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Researching A New Car

It's a big decision -- make it a smart one, too. (For more buying information, please see our "Buying a Car" [Site Test](#).)

Consumer Reports: Road Tests



CONSUMER REPORTS, the venerable guide to all things purchasable, offers the full text of the magazine's road tests, car profiles, and reports for \$3/month (\$24/year). (This site was chosen "Best Up-and-Comer to Watch" in the 1/98 edition of [Site Test](#).) -- *Philip Bishop*

reviewed: 5/18/98

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Autopedia: Lemon Laws



AutoPedia's excellent reference section explains the ins and outs of the laws for 22 states. (This site was chosen "Best Summary of Lemon Laws" in the 1/98 edition of [Site Test](#).) --

Philip Bishop

reviewed: 12/19/97

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Edmund's Automobile Buyer's Guides



Feature-by-feature pricing (MSRP and dealer invoice), current nationwide incentives, dealer holdbacks, and rebates are all covered at EDMUND'S AUTOMOBILE BUYER'S GUIDES. Don't skip "How to Get Your Way at the Auto Dealer." (This site was chosen "Most Comprehensive Price Info" in the 1/98 edition of [Site Test](#).) -- *Philip Bishop*

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CarPoint



With its 3-D viewer, zoom around and through the interior of 55 new models at the CARPOINT virtual lot. There are exterior pics, too. (This site was chosen "Best View of the Cars, Inside and Out" in the 1/98 edition of [Site Test](#).) -- *Philip Bishop*

reviewed: 12/19/97

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Car And Driver



There is nobody whose opinion we value more -- after Click and Clack, of course -- than the editors of CAR AND DRIVER, the bible of car buffs everywhere. C&D's site includes a buyers' guide for every nameplate from A to V (Acura to Volvo), and each review packs the lean, muscular prose and authoritative word we have come to love. The 1996 Suzuki Esteem "rides well, but tends to roll a lot in corners. That makes it feel softly sprung, and makes you wish for larger, stickier tires." You can see the vehicles in your price range either in a list as as a feature-by-feature comparison chart, including such items as highest top speed, highest MPG, most interior space, and so on. The expected archives of road tests and industry news are here, too. (This site was chosen "Best Overall Look At The Market" in the 1/98 edition of [Site Test](#).) --

Philip Bishop

reviewed: 5/18/98

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"Car Talk"



Ray and Tom Magliozzi -- a.k.a. Click and Clack -- exhibit the same irreverent spirit on their Web site as they do on their weekly CARTALK call-in radio show on National Public Radio. Nothing is safe with these guys: the Ford Aspire is "elegant and refined, everything you could possibly want -- in a golf cart." But in-between the yuks, these savvy and streetwise auto mechanics present the best searchable database of critical safety information we have seen, and it has data on hundreds of car models. Enter the year, make, and model of a car, and they will tell you about recall notices, crash test results, and service bulletins drawn from a variety of government and private sources including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Highway Loss Data Institute. (Look for it in the Virtually Useful Data section.) Lots of other interesting car statistics here, too, plus the boys' test-drive reports on new models. Never heard the show? You can download audio clips here from past broadcasts. (This site was chosen "Best Data on Previous Models" in the 1/98 edition of [Site Test](#).) -- *Philip Bishop*

reviewed: 12/19/97

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Financenter



You've narrowed your credit card choices down to half a dozen. Decide among them with the seven different calculators **FinanCenter** offers. Are flight rewards or rebates better than lower rates? Is a lower rate worth paying an annual fee? Find out, down to the dollar. There's also valuable, plain-language advice on topics such as disputing charges and liability for unauthorized use. Financenter can also help you resolve auto-shopping questions with a nice set of calculators that illustrate your choices with easy-to-understand graphs, a plain-English glossary of auto lease and loan terms you should memorize before squaring off against a dealer, and some financing tips we never would have thought of ourselves ("Consider borrowing against a cash-value life insurance policy. The interest rate may be lower than a vehicle loan and immediate repayment may not be required.").

-- *Dina Gan*

reviewed: 5/17/98

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The Car Center



If you are willing to plunk down a little cash (a mere \$5) for your research, THE CAR CENTER by IntelliChoice provides some of the most exhaustive reports going on hundreds of models. You can get free abridged versions of these reports that include the factory-to-dealer price, specs, and a list of all available options in an easy-to-read grid format, but you could get as much from most automaker's sites. IntelliChoice saves the good stuff for the \$5 full online reports that are a data junkie's dream: estimated five-year maintenance costs, theft index ratings, and even a "target price" to shoot for when you haggle with a dealer. Tempted by those seemingly dirt-cheap leases? IntelliChoice provides an analysis of all current manufacturers' lease offers and confers "Gold Star" status on the best deals. This may be the best \$5 you have ever spent.

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DealerNet



When you have decided which car (or parts) you want and why, find the dealer nearest you at DEALERNET. You might want to use another feature here, too: for \$31 (and 10 days), DealerNet will help you check your credit rating with the major credit bureaus to save you from a faux pas at a dealer's loan desk. Test-drive reports are available, but not for many cars. Do-it-yourselfers can order parts here, and GMAC loan applications also are available.

reviewed: 3/9/97

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