

New Model Entries Drive Consumer Interest Gains in Compact Cars on AutoTrader.com

The New Car Insights Report, a new report from the AutoTrader.com Trend Engine, also indicates that luxury cars gain traction and trucks are among most viewed on the site

ATLANTA, Oct. 12, 2011 /[PRNewswire](http://PRNewswire.com/prnh/20110425/CL88097LOGO)/ -- New model entries in the compact car segment gained considerable increases in consumer interest on the site, according to the New Car Insights Report from AutoTrader.com for September. At the other end of the spectrum, luxury vehicles are also gaining ground, with notable new car rank improvements compared to the previous month. With automakers producing exciting cars on both ends of the price spectrum, car shoppers have certainly begun to take notice. Though these cars did not yet land among the top 20 most-viewed models in September, the significant increases in activity will certainly be a trend that AutoTrader.com analysts watch closely.

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Compact and Luxury Cars Make Big Moves in September

This month, AutoTrader.com's Trend Engine has produced a closer look at the "Big Movers" on the site—vehicles that have gained significantly more consumer interest month-over-month—to surface interesting early trends in what vehicles consumers are shopping for. The predominant trend to emerge in the list of Big Movers in September is the emergence of new compact car entries that lead the list of new car rank gainers on the site.

With economic factors and high gas prices weighing on consumers' minds, small cars are creating some big buzz in the industry, and that buzz was certainly reflected in new car shoppers' actions on AutoTrader.com. New entries led the charge, with large month-over-month rank improvements for the much-buzzed-about Hyundai Veloster (up 219 spots to number 144), the much-anticipated Chevrolet Sonic (up 215 spots to number 109), the redesigned Volkswagen Beetle (up 169 spots to number 141), and the new-to-the U.S. and heavily supported Fiat 500 (up 30 spots to number 66). The redesigned Nissan Versa rounded out the top compact cars on the Big Movers list (up 72 spots to number 50). Barring any unforeseen issues, these small cars should continue to rise up in the rankings as consumers seek more economical choices and get behind the wheels of these exciting models.

"In the past, small cars didn't fare very well with American shoppers, as many of the available options were considered cheap and lacking in features. However, the compacts being produced today like the Veloster and the Sonic are exciting, fun-to-drive and fuel-efficient. Add in some great technology features being offered on these models, and there's a lot more to love about these small cars," said Rick Wainschel, vice president of automotive insights at AutoTrader.com.

On the other end of the spectrum are luxury cars, which also made some big month-over-month moves on the site. Leading the rank improvements was the Mercedes-Benz CL Class, which moved up 82 spots in its ranking from August to September, making the biggest leap of all of the new luxury vehicles on the site. The C Class, fueled by fresh new designs for the 2012 model year, made a 74 spot leap, the GL Class moved up 27 spots and the S Class experienced a 25 spot improvement. Rounding out the list of luxury cars making big moves in September were the Audi TT models with a 55 spot jump, the Jaguar XF with a 39 spot leap and the Hyundai Equus with a 39 spot improvement.

"The movement of these luxury cars in September was quite revealing to us," Wainschel continued. "What these numbers say to us is that there may be some pent

up demand developing in the luxury car segment. Whether these vehicles continue to garner significant interest will likely be driven by consumer confidence and the economic climate over the next few months."

Segment Tracker: Large Trucks and SUVs Capture Bigger Shares of Interest in September

Americans have shown time and again that they love their large trucks and SUVs, and a deep dive into the share of views by segments on AutoTrader.com shows just how much that interest has grown over the last few years. Out of the total views on AutoTrader.com in September, trucks experienced a point change of 2.3 compared to the month prior. In looking year-over-year, views for full-size trucks were up 3.4 points from September 2010, and a full 6.3 points from September 2009.

Mid-size SUVs are currently the second most-viewed segment on the site, though the overall share of views declined from August to September by 0.9 points. Nevertheless, the share for this segment is still up 1.0 points from September 2010 and 1.7 points from September 2009. Full-size SUVs have also shown similar increases in consumer interest, with the segment being up 0.1 points in share of views month-over-month, up 0.9 points since 2010 and up 0.3 points since 2009.

"We definitely saw a dip in interest for large trucks and SUVs during the April – May timeframe as gas prices were near record highs, but the segments have experienced a healthy rebound since then," Wainschel continued. "With compact car and luxury car interest also seeing recent gains, automakers will have to carefully monitor the trends in shopper behavior to chart their course and adjust their sails."

Most-Viewed New Vehicles in September

Compacts and luxury cars were certainly making some big moves in September, but full-size trucks remained among the most-viewed cars overall on AutoTrader.com. The Ford F-150 again claimed the top spot, and a number of others secured their places in the top 10: the Chevrolet Silverado 1500 at No. 5, the Dodge Ram 1500 at No. 6, the Ford F-250 at No. 7 and the Chevrolet Silverado 2500 at No. 10. The significant drop in gas prices over the summer, which continued in September, has contributed to the sustained popularity of these vehicles.

