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Interior Design and Special Features

Inside the cabin, the 2009 Hyundai Genesis 4.6 V8 is outfitted like a true luxury sedan. Spacious, richly appointed and fully decked out with a comprehensive list of convenience features, this Hyundai looks and feels very much like a top-line Lexus. The seats are as comfortable as they appear, although they lack the kind of firm, highly bolstered Germanic treatment a sport sedan enthusiast might enjoy. The instrument panel's white-on-black electroluminescent gauges look like they came straight out of a Lexus.

The soft curves of the sweeping dashboard are complemented by an elegantly adorned center stack with numerous climate and audio controls, many of which have more driver-friendly counterparts either on the steering wheel or by the multimedia controller on the center console. Standard on the V8 model (and optional on the V6) is real leather trim that adorns the dash and door panels.

Body Styles, Trim Levels, and Options

The 2009 Toyota Corolla is a compact economy sedan. It's available in five trim levels -- base, LE, S, XLE and XRS. Base Corollas start you out with 15-inch steel wheels, air-conditioning, an MP3/WMA-capable CD stereo with an auxiliary audio jack, a tilt/telescoping steering wheel and power mirrors. The LE gains power windows and locks, along with body-color exterior mirrors. If you select the Corolla S, the LE's equipment upgrades move to the options list, but you gain 16-inch steel wheels, full underbody spoilers, foglights, sport seats, a leather-wrapped steering wheel and an extra pair of stereo speakers.

Essentially a luxury version of the LE, the new Corolla XLE also gets the 16-inch wheels and upgraded stereo while adding amenities like a sliding center armrest, wood-grain interior trim, electroluminescent gauges, keyless entry and variable intermittent wipers. The top-of-the-line XRS, meanwhile, builds upon the S model's equipment list. Although it forgoes some of the XLE's standard conveniences, it adds a larger engine, 17-inch alloy wheels, sport-tuned suspension and steering, a front strut tower brace, a rear deck spoiler and chrome interior trim. Cruise control is also standard on the XRS; it's optional on other Corollas.

Heated mirrors and satellite radio are optional across the Toyota Corolla line, while the S, XLE and XRS are eligible for a sunroof, an upgraded JBL sound system and a navigation system (with real-time traffic). Leather upholstery is available on the S and XRS only.

[**About Games And Stuff**](http://ouissamyoussef.net/ouissam-youssef-news.html) **:**Safety

Standard safety equipment on the 2009 BMW 3 Series includes antilock disc brakes, stability control, run-flat tires, front-seat side airbags and full-length side curtain airbags. The convertible lacks the side curtains, but the regular front side airbags extend up to head level, and there are also pop-up rollover hoops. The stability control system integrates several features designed to improve braking performance, such as periodically wiping the brake rotors dry when the windshield wipers are in use, and automatically snugging the pads to the rotors when the driver abruptly lifts off the throttle.

In government crash tests, the sedan and wagon received four out of five stars for frontal collision protection and five stars for side protection. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety gave the 3 Series sedan, wagon and convertible the top rating of "Good" in its frontal-offset crash test. The sedan and wagon also scored a "Good" for side crash protection, but the convertible received a second-lowest "Marginal" score because of insufficient rear seat head protection and possible torso injuries for those in the front.

[**Games And Stuff Ranking**](http://ouissamyoussef.net/ouissam-youssef-news.html)

The G8 also impresses inside, especially considering the plasticky depths to which Pontiac interiors had previously sunk. There are still too many hard surfaces, but the center stack -- save for a couple cheesy Atari-grade digital readouts at the top -- is more than a little reminiscent of Audi's industry-leading efforts. Passenger room is plentiful, particularly in back, where all but the largest riders will have space to spare. The rear center seat isn't so hospitable, however, as the wide center tunnel necessitated by the G8's rear-drive layout essentially eliminates legroom there.

