

URBAN PICKS

BIGGER IS GETTING BETTER IN FULL-SIZE SUV MARKET

By Paul A. Eisenstein

Bigger certainly seems to be better - or so one might suspect from the booming sales of full-size, sport-utility vehicles such as the Lincoln Navigator and Toyota Land Cruiser. And the good news is that automakers are responding with a growing list of choices.

It wasn't too long ago that full-size SUV buyers had only a handful of options, primarily products like the Range Rover, Land Cruiser and the granddaddy of the segment, the Suburban, which is sold through both Chevrolet and GMC dealers. Suddenly, all sorts of new nameplates are entering the full-size segment. The Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator are two of the most recent - and successful - examples. Add to the list the newly-updated Lexus LX470 and the GMC Yukon Denali.

One thing hard to miss is that the vehicles on this list are not only big in overall length, they're also big on creature comfort and other features. Forget the days when buying a truck

meant a vinyl-covered bench seat and a static-filled AM radio. The models on our list all offer the type of touches once found only on top-of-the-line luxury cars: from air conditioning, of course, to studio-quality sound systems. Leather trim, if not standard issue, is a common option, as are CD changers and power seats that do just about everything but give you a massage.

Of course, the price tags reflect this. You can squeak into a fairly plain-vanilla Suburban for as little as \$22,239, but the massive AMG Hummer will set you back \$61,358. The majority of these vehicles start in the mid-\$20,000 range and run up to the mid-\$30,000s. But they typically offer a wide range of option packages that can tack thousands more onto the bottom line before you drive off the dealer's lot. So, shop carefully or you could easily exceed your budget. Is it worth it?

LINCOLN NAVIGATOR



system, and a beautifully orchestrated 290 horsepower, 32-valve, aluminum-alloy V8.

JAGUAR

A new breed of Jaguar