"What this year's precipitous rise and then subsequent fall in gas prices showed us this year is that car shoppers are getting accustomed to higher gas prices. Consumers were slower to shift their shopping focus toward more fuel-efficient cars when prices were on the rise, and they were also much quicker to return to their traditionally favorite large vehicles as prices started falling," Wainschel noted.

Price Tracker: Trucks and Korean Vehicles Show Big Price Increases in September

Three of the trucks in the list of most-viewed vehicles commanded significant price premiums over the same time last year, with the asking price for the F-150 increasing 2.9% (or \$1,065) and the price for the Silverado 2500 increasing 3.1% (or \$1,295). The price for the Ford F-250 increased the most of all the full-size trucks at 5.1% (or \$2,353). These trucks have been in high demand for quite some time, likely contributing to the higher price.

Outside of the most-viewed cars, a number of Korean models showed significant year-over-year price increases, catching the attention of AutoTrader.com analysts. The redesigned Kia Optima's price increased 23.5% (or \$4,780); the Hyundai Elantra's price increased 19.7% (or \$3,495); and the Hyundai Accent's price increased 16.2% (or \$2,345). These automakers have been making significant headway in the new car arena over the last year, increasing demand for many models.

About AutoTrader.com

Atlanta-based AutoTrader.com, created in 1997, is the Internet's ultimate automotive marketplace and consumer information website. AutoTrader.com aggregates in a single location millions of [new cars](#), [used cars](#) and [certified pre-owned cars](#) from thousands of auto dealers and private sellers and is a leading online resource for auto dealers, individuals and manufacturers to advertise and market their vehicles to in-market shoppers. The company also provides a robust suite of software tools for dealers and manufacturers to help them manage and market their vehicle inventory and display advertising on the Internet. AutoTrader.com continues to grow key business metrics, including revenue, profitability and site traffic. Today, AutoTrader.com attracts more than 15 million unique monthly visitors who utilize the site to review descriptions, photos and videos of vehicles for sale; research and compare vehicles; review pricing and specials; and read auto-related content like buying and selling tips and editorial coverage of major auto shows and automotive trends. AutoTrader.com operates two other auto marketing brands, AutoTraderClassics.com and AutoTraderLatino.com. AutoTrader.com also owns used vehicle management software company vAuto, Kelley Blue Book (Kbb.com), HomeNet Automotive, a leading provider of online inventory management and merchandising solutions for the automotive retail industry and VinSolutions, a leading provider of end-to-end solution platforms for dealers. AutoTrader.com is a majority-owned subsidiary of Cox Enterprises. Providence Equity Partners is a 25 percent owner of the company and Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers is also an investor. For more information, please visit www.autotrader.com.

Top 20: Big Movers by New Vehicle Interest

Make	Model	Sept 2011 Rank	Aug 2011 Rank	MOM Rank Change
Hyundai	Veloster	144	363	219
Chevrolet	Sonic	109	324	215
Volkswagen	Beetle	141	310	169
Mercedes-Benz	CL Class	185	267	82
Mercedes-Benz	C Class	51	125	74
Nissan	Versa	50	122	72
Nissan	GT-R	63	118	55
Audi	TT Models	120	175	55
Volkswagen	Passat	59	105	46
Chevrolet	Volt	169	212	43
Honda	Ridgeline	196	238	42
Hyundai	Equus	137	176	39
Jaguar	XF	198	237	39
Toyota	Land Cruiser	199	235	36
FIAT	500	66	96	30
Audi	R8	67	94	27
Mercedes-Benz	GL Class	163	190	27
Porsche	911 Turbo	115	141	26
Mercedes-Benz	S Class	79	104	25
Dodge	Journey	87	112	25

Segment Tracker: All Segments by Share of New Vehicle Interest

Sept 2011 Rank	Segment	Share Point Change from Aug '11	Share Point Change from Sept '10	Share Point Change from Sept '09
1	Full-size Truck	2.3	3.4	6.3

2	Midsize SUV	-0.9	1.0	1.7
3	Sport	-0.3	3.0	2.0
4	Compact Car	-0.5	-1.9	-3.2
5	Luxury Car	0.2	-2.3	-1.9
6	Midsize Car	-0.3	-3.4	-3.3
7	Luxury SUV	0.0	-0.8	-1.2
8	Compact SUV	-0.6	0.2	0.7
9	Full-size SUV	0.2	0.9	0.3
10	Full-size Car	0.1	0.1	-0.5
11	Compact Truck	0.0	-0.1	0.2
12	Van	-0.2	-0.5	-0.8
13	Exotic	0.0	0.4	0.0

