

# Warming up to New Winter Rides

A wonderland of dependable choices for Cy-families

Written by Don Armstrong



Value, mileage, and quality are gaining strength with Cy-Fair auto consumers, as manufacturers work to keep up with demand in a struggling economy. Here are a few of the vehicles that offer what Cy-Fair families are looking for in dependable and comfortable transportation this winter.

## Sporty Focus

Although it took Ford too long to bring the all-new Focus to the U.S. from Europe, it's here now and America is a better place for it. The Focus comes in sedan and hatchback models. Quality is its strong suit, both inside and out. From paint to fit and finish, the Focus can easily go head to head with any of its compact competitors, domestic or import. Trim levels range from the S, available only on the sedan, to the Titanium Premium, with leather, a six-way power driver's seat, rear parking sensors, and the optional Sync System.

The Focus's 2.0-liter, I-4 engine delivers 160 horsepower to the front wheels through a five-speed manual or six-speed automatic transmission. The Super Fuel Economy package lists 28 miles per gallon city and 40 miles per gallon highway. If you like sporty, European-style handling, room behind the back seats for the family and groceries, and hauling capability with the seats folded down,

then the Focus is a must-see – if you can find one left on the lot. Sedan pricing starts at \$16,500 and hatchback models start at \$18,200.

## Luxurious Infiniti G25

We'd all love to have a luxury sedan in the garage, but for many it's just not financially viable – until now. And no, this isn't a stripped-down model. The Infiniti G25 Sedan was all new for the 2011 model year. It shares the same dynamic exterior, interior, and chassis as the popular G37, but with a smaller 2.5-liter, DOHC 24-valve, V6 engine that produces 218 horsepower. Posted fuel economy figures list 20 miles per gallon city and 29 miles per gallon highway.

The G25 Sedan comes with a standard seven-speed automatic transmission and is available in both rear-wheel drive and intelligent all-wheel drive. Three G25 Sedan models are offered, including the G25 Sedan, G25 Sedan Journey, and G25x Sedan AWD. The G25 Sedan's extensive list of standard equipment includes leather-appointed seating, Shodo aluminum interior trim, an eight-way power driver's seat, a four-way power front passenger's seat, automatic temperature control, a premium audio system with six speakers, and 17-inch aluminum-alloy wheels. If that doesn't pique

Toyota Prius



Hyundai Veloster



Infiniti G25



Buick LaCrosse

your interest, then perhaps the pricing will. Starting at \$32,000, the G25 may be the financial “sleeper” of the 2012 model year.

### Versatile Prius V

There’s a new Toyota Prius arriving at dealerships now, called the Prius V, as in versatile, which it is. The all-new 2012 Prius V is not a rehash of the current sedan, but a much larger car that is more of a wagon than its hatch/sedan stable mate. By bigger we mean height, width, and length. Bigger on the outside means more room on the inside, but instead of boring you with ridiculous cubic feet illustrations or shoulder, headroom, and cargo figures, our suggestion is a stop at the Toyota store to see for yourself.

One thing that is carried over from the standard Prius is Toyota’s proven hybrid propulsion system, a combination of a 1.8-liter gasoline engine, a nickel hydride battery pack, and an electric motor driving the front wheels. This proven marriage delivers an impressive 44 miles per gallon city and 40 miles per gallon highway.

As with all other models in the Toyota lineup, the Prius V is not short of option packages, so pick what fits your lifestyle and budget and pick one accordingly. Pricing begins at \$26,400. CFM

*DON ARMSTRONG’S knowledge and lifelong 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.*



## More winter picks for your family

### Hyundai Veloster

The 2012 Veloster is all-new in the compact coupe segment, with a unique third door for easy rear-seat access. Gets 40 miles per gallon highway and may get Dad to work just like the 25-year-old neighbor. Does the \$17,300 starting price have you thinking?

### Nissan Leaf

Not a hybrid, but a pure electric, the Leaf is a game-changer for the automotive world. Traveling up to 100 miles on a single charge, this type of car may be America’s answer to becoming energy independent. Pricing starts at \$32,780.

### Buick LaCrosse

If you think this is your dad’s old Buick, therapy may be in order. The LaCrosse not only can run with the luxury crowd, in many ways it leads. The new model is sharp looking inside and out, with all the amenities for a long road trip. Pricing begins at \$29,960.

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Ford Focus

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