

Glove Box Notes: Vehicle prices and prizes

by Mark Maynard

The 2007 Lotus Elise will have a starting price of \$44,915. The supercharged Exige S has a base MSRP of \$57,825.

Slight price increases are due to changes of the exchange rate between the British pound and U.S. dollar as well as the addition of upgraded headlights to comply with U.S. regulations.

Both cars use a 1.8-liter four-cylinder engine with variable-RPM cam switching and a close-ratio six-speed aluminum gear box. Supercharging pushes the 190 horsepower to 220 in the Exige S.

With a curb weight of just 2,077 pounds, the Exige S has zero-to-60 mph acceleration of 4.1 seconds, nearly a second faster than Exige. Fuel economy is 25 mpg combined city and highway.

'07 ALTIMA: \$18,565 TO \$25,115

The redesigned 2007 Nissan Altima went on sale Nov. 1 in four models with four-cylinder or V-6 engines and six-speed manual or continuously variable automatic transmissions. Pricing starts at \$18,565 for the Altima 2.5 equipped with a 170-horsepower, 2.5-liter inline four-cylinder engine rated for Super Ultra Low Emissions. The 2.5S model with CVT start at \$20,915.

The Altima 3.5 SE starts at \$24,615 and the CVT model at \$25,115.

The topline Altima SL with CVT only is \$29,015.

For maneuverability, the new model rides on a slightly shorter wheelbase than the previous model and is 2.5 inches shorter. Interior space is about the same as last year's model and trunk space is the same.

Quality and refinement were emphasized for the interior, with more use of chrome accents and soft materials, such as on the armrests.

Safety features include front seat side-impact air bags for chest protection and roof-mounted curtain side-impact air bags front and rear for head protection. The 2007 Altima Hybrid will go on sale in select markets in early 2007. Pricing will be announced closer to the on-sale date.

KIA OPTIMA GETS 5-STAR SAFETY RATING

The new KIA Optima has earned the top five-star rating for all seating positions in front- and side-impact crash tests by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. CNS Photo courtesy of KIA. The 2007 Kia Optima earned the top five-star rating for all seating positions in front- and side-impact crash tests by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Safety features include six air bags, including full-length side-curtain bags. Front active headrests move up and forward to help lessen neck injuries in a rear-impact collision.

Available with a four-cylinder or V-6 variations in LX and EX trim levels, standard conveniences include air conditioning, power windows and door locks, heated outside mirrors, six-way adjustable driver's seat, six-speaker CD audio system, 60-40 split folding rear seats, four-wheel disc brakes and a tire pressure monitoring system.

Earlier this year, Optima earned a "good" rating -- the highest level -- from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety for its front and rear-impact safety performance.

SATURN OUTLOOK SUV

The 2007 Saturn Outlook crossover SUV has a starting price of \$27,900 for front-wheel drive and \$29,990 for all-wheel drive. The topline Outlook XR will start at \$30,290 front-wheel drive and \$32,290 for all-wheel drive.

The eight-passenger Outlook has three rows of seats with a new Smart Slide second-row seat feature to simplify passenger access to the third row.

All models come with six air bags, including head curtain side-impact bags that span all three rows of seats. A rollover sensing system can activate the side-impact air bags if sensors determine a rollover is imminent.

All models use a six-speed automatic transmission paired with a 3.6-liter V-6 with variable valve timing. Entry and midlevel models are rated 270 horsepower. A dual exhaust system on the XR model pushes horsepower to 275. EPA fuel mileage for front-wheel-drive models is 18 mpg city/26 mpg highway and 17/24 for all-wheel drive.

Options include ultrasonic rear parking assist, power lift gate, remote vehicle start, heated windshield fluid

and DVD entertainment system and DVD navigation system. The Outlook will be built at GM's Lansing, Mich., factory.

JAGUAR XKR FOR FIA GT3

Apex Motorsport, an independent motor racing team formed by Richard Lloyd, will campaign Jaguar XKRs in the 2007 FIA GT3 Euro Series. Apex, whose recent successes include winning Le Mans in 2003 with Bentley, is being relaunched with this project.

This is not a return of Jaguar Cars Limited to racing, but Lloyd has the carmaker's blessing, according to Jaguar. They'll let him take the risk, but with access to Jaguar's technical support and product development team.

A Jaguar in the GT3 Euro Series will be good timing for the launch of the Jaguar XKR production model.

"We believe the new XK has huge potential, and we plan to have at least the required six race cars ready for the first event in the 2007 season," Lloyd says.

Development of the aluminum-bodied, supercharged V-8 Jaguar will begin immediately at Apex's Buckingham, England, facility.

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