



Toyota Prius



# Cy-Fair Family SEDANS

*Written by Don Armstrong*

After years of being in love with our gas-gulping SUV's, more and more Cy-Fairians are finding that the good old family sedan is a not-so-bad multi-tasker after all. In this edition of Cy-Fair Magazine we review a few of the most popular models your neighbors are considering for the New Year.

## Mileage Maker

When you think of high mileage hybrid sedans, the Toyota Prius has to be the most recognizable moniker on the automotive landscape. Combining a super efficient gasoline engine with a renewable energy source - batteries - the Prius is able to obtain 50 MPG, a truly remarkable feat.

The 2010 Prius has been completely redesigned to address a few shortcomings of the previous models. The body is longer and sleeker, pulled tight across a stiffer framework, giving it an even more wind-cheating appearance. Toyota offers five different trim levels starting with the base "II," culminating at the loaded "V" level. But loaded doesn't mean "everything". It just means all of the combined trim levels including alloy wheels. The Advanced Technology Package adds another \$4,500 to the bottom line.

The heart and soul of the 2010 Prius remains its power plant, a 1.8-liter gasoline engine combined with a nickel-metal hydride battery pack that delivers a combined 134-HP to the front wheels via a continuously variable transmission. If conserving energy, while creating a small carbon footprint is what you're after, then a \$22,000 investment will put one in your garage.

## Max-A-Million

Sports cars are typically thought of as having two doors instead of four, but Nissan is trying to change that notion with its Maxima luxury sedan. Again, you may be thinking, "Nissan and luxury don't go together." Again we say, "they're trying to change that conception too."

The current generation Maxima is now in its second year of production with few changes from the 2009 model. But why change something that is this good? No reason to, in our mind. One super sexy sedan is the best way to describe the Maxima. Styling is cutting edge, but not over-the-top. Its aerodynamic, NASCAR-like front clip will draw applause from your car-buff friends and family members, as will its opulent interior.

Powering the Maxima is a potent 3.5-liter V-6 engine that cranks out 290-HP, yet gets 19 MPG-city, 26-highway. A CVT or continuously variable transmission transfers power to the front wheels. Nay Sayers can rejoice knowing that Nissan figured out a way to make its CVT feel like it's actually shifting through six gear speeds via steering wheel mounted paddle shifters. Maxima pricing starts at \$30,160.

## Refined Design

Bigger, better and a delight to drive, a description that all too often eludes mid-size sedans, but fits the 2010 Subaru Legacy to a tee. The Legacy is another complete redesign in the very crowded family sedan category. Although it can boast of a longer wheelbase, it's rear seat legroom that gains the most from the added length, not to mention a more comfortable ride.

Creating a distinctive, yet attractive, modern design is only one of the reasons to put this Subaru on your shopping list. The renowned full-time all-wheel drive system can't be beat. Couple that with no fewer than three engines and three transmissions that are packaged in eight trim levels and you've got some decision making to do.



Subaru Legacy



Hyundai Genesis



Nissan Maxima



Honda Insight

Unless you're buying an exotic, engines alone don't usually tip the scale in the purchasing decision, but Subaru is among the few automakers that rely on a Boxer-style engine configuration. This horizontally opposed configuration is not only powerful, but lowers the center of gravity to help in the handling department. Starting at \$20,995, the all-new Subaru Legacy is in the game.

## More family sedan players

### Honda Insight

After a ten-year absence, the Honda Insight is back, this time as a hybrid. Going head-to-head against Toyota's Prius, this high-mileage look-alike gets kudos on a \$19,800 starting price along with its 42-MPG.

### Hyundai Genesis

The most impressive luxury sport sedan on the market, the all-new Genesis wins in almost every way. Although the Hyundai brand hasn't been top-of-mind, it will be now with this stunner. Begins at \$32,250.

### Ford Fusion

Move this mid-sizer to the head of the class of the most popular models, including lettermen Honda Accord and Chevy Malibu. Starting at \$19,620, the All-American gets a freshened look for 2010. **CFM**

*DON ARMSTRONG'S knowledge and life-long love affair with motorsports has earned him the reputation of being one of the area's most respected automotive journalists. He's a member of the Texas Auto Writer's Association.*



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