

Small and Mid-Sized Cars Intrigue New Car Shoppers; Trucks and SUVs Remain Strong Contenders in the Pre-Owned Arena

AutoTrader.com Delivers Insights and Analysis of Car Shopper Behavior through the Monthly Trend Engine Report

ATLANTA, Nov. 10, 2010 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- In a month where automakers' sales figures show that the industry is on a steady road to recovery, everything from the increase in AutoTrader.com site traffic from a year ago to shoppers' search activity point to positive signs for the economy. Using data gained from activity on the site each month, AutoTrader.com offers insights and in-depth analysis of shopper behavior.

"More people than ever are turning to third-party classified sites like AutoTrader.com to research and compare new and used cars," said AutoTrader.com President and CEO Chip Perry. "By looking at the traffic on our site, we are able to see that shoppers looking for new vehicles are turning their attention to practical, but stylish cars, and low fuel prices continue to support interest in pre-owned trucks and SUVs."

Notable Improvement for Many New Vehicles

The Toyota Camry was the most-searched new car on the AutoTrader.com site in October, reclaiming the No. 1 spot after a summer hiatus from the list and steady climb in the preceding months. The Camry was the second most-searched new car in September 2010 and the seventh most-searched during October 2009.

However, the biggest story coming out of this month's top 20 most-searched new vehicle list appears to be the big movement for a number of small and mid-sized cars. Five of these new vehicles made big jumps month-over-month on the most-searched list in October, with four of the five being small or mid-sized cars. The Honda Civic moved up nine places from September, landing at No. 3 in October; the Volkswagen Jetta went from No. 25 in September to No. 11 in October, a leap of 14 places; the Ford Focus landed at No. 15 in October, up 12 spots from No. 27 in September; and the Hyundai Sonata took the No. 17 place in October, up 15 from its No. 32 spot in September. The only SUV to make a notable jump was the Honda CR-V, which leapt 18 places from No. 26 in September to No. 8 in October.

"October is a great time to purchase a new car, as 2010 models are incentivized to make room for the new 2011 models," Perry continued. "As 2011 models begin dominating dealer lots, marketing and advertising for new cars ramps up—both in traditional media and online via social media and third-party sites like AutoTrader.com."

In October, Honda launched a month-long social media campaign, Hyundai extended its "Uncensored" campaign to include the Sonata, Volkswagen touted the affordability of the Jetta and Ford leveraged rebates and heavy promotion to support its ongoing success.

Year-over-year comparisons showed that there were six vehicles in the top 20 most-searched new list that were not in the top 20 in October 2009. Ford made the biggest year-over-year top 20 improvement, with three vehicles that broke into the top 20 in 2010: the aforementioned Ford Focus; the Ford Fusion, up three places year-over-year and now at No. 19; and the Ford Escape, up eight places year-over-year, rounding out the list at No. 20. In total, Ford had six vehicles on AutoTrader.com's top 20 list of most-searched

vehicles—the most of any auto manufacturer. Ford also landed at No. 1 on the list of the most-searched new-car brands on AutoTrader.com, up from No. 2 in October of 2009.

The other three vehicles to make year-over-year top 20 improvements are the GMC Sierra 1500, which moved from No. 26 in 2009 to No. 14 in October 2010; the Honda CR-V, which was No. 23 a year ago and now sits at No. 8; and the Hyundai Sonata, which leapt an impressive 54 places year-over-year from No. 71 in October 2009 to No. 17 in October 2010.

Interest in Pre-Owned Trucks and SUVs Continues

Analysis of both the top 20 most-searched used and certified pre-owned (CPO) vehicles did not show significant changes in the models searched month-over-month. Trucks and SUVs continue to hold the majority of places on these lists, with over half of each list being comprised of these popular vehicles. The continued dominance of trucks and SUVs is typically welcomed news for the auto industry and economy as a whole.

"Trucks and SUVs are a good indicator of the state of the economy because they are particularly sensitive to economic changes," Perry said. "These vehicles are used by workers in numerous industries, so interest in trucks and SUVs points to the continued recovery in the health of the economy.

