

Big 3 Make KBB's List of 'Top 10' in Best Resale Value

by Jim Stickford

Thanks to Kelley Blue Book's internet listings of vehicles with the best residual value, Nov. 18 was a big day for the Big Three as all of Detroit's manufacturers placed vehicles at the top of the list.

kbb.com named the 2014 Jeep Wrangler and 2014 Dodge Challenger winners of its 2014 Best Resale Value Awards. For the fourth consecutive year, Jeep Wrangler has been named Best Resale Value in its class and ranked on the Top 10 list for the third year in a row.

With record setting sales numbers month-over-month this year, Dodge Challenger also earned a spot on this year's Top 10 list of vehicles with the best resale value.

"Jeep continues to dominate in its segment and among the top 10 list, increasing its residual value 3.9 percentage points from just last year," said Eric Ibara, director of residual consulting for Kelley Blue Book.

"New to this year's list is the Dodge Challenger, which heavily contributes to Dodge's success for the 2014 model year, along with other strong vehicles from the brand."

Ibara also said that in addition to Chrysler's success, both Ford and GM had a number of vehicles that made KBB's list.

"I believe that seeing so many Big Three vehicles on our list is a continuation of a turnaround that we've been seeing for the past couple of years," Ibara said.

"What we've observed is that the vehicles that have been redesigned have improved resale value and the Detroit manufacturers have put a lot of time and money during the past few years redesigning their lineups."

Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com Best Resale Value Awards are based on projections from the Kelley Blue Book Official Residual Value Guide and determined by a skilled staff of automotive analysts, Ibara said.

These honored vehicles are expected to maintain the greatest proportion of their original list

Late-Month Surge Boosts Big Three's November Sales

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vehicles – particularly with our passenger cars and utilities in conquest coastal markets – helping us post our best November retail sales performance since 2004," said John Felice, Ford vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service.

"Fusion and Fiesta were particular standouts, setting November records, and Ford trucks kept their strong selling pace."

Fusion sales of 22,839 vehicles for the month are up 51 percent year over year, for the car's best-ever November sales performance, Merkle said. Fusion sales continue to expand fastest in the western U.S., where retail sales are up 79 percent. Fiesta also had its best-ever November sales performance with 4,642 vehicles sold.

Ford F-Series continued its pace of selling more than 60,000 trucks for the seventh straight month, strengthening its position as America's best-selling pickup and best-selling vehicle for another consecutive year, Merkle said. Sales of 65,501 F-Series trucks in November represent an increase of 16 percent compared with a year ago.

Lincoln MKZ sales of 2,854 cars represent a 114 percent increase compared with the same period a year ago.

price after five years of ownership.

"Chrysler Group is honored that Kelley Blue Book has named the 2014 Jeep Wrangler and 2014 Dodge Challenger winners of its Best Resale Value Awards," said Reid Bigland, head of Chrysler's U.S. Sales. "These prestigious awards serve as great recognition of our commitment to producing quality, reliable, and desirable products, all while maintaining great resale value."

GM also did well. The 2014 Impala was listed as one of the top three vehicles to keep residual value in the full-sized category.

KBB wrote of it, "Style, value, quality and quiet never lose their allure, and the totally redesigned Chevrolet Impala sedan embodies all of these gifts in a roomy 4-door package."

Other GM vehicles that placed high on KBB's list included the 2014 Corvette Stingray, the 2014 Camaro and the 2014 Silverado.

Ibara said he was surprised that the Impala rose a lot on the list so quickly.

"Last year, the Impala was just a non-descript vehicle," Ibara said. "It wasn't bad or anything, but it wasn't at the top of the list."

"With its redesign, it went from the bottom of its segment to

hitting one of the top spots."

But that is often the case with a vehicle that's been redesigned, Ibara said.

The improvements made to a well-designed vehicle increases its residual value. That's certainly what happened with the Stingray.

"I'll tell you this," Ibara said, "when we were test-driving the Stingray in Southern California, people would drive up next to us just to get a look at the Stingray, which was very new to the market. It's a sharp, good-looking car."

GM spokesman Jim Cain said the KBB list was a reflection of the hard work GM has put into improving its vehicles.

"A good way to think of this is to look at car sales as the ultimate left brain/right brain sales decision," Cain said.

"You have to connect with the buyer on an emotional level through design and performance. But you also have to deliver good value and not just on day one."

"Our customers want cars that will hold their value over the years. This has required us to step up our game with higher-quality vehicles."

"We've also been disciplined with fleet sales and incentives.

Those have an effect on residual values."

Ultimately, Cain said, GM has been able to deliver quality vehicles that their customers can trust over time. The end result has been that people can make an emotional decision on what GM car to buy without regret.

Ford spokesman Wes Sherwood said that Ford's placement of the 2014 Fusion and the 2014 Fusion Energi, as well as the 2014 Ford Transit Connect van, on the KBB's list is a reflection of a trend Ford people have been noticing for a while.

