

## **Fuel-Efficient Cars Pick Up Steam on AutoTrader.com's March Top-Searched Vehicles List New Trend Engine Charts Look At Biggest Movers on the Site**

ATLANTA, April 14, 2011 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- According to AutoTrader.com's monthly Trend Engine report, which provides analysis of site traffic as it relates to consumer car-shopping behavior, interest in fuel-sipping vehicles is on the rise as gas prices remain high across the country.

With the turmoil in the Middle East, economic recovery and the upcoming summer driving season contributing to increased gas prices, consumers appear, based on AutoTrader.com's site data, to be expanding their car searches to more fuel-efficient models.

In addition to examining the top 20 most-searched new, used and Certified Pre-Owned (CPO) vehicles, AutoTrader.com's Trend Engine will now look at the 10 biggest movers on the site across all categories and highlight market trends that may be causing those moves. Big movers are vehicles that have made significant jumps in their rank on the site month-over-month, even if the vehicles didn't receive enough interest to garner a spot in one of the top 20 most-searched lists.

### **Fuel-Efficient Cars Pick Up Steam; Slight Declines for Trucks and SUVs**

In March, the big story in the list of most-searched new vehicles is in the strong gains made by numerous fuel-efficient models.

The new Ford Fiesta jumped 10 spots, from No. 28 in February to No. 18 in March, and the new Chevrolet Cruze moved up three places month-over-month, going from No. 14 in February to No. 11 in March.

Similar jumps were seen among other fuel-efficient vehicles: the new Volkswagen Jetta gained two places, going from No. 11 in February to No. 9 in March, and the new Hyundai Elantra jumped four places from No. 18 in February to No. 14 in March. While the new Kia Optima fell by one spot in the list month-over-month, it has moved up year-over-year from No. 175 in March 2010 to No. 17 in March 2011, up an impressive 158 spots.

Except for the Dodge Durango, which made a 17-spot jump month-over-month, trucks and SUVs slipped in popularity on the list of most-searched new vehicles, with the new Ford Explorer, new Ford F-250 and new Jeep Grand Cherokee all slipping three spots month-over-month.

The lists of most-searched used vehicles and most-searched CPO vehicles

reflected many of these same trends. The more fuel-efficient cars made notable gains on the list, with four of these cars jumping at least four spots on the list. The used Honda Civic made the top 5, moving from No. 9 in February to No. 5 in March; the used Nissan Altima went from No. 16 in February to No. 12 in March; the used Volkswagen Jetta went from just breaking into the top 20 in February to No. 15 in March; and the used Toyota Camry reappeared on the list at No. 20 in March, up from No. 24 in February.

The only vehicles to lose ground on the list of most-searched used vehicles were trucks and SUVs. Out of the 10 trucks and SUVs on the list, seven dropped to lower positions. Of those, the used Chevrolet Tahoe, used Dodge Ram 2500 and used Jeep Grand Cherokee all fell four places between February and March 2011. The Tahoe went from No. 10 in February to No. 14 in March; the Ram 2500 went from No. 14 in February to No. 18 in March; and the Grand Cherokee went from No. 15 in February to No. 19 in March.

On the CPO front, the story is practically the same. Fuel-efficient CPO cars were the only ones to gain any notable ground, with the CPO Toyota Camry landing at No. 4 in March, up from No. 7 in February; the CPO Honda Civic landed at No. 6 in March, up from No. 9 in February; the CPO Audi A4 landed at No. 7 in March, up from No. 10 in February; the CPO Volkswagen Jetta landed at No. 10 in March, up from No. 13 in February. The big winner in the top 20, however, was the CPO Nissan Altima, which jumped ahead by nine spots to land at No. 20.

### **Smaller Cars Make Big Moves in March**

March is the first month that AutoTrader.com has published the "Top 10 Big Movers" lists, which analyze site traffic on models that gained significantly more consumer interest month-over-month. Interestingly, vehicles on these lists tended to be either luxury/sports cars or smaller, more fuel-efficient cars.

The big movers in the new vehicle arena in March illustrated the trend of consumers shifting interest to more fuel-efficient vehicles. Three hybrid cars and three smaller cars dominated the list. The luxury hybrid Lexus CT 200H made the biggest jump of all, from No. 343 in February to No. 82 in March, a leap of 261 spots. Other hybrids to make big jumps included the Honda Insight, which went from No. 212 in February to No. 158 in March and the Honda CR-Z, which went from No. 151 in February to No. 109 in March. The Fiat 500, Scion XD and Honda Fit rounded out the fuel-efficient models on the list.