Gas prices are another factor that affects interest in and sales of these vehicles. Although gas prices aren't the lowest they've ever been, the prices are still in a range that doesn't dampen shoppers' interest. Those are two good signs all around."

Average Asking Prices Strong for New, Used and CPO Vehicles

Across all three lists, average asking prices for the majority of most-searched vehicles increased. In the top 20 new-car list, average asking prices increased for 15 out of the top 20; in the used car list, 11 out of the top 20 posted increases; and in the CPO arena, 14 of the top 20 saw increases in average asking prices. Particularly notable is the rebound of CPO vehicle prices, which experienced a notable decline in September 2010.

For new vehicles, average asking prices have increased on 15 of the top 20, with four vehicles experiencing a price increase in excess of four percent: the ever-popular Ford Mustang gained 4.37% in asking price, moving from \$32,794 in October 2009 to \$34,227 in October 2010 and the Volkswagen Jetta increased 5.66% from \$22,655 to \$23,938 during the same time. The Hyundai Sonata and Chevrolet Corvette both saw average asking prices increase over seven percent, with the Sonata at 7.29% going from \$21,965 to \$23,566 and the Corvette at 7.85% going from \$64,796 to \$69,880 year-over-year.

Used and CPO vehicle prices remain strong, with the majority of average asking prices increasing slightly year-over-year. All of the used and CPO average asking price increases were relatively modest compared to the numerous double-digit price increases seen earlier this year.

"With the economic downturn, three major trends emerged for pre-owned vehicles that greatly affected prices," said Perry. "People were holding on to their cars and not trading them in, the majority of people in the market purchased pre-owned instead of new and leasing practically dried up. All of these factors contributed to reduced inventory for used and CPO cars, which drove prices up significantly during the first three quarters of this year. The trend that we're seeing now with prices appears to point to more stable inventory levels for these vehicles."

Supporting the continued interest in pre-owned trucks and SUVs is a very strong price story for these types of vehicles. Of the eight trucks listed on the most-searched used vehicle list, six gained in price. Of these, the Dodge Ram 2500 posted the largest gain in average asking price, going from \$23,828 to \$25,097 in October 2010, an increase of 5.33%.

Four trucks gained over four percent in asking price year-over-year: the used Chevrolet Silverado 1500 posted a gain of 4.80%, moving from \$19,024 to \$19,938; the used Ford F-250 gained 4.64%, moving from \$23,509 to \$24,600; the used Chevrolet Silverado 2500 increased 4.58%, moving from \$22,556 to \$23,588; and the used Dodge Ram 1500 was up 4.37%, moving from \$17,687 to \$18,460. Only the used Toyota Tundra and used Toyota Tacoma saw a decrease in asking price, with each dipping slightly at -0.39% and -0.5%, respectively.

The used SUV price story is similarly rosy, with all three used SUVs on the list gaining over three percent in average asking price. The used Jeep Wrangler gained 4.70% year-over-year, increasing from \$19,578 to \$20,499.

Similarly, the used Chevrolet Tahoe went from \$24,459 in October 2009 to \$25,561 in October 2010, an increase of 4.51%. Rounding out the used SUVs is the Jeep Grand Cherokee, which went from \$16,030 to \$16,572, a year-over-year increase of 3.38%.

Average asking prices for CPO vehicles showed the biggest improvement this month, a vast improvement over September 2010, where prices dipped for 15 out of 20 vehicles on the list. As mentioned earlier, prices increased for 14 of the top 20 most-searched CPO vehicles, with the CPO Toyota Highlander posting the biggest increase of 6.83%, moving from \$23,941 in October 2009 to \$25,577 in October 2010.

With the exception of the CPO Ford Mustang, all year-over-year average asking price increases over four percent were for either trucks or SUVs. In addition to the aforementioned CPO Chevrolet Tahoe, the CPO GMC Sierra 1500 gained 5.62%, increasing from \$24,291 to \$25,657; the CPO Ford F-150 gained 5.50%, increasing from \$23,664 to \$24,965; the CPO Chevrolet Silverado 1500 gained 4.86%, increasing from \$23,389 to \$24,525; the CPO Honda Pilot gained 4.29%, increasing from \$24,301 to \$25,344; and the CPO Acura MDX gained 4.12%, increasing from \$31,294 to \$32,582.

