



TOP PICKS

These are the 10 cars, SUVs, and trucks that shine brightest in our tests.

BY JEFF S. BARTLETT

BUYING A NEW CAR can be exciting—and overwhelming. There are more than 260 models available today, each with a range of features and specifications to consider. But CR's annual Top Picks can help you make a smart choice.

Each vehicle on our list achieved exceptional results in road-test performance and safety. We also factored in predicted reliability and owner satisfaction. Plus, all Top Picks come standard with low-speed automatic emergency braking with pedestrian detection, as well as

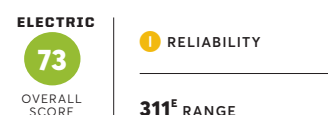
highway-speed AEB—vital features to get on your next car.

We have selected models from popular categories, spanning compact cars to midsize luxury SUVs. This year's group includes four hybrids, three plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), and one electric vehicle.

Subaru and Toyota dominate our list with practical and appealing models. Several of last year's Top Picks earned spots on our list again, but we also welcome newcomers like the Nissan Sentra, at right. Read on to learn why these special 10 models earned our highest honor for 2025.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE

TESLA MODEL Y

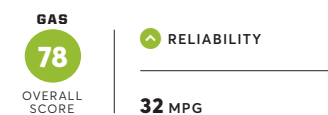


TESLA'S MODEL Y electric SUV shares many virtues with its sibling, the Model 3 sedan: long driving range, thrilling performance, and access to the expansive Tesla Supercharger network. But the Model Y's hatchback body style gives it an edge, with more interior room and cargo space than the 3. Acceleration is otherworldly, with instantaneous response at any speed. Quick steering and taut suspension make the

car feel eager to tackle turns. Combined, these dynamic characteristics make it drive more like a sports car than an SUV. The uncluttered cabin, devoid of a traditional instrument panel, has a modern aesthetic—but accessing common features like audio and climate controls through the large central screen is distracting, as are the steering wheel controls. Overall, though, this green machine is both practical and entertaining.

SMALL CAR

NISSAN SENTRA

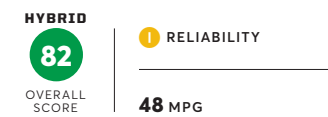


THE SENTRA is an exceptional value. It comes with more standard active safety features than some higher-priced rivals and earned a strong road-test score for its comfortable ride, nimble handling, great fuel economy, and relatively roomy cabin. The controls are intuitive—infotainment and climate

interfaces are models of simplicity. Nissan also now includes three free oil changes during the first two years of ownership. Altogether, the Sentra is proof that you can still find a good all-around new car for under \$25,000. If you want premium touches like leather upholstery, numerous upgrades are available.

MIDSIZE CAR

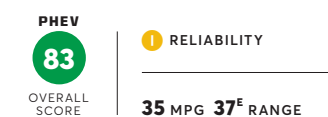
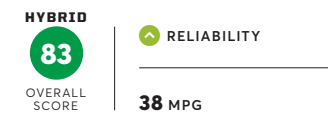
TOYOTA CAMRY



TOYOTA REDESIGNED the Camry for 2025. Improvements throughout made this popular, efficient sedan an obvious choice to return to our Top Picks list. It remains comfortable, practical, and user-friendly, and has the brand's latest infotainment system and tasteful, soft-touch interior surfaces. The Camry is now offered solely as a hybrid, and based on its performance in our tests, that's a good thing. It's even more fun to drive, striking a fine balance between sharp handling and a smooth ride. The hybrid powertrain benefits from a 17-hp increase over the last generation, while gaining 1 mpg in our tests, for 48 mpg overall. As an added benefit, all-wheel drive is available on all trims.

LUXURY COMPACT SUV

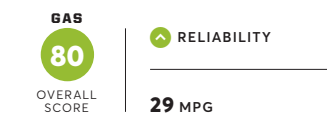
LEXUS NX350H NX450H+



LEXUS PACKS A LOT of goodness into this compact SUV. The well-equipped NX has a cabin that pampers its occupants with premium touches, like plush seats, and a straightforward infotainment system—except for the touchscreen-only climate controls. The best versions are the hybrids. Both have a refined-but-firm ride, quick steering, and capable handling. The NX350h is a traditional hybrid that delivers an impressive 38 mpg overall. For peak efficiency, the NX450h+ plug-in hybrid has a 37-mile electric-only range, and once the battery is depleted, it gets a nice 35 mpg on gas alone. (Recharge time is about 3 hours using a 240-volt charger.)

