



Already one of the most handsome looking sedans on the road, the 2012 Buick LaCrosse with eAssist technology offers luxury with the bonus of up to 5.4L/100 km (52 mpg) on the highway. With a starting price of \$35,195 it is well under the price of comparable sedans.

Stylish Buick LaCrosse sedan gets a boost

By **JIM ROBINSON**
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Last year I drove the Buick LaCrosse CXS with all-wheel-drive and found it be one of the most satisfying sedans I sampled in 2011.

Satisfying?

Yeah and for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it is one of the most handsome looking, in my opinion, cars on the road.

After all those duds during the dark 'badge engineering' days, it seems as if Buick, at least, has rediscovered that GM flare for styling that used to set it apart.

Secondly, Buick got a reputation — rightly or wrongly deserved — for catering to people in their golden years turning out cars that were plushy inside, outside and under the hood.

Look inside the 2012 LaCrosse and you'll find supple leather, tasteful wood inserts, discreet blue ambient lighting and smart French stitching making it, again in my opinion, much more inviting than several of the Europeans in the luxury class. The LaCrosse is really not a premium luxury car but the appointments help make it seem so.

Lastly, it is affordable. With a starting price of \$35,195 it is well under sedans of comparable size inside and outside compared to, say, the Mercedes-Benz E Class.

When I drove the 3.6-litre CXS AWD model last fall, fuel economy was rated at 12.2/7.3L/100 km (23/39 mpg) city/highway.

That's not bad, but for 2012 it just got better with the availability of GM's eAssist engine technology that offers up to 5.4L/100 km or 52 mpg. As tested, fuel economy is rated at 8.3/5.4L/100 km (34/52 mpg).

It starts with a 2.4-litre Ecotec four-cylinder engine and six-speed automatic. Coupled to it is a 115-volt air-cooled lithium-ion battery with approximately 115 kW (15 horsepower) of electric power assist that can be tapped into during heavy acceleration along with 15 kW of regenerative braking power.

The eAssist system shares the same basic belt-alternator-starter configuration found on the V6 but the whole eAssist package goes beyond just a battery assist.

To reduce drag, underbody aerodynamics and tires have been optimized for performance and fuel economy, as well as active control of front-end airflow that improves aerodynamics and engine warm-up. The 17-inch wheels are a special light weight design.

Electronically controlled shutters in the lower

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