

Mazda6

The Mazda6 is competitive among family sedans. The engines aren't as powerful or refined as those in the Honda Accord or Toyota Camry. The Ford-supplied V6 is relatively thirsty. Neither automatic transmission is very responsive. Handling is fairly nimble, and the ride is firm yet compliant. The wide turning circle makes parking tedious. The rear seatback has an easy-to-use release to fold the split seats. A hatchback is available, but the wagon has been dropped. ESC is not available. Reliability has improved to average for all versions. A redesigned Mazda6 arrives for 2009.



RECOMMENDED **Reliability:** **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body styles: 4-door hatchback, sedan
Trim lines: i Sport, i Sport Value, i Touring, s Sport Value, s Touring, i Grand Touring, s Grand Touring
Price: \$18,990-\$27,750 **Drive wheels:** Front
Seating: 2/3 **Engines:** 2.3L 4 (156 hp); 3.0L V6 (212 hp) **Transmissions:** 5-spd. man.; 5-spd. auto.; 6-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Regular
Version tested: s V6 **CR overall mpg:** 20
Acceleration (0-60): 8.1 **Braking (60-0):** 132

Mercedes-Benz E-Class

The E-Class blends spirited acceleration and respectable fuel economy. The ride is very comfortable, yet handling is agile and sporty. The steering is quick and communicative. The 3.5-liter engine has performance closer to that of the V8-powered E550. Seat comfort and driving position are first-class and the rear seat and trunk are very roomy. Some controls are complicated. We also tested the refined and economical Bluetec diesel version, which is quiet, quick, clean, and gets 29 mpg overall, giving it a 600-mile cruising range, but is only available as a sedan. Reliability has been below par.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body styles: sedan, wagon **Trim lines:** E350, E320 BLUETEC, E550, E63 AMG **Price:** \$50,900-\$86,050 **Drive wheels:** Rear or AWD **Seating:** 2/3
Engines: 3.0L V6 turbodiesel (210 hp); 3.5L V6 (268 hp); 5.5L V8 (382 hp); 6.3L V8 (507 hp)
Transmissions: 5-spd. auto.; 7-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Diesel or premium
Version tested: E350 V6 **CR overall mpg:** 21
Acceleration (0-60): 6.5 **Braking (60-0):** 136

Mercedes-Benz C-Class

The redesigned C-Class is a capable car, and is now more competitively priced. The 3.0-liter V6 provided smooth and strong performance with decent fuel economy. Expect 21 mpg overall in mixed driving. This engine requires premium fuel, but can also run on E85 ethanol. Braking performance is excellent but the steering is overly light, particularly for the taut suspension. The sport suspension makes the ride a bit choppy at low speeds. The cabin remains snug, but it is quiet and the seats are supportive. The controls are better than in some Mercedes, but some are not very logical.



Reliability: New **Satisfaction:** New **Owner cost:**
Body style: sedan **Trim lines:** C300, C350, C63 AMG **Price:** \$31,600-\$60,000 **Drive wheels:** Rear or AWD **Seating:** 2/3 **Engines:** 3.0L V6 (228 hp); 3.5L V6 (268 hp); 6.3L V8 (457 hp) **Transmissions:** 6-spd. man.; 7-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Premium
Version tested: C300 V6 **CR overall mpg:** 21
Acceleration (0-60): 6.8 **Braking (60-0):** 129

Mercedes-Benz GL-Class

This seven-passenger luxury SUV has a great deal of interior space without huge exterior dimensions. The third-row seat is roomy enough for adults. The 4.6-liter V8 is smooth and delivers strong performance. Expect 15 mpg overall. Handling is relatively responsive, with good steering feel. The GL proved secure and forgiving in our tests. The ride is comfortable, and the interior is very quiet. Fit and finish is excellent, but some controls are overly complicated. The GL can tackle most off-road situations, and towing capacity is impressive. A diesel engine is available. Reliability has been well below average.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: 4-door SUV **Trim lines:** GL320 CDI, GL450, GL550 **Price:** \$53,400-\$77,375
Drive wheels: Permanent 4WD **Seating:** 2/3/2
Engines: 3.0L V6 turbodiesel (215 hp); 4.6L V8 (335 hp); 5.5L V8 (382 hp) **Transmission:** 7-spd. auto.
Fuel: Diesel or premium
Version tested: GL450 V8 **CR overall mpg:** 15
Acceleration (0-60): 7.4 **Braking (60-0):** 136

