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CONTACTS: C. Matt Fields 914.378.2454
cfields@consumer.org

or Douglas Love 914.378.2437
dlove@consumer.org

CONSUMER REPORTS ANNUAL RELIABILITY SURVEY SHOWS PROMISING SIGNS FOR TESLA MODEL 3 RELIABILITY

Infotainment systems and new transmissions can hinder new-car reliability; CR advises that consumers wait for technology to mature before buying

YONKERS, NY—Consumer Reports (CR) predicts the new Tesla Model 3 will have an “Average” reliability score, based on improved reliability data reported by Model S owners in the organization’s latest Auto Reliability Survey, the findings of which were announced at a news conference before the Automotive Press Association in Detroit today.

CR’s predicted reliability for the Model S was rated “Above Average” by owners for the first time, and because the Model 3 shares much of its technology with the Model S, that improved reliability helps CR make that prediction for the Model 3. Consumer Reports doesn’t have data yet specifically from Model 3 owners. However, the world’s largest and most trusted consumer nonprofit makes predictions on every new and redesigned model based on the manufacturer’s history and data from vehicles that share major components.

“Electric vehicles are inherently less complicated than gasoline or hybrid alternatives. The Model 3 is the least complicated Tesla yet, and should benefit from what Tesla has learned from the Model S,” said Jake Fisher, director of auto testing at CR.

For more information on Consumer Reports’ Annual Auto Reliability Survey, or to get the latest ratings and scores for more than 300 models, visit www.CR.org.

This year, CR’s data showed that “growing pains” for new models was a common trend for many manufacturers. The survey of 640,000 vehicles revealed that all-new or updated models are now more likely than older ones to have a wonky engine, a jerky transmission, or high-tech features that fail outright.

The problems often arise when automakers incorporate new technologies into their cars. As more eight- and nine-speed and continuously variable transmissions (CVT) hit the market, many owners have reported issues with them breaking down or shifting badly. Infotainment systems were another frequently noted trouble spot in new or newly redesigned models. CR’s survey showed that owners of first-year models had twice as many complaints about in-car electronics.

“These new technologies can add features and improve fuel efficiency, but are more prone to have issues. More often than not, our data suggests it’s prudent for consumers to wait for the technology to mature,” Fisher said.

CR’s survey does show that some—but not all—automakers quickly remedy the problems that surface so they’re mostly gone by the next model year. The 2016 Hyundai Tucson SUV scored poorly with owners due to transmission issues, but complaints about 2017 Tucson transmission dropped by more than half. Similarly, the in-car electronics of the 2017 Civic are so improved the complaint rate was only a third of that for the 2016 version.

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Domestic Shake Up: Chrysler improves while GM brands drop

Overall there was plenty of movement among car brands in CR's Annual Reliability Rankings this year. The perennially lagging Chrysler brand climbed the most in this year's report, jumping 10 positions from last year. While it remains in the lower half of all 27 brands ranked by CR, this represents a huge improvement for the automaker. The all new Pacifica minivan has average reliability; the vehicle's rating was affected by some minor transmission issues.

Other FCA brands made incremental improvements as well. Jeep seems to have worked out some of the transmission problems that plagued the early years of the Cherokee, but the Grand Cherokee and Renegade remain below average. Still, CR's data shows marked improvement with these models each year. The only Dodge model that did not have below-average reliability was the Grand Caravan. The Charger and Challenger improved over last year, but are still below average. The Ram 1500 pickup improved to average, but the low standing of the 2500 and 3500 heavy-duty pickups keeps the brand near the bottom.

Overall, GM's brands did not fare well this year, with most of them—Chevrolet, Cadillac, GMC—in the bottom third. Buick, which ranked third last year, dropped five spots to eighth, with the redesigned LaCrosse debuting with reliability that is well-below average. The much-better-than-average reliability of the Encore, and the better-than-average reliability of the Cascada and Envision all helped Buick to stay in the top 10.

The new Bolt electric car is Chevrolet's most reliable model with above average reliability. However, the Volt plug-in hybrid remains below average, and the Cruze, which debuted with well-above-average reliability last year, plunged to below average this time around.

GMC and Cadillac are at the bottom of Consumer Reports' brand rankings. The Acadia debuted with well-below-average reliability, and is among the 10 least-reliable new models. Aside from some infotainment issues in the Acadia, problems with drive system, power equipment, and climate system were also reported. All of Cadillac's models had below-average reliability, including the new-for-2017 XT5 compact SUV.

Ford gained several spots and ranks 15th. The F-150 pickup improved to average reliability. However, the Focus and Fiesta are still well-below average, with ongoing clutch and transmission problems. Some respondents reported a few problems with the new Sync3 infotainment system in the Fusion. As for Lincoln, the MKZ sedan had average reliability, and the MKC and MKX SUVs were below average.

Despite Volatility Among Asian Brands, Toyota stays on top

For the fifth straight year, Toyota brands sit atop the ranking of 27 brands for predicted new-car reliability, but other Asia-based manufacturers, including Acura and Mazda, saw their reliability averages take a tumble. Subaru had gained five spots to rank sixth this year, despite the "below average" reliability of the redesigned Impreza.

