

CX-7 GX is Mazda's version of a sport crossover SUV

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Gaining a foothold in the entry-level crossover market is important for Mazda because it (the crossover and compact SUV segment) makes up 15 per cent of the entire automotive market in Canada, second only to the compact sedan segment.

My tester was the 2010 CX-7 GX model with the \$2,995 Luxury Package, featuring power moonroof, leather upholstery and door trim, leather wrapped steering wheel and shift knob, eight-way power adjustable driver's seat, four-way power adjustable passenger seat, heated seat, Bluetooth hands-free phone system with audio profile and automatic climate control. It was priced at \$30,990.

Fuel consumption for the 2.5-litre is rated at 10.4L/100 km (27 mpg) city and 7.2L/100 km (39 mpg) highway. Meanwhile, the 2.3-litre turbo gets 12.2L/100 km (23 mpg) city and 8.7L/100 km (32 mpg) highway.

For 2010 all trim levels get new rain-sensing wipers, telescopic steering wheel, rear door storage bin, tire pressure monitoring system and multi-information system as new features this year.

The GT adds 235/55R 19 tires, memory driver's seat, colour multi information display with rear view camera and blind spot monitoring system.

As well, all CX-7s are fitted with four-wheel disc brakes with ABS, electronic brake force distribution and brake assist.

The ABS is electronically integrated with the stability control and traction control systems. Together, they modulate engine power and braking to maintain stability.

The CX-7 was introduced in 2007 and this year has undergone a minor facelift or "refinement" as Mazda likes to call it.

According to Masashi Otsuka, program manager for the CX-7, Mazda aimed "not only to focus on the North American market but rather to create a true global model that would satisfy the needs and expectations of customers worldwide."

To that end, the athletic and sporty exterior is largely unchanged, except for a revised lower front grille with a larger five-point design, similar in appearance to the one adopted recently on the RX-8, MX-5 and Mazda3.

This grille opening also contributes to increased cooling performance. On either side of the larger grille are new front fog lamp bezels.

Inside, a new steering wheel incorporates controls for the audio, Bluetooth and cruise control, while the gauges are redesigned with three-dimensional dials, ringed in blue illumination and white pointers. Softer padding is used on the front and rear door armrests, while new graining is used inside which reduces the collection of dirt between the dimples in the grain.

Further refinement has been carried

out on the CX-7 platform architecture, making it more rigid, lowering the noise, vibration and harshness levels and reducing wind noise. Thicker insulation in both the engine compartment and interior cabin in result in a quieter environment for passengers, while the A-pillars are fitted with large moldings in an effort to suppress cabin noise generated by side winds.

Mazda builds "zoom, zoom" into all its vehicles and the CX-7 is no different.

It is based on the concept of creating a sport crossover SUV—a vehicle with the attributes of a sports car blended in with those of an SUV.

From a design standpoint, the CX-7 is perhaps the sexiest SUV/CUV on the market with its steeply raked windshield, flowing hood and bulging wheel arches. Distinct character lines run through the A-pillars and along the sides of the hood to the front fascia.

Inside the cabin there is room for five passengers with ample hip, head and legroom, although legroom is somewhat less than some competitors.

Cargo room is 848 litres (30 cu. ft.) behind the rear seat and 1,658 litres (59 cu. ft.) with the rear seat folded. The GX has a towing capacity of 680 kg (1,500 lb), while the GS and GT turbo models will tow 907 kg (2,000 lb).

The Mazda "zoom zoom" is evident in the CX-7 driving characteristics. The vehicle has car-like handling with nicely weighted steering, a firm yet stable ride

and decent, but unspectacular acceleration with the base 2.5-litre engine.

This is a fairly heavy vehicle at 1,588 kg (3,493 lb) so the engine does have to pull hard on heavy acceleration and the noise it produces lets you know it. At speed, there is little wind and road noise and the engine sound is barely audible.

If power is important to you, though, you'd be advised to go with the 2.3-litre turbo engine, although it comes at a higher price and with poorer fuel economy.

Overall, though, Mazda hopes to take a larger share of the compact SUV/CUV pie with the 2010 CX-7 and with the new GX model seems poised to cut into sales of the RAV4 and CR-V, particularly at the entry level.

