

Car Shoppers Redefine "American-Made"

An increasing number of consumers believe cars built in the U.S. by foreign-based auto companies aren't truly American

ATLANTA, July 2, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- As the U.S. gears up to celebrate everything red, white and blue for Independence Day, there's a new definition of what it means to be American emerging among car shoppers.

According to a recent AutoTrader.com survey, 59 percent of car shoppers say that to be considered "American-made" a vehicle has to be manufactured in the U.S. by a U.S.-based company. This is a 9 percent increase from 2012. Fewer car shoppers now believe that just being manufactured in the U.S. makes a car "American-made" – 26 percent currently compared to 33 percent in 2012. The number of car shoppers who say all cars produced by U.S.-based auto companies, no matter where they're built, are "American-made" remains constant at 16 percent.

"More and more consumers are demanding authenticity and transparency from companies about the goods they produce - be it cars, clothes, food or any other commodity. If a company promotes the fact that a car is 'American', then consumers believe the purest form of that statement: built here by a company based here," said Michelle Krebs, senior analyst for AutoTrader.com. "But, the truth is, when it comes to cars it's simply not that cut and dry. Cars have thousands of components, and even if the car's final assembly process happens in the U.S., not very much of it may be 'American.' And then there's Chrysler, which is historically an American company, but is now owned by an Italian company with headquarters in the U.K. The days of automakers promoting the 'buy American' message may be behind us, since it's now something in a way everyone and no one can claim."

Despite the fact that the definition of "American-made" is changing, it might not mean that much to domestic or foreign automakers' bottom lines. Younger car shoppers care much less than their older counterparts if their new car was made by an American company or by American workers. Only 34 percent of young Millennials (ages 16-24) said it's important that their vehicle be made by U.S. workers, compared to 53 percent of Generation Xers and 60 percent of Baby Boomers. Slightly more young Millennial car shoppers – 37 percent – said it's important that their vehicle is made by a U.S. company, compared to 47 percent of Gen Xers and 52 percent of Baby Boomers.

For those consumers who are interested in a bit of patriotic car shopping over the long weekend, AutoTrader's expert editors have compiled a list of their "Must Shop American-Made" vehicles.

"While a consumer's definition of American-made may be changing, the fact remains that many of the most popular 'foreign' cars have a long manufacturing history here in the U.S. and are having a very positive impact on their local communities," said Brian Moody, AutoTrader.com site editor. "So we created a list of recommended vehicles that are built here in the U.S. and offer car shoppers exceptional performance, quality and value."

The list includes:

- Chevrolet Corvette – Bowling Green, KY
- Toyota Camry – Georgetown, KY
- Chrysler 200 – Sterling Heights, MI
- Ford Mustang – Flat Rock, MI
- Honda Accord – Marysville, OH
- Hyundai Sonata - Montgomery, AL
- Jeep Grand Cherokee – Detroit, MI
- Nissan Murano – Canton, MS
- Tesla Model S – Fremont, CA

- Buick LaCrosse - Kansas City, KS

For more information about each of these vehicles, expert advice and to search more than 4 million new and used cars for sale, visit AutoTrader.com.

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