For used vehicles, another Lexus hybrid made the list: the used HS 250H, moving up 37 spots month-over-month to the No. 461 position. Four small cars also made big jumps, including the used Smart Fortwo (up 46 spots), the used Ford Fiesta (up 38 spots), the used Honda Fit (up 36 spots) and the used Chevrolet Cruze (up 33 spots). No hybrid cars made big moves on the CPO list, but four fuel-efficient models did: the CPO Mini Cooper made the biggest leap of 73 spots, followed by the CPO Honda Fit (up 32 spots), the

CPO Volkswagen Golf (up 31 spots) and the CPO Mini Cooper Clubman (up 26 spots).

### **Majority of Average Asking Prices Continue to Rise**

Average asking prices for new vehicles remain healthy, with 11 out of 20 posting a year-over-year increase on AutoTrader.com. Six of those 11 saw an average asking price increase more than four percent, but two new vehicles stood out with average asking prices increasing more than 10%: The average asking price of the Hyundai Elantra went from \$17,423 in March 2010 to \$19,414 in March 2011, an increase of 11.4%; the Kia Optima's average asking price went from \$20,066 in March 2010 to \$23,671 in March 2011, an 18% increase.

As a result of the still-limited inventory of quality used cars, average asking prices continued to creep up for the majority of the most-searched used vehicles on AutoTrader.com. Sixteen out of 20 vehicles on the list experienced an average asking price increase, with the used Jeep Wrangler increasing 7.4% from \$19,640 in 2010 to \$20,907 in 2011 and the used Dodge Ram 2500 increasing 9.5% from \$24,708 in 2010 to \$27,066 in 2011. Other used vehicles with a significant year-over-year price increase include the used Toyota Tacoma, used Volkswagen Jetta and used Toyota Camry. Analysts noted that the good fuel economy of the Jetta and Camry may be a contributing factor to their price increases.

The price story was particularly intriguing on the list of most-searched CPO cars, as there were six vehicles that experienced year-over-year price increases over six percent. With the exception of the Ford Mustang, which saw an average asking price increase of 8.6% year-over-year, the other five vehicles were either Hondas or Toyotas. The average asking price for the Honda Accord rose 6.6%, from \$18,054 in 2010 to \$19,237 in 2011; the Toyota Tundra rose 7.9%, from \$24,732 in 2010 to \$26,684 in 2011; the Toyota Highlander rose 7.9%, from \$24,785 in 2010 to \$26,750 in 2011; the Toyota Tacoma rose 8% from \$21,687 in 2010 to \$23,436 in 2011; and the Toyota 4-Runner rose the most at 10%, from \$24,268 in 2010 to \$26,698 in 2011.

The rise in prices for these cars might be a result of the impending shortages caused by the back-to-back natural disasters in Japan which have wreaked havoc on the production schedules for new cars from these auto makers.

### **Most-Searches Brand on AutoTrader.com**

In a month where Ford topped rival brands in number of sales, Ford also continued to dominate the most-searched new and used vehicle brands list, with GM's Chevrolet remaining in the No. 2 position. On the new vehicle list, three brands made significant year-over-year improvements, with Hyundai moving up four spots to the No. 6 position; Jeep moving up an impressive seven spots to the No. 8 position; and Kia moving up four spots to the No. 10

position on the list. Both Honda and Kia, which were not on the list of most-searched new vehicle brands in February, made the list in March. With only slight position changes here and there, the list of most-searched used vehicle brands remained stable.

### **Top 10 Articles on AutoTrader.com in March**

AutoTrader.com publishes insightful and informative articles about automobiles and car shopping, including how-to tips, car reviews and automotive trend stories. In March, fuel efficiency was top-of-mind for many car shoppers, as were a few unique vehicles listed on AutoTrader.com.

The most-viewed articles on AutoTrader.com in March were:

