Portland Observer Auto Review News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2009 Mercury Mariner Premier 4WD Mercury Mariner shows mediocre merit



Specifications: 3.0-Liter, 240-hp @ 223 lb-ft. torque, DOHC 24-valve V-6 engine; 6-Speed automatic transmission; 17-City, 24-Highway MPG; \$32,795. MSRP

BY KATHLEEN CARR

been mechanically overhauled, on the heels of a total redesign for 2008. New four-cylinder and V-6 with better gas mileage, and ride have improved. The cabin also has some interesting new options.

Those are all good things, because the redesigned 2008 Mari-

The 2009 Mercury Mariner has many low-rent plastics and seating annoyances inside. The changes for 2009 move the Mariner from average to appealing, drivetrains produce more power but not decisively so. It still has a few flaws, and lined up against quality and braking performance competitors the Mariner doesn't stand out.

> For 2009, "Part 2" of the refresh of the Mercury (and the Ford Escape twin) begins with more powerful and efficient powertrain

thirst at the pump, and it had too Mariner comes with a 171-hp, 2.5L steering systems. The Electric four now mated to a six-speed automatic transmission -- that's two speeds and 18 hp more than before. Customers looking for more power can order the optional 3.0L V-6 with 240 hp -- 40 more hp than last year's six. The closer in fuel economy to the comextra power from the updated V-6 results in a 0-60-mph time that Ford claims is a substantial 1.7 sec quicker than the 2008 model.

> The 2009 Mariner also benefits from retuned suspension and

Power Assist Steering, along with low-rolling-resistance tires and the addition of front bumper and rear tire spoilers, help Ford and Mercury eke out 1 more mpg from the SUVs. The Mariner is now pact SUV class sales leader, the Honda CR-V.

A capless refueling system and seat fabrics that Ford claims are "ecofriendly," with soy-based foam taking the place of petro-

the changes. With a bump in power and fuel efficiency (now that the four-speed automatic is history), the fully refreshed Mer- drivetrain's droning exhaust. cury Mariner is now better couple years.

mannered in its upshifts, but its Mariner to the front of the pack.

leum-based products, round out highway responsiveness is just as good — and it has shorter gears for quicker passing-lane bursts, with none of the old

Among a vast sea of competiequipped to take on its formi- tive models, we haven't been terdable competition for another ribly impressed by the Mariner in recent years. It's a fine vehicle, That's due in part to the new but the materials, engines, and six-speed automatic, which re- lack of innovative features have places last year's antiquated four- left us wanting, especially when speed gearbox. The four-speed compared to younger alternawasn't a deal-breaker; it upshifted tives. The 2009 model's boost in smoothly around town and kicked power and refinement will address down to third on the highway for these issues head on, though a easy-enough passing perfor- complete redesign might've had mance. The six-speed isn't as well- the best chance of propelling the



Real People, Real Advice An advice column known for its fearless approach to reality based subjects!

Dear Deanna!

I work two jobs because my wife got laid off. She's never satisfied and when I think about it, I'm breaking my neck and she spends money left and right. I don't have a problem with this, but if she wants to have her glamorous lifestyle, she needs to get a job. When I approach her, she claims she can't find work but she's not looking. I'm tired and want to rest but also want to keep my wife sonville, Fla.

Joel; Omaha, Neb.

Dear Joel:

Shut her down, close your wallet and take the credit cards immediately. If your wife won't work, then you need to make her an item on the budget and give her a monthly allowance. Once her money runs out, then oh well, she's stuck until the next cycle or until she gets a job. This may not make your wife happy but at least you'll still be around to see her.

Dear Deanna!

I made the mistake and tried to help a friend that got evicted from her apartment. She has three children and I feel as if I'm living in a tornado. These kids have no home training, constantly spill food and are always dirty. I'm really losing my mind because you would think they were deaf the way the television is on full blast. The way my home looks and the stress I feel makes me willing to lose the friendship if I kick her out. What do I do? -- Anonymous; Jack-

Dear Anonymous:

There may be more to the story of why she got evicted in the first place. If you value your sanity and possessions, help her plan her next move. Be mature and have a discussion without placing the blame on the children and express your desire to reclaim your space. Have a few applications available and some cash to speed the process. This approach should save your friendship and also get the tiny terrors out the door quick, fast and in a hurry.

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Food Stamp Workers Hired

The Legislature has approved of three. a request from Gov. Kulongoski to immediately hire 60 new workers throughout the state to meet the increasing demand for Food Stamps.

The need for Food Stamps has grown 13 percent in Oregon since October 2007, and in some communities the increase is as high as 25 percent. The new positions will be targeted in the communities that have shown the greatest increase in Food Stamp applications.

"We need to be sure that every Oregonian who is eligible for assistance through the food stamp program has the opportunity to benefit from it," said Gov. Kulongoski. "With the rising cost of food and other basic expenses, we must do all we can to make sure that families in our state are not going hungry.

Oregon's food stamp benefits are distributed through the "Oregon Trail Card," which works like a debit card. Many working families turn to these benefits when their monthly income does not cover rent, health care, food and other basics. Benefits are determined on a sliding scale, from \$14 to \$463 per month for a family

Currently 258,600 households (approximately 499,000 individuals) receive food stamps in Oregon, or about 13 percent of the Oregon population.

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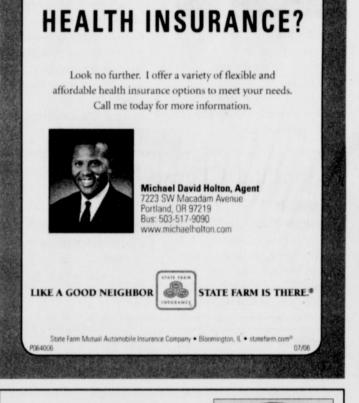
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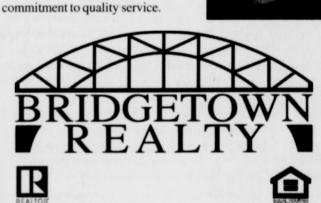


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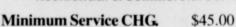
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