



2016 Mitsubishi Mirage

An Envision from China

At the rate Buick is going, more of its models will arrive from offshore plants than from manufacturing facilities here in North America. We can now confirm that the forthcoming **2017 Buick Envision** compact tall wagon will actually originate from China, where it is currently being built. In a way, that makes sense since a majority of the car's production will be sold in that country. The Envision will be sized between the smaller Korea-built Encore and full-size U.S.-made Enclave models. Power will be supplied by a turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine, which is part of parent General Motors' "Ecotec" powerplant family.

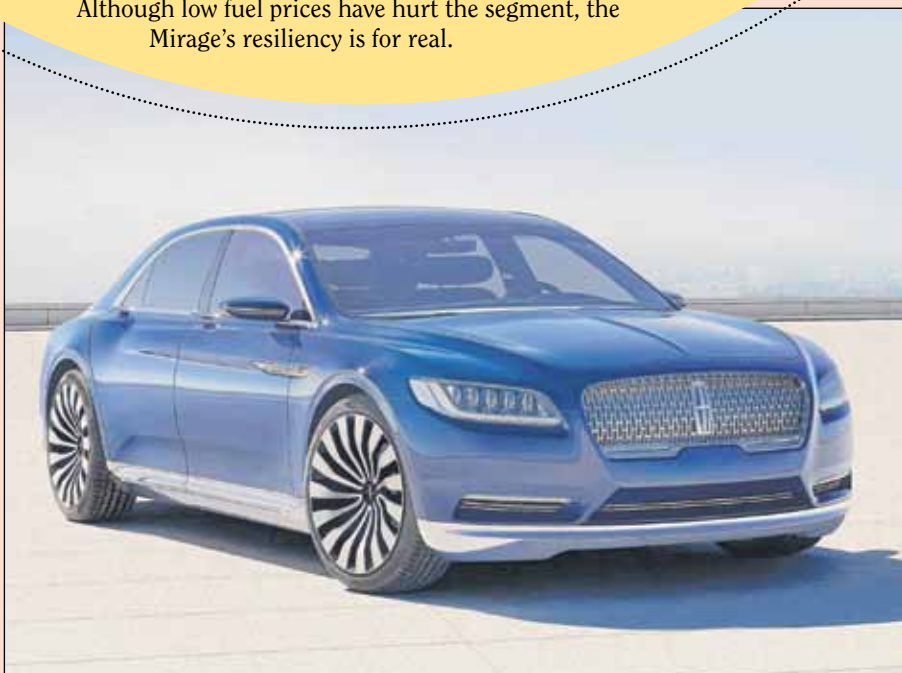


2017 Buick Envision

These sales numbers are no Mirage

These peach-colored pages are trying to comprehend the success of the **Mitsubishi Mirage** sub-sub-compact. The Thailand-built hatchback that has been mildly updated for the 2016 model year and uses a non-turbo three-cylinder engine rated at a mere 78 horsepower (four more than in 2015). That's 20 less than the 2016 Chevrolet Spark's 98-horsepower four-cylinder. Since both cars cost about the same, it's understandable that the Chevy outsold the Mirage in North America by about two to one in calendar year 2014. But when you examine small-car sales in general as of October, 2015, the Mirage is the only car in its class to have actually gained year-over-year sales (by about 10 percent), while the rest of the pack, including the Spark, Ford Fiesta and Fiat 500, are experiencing declines.

Although low fuel prices have hurt the segment, the Mirage's resiliency is for real.



THE NEW LINCOLN LOOK. Although the rest of the MKZ sedan seems familiar, there will be a new 400-horsepower engine option.

Another new look for Lincoln

Truth be told, we were never huge fans of Lincoln's winged-grille styling that's worn by its current model lineup. What looked quite advanced on the 1940-'41 Continental never seemed to translate well when designed for Lincoln models 70-plus years later.

Lincoln's new face can be seen on the stunning **Continental sedan concept car** that was introduced earlier this year, but since then Ford's luxury division has unveiled the real-deal **2017 MKZ sedan** that's based on the Ford Fusion platform.