The strength in CPO asking prices on AutoTrader.com reflects the strength in CPO sales that many brands experienced in October and indicates that this segment should remain strong as asking prices can be a leading indicator of expected demand for CPO vehicles.

On the list of the most-searched used brands, Ford remained at No. 1, a position it held in October of 2009. Chevrolet came in as the No. 2 most-searched used brand and Toyota landed at No.3, positions both brands also held in October of 2009.

Site Traffic Increases Year-Over-Year; Mobile Site Again Tops One Million

The number of visitors to AutoTrader.com increased year-over-year, with nearly 15.5 million unique visitors going to the site in October 2010. This was a 13% lift from the 13.6 million who visited the site in October 2009.

This lift was supported by numerous marketing initiatives, including great exposure in the Major League Baseball post-season and World Series, strong advertising on cable television and strategic partnership programs. October was also an excellent month for traffic to AutoTrader.com's mobile site, which achieved the highest number of monthly visitors since its launch—again topping one million unique visitors.

Top 10 Articles on AutoTrader.com in October

AutoTrader.com publishes insightful and informative articles about the automobiles and car shopping, including auto-shopping how-to tips, car reviews and automotive trend stories. In October, the most-viewed stories on AutoTrader.com, in order from one to 10, were:

1. [2011 Mediocrity Sedan - New Car Review](#): a tongue-in-cheek viral marketing program from Subaru.
2. [AutoTrader.com's Roadmap to Car Shopping Success](#): tips for car shopping success from Spike TV host automotive expert Courtney Hansen.
3. [Wait, I Know That Voice... Car Commercial Celebrity Voiceovers](#) a look at celebrity voices behind several automobile advertising campaigns.
4. [2011 Ford Fusion - New Car Review](#): a car review of the popular Ford sedan
5. [Santa's Camaro is a Big Hit](#): a look at the Chevrolet Camaro convertible featured in this year's Neiman Marcus 2010 Christmas Book.
6. [The New Wheels of Hawaii 5-0](#): a rundown of the cars featured on the hit CBS reboot of the classic television series.
7. [Car Safety Features Explained](#): a primer on auto safety features.
8. [Hundreds of Mustang Owners Converge on Woodward Dream Cruise](#) a look at a popular Mustang event at this summer's Woodward Dream Cruise.
9. [2011 Ford Fusion Hybrid - New Car Review](#): a review of the hybrid version of the popular Ford sedan.
10. [Found: The Oldest Porsche Sold in America](#): a look at the oldest Porsche in the United States.

All these articles and more, including coverage of upcoming auto shows, can be found at www.autotrader.com/research.

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. 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 10 NEW VEHICLE BRANDS
SEARCHED

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MAKE	Rank 10/10	Rank 10/09
Ford	1	2
Chevrolet	2	1
Toyota	3	3
Honda	4	5
Dodge	5	6
Nissan	6	4
BMW	7	9
GMC	8	8
Hyundai	9	12
Jeep	10	14

TOP 10 USED VEHICLE BRANDS SEARCHED

MAKE	Rank 10/10	Rank 10/09
Ford	1	1
Chevrolet	2	2
Toyota	3	3
BMW	4	5
Dodge	5	4
Nissan	6	6
Honda	7	7
Mercedes Benz	8	8
Jeep	9	9
GMC	10	10

