

## CONSUMER REPORTS: REDESIGNED HYUNDAI SONATA NOW RIVALS NISSAN ALTIMA

### Altima and Sonata now at top of class for family sedans

YONKERS, NY — The redesigned Hyundai Sonata is now one of Consumer Reports' top-rated family sedans, posting an "Excellent" score, and scoring just behind the four-cylinder Nissan Altima.

The Sonata has agile handling, a steady ride, good accommodations, easy-to-use controls, and impressive performance and fuel economy for the class.

Two freshened versions of the Nissan Altima posted "Excellent" overall scores topping Consumer Reports' tests of four family sedans for the August 2010 issue. Along with the Altima and the Sonata, the new Suzuki Kizashi and the Chevrolet Impala were part of the test group. The Kizashi posted an "Excellent" overall score and the Impala a "Good" score.

"The Sonata has been transformed from a humdrum car into a really nice stylish car with impressive fuel economy, all at a competitive price," said David Champion, senior director of Consumer Reports' Auto Test Center in East Haddam, Connecticut.

Now one of CR's top-rated family sedans, the Sonata has agile handling, a steady ride, good accommodations, easy-to-use controls, and impressive performance and fuel economy for its class.

The Altima's 2010 freshening includes standard electronic stability control, which make the sedan's handling more secure at its limits.

While both versions of the Altima are Recommended, the Kizashi and the Sonata are not Recommended because they are too new for Consumer Reports to have reliability data. The Impala scored too low in CR's testing to be Recommended. CR only Recommends vehicles that have performed well in its tests, have at least average predicted reliability based on CR's Annual Auto Survey of its more than seven million print and Web subscribers, and performed at least adequately if crash-tested or included in a government rollover test.

Prices ranged from \$21,800 for the Sonata GLS to \$30,335 for the V6-powered 3.5 SR Altima.

Full tests and ratings for all five sedans appear in the August issue of Consumer Reports, which goes on sale June 29. The reports are also available to subscribers of **[www.ConsumerReports.org](http://www.ConsumerReports.org)**. Updated daily, ConsumerReports.org is the go-to site for the latest auto reviews, product news, blogs on breaking news and car buying information.

The Nissan Altima has been among the best family sedans rated by Consumer Reports for some time, and a freshening makes it better. A pleasant ride, handling balance and a quiet cabin add to its appeal. The Nissan Altima 2.5 S (\$23,970 Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price as tested), is powered by a 175-hp, 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine that is responsive and gets an impressive 26 mpg overall in CR's own fuel economy

tests. The continuously variable transmission facilitates instant responses and adds to the fuel economy. Braking is Excellent. The interior is neatly finished. The 60/40-split rear seatbacks fold down to accommodate more cargo.

The redesigned Sonata is a major leap ahead of its predecessor. The ride is supple, yet composed, and handling is agile and responsive. Like many contemporary cars, the new Sonata has coupelike body styling, but unlike most, it has good rear-seat room, and its visibility remains decent. The Hyundai Sonata GLS (\$21,800 MSRP as tested), is powered by a 198-hp, 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine that delivers smooth and responsive performance and gets an outstanding 27 mpg overall. The six-speed automatic transmission shifts smoothly and responsively. Braking is Very Good. The interior is well-finished. Folding the 60/40-split rear seatbacks supplements the already large trunk.

The new Suzuki Kizashi is a capable car, but not quite the bargain sports sedan that it is marketed as. It's small for a family sedan, with a snug cabin and a tight rear seat. The ride is fairly stiff and handling is fairly nimble, but not overly sporty. The Suzuki Kizashi SE (\$22,489 MSRP as tested), is powered by a 180-hp, 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine that delivered just average performance and gets a respectable 25 mpg overall. The continuously variable transmission is smooth. Braking is Very Good. The interior is well-finished but not quite posh. The trunk is on the small side, but folding the 60/40-split rear seatbacks expands the capacity.

The dated Chevrolet Impala is overdue for a redesign. Although it's a large sedan, the cabin is less roomy than that of its smaller and less expensive Chevrolet Malibu sibling. Handling is clumsy, and powertrain refinement falls short. The Chevrolet Impala LT (\$29,270 MSRP as tested), is powered by a 211-hp 3.5-liter V6 engine that gets just average performance and 20 mpg overall. Most modern transmissions have five or six speeds, but the Impala retains a four-speed automatic that shifts smoothly but is reluctant to downshift. Braking is Very Good. Fit and finish is second-rate. The trunk is large and folding the 60/40-split seatbacks expands its space.

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