

Ward's 'Interior of the Year' award winners announced

ROBINSON/BEINTEMA AUTOFILES

The votes are in and the big winners at the 2007 Ward's "Interior of the Year" awards are models from General Motors, Ford, DaimlerChrysler and Honda.

In all, 34 vehicles from 11 manufacturers were in contention to win an "Interior of the Year" award in the annual competition sponsored by Ward's AutoWorld magazine. The prestigious awards program is part of the annual Ward's Auto Interiors Show being held at Detroit's Cobo Center.

Winners were determined in two ways: the editorial staff of Ward's conducted a two-month review and analysis of the 34 nominated vehicles and selected the winners based on eight evaluation categories such as comfort, safety and design harmony.

In addition, members of the auto industry at-large were encouraged to participate in a popular vote online at <http://www.autointeriors.com/> to see how they would evaluate the nominees compared to the Ward's judges. More than 1,400 popular votes were cast.

In the cars categories, Ward's editors voted the Honda Fit the best interior in Economy-Priced Cars; they also chose the Saturn Aura as best in Popular-Priced Cars; and the Volvo S80 as having the best interior in Premium-Priced Car category.

In light trucks, the Ward's judges selected the Honda CR-V as the winner in Popular-Priced CUV category; they agreed that the Cadillac SRX had the best interior in Premium-Priced CUV category; they also chose the Chevy Silverado as tops in Popular-Priced Trucks; and they selected the Lincoln Navigator as having the best interior in Premium-Priced Trucks.

Voters in the industry at-large balloting agreed with Ward's

editors in three categories: the Saturn Aura won in Popular-Priced Car; the Cadillac SRX took the Premium-Priced CUV category; and they voted the Chevy Silverado as best in the Popular-Priced Trucks category.

However, at-large voters went their separate way for the other vehicle categories. To them, the Dodge Caliber was the winner in the Economy-Priced Car category; the Saturn Outlook won in Popular-Priced CUV; and in Premium-Priced Trucks, the Cadillac Escalade took the honors.



Follow these child safety tips

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With the onset of summer, the U.S. Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety (ACTS) is teaming with XM Satellite Radio, the National WIC Association, local health clinics, automobile dealers, state highway safety offices, as well as others to remind parents to actively supervise their children in and around cars.

Each year hundreds of children suffer injuries or death from vehicles backing out of driveways, being trapped in hot vehicles or in car trunks, being strangled by power windows, in vehicles inadvertently put in motion by children moving the shift lever and similar types of incidents. ACTS is aware of at least 100 of these incidents in the U.S. and Canada this year.

ACTS recently announced the results of a first of its kind parent survey involving 900 parents of children ages 12 and younger. The survey found that:

- Most parents perceive the risks to unattended children in and around cars as low.
- Two thirds of parents thought it unlikely or very unlikely that a child in their neighborhood might die from the heat after being left alone in a car.
- Less than half (46 per cent) thought it was likely that a child in their neighborhood might be hit by a car backing out of a driveway.
- 44 per cent of parents surveyed have known someone whose child was hit by a car.
- Nearly 9 out of 10 parents strongly agreed that parents should do a better job of supervising their children in and around cars.

The survey also showed that most parents are

taking the correct actions to protect their children in and around cars.

- On average, parents normally hold a child's hand in a parking lot until the child is at least 7 1/2 years old.
- Most parents require their children to be in a safety seat or booster seat until age 6 1/2.
- Nine out of 10 parents say they have never left a child under five alone in a car.
- Three out of five parents say the same about a child under 12.

The following tips can help keep children safe in and around motor vehicles:

- **Observe** - Walk completely around your car before getting in. Know where your children are and teach them to move away from a vehicle when it is started.
- **Hold Hands** - Most parents hold their child's hand around streets, driveways and parking lots until the child is at least 7 1/2 years old.
- **Buckle Up** - Set a good example and don't move the car until your children are properly restrained as well.
- **Supervise** - Nine out of 10 parents say they have never left a child under five alone in a car. But, they agree that children need more supervision.
- **Know your choices** - New safety technologies can help keep kids safer around cars. Pick the devices that are right for your family and try them before buying to make sure they meet your expectations.



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