

Kelley Blue Book's Kbb.com Names Top 10 Green Cars of 2011, Releases New Survey Data Showing Gas Prices Increasingly Influence Purchase Considerations

Kbb.com Editors Spot Trends in More Fuel Efficient Gas-Powered Cars, as well as Hybrids, Diesels, Electrics

IRVINE, Calif., April 12, 2011 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- The expert editors from Kelley Blue Book's www.kbb.com, the leading provider of [new car](#) and [used car](#) information, today named the [Top 10 Green Cars of 2011](#). In this annual list, especially timely this year due to rising gas prices and just in time for Earth Day 2011, the kbb.com editors present a variety of [fuel-efficient vehicles](#) worthy of buyers' consideration.

The coverage includes detailed EPA-estimated fuel economy numbers and editorial commentary on why each model made this year's top Green Car list from kbb.com.

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In addition, Kelley Blue Book Market Intelligence today announces the latest March 2011 survey data detailing consumer sentiment and opinions on gas prices, showing that gas prices are increasingly influencing car shoppers' vehicle purchase considerations. The number of survey respondents reporting that gas prices have changed their mind about the vehicles they are considering increased 5 percentage points from 30 percent in February 2011 to 35 percent in March 2011. Further, the amount of respondents who identified better fuel economy as the primary reason they are looking to purchase a new vehicle also has been on the rise over the past three months, increasing from 6 percent in January 2011 to 15 percent in March 2011. In addition, 85 percent of car shoppers in March 2011 indicated that they feel gas prices will be higher in the next 30 days, up 11 percentage points from February 2011. On average, consumers taking the March 2011 survey said that a vehicle would need to get at least 26.2 highway miles-per-gallon in order for them to consider it for their next vehicle purchase.

Keeping consumer sentiment about gas prices in mind as the kbb.com editors chose their annual Green Car list for 2011, they were immediately struck by the much wider range of vehicles they had the privilege of considering this year when compared to years past. These days not only are there more [hybrids](#) than ever before, there also are more high-efficiency [gasoline-powered vehicles](#) on the road.

While it would have been simple for the kbb.com editors to rank the Top 10 vehicles in fuel efficiency, they instead sought out a variety of vehicle types for this list, since not everyone who wants to go greener will have their transportation needs met by a small hybrid or [plug-in electric vehicle](#). The editors also considered which 'green' vehicles they actually enjoy driving and would highly recommend to others. To be considered for the Top 10 Green Cars of 2011 list, each vehicle was required to offer fuel economy and CO2 emissions superior to the bulk of vehicles in its class, and at the same time provide all the safety, creature comforts and driving enjoyment that would make it pleasant to own.

"The sheer number and types of choices in the Green Cars category have grown remarkably in the last year, with new plug-in electrically driven vehicles alongside an increased number of traditional gasoline-powered cars with improved fuel

economy, as well as hybrids and [diesels](#)," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com. "Whether drivers are looking to be more environmentally friendly or seeking to save cash at the gas pump or both, the latest Top 10 Green Cars list from kbb.com offers a variety of choices to suit drivers' various Green Car wants and needs."

In fact, one of the key trends the kbb.com editors identified this year is that fuel-efficient conventional gasoline cars are making their own statement with combined EPA fuel economy numbers in the high 30s and highway ratings nudging over 40 miles per gallon. Since these vehicles also are significantly less expensive than hybrids, the kbb.com editors expect them to have a big impact with consumers who are staring \$4-per-gallon gasoline right in the face.

However, that is not the only important trend exemplified by kbb.com's Green Car list this year. For the 2011 model year, the auto industry also has witnessed the rise of the electrically powered vehicle. [Nissan](#) has created a stir with its all-[electric Leaf](#), daring to plunge into territory that General Motors eventually found untenable more than a decade ago. Meanwhile, GM has learned from its past EV1 experience and launched the [Chevrolet Volt](#), an electric car that carries with it a gasoline engine, which actually powers the vehicle only on the rarest occasions. Instead, that task is left to the electric motor-generator, making the Volt feel like a pure electric. Since both Leaf and Volt are plug-ins, they can relieve drivers of the need to frequent gasoline stations. Due to its all-electric-all-the-time nature the Leaf is emission-free, while the Volt's emission performance depends a great deal on how – and how long – it is driven.

As the consideration process continued, the kbb.com editorial department was confronted with the fact that, in terms of Green Cars, there are more good choices than ever before. While it makes the editors' job of choosing the Top 10 a bit tougher, it is nothing but a positive for all of the American drivers who are considering an environmentally friendly car these days.

Select Choices from Kbb.com's Top 10 Green Cars of 2011 List, with Fuel Economy Information, Editorial Commentary

[2011 Nissan Leaf](#) | 99 mpg equivalent

With a groundbreaking combination of range, room and price, the Nissan Leaf is the first all-electric car for the masses. The EPA says the Leaf will deliver 73 miles per charge and the equivalent of 99 miles per gallon. But that's not the only thing green about the Leaf: recycled materials made from home appliances, old car parts and plastic bottles are used extensively throughout the vehicle. The limited range disqualifies the Leaf as an option for some drivers, but for those who can swing it, the Nissan Leaf is the real deal.

[2012 Ford Focus](#) | 31 mpg (28 city/38 highway)

Impressive fuel economy is just one of the things we like about the new 2012 Ford Focus. Among our favorite features are its excellent handling, impressively outfitted interior, sweet Euro styling and the availability of cool features like Ford's Sync entertainment and communications system. You can even equip the Focus with Ford's highly impressive auto-park feature. And for maximum efficiency, Focus sedan buyers can add the SFE package, upping highway fuel economy to a solid 40 mpg.

[2011 Toyota Prius](#) | 50 mpg (51 city, 48 highway)

The original hybrid for the masses is still the segment's heavyweight when it comes to getting the most miles for your gallon. Whereas some efficiency-focused cars require an adjustment in driving habits to wring the most out of the vehicle's fuel-saving technologies, the Prius allows you to drive as you normally would and still see mpg returns that you can brag about during your semi-regular visits to the gas station.

[2011 Volkswagen Golf TDI](#) | 34 mpg (30 city/42 highway)

Interested in saving the planet but don't want to stop having fun? The punchy, sticky, miserly Golf TDI just might be the instrument of good you seek. We're long-time fans of the Volkswagen Golf lineup for its European driving feel, hatchback utility and interior quality that outclasses anything else in its class. When outfitted with the automaker's ubiquitous 2.0-liter turbo-diesel engine capable of delivering quick launches and 42 highway miles per gallon, you can feel especially good behind the wheel.

[2011 Hyundai Elantra](#) | 33 mpg (29 city, 40 highway)

There are now a few non-hybrid compact cars that deliver highway fuel economy of at least 40 miles per gallon, but the 2011 Hyundai Elantra is the only one that does so in every trim. In addition to the impressive efficiency, we're fans of the all-new Elantra's bold sheet metal, stylish interior and attractive list of standard and optional features.

For the remaining five vehicles on the Top 10 list, including full editorial commentary and reasoning behind each of the editors' picks, visit the [Top 10 Green Cars of 2011](#) story in kbb.com's Latest News section at <http://www.kbb.com/car-news/all-the-latest/top-10-green-cars-for-2011>.

The latest Kelley Blue Book Market Intelligence survey about consumer sentiment and gas prices was fielded to 404 in-market new- and used-car shoppers on Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com from March 14-22, 2011.

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