, a variant of the Buick Regal that came out in the 1980s.

He said he liked its "more performance"-oriented ride.

His favorite current Buick is the Enclave. He said that as a father of three, he likes how it's a "nice people hauler."

Overall, Richards said, Buick's brand has made something of a comeback in the last five years. The average buyer age dropped from 64 to 57. Sales in May of 2013 were up 9.9 percent com-

pared with May of 2013.

Calendar year-to-date, brand sales are up 16 percent compared with the same time in 2012. That beats GM's overall sales increase number of 9.9 percent, Richardson said.

And Buick's brand in China is also doing well. Last year, the company sold 700,000 Buicks in China, compared with about 180,000 in North America.

"Buicks are seen as status symbols there," Richards said. "In China, people pay cash for cars, and the vehicle is supposed to say something about the buyer and the buyer's family."

Overall, as much as Buick has a storied past, it also has a bright future, Richards said.

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