"Overall, our vehicles' resale values have been trending up-

ward across its line of vehicles," Sherwood said. "A hallmark of our recent marketing and sales strategy has been to better serve our customers with vehicles that are fresh and are leaders in fuel economy, safety, quality and smart technology."

"This focus can be seen in the 2014 Fusion. It's at the top of the KBB list and it has been a great symbol of what we've done with our vehicles across the board."

"Not only have Fusion sales increased, a lot of the buyers are 'coastal' customers. These are buyers on the East and West Coasts that we haven't seen in a while."



2014 Impala



2014 Ford Fusion



2014 Dodge Challenger

Ford Debuts New Mustang to Celebrate 50th Anniversary

To celebrate 50 years of the Mustang, Ford simultaneously revealed the newest version of the pony car around the globe in six cities on four continents.

"Ford Mustang inspires passion like no other car," said Raj Nair, Ford group vice president, Global Product Development. "The visceral look, sound and performance of Mustang resonates with people, even if they've never driven one."

"Mustang is definitely more than just a car. It is the heart and soul of Ford."

Mustang's impact goes well beyond the 9 million-plus cars sold in its 50 years of continuous production, Nair said, pointing out that it has made thousands of appearances in film, television, music and video games, and is the world's most-liked vehicle on Facebook. For the first time ever, Ford will bring Mustang to customers in key parts of Europe and Asia.

"We crafted this car with the goal of creating a contemporary interpretation of Mustang – an American automotive icon that symbolizes optimism and freedom for millions of people around the world," said Jim Farley, executive vice president of Ford Global Marketing, Sales and Service and Lincoln.

"You only get one chance to make a first impression, and when you see this car, you immediately see a Mustang strong and true," said Moray Callum, Ford executive director, Design, The Americas.

He said there are several key

design features that define the all-new Mustang, including:

- A lower, wider stance with a reduction in roof height, and wider rear fenders and track;
- The return of Mustang fastback with a sleeker profile enabled by more steeply sloped windshield and rear glass;
- Three-dimensional, tri-bar taillamps with sequential turn signals;
- Contemporary execution of the signature shark-bite front fascia and trapezoidal grille.

Mustang convertible drivers will appreciate the standard multilayer insulated cloth top that gives the car a more upscale appearance and a quieter cabin. The new top lowers twice as fast as before, and has a sleeker profile when folded for open-air motoring, Nair said.

The information and controls an active driver needs are all readily accessible in the aviation-inspired cockpit, which is executed with the highest degree of craftsmanship ever found in a Mustang, said Ford spokesman Ian Hall.

The way Mustang looks, drives and sounds is key to the visceral experience that makes drivers just want to get in and hit the road, Hall said.

With more options to choose from, there is a Mustang to fit any lifestyle.

The upgraded V6 and V8 are joined by an all-new 2.3-liter EcoBoost engine that brings state-of-the-art technology to Mustang, said Hall.

"This EcoBoost engine delivers where a Mustang driver expects it to, with a broad, flat torque curve that pours out when you stand on it for easy passing or hustling down a twisty road," said Dave Pericak, Ford Mustang chief engineer.

The Mustang EcoBoost engine

uses direct injection, variable cam timing and turbocharging to deliver plenty of usable performance and projected segment-leading fuel efficiency, Pericak said. A unique intake manifold and turbocharger housing enable it to deliver the performance Mustang drivers expect with output projected at more than 305 horsepower and 300 lb.-ft. of torque.

"We already set a very high standard for Mustang's dynamics with Boss 302, and our goal was to go above and beyond that with this new car," said Pericak.

Mustang features all-new front and rear suspension systems.

At the front, a new perimeter subframe helps to stiffen the structure while reducing mass, providing a better foundation for more predictable wheel control that benefits handling, steering and ride, Pericak said.

The new double-ball-joint front MacPherson strut system also enables the use of larger, more powerful brakes. This is expected to be the best stopping Mustang yet, with three available brake packages.

At the rear is an all-new integral-link independent rear suspension. The geometry, springs, dampers and bushings all have been specifically modified and tuned for this high-performance application. New aluminum rear knuckles help reduce unsprung mass for improved ride and handling, said Hall.

April 17, 2014, marks the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the original Ford Mustang, and each 2015 model celebrates the milestone with a badge on the instrument panel that includes the galloping pony logo and the words, "Mustang – Since 1964."

Mustang will continue to be built in the United States at the Flat Rock (Mich.) Assembly Plant.

"From day one, we knew if we were going to build a new Mustang, we had to do it right," said Pericak.

"We built a new Mustang from the ground up that is quicker, better-looking, more refined and more efficient, without losing any of the raw appeal that people have associated with Mustang for half-a-century."



The 50th anniversary edition of the Mustang