Top 20: Most-Viewed Models by New Vehicle Interest

Sept 2011 Rank	Make	Model	Rank Change from Aug '11	Rank Change from Sept '10	Rank Change from Sept '09
1	Ford	F-150	0	1	2
2	Ford	Mustang	0	1	0
3	Chevrolet	Camaro	0	2	2
4	Jeep	Wrangler	0	5	3
5	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	0	2	0
6	Dodge	Ram 1500	2	0	8
7	Ford	F-250	2	1	2
8	Chevrolet	Corvette	1	5	4
9	Dodge	Challenger	3	8	14
10	Chevrolet	Silverado 2500	3	12	10
11	Ford	Explorer	0	112	94
12	Chevrolet	Cruze	2	158	N/A
13	Jeep	Grand Cherokee	1	2	62
14	Dodge	Ram 2500	2	4	27
15	Volkswagen	Jetta	3	8	7
16	Ford	F-350	6	12	13
17	Chevrolet	Tahoe	3	7	2
18	Chevrolet	Equinox	3	13	1
19	GMC	Sierra 1500	5	0	2
20	Dodge	Charger	2	52	46

* N/A - Vehicle was not available in reported month

Price Tracker: Top 20 Most-Viewed Models by New Vehicle Interest

Sept 2011 Rank	Make	Model	Median Inventory Listing Price	Price Change from Aug '11	Price Change from Sept '10	Price Change from Sept '09
1	Ford	F-150	\$37,955	0.6%	2.9%	4.9%
2	Ford	Mustang	\$33,235	-3.7%	-0.4%	2.6%
3	Chevrolet	Camaro	\$36,662	-0.6%	10.5%	-0.4%
4	Jeep	Wrangler	\$31,305	1.5%	6.5%	9.2%
5	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	\$34,244	0.7%	0.2%	1.0%
6	Dodge	Ram 1500	\$35,240	0.7%	-1.8%	-2.9%
7	Ford	F-250	\$48,878	-1.0%	5.1%	6.2%

8	Chevrolet	Corvette	\$63,352	0.6%	-0.3%	4.7%
9	Dodge	Challenger	\$30,515	-0.4%	-10.9%	-20.8%
10	Chevrolet	Silverado 2500	\$42,779	-0.5%	3.1%	9.9%
11	Ford	Explorer	\$39,180	-1.7%	9.8%	11.7%
12	Chevrolet	Cruze	\$20,668	0.9%	3.8%	N/A
13	Jeep	Grand Cherokee	\$38,815	-0.4%	4.9%	12.3%
14	Dodge	Ram 2500	\$47,255	-0.1%	-0.3%	6.0%
15	Volkswagen	Jetta	\$23,290	1.5%	-5.6%	3.9%
16	Ford	F-350	\$51,569	-0.8%	-0.5%	4.3%
17	Chevrolet	Tahoe	\$48,980	0.7%	-0.1%	-1.1%
18	Chevrolet	Equinox	\$26,795	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%
19	GMC	Sierra 1500	\$36,095	0.5%	0.8%	2.2%
20	Dodge	Charger	\$32,920	3.2%	17.2%	20.0%

* N/A - Vehicle was not available in reported month

Price Tracker: 20 Largest Increases by Percent Change

Sept 2011 Rank	Make	Model	Median Inventory Listing Price	Price Change from Aug '11	Price Change from Sept '10	Price Change from Sept '09
35	Kia	Optima	\$25,090	-3.5%	23.5%	26.7%
41	Hyundai	Elantra	\$21,205	0.7%	19.7%	19.2%
20	Dodge	Charger	\$32,920	3.2%	17.2%	20.0%
94	Hyundai	Accent	\$16,855	1.0%	16.2%	13.5%
62	Nissan	GT-R	\$96,980	0.0%	14.5%	14.5%
100	Volkswagen	Touareg	\$50,600	0.7%	11.8%	16.8%
28	Ford	Focus	\$21,285	0.0%	11.7%	14.4%
57	BMW	M Series	\$89,975	9.3%	10.9%	9.5%
51	Kia	Sportage	\$25,686	-1.2%	10.6%	13.2%
3	Chevrolet	Camaro	\$36,662	-0.6%	10.5%	-0.4%
87	Volkswagen	Golf and Rabbit	\$24,530	0.1%	10.4%	33.2%
11	Ford	Explorer	\$39,180	-1.7%	9.8%	11.7%
146	Scion	tC	\$20,544	1.9%	9.6%	11.2%
34	Chrysler	300	\$37,230	0.0%	9.4%	14.1%
52	Ford	Ranger	\$24,450	1.2%	9.1%	8.0%
142	BMW	6 Series	\$99,775	-0.6%	9.0%	7.8%
37	Honda	Civic	\$20,824	-0.9%	8.7%	8.9%
131	Maserati	GranTurismo	\$144,725	1.3%	8.6%	11.3%
93	Hyundai	Santa Fe	\$27,295	-1.0%	8.4%	3.7%
97	Porsche	911	\$114,765	0.3%	8.2%	9.5%

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SOURCE AutoTrader.com

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