NEW CARS

MAKE	MODEL	VDP Rank 10/10	VDP Rank 9/10	VDP Rank 10/09	Avg. Price 10/10	Avg. Price 10/09	Avg. Price % Change
Toyota	Camry	1	2	7	24,765	24,599	0.67%
Ford	F-150	2	1	1	37,294	36,148	3.17%
Honda	Civic	3	12	13	20,044	20,138	-0.47%
Ford	Mustang	4	3	3	34,227	32,794	4.37%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	5	5	4	33,571	33,471	0.30%
Dodge	Ram 1500	6	6	8	35,587	34,836	2.16%
Honda	Accord	7	8	6	26,152	25,844	1.19%
Honda	CR-V	8	26	23	25,799	25,804	-0.02%
Toyota	Corolla	9	7	18	18,359	18,362	-0.02%
BMW	3 Series	10	4	10	47,201	46,660	1.16%
Volkswagen	Jetta	11	25	20	23,938	22,655	5.66%
Chevrolet	Camaro	12	9	2	33,538	35,095	-4.44%
Ford	F-250	13	10	9	46,528	45,650	1.92%
GMC	Sierra 1500	14	19	26	35,849	35,400	1.27%
Ford	Focus	15	27	31	19,160	18,634	2.82%
Jeep	Wrangler	16	13	14	29,633	28,630	3.50%
Hyundai	Sonata	17	32	71	23,566	21,965	7.29%
Chevrolet	Corvette	18	14	5	69,880	64,796	7.85%
Ford	Fusion	19	17	22	25,737	25,745	-0.03%

Ford	Escape	20	16	28	27,426	26,927	1.85%
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USED CARS

MAKE	MODEL	VDP Rank 10/10	VDP Rank 9/10	VDP Rank 10/09	Avg. Price 10/10	Avg. Price 10/09	% Change
Ford	F-150	1	1	1	20,087	19,814	1.38%
BMW	3-Series	2	2	2	24,896	25,953	-4.07%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	3	3	3	19,938	19,024	4.80%
Ford	Mustang	4	4	4	17,757	17,337	2.42%
Ford	F-250	5	5	5	24,600	23,509	4.64%
Honda	Accord	6	6	6	15,692	15,886	-1.22%
Dodge	Ram 1500	7	7	7	18,460	17,687	4.37%
Jeep	Wrangler	8	8	14	20,499	19,578	4.70%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	9	9	8	25,561	24,459	4.51%
Honda	Civic	10	10	9	13,333	13,694	-2.64%
Chevrolet	Silverado 2500	11	11	11	23,588	22,556	4.58%
Infiniti	G35/37	12	12	10	22,357	22,659	-1.33%
Dodge	Ram 2500	13	13	12	25,097	23,828	5.33%
Toyota	Tacoma	14	14	16	19,409	19,419	-0.05%
BMW	5-Series	15	15	13	30,032	31,226	-3.82%
Jeep	Grand Cherokee	16	17	17	16,572	16,030	3.38%
Nissan	Altima	17	16	15	14,778	14,943	-1.10%
Audi	A4	18	18	18	20,824	20,487	1.64%
Toyota	Tundra	19	19	21	22,735	22,825	-0.39%
Toyota	Camry	20	20	20	15,223	16,463	-7.53%

CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED

MAKE	MODEL	VDP Rank 10/10	VDP Rank 9/10	VDP Rank 10/09	Avg. Price 10/10	Avg. Price 10/09	% Change
BMW	3-Series	1	1	1	29,367	30,519	-3.77%
Honda	Accord	2	2	2	18,351	18,602	-1.35%
Ford	F-150	3	4	6	24,965	23,664	5.50%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	4	3	3	24,525	23,389	4.86%
Toyota	Tundra	5	5	5	26,057	25,290	3.03%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	6	6	4	33,569	31,525	6.48%
Toyota	Tacoma	7	8	10	22,681	22,689	-0.04%
Toyota	Camry	8	7	7	17,354	19,012	-8.72%
BMW	5-Series	9	9	8	36,391	35,850	1.51%
Audi	A4	10	10	9	26,601	26,059	2.08%
Honda	Civic	11	11	11	15,929	16,831	-5.36%
Acura	TL	12	13	12	26,431	26,458	-0.10%
Volkswagen	Jetta	13	16	26	16,278	16,124	0.96%
Ford	Mustang	14	12	15	21,594	20,234	6.72%
Acura	MDX	15	15	27	32,582	31,294	4.12%
Toyota	Highlander	16	14	13	25,577	23,941	6.83%

Honda	Pilot	17	18	16	25,344	24,301	4.29%
Toyota	4Runner	18	17	14	25,522	24,854	2.69%
BMW	X5	19	19	25	41,744	40,780	2.36%
GMC	Sierra 1500	20	20	17	25,657	24,291	5.62%

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