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HOT CAR REPORT

November 4, 2010



Summary:

The Mercedes-Benz SL-Class improved 28.5 percent week-over-week in share of new-car shopping activity. The flagship roadster for Mercedes was the hottest car in the kbb.com virtual parking lot, increasing its share the most of any new car. On the other side of the pond, the 2011 Chevrolet Volt was the hottest Intro/Redesigned vehicle. This controversial gas-miser increased its share of new-car shopping activity 21 percent in a week's span.

Commentary:

The Mercedes-Benz SL has been an icon of style and sophistication for decades, and the No. 1 ranking of the slightly-revised 2011 model in this week's Hot Car report helps to illustrate the everlasting appeal of a high-powered luxury convertible in the dreams of U.S. shoppers. With auto manufacturers unveiling October sales results this week, much attention is turning to early signs of growth and a slight recovery in the auto industry, and the Hot Car Report exhibits much of what the OEMs are reporting. Weekly Top 5 shopping activity shows renewed interest in pick-up trucks, which echo statements made by Ford and others that small business and construction investment may be returning to the marketplace in healthy volumes. With regard to new and redesigned model shopping activity, each week interest in the Chevrolet Volt, Chevrolet Cruze and Nissan LEAF continues to feed a sense that, in the wake of our economic downturn, U.S. consumers are willing to take a hard look at their future driving habits and real needs, considering a vehicle that is not necessarily the largest, most utilitarian or most powerful. This would represent a huge shift in our buying habits; especially in light of relatively stable fuel prices today and projected in the near future by Kelley Blue Book's market analysts. For those shoppers who do need more space or utility, the new-generation 2011 Ford Explorer, with its high-MPG four-cylinder option, may be timed perfectly for this evolving market.