

CHEVROLET IMPALA IS FIRST DOMESTIC CAR TO TOP CONSUMER REPORTS SEDAN RATINGS IN TWO DECADES

Outscores luxury competitors costing as much as \$20,000 more

YONKERS, NY-With a phoenix-like turnaround, the revamped 2014 Chevrolet Impala has changed the landscape of Consumer Reports ratings by earning the top spot overall for all sedans-and taking a position that has been held by Japanese and European models for at least the last 20 years.

The Impala has gone from the bottom of its class in Consumer Reports ratings, with a mediocre test score of 63-too low to be CR Recommended-to an "Excellent" 95 that places it not only at the top of its "Large Sedan" category, but also among the top-rated vehicles Consumer Reports has tested. Only two vehicles have a higher test score; the Tesla Model S hatchback and the BMW 135i coupe.

"The Impala's performance is one more indicator of an emerging domestic renaissance," said Jake Fisher, director of Consumer Reports automotive testing. "We've seen a number of redesigned American models-including the Chrysler 300, Ford Escape and Fusion, and Jeep Grand Cherokee- deliver world-class performance in our tests."

Consumer Reports engineers found the Impala rides like a luxury sedan, with a cushy and controlled demeanor, while delivering surprisingly agile handling, capable acceleration, and excellent braking. The Impala corners quite well for a large car, with prompt turn-in response and controlled body lean. Steering is nicely

weighted; it's light enough for parking maneuvers and provides decent feedback. When pushed to its handling limits, the Impala proved secure, responsive, balanced, and easy to control.

Inside, the spacious cabin sets a new standard for Chevrolet fit and finish, with generally high-quality materials and trim. The backseat is roomy and comfortable, the trunk is huge, and controls are refreshingly intuitive and easy to use. The 22 mpg overall Consumer Reports measured with the Impala's 3.6-liter V6 engine and six-speed automatic transmission is competitive, but it's not the best in its class.

Despite its high test score, this Impala is too new for Consumer Reports to have reliability data, so it can't be Recommended. To be Recommended, a vehicle must perform well in CR's battery of tests, have average or better reliability in CR's Annual Auto Survey, and perform well in government and industry crash tests.

Consumer Reports has been testing, reviewing and comparing cars for more than 75 years. The organization started calculating numerical scores and compiling comparative overall ratings charts in 1992. In that time, the top-scoring sedan spot in Consumer Reports tests has been held 12 times by a Japanese model and nine times by a European model.

Overall, Consumer Reports found the Impala is competitive with cars that cost \$20,000 more, including the Audi A6 and Lexus LS460L, as well as the recently reviewed Acura RLX and Jaguar XF.

Complete tests results for the Impala, Acura RLX and Jaguar XF,

Hyundai Santa Fe, and Kia Sorrento, appear on www.ConsumerReports.org today, and in the September issue of Consumer Reports, on newsstands August 1. Updated daily, ConsumerReports.org is the go-to Website for the latest auto reviews, product news, blogs on breaking news, and car-buying information. Check out CR's ongoing Twitter feed at @CRCars.

CR Testers find Hyundai Santa Fe and Kia Forte impressive redesigns

The redesigned, seven-passenger version of the Santa Fe is one of the most pleasant and well-rounded three-row SUVs on the market. It's stylish, functional, and easy to live with. It now tops its class in Consumer Reports' mid-sized SUV ratings, edging out the Toyota Highlander by two points.

Spacious and accommodating, the Santa Fe has a limo-like rear seat and a generous cargo area. Yet it doesn't feel too bulky to drive or park. The comfortable ride and quiet interior make it a welcome partner on family trips. Easy access and simple controls add to its user-friendliness. And its smooth, refined 290-hp V6 engine delivers a best-in-class 20 mpg overall with little compromise in performance.

Consumer Reports testers also found the 2014 Kia Forte has made a quantum leap from the previous model. It even improves, albeit incrementally, on the highly rated Hyundai Elantra upon which it is based. Overall, it's a solid, mature compact sedan that will satisfy many buyers. Consumer Reports testers found the Forte is one of the more comfortable riding cars in this class; it has a smooth powertrain, and the cabin is relatively quiet.

The Forte's fuel economy of 28 mpg is merely par for this class, but the sedan compensates with a relatively roomy driving position and rear seat, and controls that are very easy to use. The interior is spacious and nicely finished, the seats are firm and well-shaped, and the in-car entertainment system is brimming with the latest connectivity features. Handling agility is not the car's strong suit; it just doesn't have the high fun-to-drive factor of a Ford Focus or a Mazda3. Still, it remains secure even at its limits.

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