

Ford Eyes Demand for 5-Door Cars

DEARBORN – Customers seeking more versatile vehicles with better fuel economy are finding what they're looking for in hatchbacks and U.S. sales of these popular five-door cars continues to skyrocket.

It's a trend reflected in sales of two of Ford's hottest-selling cars.

Approximately 50 percent of retail sales of the 2011 Fiesta have been for hatchbacks. On the market for just a few months, 41 percent of retail sales for the all-new 2012 Focus have been for the hatchback – a number Ford expects to continue rising.

"The hatchback is hitting an unmet need for versatility as people continue to downsize their vehicles," said Paul Russell, Focus brand manager. "No other competitor in the top five of total market share offers a hatchback option in the small car segment."

The total number of hatchbacks available in the U.S. market increased 63 percent between model years 2006 and 2010, going from 291,853 to 475,048, according to Ward's Auto World data.

"American car buyers have become appreciative of the convenience and flexibility that hatchback body styles offer after years of owning SUVs and crossovers," said George Pipas, Ford sales analyst. "Combined with the generation of younger drivers who

have been exposed to popular high-performance hatchback offerings in Europe and Asia, we may be seeing the beginning of a shift in buyer acceptance of hatchbacks."

Unsure of how the market would react to new hatchback offerings, Ford prepared itself by investing in flexible plant capacity.

This flexibility, the automaker says, ensures Ford is able to react quickly to changing tastes, providing a vehicle mix – hatchback or sedan, base model or fully loaded Titanium – to serve varied customer demands.

Today's hatchbacks offer more cargo space than sedans. The five-door Focus hatchback provides an additional 10.6 cubic feet compared with the sedan model and features a wide cargo opening and fold-flat load floor.

The Focus delivers up to 40 mpg on the highway. Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com recommended the 2012 Focus hatchback as a ride that's fit for students who long for the open road, due in part to the extra cargo room afforded by the hatchback design.

The five-door Fiesta hatchback also brings additional cargo room to the table, providing 15.4 cubic feet of space.

"Our fun, vibrant Fiesta customers like the versatility of the hatchback's access to cargo both inside and outside



The 5-door 2011 Ford Fiesta. Sales of 5-door hatchbacks, including the Fiesta and Focus, have been rising significantly of late for the Dearborn automaker. Ford marketers say this is so because of the customer-friendly versatility built into their 5-door offerings.

the vehicle," said Sherryl Brightwell, Fiesta brand manager.

"The additional square footage allows the on-the-go customer the ability to maximize cargo space when needed."

The hatchback Fiesta is styled to have a "sporty, Euro-racing" feel, along with impressive fuel economy that delivers up to 40 mpg.

Ford Fiesta and Focus hatchbacks offer more than additional space.

The all-new 2012 Ford Focus redefines the small car category with impressive fuel economy, distinctive design and strong driving dynamics.

Focus offers class-exclusive technologies and first-to-

market features such as hands-free SYNC, MyFord Touch driver connect technology, push-button start, and six-speed PowerShift automatic transmission, along with heated and leather-trimmed seats and active park assist.

The Fiesta offers a vibrant, expressive design and a global track record that redefines small car expectations for customers, along with 15 class-exclusive technologies and features.

The Ford Fiesta and Focus recently were named to Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com 2011 Top 10 Coolest New Cars Under \$18,000 list.

Combined sales for the Fiesta and Focus in June were 26,920, up 66 percent from June 2010.

Fiesta sales were 5,535 and Focus sales were 21,385, up 41 percent from the prior June – making it the best-selling Ford car of the month.

Ford NASCAR Driver Bayne Seeks a Victory

By CHRIS JENKINS
AP Sports Writer

ELKHART LAKE, Wis. (AP) – Despite the sudden stardom that came with his wild victory in NASCAR's biggest race, Trevor Bayne's future is anything but settled.

This much is clear: The youngest-ever Daytona 500 winner wants to race full time in the Sprint Cup Series next season. And as he returns to Daytona International Speedway this weekend, Bayne acknowledges he's keeping an eye on Carl Edwards' impending free agency.

