2009 Model easily the best-looking Mazda6 yet

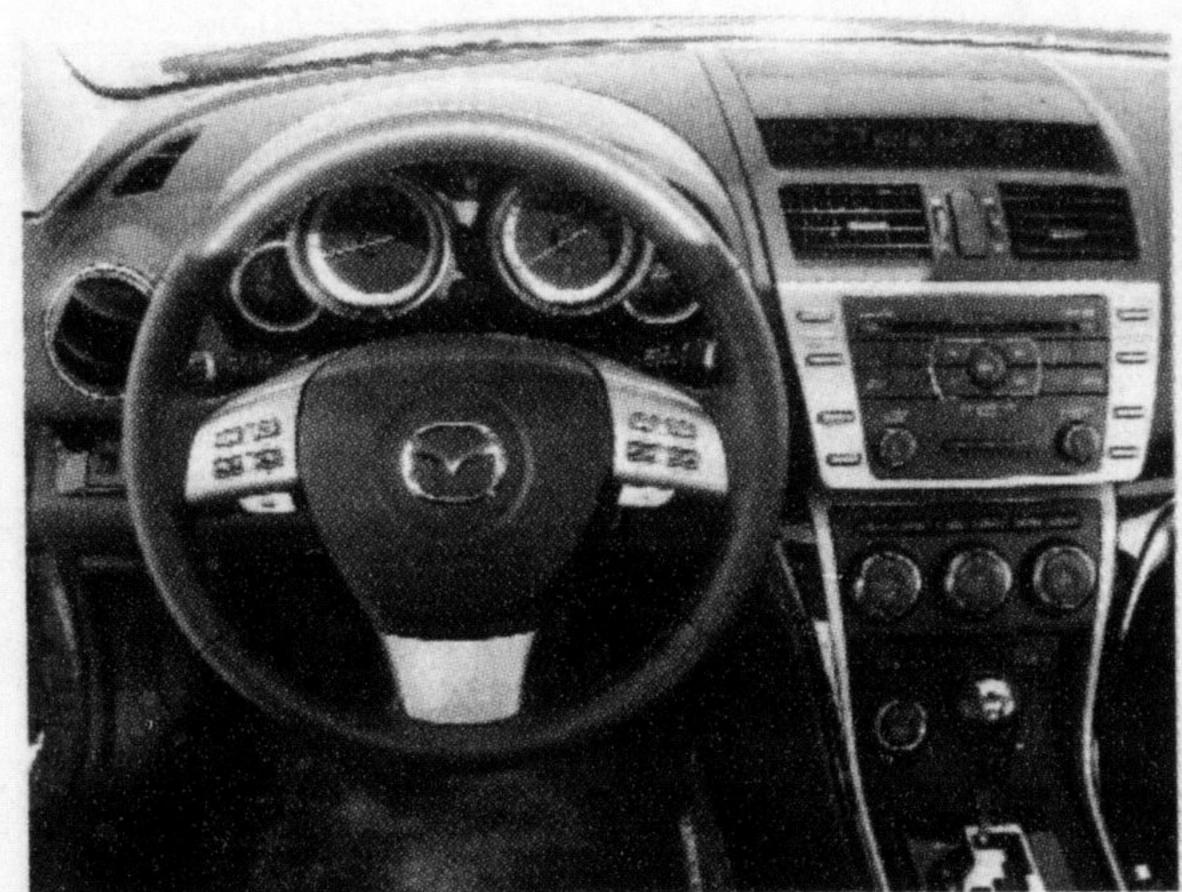
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ABS, keyless entry, air conditioning with pollen filter, power locks/windows, heated outside mirrors, cruise, tilt/telescoping steering wheel, and two, 12volt outlets. There is one option called the Comfort Package that adds headlights on/off with disk sensor, rain-sensing wipers (which my wife has come to love), moonroof, eight-way adjust driver's seat, and most important - Dynamic Stability Control (DSC). You have to get this package to get the DSC.

The GT models (four-cylinder, \$27,695, V6, \$33,495) include everything from the GS Comfort Package and add 18-inch wheels (instead of 17-inch on the GS), fog lights, leather interior, heated seats, dual zone climate control, auto dimming rearview mirror and a six-disc CD changer. And if you have the V6, it further includes high intensity headlights and driver's seat memory.

Like the GS, there is one option on the GT called the Luxury Package that includes Bluetooth connectivity, 10-speaker Bose surround sound audio system, Sirius satellite radio and Xenon high intensity lights. The GT V6 with this package also is fitted with a Blind Spot Monitoring system.

The steering wheel has a nice feel to it and the instruments, with amber and violet display hues, are easy on the eyes.



The interior of the 2009 Mazda6 (GT V6 shown) borrows a lot of the flagship CX-9.

Tested here is the GT V6 and my wife, son and I each drove the car and found the power driver's seat could be adjusted for three very different body shapes. The best part is, with three memory settings, all of us could be happy.

Much thought went into noise, vibration and harshness starting with a panel under the engine to cut drag and turbulence. By looking at little things like the attachment points of the rearview mirrors, the drag coefficient was lowered by 10 per cent over the current Mazda6 to 0.27 for the 2009. Foam was injected into every nook and cranny and the roof is now lined with Thinsulate instead of felt.

One of Mazda's prime objectives was to include 'Zoom, Zoom' in the ride and handling. In other words, the 2009 Mazda6 had to have the 'soul of a sportscar'.

To do this, Mazda went away from the MacPherson struts they have been using for decades, opting for double wishbones with coil springs and stabilizer bar. At the rear is a multi-link system with special shocks tuned for sporty handling and grip.

What stuck out was the small turning circle, making steering and parking much easier than a lot of other front-drivers.

We all commented on the big brakes that are very solid in actuation that leads to a feel of confidence behind the wheel.

My tester was equipped with the blind spot system that lit up an icon in either mirror each time a car came into the blind spot zone.

It also lets out an audible beep if you move into another lane and a car is in the blind spot. The first time it went off, I was startled, but after a while it became a welcome extra warning of what was going on around the car.

A bonus was, when in the passing lane, the icon would light up and then go out when you were further ahead. This served as a great aid in deciding when to move over into the slower lane.

The trip up and back was blissfully uneventful, everyone having a good time. For its part, the Mazda6 took us, and all our stuff, in stride and very comfortably too I might add.

Mazda has always been very successful in this country by offering vehicles that hit a cord for buyers.

Now with standup good looks, great interior room and 2 more than enough power along with good mileage, this car 3 should continue Mazda's winning ways with Canadians.



65 Ontario Street North, Milton, ON (905) 878-7700