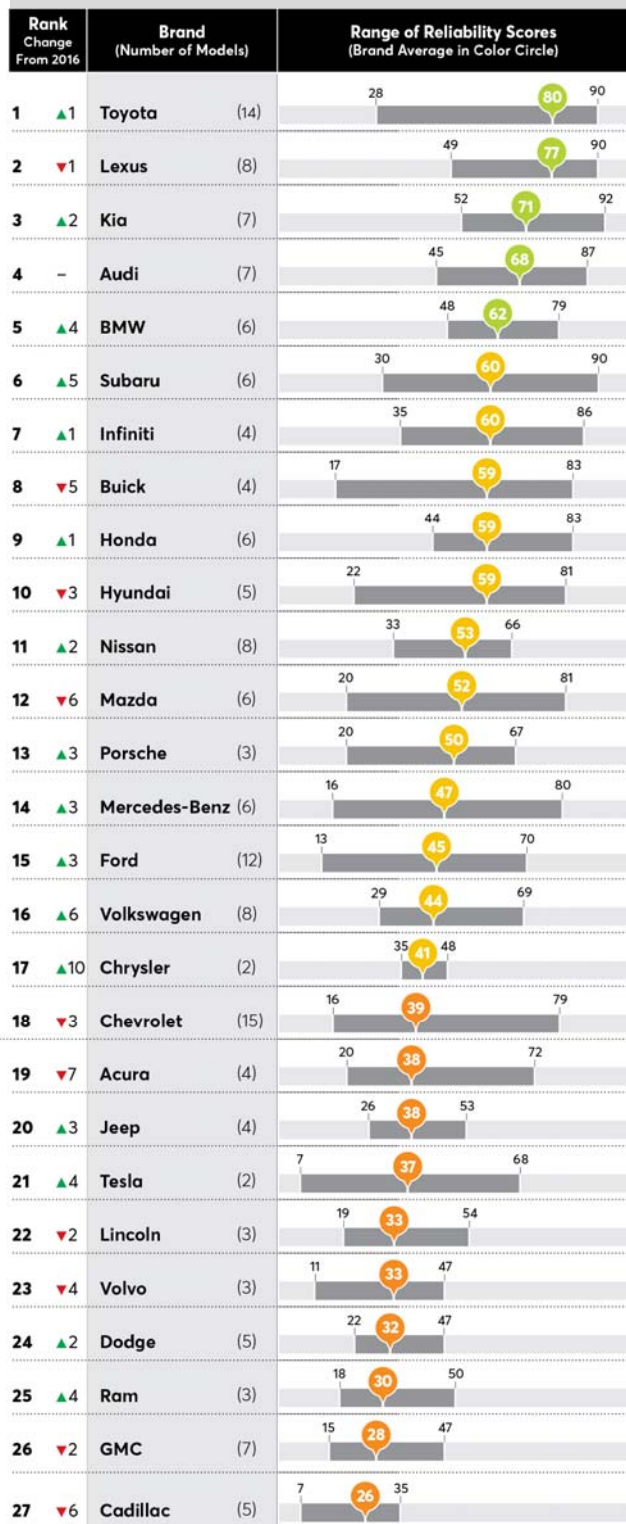
Honda improved by one spot this year, with all of its models having average or better reliability. Honda has managed to work out most of the bugs with the Civic's in-car electronics, and those improvements were reflected in the redesigned-for-2017 CR-V, which shares an engine and the infotainment system with the Civic. Acura took a nosedive this year, dropping to the bottom third of the brand rankings. While the RDX, which was last redesigned in 2013, is above average, the other Acuras were all below average.

Kia continues to make impressive strides, rising two spots to rank third. The new Niro hybrid debuted as the most reliable new car in the entire survey. Kia's lowest scoring model is the Sportage, which has average reliability. Hyundai dropped three places to rank 10th. The redesigned-for-2017 Elantra compact car had well-above average reliability, but the problems with the new seven-speed dual-clutch transmission dropped the Tucson compact SUV to below average. Nissan had a slight gain, with the popular Altima sedan improving to better-than-average and the Pathfinder SUV finally improving to average.

European Brands Remain Steady

European brands remained relatively unchanged from last year. Audi stayed in the fourth position. BMW gained four spots to join the top five brands this year. All of its models had average or better reliability.

How the Brand Stack Up



Mercedes-Benz's redesigned 2017 E-Class had better-than-average reliability in its first year, and the S-Class finally improved to average. Volvo remained near the bottom, hurt by the much-worse-than-average

XC90, which ranks as the third least reliable model among new vehicles. The problem rate for the XC90's infotainment was the worst in CR's Survey at 21 percent – nearly as high as Ford/Lincoln's MyTouch system when it debuted.

For more information on CR's annual **#CRCarReliability** survey, visit CR.org/reliability or follow Consumer Reports on Facebook at facebook.com/consumerreports and on Twitter [@consumerreports](https://twitter.com/consumerreports).

The Consumer Reports latest Annual Auto Reliability Survey, gathered information from Consumer Reports subscribers who collectively owned or leased more than 640,000 vehicles, from model years 2000 to 2017, covering more than 300 models. More information can be found at www.ConsumerReports.org and in the December 2017 issue of *Consumer Reports* magazine.

About Consumer Reports

Consumer Reports is an independent, nonprofit organization that works side by side with consumers to create a fairer, safer, and healthier world. For 80 years, CR has provided evidence-based product testing and ratings, rigorous research, hard-hitting investigative journalism, public education, and steadfast policy action on behalf of consumers' interests. Unconstrained by advertising or other commercial influences, CR has exposed landmark public health and safety issues and strives to be a catalyst for pro-consumer changes in the marketplace. From championing responsible auto safety standards, to winning food and water protections, to enhancing healthcare quality, to fighting back against predatory lenders in the financial markets, Consumer Reports has always been on the front lines, raising the voices of consumers.