Mercedes-Benz CLK

The CLK coupe and convertible are based on the previous generation C-Class sedan. The steering is quick and communicative, and the ride is supple and comfortable. The 3.5-liter V6 engine is strong, but the muscular 5.5-liter V8, with its seven-speed automatic, provides abundant performance. Opting for the powerful CLK63 AMG brings a brawny 475-hp V8. The rear seats two in relative comfort for a coupe. In the front, a motorized arm moves the safety belt forward when the door is closed. A convertible version is also available. Reliability has been below average.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body styles: convertible, coupe
Trim lines: CLK350, CLK500, CLK63 AMG
Price: \$46,450-\$135,000 **Drive wheels:** Rear
Seating: 2/2 **Engines:** 3.5L V6 (268 hp); 5.5L V8 (382 hp); 6.3L V8 (475 hp) **Transmission:** 7-spd. auto.
Fuel: Premium

Mercedes-Benz M-Class

The M-Class has a luxurious interior with excellent fit and finish. It is a comfortable, quiet vehicle with responsive handling and a firm, yet supple ride. The 3.5-liter V6 is smooth and responsive, but returned just 16 mpg overall. A V8 version is also available. Both use a seven-speed automatic that doesn't always shift at the appropriate moment. Controls can be confusing, including an electronic column shifter that can be mistakenly knocked into neutral. Despite the lack of a low range, it performed very well on our off-road course. A 215-hp diesel and a high-performance AMG model are available. Reliability is disappointing.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: 4-door SUV **Trim lines:** ML350, ML320 CDI, ML550, ML63 AMG **Price:** \$44,000-\$87,000 **Drive wheels:** AWD **Seating:** 2/3
Engines: 3.0L V6 turbodiesel (215 hp); 3.5L V6 (268 hp); 5.5L V8 (382 hp); 6.3L V8 (503 hp)
Transmission: 7-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Diesel or premium
Version tested: ML350 V6 **CR overall mpg:** 16
Acceleration (0-60): 7.8 **Braking (60-0):** 134

Mercedes-Benz CLS

Based on the E-Class, the coupe-like styling of the CLS results in a low roof, small windows, and reduced interior space that limits access, visibility and rear-seat room. Our tested 5.0-liter V8 delivered abundant power, but the seven-speed automatic hesitated before downshifts and wasn't always smooth. Handling is capable, with quick steering that offers good feedback. The ride is mostly steady. Noise levels are hushed. Fit and finish is excellent, but the controls are complicated. The CLS now has a larger 5.5-liter V8, and a 6.3-liter AMG version is also available. Reliability is well below average.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: sedan **Trim lines:** CLS550, CLS63 AMG **Price:** \$67,950-\$93,550 **Drive wheels:** Rear
Seating: 2/2 **Engines:** 5.5L V8 (382 hp); 6.3L V8 (507 hp) **Transmission:** 7-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Premium
Version tested: CLS500 V8 **CR overall mpg:** 18
Acceleration (0-60): 6.1 **Braking (60-0):** 126

Mercedes-Benz R-Class

The three-row R-Class has room for six passengers in its flexible interior. The ride is comfortable and quiet. Handling is responsive and secure, but the steering is too light. A 3.5-liter V6 and a turbodiesel are the only engines for 2008, as the V8 models have been dropped. A rear-wheel-drive model is also new. The seven-speed automatic sometimes hesitates to downshift. Access is very easy, but the long rear doors can strike adjacent cars when swung open. The second-row seats are very roomy, but the third row is tight. Fit and finish is excellent, but some controls are awkward. Reliability has been well below average.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: 4-door SUV **Trim lines:** R350, R320 CDI **Price:** \$42,100-\$45,600 **Drive wheels:** Rear or AWD **Seating:** 2/2/2 **Engines:** 3.0L V6 turbodiesel (215 hp); 3.5L V6 (268 hp) **Transmission:** 7-spd. auto.
Fuel: Diesel or premium

Mercedes-Benz S-Class

Mercedes-Benz's flagship sedan was redesigned for 2007. This new S-Class maintains the comfort and agility of its predecessor. The new car also adds a control system that's reminiscent of BMW's awkward iDrive. Although it is frustrating, it is easier to use. An optional night-vision system works well, but can be distracting. The S550 is quiet and luxurious, and a delight to drive. Acceleration from the 5.5-liter V8 is effortless. The cushy ride is extremely comfortable. The vast cabin is luxurious and comfortable, and very quiet. Reliability has been below par.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: sedan **Trim lines:** S550, S600, S63 AMG, S65 AMG **Price:** \$86,700-\$194,000
Drive wheels: Rear or AWD **Seating:** 2/3
Engines: 5.5L V8 (382 hp); 5.5L V12 twin-turbo (510 hp); 6.3L V8 (518 hp); 6.0L V12 twin-turbo (604 hp)
Transmissions: 5-spd. auto.; 7-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Premium
Version tested: S550 V8 **CR overall mpg:** 17
Acceleration (0-60): 6 **Braking (60-0):** 141