Edwards has been coy about his contract situation at Roush Fenway Racing and there has been speculation he could move to another team in 2012.

"I don't know what he's going to do, but obviously I love having him as a teammate," Bayne said. "I want him to stay. On the other hand, if he leaves, it's an open seat."

Just the kind of opportunity Bayne is looking for.

Bayne drives for Roush in the Nationwide Series and is running a part-time Cup schedule with the Roush-affiliated Wood Brothers team. If Bayne were to make a full-time move to Cup next year, Roush would be the natural place to do so.

But Bayne says nothing has been decided and he's getting a little antsy.

"I just talked to my dad about it," Bayne said during a break in the Nationwide Series race weekend at Road America. "I was like, 'Man, it's about time for us to start talk-

ing about next year.' And we haven't yet at all. Hopefully that'll be the next conversation that we have."

On the track, Bayne is confident going into Daytona – if only because he knows other drivers will be more willing to work with him in the draft. Bayne doesn't want to get cocky, because that's not how he got to victory lane in February.

"I went in there with the mindset of just finish the thing, just go out and survive and whatever happens, I'll be there at the end," Bayne said. "You've got to hold yourself back because if you go in there thinking 'I'm going to win this thing,' you might get in trouble trying to lead every lap or whatever. I think I've got to just go there and think, 'All right, let's just ride and wait until the end like last time and we'll be all right.'"

Winning Daytona was an emotional high for Bayne, but it didn't last long. He soon found himself in the Mayo Clinic being treated for what he now believes was Lyme disease.

"They treated me for Lyme disease," Bayne said. "Those kinds of things are hard to diagnose. They treated me for that and hopefully if that's what it was, it'll be fine."

Bayne hopes he's in the clear, but can't be sure.

"You're never in the clear," he said. "The first time it comes around, you don't expect it, you feel great. I went hiking the day before and went jumping in waterfalls, and I wake up the next morning and I'm messed up."

Buyers of GMC Vehicles Now Enjoying Higher Residual Value than Before

DETROIT – The overall residual value of GMC vehicles – what a vehicle is worth after three years on the road – is outpacing the competition and reducing the total cost of ownership for GMC customers.

According to General Motors' Residual Value Management's performance report based on ALG's 36-month data for July/August, the forecasted depreciation for GMC vehicles is lower than its competitors and lower than the same time a year ago.

"Resale value is one of the most important considerations among today's knowledgeable car buyers as it can literally save consumers thou-

sands of dollars over the life of the vehicle," said Brian Sweeney, U.S. vice president of Buick GMC Sales and Service.

"GMC's Professional Grade vehicles continue to deliver great value for our customers."

GMC's 2011 model year residual values beat its competitive set by 0.6 points and improved by 0.5 points over the brand's 2010 average. The improvement is due in part to a strong performance by GMC's smaller SUV and crossover models, Terrain and Acadia.

Acadia earned a 3.2-point improvement compared to the average of its competi-

tors, including Toyota Highlander, Honda Pilot and Ford Flex. Terrain earned a 1.2-point lead over the average residuals for its competitive set, including Nissan Murano, Hyundai Santa Fe and Ford Edge.

GMC's improved residual value performance has been acknowledged externally as well. Kelley Blue Book named the Acadia the best resale value in the full-size utility vehicle category for 2011.

In addition, GMC earned the top truck brand honor in Vincentric's seventh annual "Best Value in America" awards, based on calculations of total cost of ownership relative to price.

MIS Holds Annual 9/11 Blood Drive

BROOKLYN – The American Red Cross and Michigan International Speedway will once again partner for the 10th annual Spirit of America Blood Drive on Sunday, September 11 at the speedway in Brooklyn, Mich.

The blood drive is open to the public; appointments are needed to donate. To best accommodate your schedule, it is recommended to make an appointment as soon as possible. The drive runs from 6:15 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 11 at MIS.

Appointments may be

made by calling 1-800-YOUGAVE (1-800-968-4283) or visiting www.SpiritOfAmericaBloodDrive.com

"We are so proud that this event, dedicated to the victims and survivors of the 2001 terrorist attacks, continues to grow," said Sharon Jaksa, CEO of the American Red Cross Great Lakes Blood Services Region.