To say that the mid-size MKZ looks considerably better from the front would be a gross understatement. The new shape also fits neatly with the swooping rear-end sheetmetal that up until this point was the car's best feature. A new 400-horsepower twin-turbocharged V6 engine along with the existing hybrid powertrain will be available when the new MKZ arrives next summer.



The all-new 2017 Mazda CX-9 wagon recently debuted at the Los Angeles auto show. The crossover is lighter and swaps out its previous V6 engine for a turbocharged four-cylinder.

An all-new CX-9 arrives; the last V6 Mazda departs

With three all-new models in less than 12 months (four, if you count the Mazda2 sedan that's sold here as the Scion iA), Mazda has indeed been busy. Following the **CX-3** and **MX-5 Miata** launches, an all-new **2017 CX-9** wagon recently debuted at the Los Angeles International Auto Show. It replaces the previous CX-9 that had received little in the way of updates since its 2007 model-year launch.

Beyond the sophisticated design and Mazda6 sedan-based platform, what impresses us most is the car's 287-pound weight reduction, despite adding 53 extra pounds of sound deadening material. Mazda also dumped the CX-9's 273-horsepower V6 (270 pound-feet of torque) and installed a turbocharged 2.5-liter four-cylinder producing 250 horsepower (310 pound-feet of torque). Both front- and all-wheel-drive versions will be available when the CX-9 shows up this spring.



The next Mazda CX-9 will exchange this V6 engine for a turbocharged 2.5 liter.

TEST DRIVE

2016 Acura TLX

Continued from page 1

The power distribution between front and rear wheels automatically adjusts to maximize grip. Super Handling All Wheel Drive is a \$2,200 upcharge on V-6 cars with the Technology or Advance Packages. However, since it's not offered on any four-cylinder models, it's nearly a \$10,000 bump from the car's base price.

All TLX models include Acura's four mode, Integrated Dynamics System. Eco, Normal, Sport and Sport+ each have corresponding settings for throttle response, transmission mapping, steering effort and traction/handling systems. Both four- and six-cylinder models exhibit a fine ride and confident handling.

The main dash cluster is clean and legible. Some HVAC and sound system functions are accessed by conventional controls and others are absorbed into the

main, center stack touchscreen (one of two in the unusual tiered, dual-screen array). The logic for the division of switchgear is hard to follow and so adjustments to said systems take longer than they should — unless you can use steering wheel mounted shortcuts.

TLX shares many things with the Accord, but the Acura is notably shorter (2.2 inches) than the Honda. That makes for tidier design lines outside, but less rear seat legroom (4 inches) than cousin Honda. It's also slightly less than class comparables like the Audi A4 and BMW 3-series; slightly more than Volvo's S60. Six-footers seated behind six-footers will find it quite tight. Trunk capacity ranges from 13.2-14.3 cubic feet, which is a little better than those same rivals. The split rear seat backs fold forward, via remote release in the trunk. That reveals



The 2016 Acura TLX's main dash cluster is clean and legible, with HVAC and sound systems accessed by conventional controls while others are absorbed into one of the two main, dual-tiered touchscreens. Shortcuts are also available on the steering wheel.

a rounded opening to extend your cargo capacity for long items. You may, however, have to push front seats forward, to allow the folding seats to clear.

Technology Package models include a navigation system with voice recognition and traffic information, blind spot monitoring, lane keeping assist, forward collision warning, rear cross traffic monitoring, leather-trimmed seats, HD radio, and the well-regarded, 10-speaker, 455 watt ELS studio audio system.

Six-cylinder TLX shoppers can further avail themselves of the Advance Package

(\$3,225), which upgrades the forward collision warning system to a mitigation system with automatic braking. Also included here is a remote starter, front seat ventilation, 18-inch rims, adaptive cruise control, LED fog lights, auto-dimming side mirrors and front/rear parking sensors.

A regular contributor to the Times Union for more than 20 years, Dan Lyons is the award-winning author of six books, and photographer of 165 calendars. Read Dan's recent reviews online anytime at Timesunion.com/vehiclereviews.