SUBCOMPACT SUV

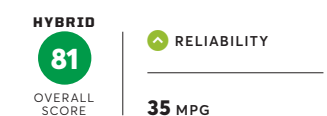
SUBARU CROSSTREK



THE CROSSTREK is designed for both urban touring and wilderness adventure. It offers an excellent ride, good fuel economy, standard all-wheel drive, and a high ground clearance that makes it able to handle rougher roads. It's easy to get into and out of. Both the front and rear seats are comfortable and supportive, and the physical and touchscreen controls are mostly user-friendly. For 2025, only the base trim has the weak 152-hp, 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine. All other versions have the peppier 182-hp, 2.5-liter four-cylinder that we prefer. The EyeSight suite of active safety and driver assistance systems is standard on the Crosstrek. BSW and RCTW are available only above the base trim. A 2026 hybrid (non-plug-in) version debuts in the fall with more power and improved fuel economy.

MIDSIZE SUV

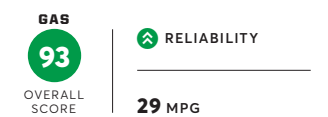
TOYOTA HIGHLANDER HYBRID



THE HIGHLANDER HYBRID is a unicorn among midsize SUVs: It combines three-row capacity with fuel economy that rivals the most efficient compact SUVs. With standard all-wheel drive, the hybrid returned 35 mpg overall in our tests. That's enough to take an epic near-600-mile road trip before refueling. (If most of those miles are on highways, you'll get up to 41 mpg.) Along the way, passengers will enjoy the comfy rear seats and compliant ride, while the driver will appreciate the responsive handling and abundance of active safety features. This repeat Top Picks winner remains a smart, versatile vehicle. (If you need efficiency but more space, the even larger Grand Highlander Hybrid is worth considering.)

COMPACT SUV

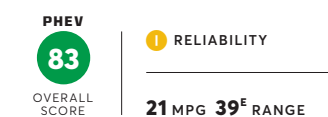
SUBARU FORESTER



LONG A PRACTICAL choice among compact SUVs, the Forester was redesigned for 2025 and is now better than ever. The makeover added refinements throughout the cabin, without straying from the winning formula that has made the Forester a regular among CR's Top Picks. It is still roomier than it appears, with easy access, great visibility, a compliant ride, outstanding fuel economy, and standard all-wheel drive. Plus, it has a quieter cabin and more cargo space than the previous model—both welcome improvements. The four-cylinder engine gained some torque, giving the Forester a bit more oomph, and it increased efficiency by 1 mpg, to 29 mpg overall. (A hybrid version will join the ranks later in the year.)

LUXURY MIDSIZE SUV

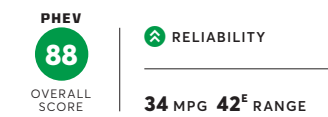
BMW X5/ X5 PHEV



EVERYTHING ABOUT the X5 says "premium." This well-rounded vehicle has an exceptionally quiet and richly finished cabin with supportive seats suitable for daylong trips. Both powerful and efficient, the base X5 delivers swift acceleration (0 to 60 mph in 6 seconds) and returns 23 mpg overall—among the highest fuel economy in its peer group. The plug-in hybrid version heightens this efficiency with an electric-only range of up to 39 miles, bringing real energy cost savings to drivers who routinely travel locally and have convenient access to charging. Once the battery is depleted, the PHEV gets 21 mpg. With either powertrain, the finely tuned suspension provides a composed ride and athletic, confidence-inspiring handling that further sets the engaging X5 apart from its luxury rivals.

FUEL-EFFICIENT SUV

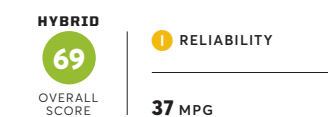
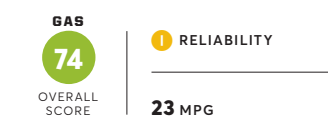
TOYOTA RAV4 PHEV



THIS COMPACT PLUG-IN hybrid SUV (formerly known as Prime) is the best version of Toyota's popular RAV4. It's a great solution for drivers who like performance—with a lively 302 hp, this model moves swiftly from 0 to 60 mph in just 6.3 seconds—and efficiency. Its key trick is that the rechargeable battery has a significant electric range of up to 42 miles. It takes just 2.5 hours to replenish the battery via a 240-volt home charging system, or 12 hours with a simple household 120-volt outlet. As a bonus, we like the PHEV's ride quality better than that of other RAV4 versions and BSW is standard. As good as the RAV4 Hybrid is, the PHEV feels like a higher-caliber vehicle.

SMALL PICKUP

FORD MAVERICK/ MAVERICK HYBRID



THE MAVERICK is a fun, frugal small truck that is equally ready for a run to the hardware store, commuting duty, or a weekend escape with friends. For its size, the interior is quite comfortable, with easy access, simple controls, and decent passenger space. The 250-hp turbocharged four-cylinder is reasonably peppy while returning 23 mpg overall. The 191-hp hybrid version of this truck is the real draw: Our front-wheel-drive model achieved a stunning 37 mpg overall in our tests. (An all-wheel-drive hybrid is available for 2025.) The Maverick even has a refined ride for a truck, and its compact size makes it simple to maneuver. Overall, this freshened pickup is an appealing alternative to many of today's high-priced full-sized models.

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