

Portland International Auto Show

BY KATHLEEN CARR

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Dodge Nitro 4X4



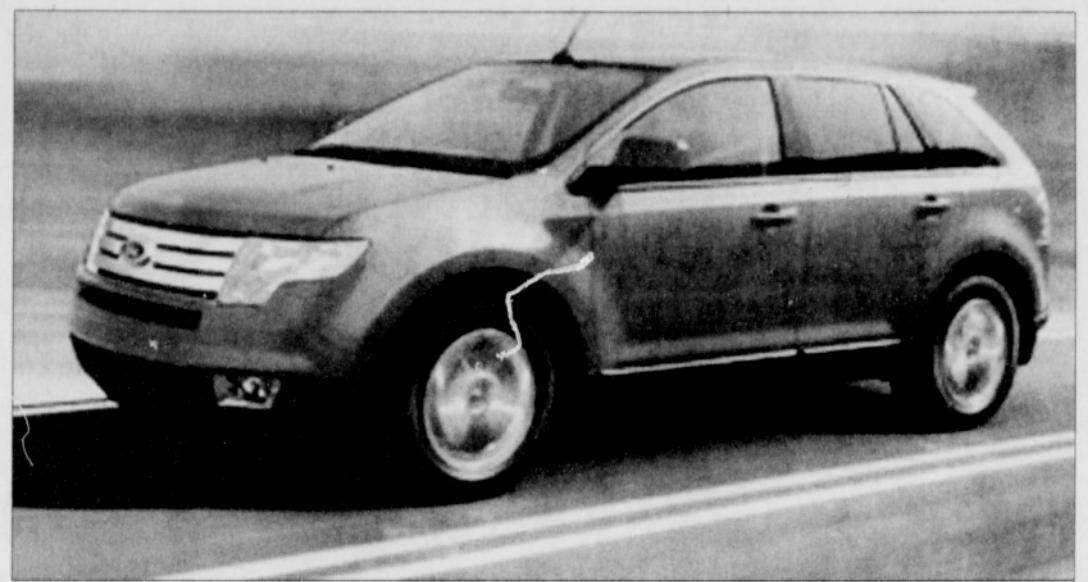
Driving is a Blast

Engine: 4.0-liter, V6

MPG: 17 mpg City/ 21 mpg Highway

SMRP: \$ 27,480.00

Dodge's first midsize SUV, the Nitro is based on the Jeep Liberty but has undergone many changes. It is a "leapfrog" edition; containing elements of the 2008 Liberty and many of its own unique features. One of those features is the brand new, performance-oriented 4.0-liter V6 engine, which delivers 255-hp at 5,800 rpm and 265 lb.-ft. torque at 4,200 rpm. The engine provides more power and torque with emphasis on low- and mid-range operation to meet the needs of the day-to-day driver. It is one of the quietest engines of on the market. The Nitro is an impressive ride with great handling. The Nitro features a tough exterior look, with a nice interior. The Nitro can tow 5,000 pounds and has the Load N' Go cargo floor, which slides 18" rearward for easy loading, and unloading. One of the coolest features is Chrysler's new MyGig hard drive-based multimedia system. MyGig is a voice-activated navigation/audio system, which comes with real-time traffic reports and a 20-GB hard drive capable of storing 1600 songs. Material may be uploaded from CDs, a flash drive, or even a laptop via a USB port in the faceplate, right next to the iPod jack. MyGig also allows you to upload eight jpeg photos, which can be used as wallpaper on half of the display.



2007 Ford Edge

The Edge is Never Dull

Engine: 3.5-liter V6, 265-hp

MSRP: \$ 30,700.00

Mpg: 18 mpg City/ 25 mpg Highway

The Edge is a comfortable, quick, smooth-riding midsize SUV, with 5 seats and fresh styling. The Edge is Ford's first entry in the burgeoning crossover utility vehicle (CUV) market, an area that has assumed more importance lately because of the volatile gas prices. The big news is that the Edge is one of the first recipients of the new corporate 3.5-liter V-6 engine shows good power, sprinting to 60 mph in roughly 7.5 seconds. This new engine design has the potential for capacity increases in the future. It is mated to a six-speed automatic transmission which provides sweet, fast shifts, which is a joint design between General Motors and Ford. The Edge interior is extremely spacious, and when it comes to true utility, the Edge has commodious cargo space. Providing drivers with a fine-tuned ride without compromising the fun-to-drive quotient places Ford directly on the cutting edge. The edge is never dull.



