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Stingray, Silverado Chosen as NAIAS Car, Truck of Year

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designs, innovative technologies and engaging performance in every vehicle that wears the bowtie."

The Corvette received 211 points, topping the Mazda3 with 185 points and the Cadillac CTS with 94 points, Doran said. The Silverado received 219 points, while the Jeep Cherokee had 174 points and the Acura MDX 97 points.

Presentation of the North American Car and Truck of the Year awards open media days each year at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. Forty-nine automotive journalists from the United States and Canada vote to recognize the most outstanding vehicles of the year based on factors including innovation, design, safety, handling, driver satisfaction and value for the dollar.

The new Corvette Stingray, Doran said, is the most powerful standard model ever, with 455 horsepower and 460 lb.-ft. of torque from a 6.2L V8 engine – and 460 horsepower, 465 lb.-ft. with the available performance exhaust system – enabling models with the available Z51 Performance Package to sprint from 0-60 in 3.8 seconds.

Silverado's available 5.3L EcoTec3 V8 generates 355 horsepower for confident towing and hauling, yet seamlessly switches to four cylinders to save fuel during light-load driving. With an EPA-estimated highway fuel economy of up to 23 mpg, Silverado offers the best fuel economy of any V8 pickup, said Chevy truck spokesman Tom Wilkin-son.

Ram 1500, Jeep Grand Cherokee Earn More Honors

Autobytel.com has named the 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee "SUV of the Year," while the 2014 Ram 1500 won the "Pickup Truck of the Year" award.

"For 2014, the Jeep Grand Cherokee embodies a readiness to head off into the hills as an affordable family hauler wrapped around class-leading interiors chockfull of the safety, technology and comfort features that set the Grand Cherokee at the top of the heap," said Michelle Naranjo, editor-in-chief, Autobytel.

"For the second year in a row, the award-winning Ram 1500 continues to bring fuel efficiency and tech in a bold package to the value shoppers and accomplishment seekers who want to get the job done right."

The Jeep Grand Cherokee was praised for its extensive model lineup, refinement and off-road capability, said Chrysler spokesman Patrick Hepsen, while the Ram 1500 was praised for its new EcoDiesel V6 engine, new eight-speed automatic transmission and standard rear coil suspension.

Chrysler 200 'Debuts New Face of Chrysler,' Says Gardner

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signed, engineered and built with pride in Michigan, Gardner said. With a major investment of more than \$1 billion, Chrysler Group's Sterling Heights Assembly Plant (SHAP), once slated for closure, sports an all-new paint shop using leading-edge technology, a new, fully robotic body shop and an upgraded assembly area, setting the stage for the world-class craftsmanship found in the all-new 200, he added.

Inspired American design and "beautifully crafted" inside and out, the 2015 Chrysler 200 is meant to transform what customers expect in a mid-size sedan, Gardner said. The 2015 200 sedan showcases the new face of Chrysler, and incorporates "timeless" design cues that let the car tell the story, he said.

The 200 is important to the Chrysler brand, Gardner said, because they are now "playing in the midsize car market, where everyone else is."

"In order to stand out with all that competition," Gardner said,

"we have to build the best car and get the word out. Just look at the new 200. It's beautiful on the outside, but a lot of midsize cars are beautiful on the outside. But look at the 200's interior. It's really good. We sweat the details."

Gardner credited Marchionne with focusing Chrysler on things like an exciting and detailed interior that are produced by the world-class manufacturing techniques brought over from Fiat.

Some of the details sweated by Chrysler engineers and designers, Gardner said, include clean, expressive surfaces.

"The 200 sedan, with its muscular yet soulful presence, embodies a strong, sculptured exterior that drivers will want to touch and feel," Gardner said. "The restrained design is not ornamental or full of line work. Instead, it showcases sensual lines and fluid surfaces, which highlight the coupe-like appearance."

The 2015 Chrysler 200 debuts the new "face of Chrysler," Gardner said. The grille and headlamps are integrated for the first time and the updated Chrysler



Al Gardner

badge has an emphasis on the wing, which is more defined. The signature light pipe or available full-LED daytime running lamps (DRL), LED fog lamps and standard LED taillamps give the all-new Chrysler 200 a distinctive, recognizable look coming and going.

And the next step after building great products like the 200, Gardner said, is getting the word out. And that's done by "spend-

ing a ton of money" on the various media. He pointed out that developing the new 200 took three years and a billion dollars. Stinting on money during the launch doesn't make sense.

"The launch part is fun," Gardner said. "We want to bring young customers in. The message we want to get out is that the 200 not only has an exciting exterior and a refined interior, it has the technology, such as UConnect, that people want in today's car. Basically, anything they want a car to do, the 200 can do."

And, Gardner said, the 200 has a nine-speed transmission, which is something that no other midsize car has. They've been able to take the premium technology that has proved successful and popular in the Jeep Grand Cherokee and transfer it to the mid-sized 200.

"We have adaptive cruise control, which allows the vehicle to stop without the driver having to put his foot on the brake," Gardner said. "Other mid-sized cars don't offer that."



Cadillac Design Director Andrew Smith unveils the brand's new 2015 ATS Coupe to hit dealerships this year.

Caddy's First Compact Luxury Coupe Debuts

Cadillac introduced the new 2015 ATS Coupe to the world at the 2014 NAIAS.

Bob Ferguson, senior vice president, Global Cadillac, called the ATS Coupe a quicker and more personal addition to the award-winning ATS product line.

Designed to be lighter, more agile and more engaging than its competitors, said Ferguson, it extends Cadillac's product-driven growth and the brand's tradition of dynamic luxury coupes.

