

LaCrosse offers great looks, price and fuel economy

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grille close at higher speeds to push more air over the vehicle, which increases aerodynamic efficiency to enhance fuel economy.

LaCrosse with eAssist includes an ECO gauge on the instrument panel that continuously responds to driving behavior, enabling the driver to drive with maximum efficiency.

It also features a hill-assist system that captures brake pressure to help the driver more comfortably accelerate from a stop on a moderate or steep grade. It does this by reducing the tendency of the vehicle to roll backward with the engine in shut-down mode.

In all dimensions, headroom, hip room, shoulder room and legroom between the front and rear are identical between the standard LaCrosse and the eAssist version. Legroom for instance is 1,059/991 mm (41.7/39.0 in) front/rear.

The only change is in the trunk where the already meager 377 litres (13.3 cu ft) is reduced to 307 litres (10.9 cu ft) to make way for the lithium-ion battery. Another casualty of the battery is the spare tire which is



The interior of the Buick LaCrosse eAssist is a standout with the highest quality materials and luxury extras such as the standard heated, leather and wood-trimmed steering wheel.

replaced by a tire inflator kit.

Despite having to haul that heavy battery around, the eAssist is the lightest LaCrosse of the lot at 1,712 kg (3,775 lb) versus 1,783 kg (3,936 lb) for the base LaCrosse and 1,917 kg (4,226 lb) for the AWD version I drove last fall.

While this does not translate into a marked acceleration difference compared to the standard 303 hp V6, eAssist is not a slug either.

With the Eco gauge staring you right in the face, the tendency to push the pedal to the metal is greatly reduced.

Starting from rest, eAssist feels strong enough and power is

adequate for all in-town driving.

About the only place you feel the battery assist kick in is during highway lane changes and on-ramp merging. Here there is noticeable engine noise as the four-banger does its best to behave like a V6.

The engine is probably a lot louder than you hear inside the cabin and that's due to what Buick calls 'Quiet Tuning' technologies that include gobs of sound deadening materials and acoustic laminated front windows and windshield.

Starting price for the 2012 LaCrosse as mentioned is \$35,195 and it gets you a lot of stuff such as Bluetooth, dual zone air universal home remote and the list goes on.

For a mere \$690, the V6 goes out and all the eAssist pieces go in.

My tester did have a few options such as \$4,210 for the leather package with heated front seats. It also included Bi-xenon lights, audible park

assist, blind spot monitoring and auto dimming driver's outside mirror. This in one option you have to get because the leather is so good.

A few other take-them-or-leave-them options such as \$1,660 for the sliding panoramic sunroof, \$995 for premium paint and \$2,870 for the navi/infotainment system pushed the as tested price up to \$47,630 and that includes a \$1,495 shipping fee.

The bottom line is the LaCrosse with eAssist still comes in at less than fifty grand, making it a relative bargain compared to the cost of some of its direct competitors.

Great looks, great price and great fuel economy makes the Buick LaCrosse with eAssist worthy of serious consideration for the tier one luxury car buyer.



Buick LaCrosse eAssist 2012 (at a glance)

BODY STYLE: mid-size sedan.

DRIVE METHOD: front-engine, front-wheel-drive.

ENGINE: 2.4-litre inline four-cylinder with 15 kW electric motor/generator (combined 182 hp, 172 lb/ft)

FUEL ECONOMY: 8.3/5.4L/100 km (34/52 mpg) city/highway

TOWING CAPACITY: NA

PRICE: Base LaCrosse with V6, \$35,195; eAssist package adds \$690; eAssist as tested including \$1,495 shipping fee, \$51,480 including \$1,000 shipping fee

WEBSITE: www.gm.ca/Buick



In the eAssist version of the 2012 Buick LaCrosse, the standard V6 is replaced by a 2.4-litre Ecotec four-cylinder with 15 kW electric motor/generator for a combined 182 hp and 172 lb/ft of torque.

WHERE THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS #1

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