MAZDA CX-7 GX 2010 AT A GLANCE

BODY STYLE: Compact SUV/CUV.
DRIVE METHOD: front-engine, front/all-wheel drive.

ENGINE: 2.5-litre four-cylinder 16-valve DOHC (161 hp, 161 lb/ft torque); 2.3-litre turbocharged inline four cylinder (244 hp 258 lb/ft)

FUEL ECONOMY: 2.5-litre 10.4L/100 km (27 mpg) city, 7.2L/100 km (39 mpg) highway; 2.3-litre turbocharged, 12.2L/100 km (23 mpg) city, 8.7L/100 km (32 mpg) highway.

PRICE: GX \$27,995; GS \$32,295; GT \$38,990.

WEB SITE: www.mazda.ca

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\$11,166*

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STK. #G755



2009 PT CRUISER

Black, 2.4L, Auto, Air, P/Windows/Locks/Door, 49,000 kms.

\$11,366*

Includes admin. \$299, Trust Guard \$179, plate transfer \$10 plus GST & PST Only

STK. #G756



2009 PT CRUISER

Silver, 2.4L, Auto, Air, P/Windows/Locks/Door, 56,000 kms.

\$10,866*

Includes admin. \$299, Trust Guard \$179, plate transfer \$10 plus GST & PST Only

STK. #G757



2009 Gr. Caravan

Silver, 3.3L, Auto, Air, P/Windows/Locks, Stow 'n Go backseats, 59,000 kms.

\$17,028*

Includes admin. \$299, Trust Guard \$179, plate transfer \$10 plus GST & PST Only

STK. #G758



2008 Grand Prix

Brown, 3.8L, Auto, Air, P/Windows/Locks, ABS, 63,167 kms.

\$14,466*

Includes admin. \$299, Trust Guard \$179, plate transfer \$10 plus GST & PST Only

STK. #G727



2007 Sierra 4x4

White, 5.3L, Auto, Air, P/Windows/Locks, Locking Diff., 60,188 kms.

\$26,378*

Includes admin. \$299, Trust Guard \$179, plate transfer \$10 plus GST & PST Only

STK. #G748



2007 Silverado LTZ

Brown, 5.3L, Auto, Air, Leather, P/Windows/Locks, HD Trailing, 57,000 kms.

\$27,999*

Includes admin. \$299, Trust Guard \$179, plate transfer \$10 plus GST & PST Only

STK. #G745



2007 Caliber

Red, 2.0L, Auto, Air, P/Windows/Locks, Back Up Camera, 54,167 kms.

\$12,966*

Includes admin. \$299, Trust Guard \$179, plate transfer \$10 plus GST & PST Only

STK. #G696A



2007 Silverado 4 WD

White, 5.3L, Auto, Air, Locking Diff., HD Trailing, 78,856 kms.

\$21,366*

Includes admin. \$299, Trust Guard \$179, plate transfer \$10 plus GST & PST Only

STK. #G749



2006 STS ALL WHEEL DRIVE

Brown, 3.6L, Auto, Air, Sunroof, Heated Seats, 59,995 kms.

\$26,461*

Includes admin. \$299, Trust Guard \$179, plate transfer \$10 plus GST & PST Only

STK. #G751



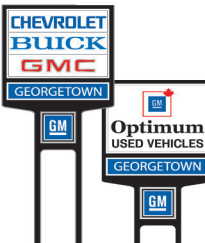
2006 STS ALL WHEEL DRIVE

Black, 3.6L, Auto, Air, Sunroof, Heated Seats, 68,472 kms.

\$26,461*

Includes admin. \$299, Trust Guard \$179, plate transfer \$10 plus GST & PST Only

STK. #G752



GEORGETOWN

CHEVROLET Buick GMC

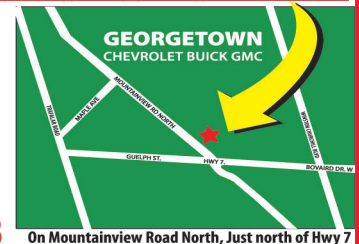
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