At the G8's moderate price point, the Dodge Charger/Chrysler 300 twins are the only other roomy, rear-wheel-drive, full-size performance sedans available. The Chrysler siblings are certainly competent, but the G8's sporting character sets it apart. We're not fans of the G8's lackluster fuel economy, but then, the Charger/300 duo aren't likely to win any efficiency awards from the EPA either. Bottom line: If you want a large sedan with American attitude and Continental manners, the 2009 Pontiac G8 is in a class of its own.

Interior Design and Special Features

The 2009 Acura TSX is awash with dashboard buttons, with or without the optional Technology Package. Although the layout is logical, the sheer quantity of little black buttons (upwards of 40) would make a 747 pilot feel at home. Although the interface is a step backward (the old car's touchscreen controls were much simpler to use and more visually appealing), the tech pack's navigation system is the same found in Acura's higher-end products, and features voice commands, real-time traffic, weather forecasting and a large LCD screen with secondary control knob. The accompanying 10-speaker surround-sound system is one of the best factory stereos available and is a solid justification for the pricey tech pack.

Elsewhere inside the TSX, materials are consistent with the rest of Acura's well-built line. However, those looking for a Lexus-like level of opulence will be disappointed, since this Acura is only a smidgen nicer than its otherwise well-constructed Honda cousin and features a sportier, BMW-like aesthetic. Interior room inside this compact sedan is actually quite good, with only a shade less space than the larger TL. The TSX also has considerably more interior space than the Lexus IS 250 and a hair more than the Volvo S40. The trunk measures 12.6 cubic feet.

[**Games And Stuff Contact**](http://ouissamyoussef.info/) **:** Powertrains and Performance

The front-wheel-drive 2009 Mazda 6 is powered by either a 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine or a 3.7-liter V6. The four generates 170 horsepower and 167 pound-feet of torque, while the V6 pumps out 272 hp and 269 lb-ft. A six-speed manual transmission is standard on four-cylinder models, with a five-speed automatic optional on all but the i SV. A six-speed automatic is mandatory on V6-powered models.

Fuel-economy estimates stand at 20 mpg city/29 highway and 23 combined for four-cylinder models with the manual transmission, while the five-speed auto improves the four's numbers to 21 mpg city/30 highway and 24 combined. These are class-competitive numbers. However, if you opt for the V6, estimates drop to 17 mpg city/25 highway and 20 combined, which is about as bad as it gets in this segment.

*Games And Stuff Ranking* Driving Impressions

Nissan enthusiasts were dismayed when the company revealed that the new GT-R would employ a V6 in place of the iconic inline-6 from previous Skyline GT-Rs. They needn't have worried. This engine makes big power everywhere, and displays none of the coarseness that afflicts other Nissan V6s at higher rpm. Moreover, the 2009 Nissan GT-R is as graceful as it is powerful. When we drove a GT-R at Nissan's test facility in Japan, we were amazed at how easy the car was to drive at the limit. The GT-R also felt incredibly poised both in tight corners and on high-speed straights, an impression supported by the otherworldly 7:29 lap the GT-R has turned in at the Nürburgring's famed Nordschleife loop. Its Teutonic target's best time, by the way, is 7:40.

As capable as the GT-R is at the racetrack, it nonetheless manages to be bearable on the street, even if no one will mistake it for a luxury coupe. The transmission's automatic mode is surprisingly civil, and although the GT-R's ride is never less than stiff, the suspension settings can be fiddled with so pavement imperfections need not be treated like land mines. We still yearn for a stickshift, but we know a good thing when we see it -- and the 2009 Nissan GT-R is unquestionably one of the best performance cars ever.

**Games And Stuff News** The G8 also impresses inside, especially considering the plasticky depths to which Pontiac interiors had previously sunk. There are still too many hard surfaces, but the center stack -- save for a couple cheesy Atari-grade digital readouts at the top -- is more than a little reminiscent of Audi's industry-leading efforts. Passenger room is plentiful, particularly in back, where all but the largest riders will have space to spare. The rear center seat isn't so hospitable, however, as the wide center tunnel necessitated by the G8's rear-drive layout essentially eliminates legroom there.

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