1. [For Sale on AutoTrader: Tracy McGrady's 2001 Mercedes-Benz CL600](#)– Car shoppers looking for a unique luxury car should consider this former athlete's flashy, custom Mercedes-Benz.
2. [Consumer Reports Lists Best Used Family Vehicles](#)– Families looking for a good car at a great price should consider the vehicles highlighted in this article on AutoTrader.com.
3. [Top Green Cars for Under \\$25,000](#) – Driving a "green" car doesn't have to mean making big money or style sacrifices, according to this article which lists ten eco-friendly cars at a great price.
4. [Shopping for Fuel Efficiency? Kelley Blue Book Suggests Waiting](#)– Rising gas prices have consumers flocking to smaller cars, but KBB encourages patience when making a big purchase.
5. [2007-2010 Toyota Tundra - Used Car Review](#) – Big trucks are still popular with consumers; find out what makes the Tundra stand out in the pre-owned truck category.
6. [For Sale on AutoTrader Classics: Dennis Rodman's Gold Lamborghini](#)– This is a car that's as unique as its previous owner: a customized 2004 [Lamborghini Gallardo](#), available for sale on AutoTrader Classics.
7. [Young Mom with Old Car Tests Toyota's Newer Technology](#) – This article and accompanying video dives into whether all this new technology is more helpful or distracting for a busy mom-on-the-go.
8. [For Sale on AutoTrader: Chevy Corvette Owned by Nicolas Cage](#)– Car shoppers dreaming of owning a piece of celebrity history can find Cage's 1992 Chevy Corvette on AutoTrader.com.
9. [Five Reasons to Buy: 2011 Buick Regal](#) – With an emphasis on performance, the Buick Regal reappears after a seven-year production hiatus.
10. [Only \\$200K for a 200 MPH Sports Car – Audi R8 GT Pricing](#)– Audi announced details for its upcoming exotic sports car. Will the features and performance outweigh its hefty premium?

These articles and more, including coverage of upcoming auto shows and events, can be found at [www.autotrader.com/research](http://www.autotrader.com/research).

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#### **MARCH TOP 10 NEW VEHICLE BRANDS SEARCHED**

MAKE	Rank 3/11	Rank 3/10
Ford	1	2
Chevrolet	2	1
Dodge	3	5
Toyota	4	3
Nissan	5	4
Hyundai	6	10
GMC	7	8
Jeep	8	15
Honda	9	6
Kia	10	14

#### **MARCH TOP 10 USED VEHICLE BRANDS SEARCHED**

MAKE	Rank 3/11	Rank 3/10
Ford	1	1
Chevrolet	2	2
Toyota	3	4
BMW	4	3
Dodge	5	6
Honda	6	5
Nissan	7	7
Mercedes Benz	8	8

Jeep	9	9
Volkswagen	10	10

### MARCH TOP 20 MOST-SEARCHED NEW CARS

MAKE	MODEL	VDP Rank 3/11	VDP Rank 2/11	VDP Rank 3/10	Avg. Price 3/11	Avg. Price 3/10	Price % Change
Ford	Mustang	1	2	3	\$34,154	\$31,587	8.13%
Ford	F-150	2	1	2	\$38,130	\$36,737	3.79%
Chevrolet	Camaro	3	3	1	\$32,983	\$33,675	-2.05%
Chevrolet	Corvette	4	8	6	\$66,847	\$68,448	-2.34%
Dodge	Challenger	5	6	11	\$33,453	\$35,923	-6.88%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	6	4	4	\$33,664	\$33,807	-0.42%
Jeep	Wrangler	7	7	7	\$29,906	\$29,015	3.07%
Ford	Explorer	8	5	10	\$39,028	\$35,608	9.60%
Volkswagen	Jetta	9	11	27	\$23,067	\$23,408	-1.46%
Dodge	Ram 1500	10	10	9	\$35,472	\$34,595	2.54%
Chevrolet	Cruze	11	14	n/a	\$20,577	n/a	n/a
Dodge	Charger	12	9	82	\$30,941	\$29,754	3.99%
Chevrolet	Equinox	13	15	8	\$27,289	\$27,312	-0.08%
Hyundai	Elantra	14	18	95	\$19,414	\$17,423	11.43%
Ford	F-250	15	12	13	\$48,450	\$44,444	9.01%
Jeep	Grand Cherokee	16	13	70	\$38,314	\$36,251	5.69%
Kia	Optima	17	16	175	\$23,671	\$20,066	17.97%
Ford	Fiesta	18	28	n/a	\$17,641	n/a	n/a
Dodge	Durango	19	36	356	\$39,247	\$37,855	3.68%
GMC	Sierra 1500	20	20	25	\$35,941	\$36,277	-0.93%

### MARCH TOP 20 MOST-SEARCHED USED VEHICLES

MAKE	MODEL	VDP Rank 3/11	VDP Rank 2/11	VDP Rank 3/10	Avg. Price 3/11	Avg. Price 3/10	Price % Change
Ford	F-150	1	1	1	\$20,062	\$20,760	-3.36%
BMW	3-Series	2	2	2	\$25,100	\$25,014	0.34%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	3	3	3	\$19,742	\$19,531	1.08%
Ford	Mustang	4	4	4	\$18,053	\$17,510	3.10%
Honda	Civic	5	9	8	\$14,124	\$13,652	3.46%
Honda	Accord	6	6	6	\$16,363	\$15,802	3.55%
Ford	F-250	7	5	5	\$24,379	\$23,563	3.46%
Jeep	Wrangler	8	7	9	\$20,907	\$19,460	7.44%