Mercedes-Benz SL

The SL blends sportiness and luxury with a strong, responsive 5.5-liter V8 and agile handling. In our tests the seven-speed automatic sometimes hesitated to downshift. A supercharged V8 and various V12 engines are available. Handling is sporty despite the SL's size and weight, with responsive, direct steering. The ride is very comfortable, and noise levels are low. Fit and finish and front-seat comfort are excellent. The controls are overly complicated. Folding the power hard top is a simple, quick, one-button process. Wind buffeting is virtually absent. The SL has been very unreliable, which prevents us from recommending it.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** NA **Owner cost:**
Body style: convertible **Trim lines:** SL550, SL55 AMG, SL600, SL65 AMG **Price:** \$95,300-\$187,000
Drive wheels: Rear **Seating:** 2 **Engines:** 5.5L V8 (382 hp); 5.5L V8 supercharged (510 hp); 5.5L V12 twin-turbo (510 hp); 6.0L V12 twin-turbo (604 hp)
Transmissions: 5-spd. auto.; 7-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Premium
Version tested: SL550 V8 **CR overall mpg:** 17
Acceleration (0-60): 5.3 **Braking (60-0):** 126

Mercedes-Benz SLK

The SLK delivers top-down motoring without the usual convertible compromises of poor rear visibility and pronounced wind noise. It features an electrically retractable hard top that stows in the trunk but limits cargo room. The seats are very comfortable, and the head restraints feature optional neck-level vents that blow warm air. Our tested SLK350 had a strong 3.5-liter V6 with a sporty engine note. The manual shifter and clutch are more user-friendly than in the first generation SLK. Handling is agile, yet the ride is relatively comfortable. Reliability continues to be well below average.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: convertible **Trim lines:** SLK280, SLK350, SLK55 AMG **Price:** \$44,150-\$63,200
Drive wheels: Rear **Seating:** 2 **Engines:** 3.0L V6 (228 hp); 3.5L V6 (268 hp); 5.5L V8 (355 hp)
Transmissions: 6-spd. man.; 7-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Premium
Version tested: SLK350 V6 **CR overall mpg:** 21
Acceleration (0-60): 6.2 **Braking (60-0):** 118

Mercury Grand Marquis

The Grand Marquis is outdated, with a stiff ride and noisy engine. Handling is safe enough, but feels ungainly. The soft front bench seat lacks support, and the rear seat isn't as roomy as you'd expect, though the trunk is suitably cavernous. There are far better choices among large sedans, including the roomier Mercury Sable and Ford Taurus. IIHS side-crash tests were poor without the optional side air bags, and marginal with them. ESC is not available. Reliability has been above average.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: sedan **Trim lines:** GS, LS **Price:** \$25,280-\$28,170 **Drive wheels:** Rear **Seating:** 3/3 **Engines:** 4.6L V8 (224 hp); 4.6L V8 (239 hp) **Transmission:** 4-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Regular
Version tested: LS V8 **CR overall mpg:** 16
Acceleration (0-60): 8 **Braking (60-0):** 140

Mercury Mariner

The freshened 2008 Mariner has curtain air bags and standard stability control, except on the hybrid. Our tested 2008 Ford Escape, a twin of the Mariner, retains its roomy interior and good visibility. Ford improved the ride and fuel economy, but handling and braking capabilities have decreased. The 3.0-liter V6 serves up adequate acceleration but isn't very refined. In our tests, the Escape hybrid attained 26 mpg compared with 19 mpg in the regular version. Reliability of the V6 has been average, but the Escape V6 that we tested scored too low in our testing to be recommended.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: 4-door SUV **Trim lines:** Convenience, Luxury, Premier, Hybrid **Price:** \$21,153-\$28,945
Drive wheels: Front or AWD **Seating:** 2/3
Engines: 2.3L 4 (153 hp); 2.3L 4 hybrid (155 hp); 3.0L V6 (200 hp) **Transmissions:** CVT; 4-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Regular
Version tested: Escape XLT V6 **CR overall mpg:** 19
Acceleration (0-60): 10.5 **Braking (60-0):** 161

