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2011 Buick Regal

Come the summer of 2010, Buick will have a two-pronged strategy in the midsize car market. The Buick LaCrosse, aimed at the luxurious Lexus ES 350, is already on sale. Next up is the 2011 Buick Regal, a sports sedan meant to compete with the Acura TSX, Mazda6, Volkswagen Passat and Volvo S60.

Regal and LaCrosse share platforms, both based on GM's global midsize car architecture, which also hosts the award-winning Opel Insignia.

While the LaCrosse is tuned for comfort, the Regal will be sportier, with an available adjustable suspension and European tuned handling.

The Regal went on sale in China in December 2008. In the U.S., it will initially be offered in only one trim level, the well-appointed CXL. Additional models will be added for the 2012 model year.

The Buick Regal CXL will offer two engines featuring direct injection, a 182-horsepower 2.4-liter four cylinder and a 220-hp turbocharged 2.0-liter four. The 2.4 will be available at launch and the turbo will come later in the summer. Both engines will be offered with a six-speed automatic transmission with manual shift capability. A six-speed manual will become available when the turbo debuts. With the automatic transmission, the 2.4 will deliver 20 mpg city and 30 mpg highway and the turbo will be rated at 18/29 mpg.

Turbocharged Regals will be offered with an Interactive Driver Control System (IDCS) with Normal, Tour and Sport settings. In addition to adjusting the shocks for a smoother or firmer ride, IDCS will adjust steering effort, throttle response, and automatic transmission shift points. Models with IDCS will also come with 19-inch wheels instead of the standard 18-inch wheels.

Inside, the Regal CXL will build on the richer interiors of recent Buicks, notably the Enclave and LaCrosse. It will come standard with leather upholstery, a multi-function controller for the entertainment features, ice-blue instrument lighting, and three trim options, satin metallic, piano black or Kibo wood. Buick says the 12-way power adjustable driver's seat will be generously bolstered to provide support during aggressive driving. Other standard features will consist of Bluetooth hands-free cell phone connectivity, heated front seats, XM satellite radio, and OnStar assistance. Available features will include a navigation system, a Harmon Kardon sound system, a USB port, and a 10-gigabyte hard drive to hold music files.

Buick hasn't announced pricing, but the Regal CXL should start at around \$25,000 with well-equipped turbo versions ranging up to or past \$30,000.

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