Safety and Comfort

Subaru B9 Tribeca

Engine: 3.0 Liter, 6 Cylinders

MPG: 18/City 23/Highway

MSRP: \$ 34,900.00

The 2007 B9 Tribeca is the first-ever Subaru SUV with available seating for seven passengers. The 2007 B9 boasts new safety technology, more refined styling and improved suspension. There was a lot to like about the 2007 Subaru B9 Tribeca. Overall driving feel was great, and cabin electronics mostly met our high expectations. Although we would have liked a little more highway power, the Tribeca worked great for around-town driving. Through traffic its six-cylinder boxer engine gave us power when we needed it to jump into another lane. Its five-speed automatic transmission could use an extra gear, which would give it better fuel economy on the freeway. Subaru's all-wheel-drive system helped our overall performance rating of the Tribeca, which would have been merely average otherwise. Besides the long reach to the LCD, the cabin electronics were very satisfactory. We liked the nav system, and the stereo sounded good. Holding back our cabin tech subrating was the lack of Bluetooth phone support, putting this aspect of the car in the superior range. Finally, the car's all-wheel drive, side curtain air bags, rollover sensor, and backup camera helped give it a near-perfect score for safety tech.



BMW 650i Convertible Euphoria, With a View

MSRP: \$80,900.00

Mpg: 14-mpg City/ 22-mpg Highway

Engine: 4.8-liter, V8, 360-hp

Merging the refined style and fiery spirit of the legendary 6 Coupe with the open-air freedom of a convertible, this car seizes the imagination as boldly as it captures the eye. A muscular 4.8-liter V8 power plant delivers 360 horsepower and a riveting 5.6-second launch to 60 mph. A choice of three 6-speed transmissions and BMW's Active Roll Stabilization (ARS) ensure dynamic performance and level cornering on even the tightest curves. With the top up, the convertible roof gracefully mirrors the pleasing proportions and aggressive lines of the Coupe. With a push of the button, the top comes down for the most rewarding and exuberant drive under the stars. The 6 Series Convertible is a new perspective on pleasure.



Safety and Comfort

Nissan Versa

MSRP: \$14,500.00

Engine: 1.8-liter, 16-valve 4-cylinder

When it comes to comparisons with others in its class, Versa is a car packed with the unexpected. Both the Sedan and Hatchback start with a 122-hp engine that delivers class-leading power and torque, plus exceptional fuel-efficiency. Available high-tech features like the Intelligent Key keyless entry system, Bluetooth Hands-Free Phone System, and advanced Xtronic CVT (Continuously Variable Transmission) will surprise. So will the largest interior in its class. These are things you wouldn't expect, but will quickly appreciate. Explore the brand-new Versa.



World's First Hot-Rod Hybrid

Lexus GS-450 Hybrid

Engine: 3.5-liter, V6, gas/electric hybrid

MPG: 25 mpg City/ 28 mpg Highway

MSRP: \$54,900.00

Lexus claims to have the first rear-drive hybrid, combining the port- and direct-fuel-injected 2GR-FSE 3.5-liter V-6 with two motor generators and a hybrid battery pack for a combined 339 peak horsepower. It runs 0-to-60 mph in 5.2 seconds. The GS 450h can accelerate to 40 mph without using the engine, making it a combo sport sedan/golf cart. Transitions are seamless, with none of the driveline jerk that often happens when the engine kicks in on other hybrids. The GS 450h demonstrates that gasoline plus electric equals breathtaking performance. The 2007 GS 450h is the essence of Lexus performance: a well-equipped sedan with high-tech power instead of big-bore muscles. The GS450h is not a sports car but with 339-hp, it catapults to 60 quicker than the new Jaguar XK, making it the world's first hot-rod hybrid. Lexus will only allow the sale of 2000 units yearly.

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