

Kelley Blue Book Names 2012 Brand Image Award Winners Based on Annual Car-buyer Perception Ratings

Ford Garners Four Top Honors; Mercedes-Benz, Cadillac, Honda Repeat Wins

IRVINE, Calif., April 4, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information, today announces the winners of the [2012 Brand Image Awards](#). These awards, based on consumer perception data from the company's Brand Watch™ study, honor the automotive brands that have most successfully captured positive consumer attention.

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Kelley Blue Book's 2012 Brand Image Award Winners

2012 Best Value Brand: [Honda](#)

2012 Most Trusted Brand: [Honda](#)

2012 Most Family-Friendly Brand: [Ford](#)

2012 Most Rugged Truck Brand: [Ford](#)

2012 Best Exterior Design Brand – Non-Luxury: [Ford](#)

2012 Best Interior Design Brand – Non-Luxury: [Ford](#)

2012 Best Exterior Design Brand – Luxury: [BMW](#)

2012 Best Interior Design Brand – Luxury: [Cadillac](#)

2012 Best Comfort Brand: [Cadillac](#)

2012 Best Performance Brand: [Porsche](#)

2012 Coolest Brand: [Porsche](#)

2012 Most Prestigious Brand: [Mercedes-Benz](#)

The 2012 Brand Image Awards, presented to the top brands in 12 categories, are based on consumer automotive perception data from Kelley Blue Book Market Intelligence's Brand Watch study. Brand Watch is an online brand perception tracking study tapping into 12,000+ in-market new-vehicle shoppers annually on Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com. The highly comprehensive Brand Watch study offers insight into in-market new-vehicle shoppers' perceptions of brands and important factors driving their purchase decisions while they are in the midst of the shopping process. The Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Awards recognize automakers' outstanding achievements in creating and maintaining brand attributes that capture the attention and enthusiasm of the new-vehicle buying public.

This marks the fifth year Kelley Blue Book has awarded auto manufacturers the Brand Image Awards, and this year, there are multiple repeat winners. Mercedes-Benz has captured Most Prestigious Brand for the fifth year in a row, demonstrating its unwavering stance in the minds of in-market car shoppers as the brand with the highest prestige. One of the most important factors among new truck buyers is "ruggedness," and for four years running Ford has claimed the Most Rugged Truck Brand title among consumers. Furthermore, Honda is

awarded Best Value Brand for the second year running, and Cadillac is named Best Comfort Brand for the second year in a row.

Ford will bring home the most 2012 Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Awards, receiving four out of the 12 trophies given this year. Ford is taking top honors for its great design, sweeping both the Best Exterior Design and Best Interior Design Awards in the Non-Luxury categories. In addition, this year Ford is the standout among car shoppers as Most Family-Friendly Brand, and it also wins the aforementioned award for Most Rugged Truck Brand.

"Image isn't everything but it is more than enough to get shoppers into the store, and that's half the battle for automakers and their dealers," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com. "With standout vehicles, memorable marketing and positive word of mouth, the winners of Kelley Blue Book's 2012 Brand Image Awards have secured enviable positions in the minds of in-market shoppers."

Kbb.com Editorial Comments About 2012 Brand Image Award Winners

2012 Most Trusted Brand: Honda

Without surprising anyone, our inaugural Most Trusted Brand award goes to a name that's practically synonymous with reliability and dependability. Honda's vehicles enjoy a decades-deep reputation as the smart choice in so many of the categories in which it competes.

2012 Best Value Brand: Honda

Many car buyers assume a vehicle's sticker price is the most significant monetary factor when choosing a car. While it's certainly an important consideration, Honda's reputation for superb resale value, exceptional quality and legendary dependability continues to raise the bar in respect to automotive value.

2012 Most Family-Friendly Brand: Ford

Ford's revamped people-shuttling vehicles have struck a chord with those looking to haul growing families and their gear in safety and comfort. The re-invented Explorer has helped lead this effort thanks to its more car-like ride and seating for up to seven, while good looks and roomy interiors have attracted others to the Taurus sedan and Flex crossover.

2012 Best Interior Design Brand - Non-Luxury: Ford

Ford's upscale interior styling seemingly blurs the line between luxury and non-luxury interior design. Overflowing with high-quality materials and the latest high-tech gadgets, Ford interiors break the perceptions of what can be achieved in a mainstream vehicle.

2012 Most Rugged Truck Brand: Ford

In 1925, Ford produced its first ever pickup truck. Now 87 years later, Ford's F-150 has become the quintessential American truck and the country's best-selling vehicle for three decades. From ranchers to boaters to the everyday Joe, the Ford F-Series offers something for anyone seeking a durable pickup with everyday versatility.

2012 Best Exterior Design Brand - Non-Luxury: Ford

A bold, dynamic exterior design is one of the key ingredients in Ford's recent recipe for success. While Ford's current "Kinetic" design language is well received by the American public, the Blue Oval refuses to rest on its laurels. Ford is aiming to shake-up the industry once again with its next-generation global design platform set to debut on the 2013 Fusion.

2012 Best Exterior Design Brand - Luxury: BMW

From the athletic stance of the entry-level 1 Series to the long – and long-on-elegance – 7 Series executive class, BMW has a knack for expressing its cars' inner power and prestige to their exterior sheet metal. Vehicles such as the revamped X3 and hulking X6 crossovers helped this brand and its rounded design philosophy to take the top spot from last year's winner Cadillac and its more aggressive, angular approach.

2012 Best Interior Design Brand - Luxury: Cadillac

Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com visitors still can't take their eyes off the plush and progressive cabins of Cadillac vehicles, voting them the Best Interior Design among luxury cars for a second year in a row. Boasting features such as suede steering wheels and LCD screens that majestically rise from the dash, Cadillac's interiors adeptly match everyday functionality with visually pleasing form.

2012 Best Comfort Brand: Cadillac

Cadillac has forever been equated with comfort, and that fact still resonates with kbb.com visitors, who voted it the best in class for a second year in a row. While the brand continues to make significant strides in creating more sport-oriented cars, Cadillac hasn't forgotten the plush ride quality that many still equate with its very name.

2012 Best Performance Brand: Porsche

This is Porsche's year to own the award it has traded back and forth with BMW every year since 2009. Uniquely styled and built with an uncompromising focus on driving excitement and enjoyment, Porsche's performance image is rooted strongly in the cars themselves.

2012 Coolest Brand: Porsche

As soon as you say you're cool, you're not. But it always counts when someone else says it, and in the past year a lot of in-market shoppers have cited Porsche as the coolest car brand around. Like a humble world-class athlete, Porsche does its thing better than any other car in the world but never gets loud about it.

2012 Most Prestigious Brand: Mercedes-Benz

This is its fifth win in a row, so let's just recap what we've said the past four years: "Mercedes-Benz remains the luxury brand of luxury brands," "it is still impossible to find an automotive brand regarded as more prestigious than Mercedes-Benz" and "there's just something about the three-pointed star and the rich history of sophistication behind it."

For more information about the 2012 Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Awards, please visit <http://www.kbb.com/car-reviews-and-news/top-10/2012-brand-image-awards/>.

For Brand Watch inquiries on any vehicle segment or brand, please contact Hwei-Lin Oetken, vice president of market intelligence for Kelley Blue Book, at 949-267-4460 or hoetken@kbb.com.

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