



The 2012 Chevrolet Orlando is based on the same platform as the Cruze sedan, but boasts seating for seven and the versatility of a minivan.

Chevrolet Orlando a versatile, practical people mover

By **LORNE DRURY**

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WINDERMERE, Ont.— Orlando may be a strange name for a vehicle that won't even be sold in the United States.

But what a pity that our friends to the south don't get to experience Chevrolet's new seven-passenger people-mover that arrives in Canada this fall.

Built in Korea, the Orlando is an important vehicle for General Motors Canada because it gets them back into the minivan market they exited so abruptly a couple of years back when the Uplander model was cancelled.

Already on sale in Europe and soon to be sold in several

markets around the world (except the U.S), the Orlando is not actually classified as a minivan, but a multi-purpose vehicle (MPV), a segment that GM Canada says is undeveloped in North America.

While the Americans were initially in on the Orlando program, they eventually dropped out leaving GM Canada to go it alone.

With gas prices spiking this summer, one wonders if GM execs in the U.S. are now doing a bit of head scratching, wondering if they made the right decision.

Perhaps the minivan design has lost a bit of its cachet, but when you get right down to it, the Orlando can be viewed as one of the new versions of the minivan like the Mazda5, Kia Rondo and Scion Xb.

For some reason, GM doesn't mention the hot-selling

Dodge Journey as a competitor, but it certainly would draw the interest of anyone in this market.

General Motors looks at young families as the primary target buyers for the Orlando and it's easy to see why.

Families can benefit from the versatility that this vehicle offers.

Combine that with the generous amount of space inside a relatively small package as well as the practicality and fuel-efficiency of the Orlando and you have a new-style vehicle that GM hopes will be a winner in the Canadian market.

The Orlando is based on the same platform as the compact Cruze sedan, and unlike the Canadian-built Chevrolet Equinox mid size crossover SUV, it comes in only

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