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The Nissan Murano helped create the mid-size crossover segment back in 2004, but now has stiff competition in the market. For 2010, Nissan has added more value and convenience to the Murano, which had a redesign in 2009.

Nissan Murano helped create the crossover segment

By **LORNE DRURY**
*Metroland Media Group
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If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

That's the motto Nissan is taking with its mid-size Murano crossover for 2010 after a redesign last year launched its second generation.

The Murano began life in 2003 as a 2004 model and was unique in the marketplace with its modern, swoopy exterior design. Crossovers— sport utility-style bodies on sedan platforms— were just beginning to take a foothold in the market and the Murano became an instant success and helped spawn an entirely new class of vehicles. In essence, crossovers are the modern version of the venerable old station wagon, which in itself is making a bit of a comeback

these days.

Back in 2004 there were only about nine vehicles in the mid-size crossover segment and since then the numbers have skyrocketed as manufacturers spin off as many vehicles as they can from each platform and consumers clamour for wagon-style vehicles that handle like a car but offer the convenience of a sport utility vehicle.

Sales of many mid-size crossovers took a beating during the recent downturn in the automotive market and the Murano was no exception, with sales falling 19 per cent to 3,691 units last year in Canada. Part of the drop is because many people are downsizing to compact crossovers like Nissan's sibling, the Rogue, which enjoyed an 11.1 per cent increase in sales during January to 811 units.

While that trend to smaller, more economical ve-

hicles will undoubtedly continue, the mid-size crossover is still in demand and the Murano has a lot to offer anyone shopping that market.

The 2009 redesign of the Murano didn't stray far from the original design concept that proved to be a success.

The look is now bolder, featuring a dynamic front fascia design, a wide grille with large integrated headlights, strong body side character lines and LED taillights.

For 2010, the Murano has the same look and feel, but with more convenience features and different packaging. Nissan's intelligent key system is now a standard feature, while the mid-level SL's Moonroof Package has been replaced by the Luxury Package. A Leather Package is also offered on the SL.

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