

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2007 Lincoln MKZ AWD

Zephyr Yesterday ~ MKZ Today

BY KATHLEEN CARR

In an unusual twist, Lincoln has renamed one of its vehicles after just one year on the market. In order to more closely align its vehicles with a new naming structure, Lincoln has renamed last year's Zephyr sedan the 2007 MKZ.

Most noticeable is the MKZ's exclusive new engine. Under the hood is a larger, more powerful 3.5-liter V6. The bigger engine makes 263 horsepower, 42 more than last year's 3.0-liter V6. It also develops more torque (249 pound-feet this year) and is available with either front-wheel or all-wheel drive.

Handsome, classy and nicely turned out, Lincoln's first all-new sedan since the Jaguar-based, rear-wheel-drive LS is well suited to compete with "near-luxury" imports and attract more affluent buyers to Lincoln-Mercury showrooms, and

the renamed 2007 MKZ's much-improved powertrain and other upgrades make it that much more competitive. But why jettison an excellent name with strong Lincoln heritage in favor of a soulless acronym after just one year? We think this car is good enough to succeed, whatever it's called, but the label change is confusing.

The Lincoln MKZ is a distinctly American take on the entry luxury sedan. The interior is suitably roomy and comfortable, and although the materials aren't class-leading, they're a noticeable step up from the Lincoln's lower-line siblings. And with peppy acceleration from the new V6 and a plush ride, the MKZ is pleasant to drive.

Then there's the matter of the MKZ's styling, which although unusual, doesn't seem likely to resonate well with the younger custom-



Specifications: 3.5-Liter 263-hp @ 249 lb-ft torque V-6 Engine; 6-Speed Automatic Transmission; 18-City 26-Highway MPG; \$ 35,640 MSRP

ers Lincoln hopes to attract. Still, for buyers seeking an entry-level luxury sedan with a little more interior space and a fairly reasonable price, the 2007 Lincoln MKZ is worth a look.

A midsize premium sedan, the 2007 Lincoln MKZ comes in a single

trim with either front-wheel drive or all-wheel drive. The MKZ comes nicely equipped with such standard features as 17-inch alloy wheels, leather upholstery, wood trim, power seats with memory, dual-zone automatic climate control and a seven-speaker CD stereo with an

MP3 player input jack. Notable options include chrome wheels; xenon HID headlights, a sunroof, an upgraded THX-certified sound system, satellite radio, a navigation system, and heated and cooled front seats.

Standard safety features include

front-seat side impact airbags as well as full-length head curtain airbags. Those head airbags include a "roll-fold" feature that helps to keep the airbag against the glass even if the occupant is out of position. All MKZs include disc brakes with ABS. Traction control is also standard, but oddly, stability control is not available. In NHTSA crash tests, the 2007 Lincoln MKZ received four out of five stars for driver and front passenger safety.

The MKZ is capable around turns, but doesn't offer handling dynamics on par with its more athletic competitors in this price range. Steering feedback, in particular, is unimpressive. On the flip side, the MKZ offers a typical Lincoln "big car" ride on the highway, making it an excellent candidate for road trips.

Lincoln says its modern image target is "earned reward" or "American dream," rather than "old world" flashy or "ostentatious luxury," which translates to quiet, casual, confident and more understated style.

SPORTS

Portland State Football Goes Black

When Portland State's football program released its new look designed by Nike, PSU Head Coach Jerry Glanville expressed his appreciation for a vast improvement over an original design of his.

"When Nike presented their new look, I realized I may be in the wrong business designing uniforms," said Glanville. "We put their uniform next to (the one Glanville and PSU equipment manager Rick McReynolds designed, and it was no contest. The players all voted for the Nike uniform."

The uniforms designed by Glanville and McReynolds sold on eBay for about \$1.50.

Todd Van Horne, creative director for Nike, led a team that created the stylized and Viking-inspired spear logo and uniforms leaning heavily toward Glanville's favored black color scheme, while the helmets will have the new spear logo running over the crown.

"Coach describes black as not a color but an attitude, and we thought 'well, there it is.' Let's bring a new attitude and show a visual difference where Portland State University is now," said Van Horne. "I think you will see the very distinct difference of color, and the distinct difference of spear design that is much more aggressive, fitting into that new attitude."



Nike designed black jerseys and helmets to bring a new attitude to the Portland State University football program.

Mayor Declares PSU Day Sept. 8

Mayor Tom Potter has declared Portland State University Day as Saturday, Sept. 8, when he will make the official proclamation and pre-game coin toss at PSU football's home opener against UC Davis.

The 6:05 p.m. match at PGE Park will be the 13th-ranked Vikings' first in Portland under Head Coach Jerry Glanville. Portlanders are encouraged to attend the game wearing black, green and white to celebrate their affiliation with the university.

"The Vikings are back, and Coach Glanville is going to shake things up - not to mention shaking up UC Davis," said Potter. "I hope Portlanders will join me at PGE Park to welcome the coach and the new season of Viking football."

Vick Apologizes for Dogfighting

NAACP weighs in

(AP)--Michael Vick apologized to the NFL and his Atlanta Falcons teammates Monday for "using bad judgment and making bad decisions" and vowed to redeem himself of charges in a dogfighting case.

The apology came after the national president of the NAACP said Thursday that Vick "is not a victim" and should be held responsible for his actions involving a dogfighting ring in Virginia.

"He absolutely must account for what he has done," Dennis Courtland Hayes, interim NAACP president. "I think there is reason to believe in his redemption."

Hayes' comments came a day after the head of the NAACP's Atlanta chapter said Vick should be allowed to return to football after the case is resolved.

"As a society, we should aid in his rehabilitation and welcome a new Michael Vick back into the community without a permanent loss of his career in football," Atlanta NAACP President R.L. White said.

The star quarterback pleaded guilty Monday to a federal dogfighting charge and awaits a Dec. 10 sentencing date that likely will send him to prison.

"First I want to apologize for all the things that I've done and that I have allowed to happen," Vick said at a news conference following his appearance in U.S. District Court.

"I made a mistake in using bad judgment and making bad decisions," he said. "Dogfighting is a terrible thing."



Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick pauses during a statement to the press Monday after pleading guilty in a dogfighting case.

Timbers Host Latino Soccer

In their continuing efforts to further develop soccer in the greater-Portland community, the Portland Timbers will host a Latino soccer tournament on Sept. 21-23 at Delta Park.

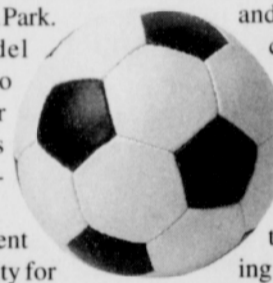
The Copa del Noroeste is open to all adult soccer leagues and clubs around the Northwest.

"This tournament is a great opportunity for the Timbers to continue to be an active member in the community and to continue our efforts in the development of soccer in the Northwest," said Gavin

Wilkinson, general manager and head coach of the Timbers. "The Copa del Noroeste will be a great platform for the Timbers to reach out into the Latino community

and allow players and clubs to showcase their talent on a regional level."

Each team is guaranteed a minimum of three matches with the winning side being outfitted by Nike with new uniforms, equipment and shoes—a value of \$3,500. Teams can register for \$250 online at www.copadelnoroeste.com by Sept. 7.



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