

# Detroit Auto Scene ROAD REPORT

## 'Everything Has a Purpose' in Verano

BY GERALD SCOTT  
NEWS DEPT.

Behold the 2012 Verano – an automobile that's entirely new from Buick: a 21st century compact car.

Actually, the Verano is Buick's first such compact since it closed out the old-school Skylark back in 1997. But maybe the only thing that Skylark and Verano have in common is that first name of "Buick."

We had a test car for a week and found it to be a surprising delight to drive. Since Verano is an all-new vehicle and all-new name, we really didn't have any preconceived notions about what it might offer, but we were delighted to drive it all the same.

It's build at the GM Orion Township plant as a four-door, five-passenger compact sedan.

Our test car came with a 2.4L DOHC engine (14) mated to a six-speed automatic transmission. The engine can run on E85 ethanol, by the way.

All in all, the car handled exceptionally well on the road – it just hugged the highway on a recent out-of-state drive and it offers 32 mpg hwy. / 21 mpg city and the vehicle hit those marks.

It comes with 18-inch, machine-faced alloy wheels and those big tires probably account for part of the smooth ride, that and the 2.4L engine that's more than adequate in pushing the svelte, 3,300-lb. car around the motorways.

Verano comes with a 15-gallon gas tank, so it doesn't feel like you're gassing up every 20 minutes, even when you're taking an extended drive on the expressway (compared to, say, the Chevrolet Volt, which has a 9.3-gallon tank).

If you can find an ethanol pump, you can get even more savings because ethanol these days is running about 50 cents to a dollar or so below regular gas, so on a 15-gallon tank, the savings from ethanol can add up.

Meanwhile, it's a Buick, described by the press kit as a luxury sedan, so it has to have the feel and comfort and convenience to match, right?

Mostly it does. The interior layout is professional and all of the buttons and whistles are within normal reach.

For that matter, inside the Verano you'll find that everything has a purpose. From the premium-level materials to the right amount of trunk space, it seems that Buick designers went out of their way to make Verano comfortable and purposeful. One will find premium craftsmanship and design everywhere you look, along with exceptional seat comfort.

Both driver and passenger

seats have the three-tiered heated seat function with the control button summoning either hot, hotter or toast as your aching back or bones see and feel fit.

From our view, Buick began remaking itself in a major way about a decade ago when it debuted the Buick Rendezvous and then refreshed its entire lineup around that, even though the Rendezvous has gone away since then.

The Verano comes into today's Buick lineup just below the Regal and it competes against the likes of the Audi A3, Volvo S40, Lexus IS250 and Acura TSX.

So the competition was fierce even before the first Verano came off the assembly line in Orion Township.

At first and second glances, it does appear that the Verano will compete nicely against its more well-established rivals.

The Verano is loaded with a variety of technology and safety features, but not so much that it gets in the way of



PHOTOS: BILL SPRINGER

**Buick Verano comes with a crisp, well-laid-out interior.**

a smooth ride or otherwise confuses the driver or front passengers.

Remember, beginning with the Rendezvous a decade ago and up through its current car-heavy lineup, Buick is chasing a much younger and hipper buyer.

This means that modern technology has to be baked into the vehicle in such a fashion as to be seamless. Buick has put its in-vehicle technical offerings under the umbrella of Intellilink, which manages a suite of technologies ranging from voice recognition and Bluetooth phone



2012 Buick Verano.

2012 BUICK VERANO FWD

- Base Price: \$25,965
- As Tested: \$27,175
- Engine: 2.4LDOHC4-cyl.
- Mileage: 32 hwy/21 city
- Length: 183 inches
- Wheelbase: 105.7 inches
- Trans: 6-speed auto
- Curb Wt.: 3,300 lbs.
- Built at: GM Orion Twp.

OPTIONS:

- The 1SL package is included in the base price, crystal red paint (\$325), and destination charge (\$885).

operations to Pandora, Stitcher SmartRadio, Sirius XM satellite channels and more.

The Verano not only has OnStar, which most everybody is familiar with these days, but also the aforementioned Pandora Internet Radio, which the 30-and-under crowd especially adores.

