

WHEELS

GMC Terrain is near the top of its class



Tom Strongman

The eye-catching styling of the Terrain is a great example of GM's comeback.

By TOM STRONGMAN

After driving a 2010 GMC Terrain for a week in Kansas City, Mo., recently, it's clear that it's a serious challenger to the Hyundai Santa Fe, Ford Escape, Toyota RAV-4 and Honda CR-V.

There are four Terrain models. Front-wheel drive is standard and all-wheel drive is optional. Prices begin at \$24,995 for the front-wheel-drive SLE1 and top out at \$31,745 for an all-wheel-drive SLT-2. An SLT-2 with all options can exceed \$36,000.

The test vehicle was a front-wheel-drive SLE-2, and it felt like a more expensive vehicle than its sticker price of \$28,785 suggests.

Standard equipment includes a rearview camera that projects an image in the rearview mirror, OnStar, XM satellite radio and USB connectivity for MP3 players.

Options include a programmable power liftgate, navigation system, premium audio and a rear-seat entertainment system with two 8-inch LCD screens, one on the back of each front seat.

The Terrain shares platforms, powertrains and some interior components with the Chevy Equinox. It differs by having unique exterior panels and a higher level of standard equipment.

The well-designed cabin has an instrument panel highlighted with silver accents.



The center stack contains flush-mounted buttons for the audio and climate-control system. Red ambient lighting highlights the console and cup holders.

The fit, finish and quality of materials appear to be equal to that of any vehicle in the compact crossover class. Wind and road noise are minimal. The steering wheel controls for cruise and audio have rotary knobs that can be rolled with a thumb, and they're simple and intuitive.

Rear-seat legroom is quite generous, thanks to the back seat that can be moved backward and forward 8 inches.

Storage bins are numerous, including one atop the center stack and one under the center armrest that is large enough for a laptop computer. There are four power outlets.

One drawback is that the rear cargo area is a bit narrow, and the low roof means some large items, such as a bicycle, may not fit easily.

The 3.0-liter V-6 delivers 264 horsepower, giving it a towing capacity of 3,500 pounds. This engine, with four valves per cylinder and variable valve timing, delivers its power from low rpm, and that makes it feel energetic. The engine is mounted in a separate subframe to keep vibration from being felt in the cabin.

Active noise cancellation uses an in-cabin microphone that detects unwanted sounds and sends counteracting sound waves through the audio speakers. It's this

kind of attention to minor details that makes the Terrain feel expensive.

The V-6 is rated at 18 miles per gallon in the city and 25 on the highway.

Folks interested in maximum highway fuel economy can choose the 2.4-liter four-cylinder that is rated at 32 mpg on the highway. The four-cylinder can tow 1,500 pounds.

Each engine has its own specific six-speed automatic transmission.

Safety features include six standard airbags, including side-curtain airbags and pelvic/thorax seat-mounted side airbags. Anti-lock brakes, vehicle stability control and traction control are standard.

Price

The test vehicle was an SLE-2, and it had a base price of \$25,850. Options included heated front seats, remote vehicle starter, the 3.0-liter V-6 engine and 18-inch machined wheels. The sticker price was \$28,785.

Warranty

Three years or 36,000 miles with a five-year, 100,000-mile powertrain warranty.

The Specs 2010 GMC Terrain SLE-2

Engine: 3.0-liter, 264-hp V-6

Transmission: Automatic Front-wheel drive

Wheelbase: 112.5 inches

Curb weight: 3,770 lbs.

Base price: \$25,850

As driven: \$28,785

MPG rating: 18 city, 25 hwy.

Loy Hickman's restored 1954 Corvette belonged to his friend

By TOM STRONGMAN

Loy Hickman and Duane Jones had a long friendship. Both were captivated by the Corvette mystique when they were high school students in El Centro, Calif.

Hickman, of Shawnee, Kan., owned a Pennant Blue 1954 Corvette when he was a student at San Diego State University. "They were called roadsters because they weren't watertight," he said. The first Corvette had a rudimentary top and side curtains instead of roll-up windows. "I drilled two holes in the floor under the carpet so the water would run out."

Hickman and his wife, Nalina, have owned several Corvettes over the years, but never another '54. He was able to buy this

car from his friend about three years ago. Jones had owned it for 20 years.

This car has an interesting background. It was used in a photo shoot for the introduction of the 1975 model, and it was featured in *Classic Auto Restorer* magazine in 1996. That story recounts Jones' history with it. He met a woman in Arizona who said her dad used to race it.

Another favorite anecdote comes from a time when Jones had the car at a Corvette show. He was approached by Dave McLellan and Zora Arkus-Duntov, who asked, "Would you mind if I sit in your car? This car got me my job at Chevrolet."

Duntov was the Corvette's legendary first chief engineer and a god to Corvette enthusiasts, so having him sit in the car was a high honor. McLellan trained under Duntov

and took over as the chief engineer when he retired.

Hickman is a pilot, and he has restored a 1948 Piper PA-15 Vagabond. He was not hesitant to tackle the Corvette. He pulled it into his basement workshop, where he overhauled the engine and brake system. Mark's Fiberglass & Paint in Merriam, Kan., then applied a new coat of Polo White to the body.

Hickman's car drives very nicely, as I discovered when he insisted I take the wheel for a short drive. The inline, six-cylinder engine produces about 150 horsepower, and the transmission is a two-speed Powerglide. As I looked through the low windshield and handled the large, thin-rimmed steering wheel, I was reminded of how the first



This 1954 Corvette is stoked with history.

Corvette so perfectly captures the poodle-skirt and bobby-socks innocence of the 1950s.

Hickman said that his friend had planned to come see the restored car, but he died earlier in the year. There's little doubt that Jones would be as tickled with the car as Hickman is.

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