

**WOMEN TODAY DON'T HAVE TO BREAK THE BANK to own a great looking vehicle with the interior and exterior features of an extravagantly priced upscale model. Just because a woman has a career and two children, it doesn't mean she has to drive a minivan, or even an SUV. Not all vehicles under \$30,000 look like a 'plain vanilla' matchbox car when traversing the highways. So for those women who crave the look of a European sports car, coupe or an up-and-coming crossover, here are my three picks.»**

# you go girl

Choose from 3 rides for \$30,000 or less

BY **Cathy Droz** PHOTOS BY **Manufacturers**



### 2007 SATURN SKY

General Motors is the proud parent of both the Sky and the Pontiac Solstice. The Sky is about \$3,000 more than its sister the Solstice, and packs a few more goodies on board. This is an affordable, sexy, sports car with a sufficient growl at acceleration, a trunk that opens the opposite way of most, but won't accommodate much more

than your laptop and purse; and a cloth top that goes down with a flip of your wrist. Your ragtop comes with anti-lock brakes, passenger air bag and one of highest ratings in crash tests for rollovers. Details like the shiny faux hood vents, multiple grille openings, and backup lights and chrome detailing with 18-inch wheels that make it great. It's your "pie in the sky" for under \$25,000.

### 2007 HYUNDAI TIBURON SE

Equipped with chrome exhaust tips, low seats, cool-looking blue instrument lights, gun metal color trim and big brakes with cross-drilled rotors, the Tiburon sports coupe is a Hyundai to be reckoned with — both inside and out. The back seat can fit either a car seat and a toddler's booster seat, or a few friends for ladies night out. This snappy front-wheel-drive coupe has a spacious cargo area, great safety features like front and side air bags, an outstanding suspension on 17-inch wheels, a six-speed manual transmission and an audio system with six speakers. Standard as well are remote keyless entry and a full-size spare tire. It's a lot of car for under \$22,000.



### 2007 GMC ACADIA

GMC's first crossover SUV, the Acadia, combines car-like handling with an SUV's capacity. This good-looking vehicle offers three rows of seating for up to eight passengers. The aerodynamic design is very appealing, with a bold roofline and a sporty spoiler on the rear. The configuration of the seats creates easy access, whether it's for cargo, taking clients

#### VEHICLES FROM LEFT TO RIGHT CLOCKWISE»

**SATURN SKY CONVERTIBLE** | 2.4-LITER, 4-CYLINDER ENGINE | 177-HORSEPOWER | MPG: 20 CITY, 28 HWY (MANUAL)  
WARRANTY: 3-YEAR, 36,000-MILE BUMPER-TO-BUMPER & 5-YEAR, 100,000-MILE POWERTRAIN | MSRP \$25,000-\$29,000

**2007 HYUNDAI TIBURON SE** | 2.7-LITER, V6 ENGINE | 172 HORSEPOWER | MPG: 18 CITY, 26 HWY (MANUAL)  
WARRANTY: 5-YEAR, 60,000-MILE & 10-YEAR, 100,000-MILE POWERTRAIN ASSISTANCE | MSRP: \$16,995-\$21,995

**2007 GMC ACADIA** | 3.6-LITER V-6 ENGINE VORTEC | 275 HORSEPOWER | MPG: 18 CITY, 26 HWY (FWD MODELS)  
WARRANTY: 3-YEAR, 36,000-MILE & 5-YEAR, 100,000-MILE POWERTRAIN



around town or loading your children in and out of their car seats. The basic GMC Acadia, priced under \$30,000, has quite a bit of standard equipment. Be sure to check out the audio system. You receive OnStar for one year, cloth seating, remote keyless entry and 18-inch aluminum wheels. For your safety, GMC includes a tire pressure monitoring system, stability Trak control system with rollover mitigation technology and standard head curtain side air bags. This crossover can tow up to 4,500 pounds, so start looking for that boat for the lake. Don't let the term crossover scare you; it's the best of both worlds.

*It is always fun to buy a new car. If you can spend up to \$30,000, there are many more suitable vehicles on the market than you might have imagined. You just need to find the one that fits your lifestyle and your budget. As you can see from my three choices, you don't have to give up looking sporty, sexy or luxurious. Now go out there and ride!*



## find a good repair shop



### ••• melanie&cathy droz

One of the first questions we almost always get is how to choose an auto repair shop.»First of all, if you still have a factory warranty, you will want to take your car to your local dealership to make sure the problem is covered under warranty. If not, you will need to locate a certified auto repair shop near your home or office that you trust.»To create a relationship with a repair facility, you will want to interview them in person. Yes, interview just like you would a doctor or lawyer. Certification of technicians is standard in the industry, but there are other things that should factor into your decision.»Unlike auto repair facilities in my day, where the mechanic in his dirty jumpsuit greeted you with a grunt and a greasy handshake, today's facilities have come a long way. If the desk staff greets you politely and treats you with respect as you explain your problem, that is a good sign. Attention to details throughout the front office are signs they run their entire business that way. Too fancy isn't good either — it makes you feel like your last brake job paid for the décor.»Always ask up front what the estimated cost of the repair might be, and insist they call you before they go forward. Once you have a price, ask them their hourly rate. You now can call around to a few other shops and compare costs.»Other things to keep in mind are whether the shop provides transportation; whether it offers discounts for programs or organizations you belong to; whether the owner is on the premises; whether they are approved by organizations such as AAA or the Better Business Bureau; and whether any of your fellow employees or neighbors use the facility.»I advise finding a facility before you need it. Once you establish yourself with a qualified auto repair facility, it can be a lifesaver.

**The mother-daughter team of Cathy and Melanie Droz, dubbed Boomer and X, are automotive journalists and manufacturer test drivers. Boomer (Cathy) shares years of knowledge and experience, while X (Melanie), shares technically hip solutions. If you have any automotive questions you'd like Cathy and Melanie to answer, e-mail editor@gpppubs.com and write "question" on the subject line.**