Pandora allows the user to listen to personalized radio stations based on favorite artists or genres.

With Pandora, drivers are asked to download the Pandora app to one's smartphone and then restart it (the phone, not the car).

You then listen to your smartphone's customized song list wirelessly linked to the stereo system in your Verano.

Some of the above might frighten seniors who have long been patrons of Buick but the younger audience, as the saying goes, "gets it."

Finally, as Buicks go, the Verano is entirely get-able: our test car came in at a \$25,000 base price and was out the door at \$27,175.

So let's pause here and consider how much the automotive world has changed when Buick is not only promoting a

compact car these days – but one with a 4-cylinder engine that gets 32 mpg on the highway all the same. Buick, once synonymous with large land boats, is lately among the most svelte of GM divisions and overall car offerings.

Verano, indeed, represents just how much the GM and Buick car worlds have changed – and all for the better, we might add.

So there you go – a Buick luxury four-door compact sedan priced under \$30,000 with seat warmers that will toast your buns.

So to speak.

## Chevrolet Redesigns the 2014 Impala and Its Emblem As Well

NEW YORK – The Chevrolet Impala has proudly worn the image of the leaping African antelope for which it was named as an emblem in some form since its debut in 1958. With the all-new 2014 Impala, the emblem evolves to complement the more modern, athletic design of the 10th-generation full-size sedan.

The Impala emblem is an enduring symbol of the nameplate. It is one of only two vehicles – the Corvette and its crossed-flags emblem is the other – in the Chevrolet lineup to have a unique symbol in addition to the brand's signature bowtie.

The design and placement of the emblem has gradually transformed with each version while maintaining a connection to the previous one.

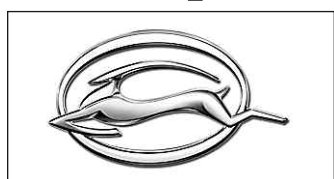
"For the new Impala, we wanted to evolve the emblem to complement the new vehicle

design without making any radical changes to its character," said Joann Kallio, lead creative designer for Chevrolet global badging.

"We kept the stylized interpretation of the animal, and made the impala more muscular. We also added defined edges, to give the impala a sleek form and make it look like it was running fast."

The new Impala emblem has a bright chrome finish to match the bright chrome of the car's bowties, located in the grille and on the decklid. Special attention was paid to how the highlights flow across the leaping Impala badge surface, following the contour of the form of the impala, enhancing the overall appearance and illusion of movement.

There are two versions of the new emblem, one for each side of the vehicle so the ani-



*The leaping African Impala, for which Chevrolet named its full-size sedan in 1958, has been used as an emblem in some fashion on every Impala since the car was introduced 54 years ago. The emblem for the 2014 model to go on sale in 2013 evolves to complement the more modern, athletic design of the 10th-generation full-size sedan.*



*The Chevrolet Impala has proudly worn the image of the leaping African antelope in some form or another since it's debut in 1958. Between 1962 and 1967, the leaping impala was located on either the front or rear quarter panel and had a circle surrounding it.*

2014 Impala goes on sales in early 2013.

Chevrolet's redesigned flagship sedan was designed to offer dramatic styling, a more refined interior, easy-to-use technology and engaging driving dynamics.

Meanwhile, from 1958 to 1961, the leaping impala was located on the rear quarter panel and had no circle or oval surrounding it.

From 1962 to 1967, it was located on the front or rear quarter panel with a circle

surrounding it.

From 1968 to 1985, there were no exterior emblems. Only variations of the Impala script were used.

The emblem was reserved for the interior, usually on the dashboard and horn button although it was not used for every model year.

The 1994-1996 Impala SS had the emblem with an oval located on sail panel.

Since 2002, Impalas have featured the emblem with an oval located on the sail panel.

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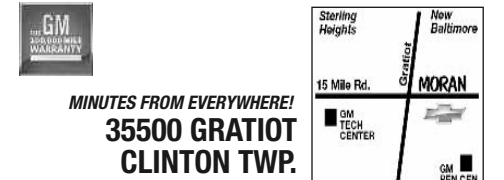
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