Dodge	Ram 1500	9	8	7	\$18,092	\$18,009	0.46%
Toyota	Tacoma	10	12	16	\$19,805	\$18,939	4.57%
Infiniti	G35/37	11	13	11	\$22,795	\$22,372	1.89%
Nissan	Altima	12	16	15	\$16,047	\$15,649	2.54%
Chevrolet	Silverado 2500	13	11	12	\$24,124	\$23,199	3.99%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	14	10	10	\$24,631	\$25,996	-5.25%
Volkswagen	Jetta	15	20	21	\$13,873	\$13,315	4.19%
BMW	5-Series	16	17	14	\$29,220	\$30,033	-2.71%
Audi	A4	17	18	20	\$20,907	\$20,996	-0.42%
Dodge	Ram 2500	18	14	13	\$27,066	\$24,708	9.54%
Jeep	Grand Cherokee	19	15	17	\$17,139	\$16,820	1.90%
Toyota	Camry	20	24	25	\$16,451	\$15,656	5.08%

### MARCH TOP 20 MOST-SEARCHED CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED CARS

MAKE	MODEL	VDP Rank 3/11	VDP Rank 2/11	VDP Rank 3/10	Avg. Price 3/11	Avg. Price 3/10	Price % Change
BMW	3-Series	1	1	1	\$30,671	\$30,315	1.17%
Honda	Accord	2	2	2	\$19,237	\$18,054	6.55%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	3	3	3	\$24,558	\$23,646	3.86%
Toyota	Camry	4	7	11	\$18,141	\$17,931	1.17%
Toyota	Tundra	5	4	7	\$26,684	\$24,732	7.89%
Honda	Civic	6	9	8	\$16,059	\$16,113	-0.34%
Audi	A4	7	10	9	\$26,111	\$26,455	-1.30%
Toyota	Tacoma	8	5	10	\$23,436	\$21,687	8.06%
Ford	F-150	9	6	5	\$26,204	\$27,303	-4.03%
Volkswagen	Jetta	10	13	15	\$16,326	\$16,148	1.10%
BMW	5-Series	11	11	6	\$35,787	\$35,699	0.25%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	12	8	4	\$33,265	\$32,491	2.38%
Toyota	Highlander	13	12	18	\$26,750	\$24,785	7.93%
Acura	TL	14	15	13	\$26,469	\$26,800	-1.24%
Honda	Pilot	15	14	14	\$25,173	\$24,668	2.05%
Acura	MDX	16	16	23	\$32,436	\$33,337	-2.70%
Ford	Mustang	17	17	12	\$22,180	\$20,509	8.15%
Honda	CR-V	18	20	28	\$21,050	\$21,903	-3.89%
Toyota	4 Runner	19	18	20	\$26,698	\$24,268	10.01%
Nissan	Altima	20	29	26	\$18,218	\$17,760	2.58%

### MARCH TOP 10 BIG MOVERS - NEW VEHICLES

MAKE	MODEL	Rank 3/11	Rank 2/11	Rank Change
Lexus	CT 200H	82	343	261
Fiat	500	255	392	137
Bentley	Mulsanne	277	365	88
Acura	TL	184	240	56
Nissan	GT-R	63	120	57
Honda	Insight	158	212	54
Scion	XD	220	271	51
Jeep	Compass	78	124	46
Honda	CR-Z	109	151	42
Honda	Fit	92	134	42

### **MARCH TOP 10 BIG MOVERS - USED VEHICLES**

MAKE	MODEL	Rank 3/11	Rank 2/11	Rank Change
Ferrari	458 Italia	497	551	54
Smart	Fortwo	313	359	46
Acura	Integra	455	494	39
Ford	Fiesta	458	496	38
Lexus	HS 250h	461	498	37
Toyota	MR2 Spyder	352	389	37
Honda	Fit	197	233	36
Chevrolet	Cruze	435	468	33
Pontiac	G5	321	354	33
Saturn	Sky	280	313	33

### **MARCH TOP 10 BIG MOVERS - CPO VEHICLES**

MAKE	MODEL	Rank 3/11	Rank 2/11	Rank Change
Mini	Cooper	161	234	73
Honda	Fit	106	138	32
Volkswagen	Golf	176	207	31
Porsche	911 Turbo	116	147	31
Audi	R8	294	323	29
Infiniti	M35/45	165	193	28
Mini	Cooper Clubman	251	277	26
Buick	Regal	275	299	24
Mazda	RX-8	238	261	23
Volkswagen	EOS	111	133	22



SOURCE AutoTrader.com

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