



Left: The huge makeover of the interior of the 2011 Dodge Avenger features a much roomier back seat with plenty of hip and legroom.

Right: The 2011 Dodge Avenger is offered with either a 2.4-litre, in-line four-cylinder engine and four-speed automatic transmission or (shown) a 3.6-litre DOHC V6 with six-speed automatic.



Avenger offers lots of legroom, support

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options on the SXT they cost \$1,265 and \$695 respectively.

Fuel consumption for the V6 is rated at 10.5/6.5L/100 km (27/44 mpg) city/highway. It's interesting that on the highway, the V6 gets slightly better mileage than the four-cylinder.

This week's SXT tester has several options like \$745 for the media info system that includes Garmin navigation, \$1,100 for the power sunroof and \$500 for 18-inch chrome clad alloy wheels for a total price of \$30,549 including a \$1,400 shipping fee.

The Avenger is one of the very few cars my super-sized son finds comfortable in terms of legroom and back support. In fact, of all the cars I've brought home over the years, the Avenger is his hands-down favourite.

Driving one of his lanky friends home from school, the friend remarked that the back seat has lots of room even with my son sitting with the front passenger seat all the way back.

The 3.6-litre V6 is a punchy unit that makes the most of the six-speed transmission to the point shifts are imperceptible. Of course, that changes when you drop down to the manual mode where you can hold the car in any gear longer for more rapid acceleration. And in winter, being able to start off and hold in second or third is a blessing on a snowy day.

The MacPherson front and multi-link rear suspensions have been thoroughly worked out with the result steering inputs are crisp without the slightly dead-on-centre sensation of the previous generation.

A carry-over car in many respects, that can't be said about the interior.

During the bad times for Chrysler in 2009, many engineers and designers decided to stay the course rather than take a package and jump ship.

One of the 'benefits' was time to rethink all interiors of all the vehicles Chrysler made. If there was one sore point with customers it was the shoddy appearance and execution of the cabins.

Soft-touch materials abound while the seats are far more supportive. The dash uses a three-pot main instrument cluster with white numerals on a black face with thick red pointers making it easy to see what's going on at a glance.

Summing up, the 2011 Avenger in the form of the SE and SXT offer almost full-size car interior passenger volume at a compact car price.

The SXT with the extra power of the V6 makes for a great long-distance or long-commute vehicle.

Either way, this car does not deserve to be overlooked by the value conscious, family sedan buyer.

Dodge Avenger SXT 2011 (at a glance)

- BODY STYLE: Mid-size sedan.
- DRIVE METHOD: front-engine, front-wheel-drive.
- ENGINE: 3.6-litre, DOHC V6 (283 hp, 260 lb/ft),
- FUEL ECONOMY: 10.5/6.5L/100 km (27/44 mpg) city/highway.
- PRICE: Base, \$23,995; \$30,549 as tested including \$1,400 shipping fee.
- WEBSITE: www.dodge.ca

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Soul 4u shown²

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Sorento EX-V6 Luxury shown

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Rondo EX-V6 shown

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HWY: 7.4L/100KM (38 MPG) CITY: 10.6L/100KM (27 MPG)

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