Mercury Milan

This family sedan is a sibling of the Lincoln MKZ and Ford Fusion. The four-cylinder engine with the five-speed automatic is noisy but performs adequately and returns 23 mpg overall. The V6 mated to the six-speed automatic offers more zip and gets 20 mpg overall. The ride is firm and controlled, and handling is responsive. The optional leather seats offer better support than the standard cloth seats. The rear seat is roomy. Plans include a hybrid version. Side and curtain air bags are standard and AWD is optional, but ESC is not offered. Reliability and IIHS crash-test results are impressive.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: sedan **Trim lines:** Base, Premier **Price:** \$18,965-\$25,770 **Drive wheels:** Front or AWD **Seating:** 2/3 **Engines:** 2.3L 4 (160 hp); 3.0L V6 (221 hp) **Transmissions:** 5-spd. man.; 5-spd. auto.; 6-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Regular
Version tested: sedan 4 **CR overall mpg:** 23
Acceleration (0-60): 9.5 **Braking (60-0):** 144

Mercury Mountaineer

The Mountaineer is a clone of the Ford Explorer. The standard V6 performs adequately but sounds coarse. The V8 is stronger and sounds better. The ride is stiff compared with its car-based competition. Handling is sound and secure but doesn't stand out in its class. The versatile interior has various folding seat arrangements and offers three-row seating. Unlike the Explorer, the Mountaineer uses a permanent all-wheel-drive system without a low range. Reliability of the V6 has improved to average, but the V8 remains below average.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: 4-door SUV **Trim lines:** Base, Premier **Price:** \$26,305-\$32,370 **Drive wheels:** Rear or AWD **Seating:** 2/3/2 **Engines:** 4.0L V6 (210 hp); 4.6L V8 (292 hp) **Transmissions:** 5-spd. auto.; 6-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Regular
Version tested: Explorer Eddie Bauer V8 **CR overall mpg:** 14 **Acceleration (0-60):** 8.3 **Braking (60-0):** 154

Mercury Sable

This roomy sedan, like its Ford Taurus twin, emphasizes comfort and good ergonomics. The Sable's elevated seating position provides good outward vision and cabin access. The rear seat and trunk are immense. The original 3.0-liter V6 was overtaxed and unpolished. The new 3.5-liter is punchier and faster. Handling is responsive and the available electronic stability control is a welcome addition. The ride is comfortable. Side and curtain air bags are standard.



Reliability: **Satisfaction:** **Owner cost:**
Body style: sedan **Trim lines:** Base, Premier **Price:** \$23,780-\$29,420 **Drive wheels:** Front or AWD **Seating:** 2/3 **Engine:** 3.5L V6 (263 hp) **Transmission:** 6-spd. auto. **Fuel:** Regular
Version tested: Taurus Limited V6 **CR overall mpg:** 18 **Acceleration (0-60):** 7.9 **Braking (60-0):** 138

Mazda Tribute (V6)	Mazda3 Sedan	Mazda5	Mazda6 Sedan (4-cyl.)	TROUBLE SPOTS	Mercedes-Benz C-Class (V6, RWD)	Mercedes-Benz CLK	Mercedes-Benz CLS	Mercedes-Benz E-Class (V6, RWD)
'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07		'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07
●	○	○	○	Engine, major	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Engine, minor	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Engine cooling	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Trans., major	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Trans., minor	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Drive system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Fuel system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Electrical	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Climate system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Suspension	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Brakes	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Exhaust	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Paint/trim	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Body integrity	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Body hardware	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Power equipment	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Audio system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	USED-CAR VERDICTS	○	○	○	○

Mercedes-Benz GL-Class (V8)	Mercedes-Benz M-Class (V6)	Mercedes-Benz R-Class (V6)	Mercedes-Benz S-Class (V8, RWD)	TROUBLE SPOTS	Mercedes-Benz SL	Mercedes-Benz SLK (V6)	Mercury Grand Marquis	Mercury Mariner (V6)
'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07		'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07
○	○	○	○	Engine, major	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Engine, minor	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Engine cooling	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Trans., major	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Trans., minor	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Drive system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Fuel system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Electrical	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Climate system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Suspension	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Brakes	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Exhaust	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Paint/trim	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Body integrity	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Body hardware	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Power equipment	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Audio system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	USED-CAR VERDICTS	○	○	○	○

Mercury Milan (4-cyl.)	Mercury Montego (AWD)	Mercury Monterey	Mercury Mountaineer (V8)	TROUBLE SPOTS	Mercury Sable (sedan)	Mini Cooper (hatchback, non-S)	Mini Cooper S (hatchback)	Mitsubishi Eclipse
'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07		'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07	'02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07
○	○	○	○	Engine, major	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Engine, minor	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Engine cooling	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Trans., major	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Trans., minor	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Drive system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Fuel system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Electrical	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Climate system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Suspension	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Brakes	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Exhaust	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Paint/trim	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Body integrity	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Body hardware	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Power equipment	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	Audio system	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	USED-CAR VERDICTS	○	○	○	○