"This is a brand new Cadillac," Ferguson said. "This is an era of growth for a brand that's more than 100 years old and it feels like it's a start-up."

Cadillac's first-ever compact luxury coupe goes on sale this summer, Ferguson said, and offers drivers the choice of rear-wheel drive or all-wheel drive, and the power from a 2.0L turbocharged four-cylinder or a 3.6L six-cylinder. In all combinations, he said, ATS Coupe takes advantage of its lightweight and strong structure to deliver exhilarating performance – with efficiency – with a segment-leading power-to-weight ratio.

"The 2015 Cadillac ATS Coupe is a natural step in the brand's progression, and another fun-to-drive and technologically advanced product for a new generation of drivers, extending our target groups," said Uwe Ellinghaus, chief marketing officer, Global Cadillac.

"It is an exclusively distinctive American alternative, unique in its class, yet delivering a sporty and sophisticated driving experience rivaling the world's best."

Ellinghaus said Cadillac is moving into new corners of the luxury market and vehicles like the ATS make that possible.

Like the sedan, Ellinghaus said, the ATS Coupe's driving dynamics are rooted in mass efficiency, which helps make it one of Cadillac's lightest and most agile models ever – and the lightest car in the compact luxury coupe segment. The 2.0L Turbo engine is upgraded from the current ATS sport sedan, he said, to deliver nearly 14 percent more torque, taking it to 295 lb.-ft. This gives the standard ATS Coupe an advantage in power and weight over similarly equipped coupes such as the BMW 428i, he added.

Greater torque means greater pulling power, for a greater feeling of responsiveness at low speeds, and helps the ATS Coupe achieve an estimated 0-60 time of 5.6 seconds, Ellinghaus said.

"More power with less weight is always a better combination for performance," said David Leone, Cadillac executive chief engineer, "and the ATS Coupe offers one of the best power-to-weight ratios in the segment, making it feel lighter, more direct and responsive."

"Engineers vetted the ATS's performance on the track, and the Coupe benefits from that exhaustive validation – all matched with Cadillac's trademark refinement."

Elements that contribute to the ATS Coupe's balanced performance and responsive characteristics include nearly perfect 50/50 weight balance and low center of gravity as well as five-link independent rear suspension featuring lightweight, high-strength steel and efficient straight link designs, Leone said.

Other features include:

- A multi-link double-pivot MacPherson-strut front suspension with direct-acting stabilizer bar;

- Underbody aerodynamic shields;
- Premium, belt-driven electric variable-effort steering gear from ZF Steering Systems;
- Brembo front brakes;
- Eighteen-inch aluminum wheels;
- Available all-wheel drive.

The 2015 ATS Coupe rides on the same 109.3-inch wheelbase as the sedan, but features its own bodywork.

The roof, doors, rear fenders and trunk lid are unique to the Coupe, along with a specific front fascia and front fenders that accommodate a wider track than the sedan. It is also the first production model to wear Cadillac's revised crest, said Andrew Smith, Cadillac executive design director.

The Coupe also has an aggressive stance, Smith said, with wider front/rear tracks than the sedan, enhanced by short overhangs and sheet metal that wrap tautly around the tires. Standard 18-inch wheels are exclusive to the Coupe.

Bold lighting elements are a Cadillac signature feature and the ATS Coupe advances that tradition, Smith said, with available light-emitting diode, or LED, headlamps with Adaptive Forward Lighting. Base models feature projector-beam headlamps, while high-intensity-discharge headlamps and front vertical LED light signatures are included on all but the standard model.

Illuminating outside door handles on Performance and Premium collections lend technologically advanced style and function to the Coupe. All models feature LED taillamps and rear-center stop lamp. The ATS Coupe also includes capless fueling.

Chrysler Vehicles Earn Polk Auto Loyalty Awards

When Chrysler turned the page on a new year, the automaker started off the right way – by winning five Polk Automotive Loyalty Awards.

The awards were presented by IHS Automotive and announced last week.

The Chrysler Town & Country won its 13th consecutive Loyalty Award by taking the Non-Luxury Midsize Van category.

The award extended the Town & Country's own record of consecutive wins, said Chrysler spokesman Patrick Hepsen.

The Jeep Grand Cherokee won its fifth award in the Non-Luxury SUV category and the Dodge Challenger took Non-Luxury Sport Midsize Car honors for the third time.

Jeep Wrangler nabbed the Non-Luxury Compact SUV award and the Fiat 500 won the Non-Luxury Traditional Subcompact Car category.

Both vehicles won their first Polk Loyalty Awards.

"Chrysler Group's emphasis on owner loyalty across their lineup is an indicator that the organization is truly working with consumers to bring them back," said Jeffrey Anderson, director of Loyalty and Source of Sales Solutions at Southfield-based IHS Automotive, a division of research and analytics firm IHS.

"To see five awards across multiple segments is impressive, and Town & Country's run is unprecedented."

The Polk Loyalty Awards recognize manufacturers for superior owner loyalty performance, which is determined when a household that owns a new vehicle returns to market and purchases or leases another new vehicle of the same model or make.

The 2013 awards are based on an analysis of more than 7.4 million new vehicle owners who bought new vehicles again during the 2013 model year.

"Winning five Polk Automotive Loyalty Awards is proof-positive of Chrysler Group's drive to build the best vehicles on the market," said Reid Bigland, head of Chrysler's U.S. Sales.

"Customers will only come back if they trust their vehicles to deliver flawless quality and reliability, and these awards speak volumes about Chrysler Group's extensive vehicle lineup."

Anderson pointed out that the auto industry is focusing on improving consumer loyalty.