"Last year was our largest year ever and we wouldn't be able to put this event on without the tremendous support from Michigan International Speedway, our volunteers,

blood donors and the community."

Since its inception in 2002, the Spirit of America Blood Drive has grown into one of the largest 9-11 blood drives in the nation with more than 1,300 pints of blood collected just last year. In the past nine years, more than 7,546 pints of blood have been collected at the Spirit of America Drive, positively affecting more than 22,638 lives. This year, all presenting donors receive a Spirit of America gift bag, Culver's lunch in the Champions Club presented by CP Federal.

Auto Show Vendor George P. Johnson Designs FIAT 'Studio'

AUBURN HILLS – The FIAT brand's Gallery was named the 2011 Best Pop-up Brand Pavilion by *Event Design Magazine*, showcasing the carmaker's risk-taking and unconventional approach to engaging customers.

In taking home a Gold Event Design Award, the FIAT Gallery beat out numerous high-quality campaigns submitted by other brands and agencies from across the globe.

Created with its experiential partners, George P. Johnson and Impatto, the FIAT Gallery was designed to become a destination for visitors to immerse themselves in the FIAT brand's Italian style and heritage and to experience first-hand the new Fiat 500 and Fiat 500 Cabrio.

"We are honored to be awarded by *Event Design Magazine*," said Laura Soave, head of FIAT Brand North America.

"As the FIAT brand progressively expands its presence in the North American market, we will continue to engage current and potential customers with highly targeted experiential initiatives that are as unique as our vehicle and that help to tell the story of the brand."

Located in the renowned SoHo arts and fashion district of Manhattan, the FIAT Gallery served as a hub of entertainment and an engaging, relaxing way to experience the FIAT brand first-hand.

The brand converted a well-known gallery space into a multi-day, style-driven cultural and entertainment center marketed to artists, musicians, designers, authors and other influential tastemakers and potential customers.

The exhibition showcased the rich heritage of the Fiat 500 through a series of original design sketches and the

presence of a vintage Fiat 500 as well as the new Fiat 500 in hatchback and cabrio versions.

Through social media promotion and word-of-mouth, large audiences enjoyed daytime events such as artist showings and test drives of the all-new 2012 Fiat 500, while at night the space turned into one of the city's hottest music venues, featuring live acts from well-known DJs to internationally recognized performers.

The opening of the FIAT Gallery was timed to occur simultaneously with the opening of the 2011 New York International Auto Show in April.

Meanwhile, GPJ describes its own modern, 21st century corporate philosophy, as posted on its Web site, as follows:

"There is no form of media, no form of interaction that can stir the psyche and move people to action in quite the same way as a personal encounter," GPJ writes.

"There is simply no replacement for the quality of connection achievable through face-to-face dialogue for building deep relationships. People of all backgrounds have an inherent need for human contact, to engage with each other and interact around powerful ideas. When gathered in shared purpose, the experience has the depth of power to transform perceptions, create indelible impressions and build the bonds of relationship that move people to action.

"Yet, as true as it is that there's no more powerful connection than that made in person, it's also true that there's an equally irreplaceable efficiency of initiating, nurturing and maintaining connection through the many capabilities of digital technol-



George P. Johnson gave Fiat a fluid design for its new "studios," as the automaker is calling its new car dealerships across the U.S.

ogy. From initial contact with individuals to building connections and communities of interest, digital capabilities deliver the power of extended reach, expanded dialogue and enhanced community, all built on the foundation of the kind of ubiquity and continuity only affordable and practical through online technology.

"When integrated together, the separate powers of live and digital interactions unite to enable a whole new strength of efficiency and effectiveness in building deep and lasting relationships previously only dreamt of.

George P. Johnson's success in helping FIAT with its new car dealerships is similar in kind to other auto show vendors, some of whom have found new contracts and new life by becoming set-builders for Hollywood movies being made in Michigan.



Early visitors to Fiat's swanky studios (new car dealerships) have said they feel as much like ritzy nightclubs as they do a traditional showroom floor. Vendor George P. Johnson helped with design.