

## **2001 OLDSMOBILE AURORA**

The all-new Aurora has shed its unusual lines and adopted a new look recalling the Intrigue. Smaller in all respects except height, the 2001 Aurora now offers a choice of two engines, a V-6 and a V-8, unlike the preceding model which only came with a V-8.

### **Interior and trunk**

It is easy to get in and out of the Aurora, and the front seats are very comfortable. An inflatable lumbar support adjusts vertically to accommodate passengers short or tall. The seat belts are attached to and follow the seats but they have a non-adjusting upper anchor that is too low for six-footers.

The rear bench suits two adults as long as they are not claustrophobic. The low seat and big front head restraints can make passengers feel closed in. Leg room is good but head room is tight for tall people. The rear windows only go down about a third of the way.

Though the trunk is roomy, liftover height is high and the opening is narrow. The trunk has a handy net and a pass-through to accommodate long objects.

### **Convenience and safety**

GM is constantly improving finish quality, as the Aurora shows. Soundproofing is good but wind and road noise should be less audible in a vehicle this expensive. Roomy storage compartments offset the inconvenience of a small glove box.

Some radio and climate controls are located on the steering wheel. The rear-view mirror is not self dimming. GM has finally come up with a great windshield wiper control, located right of the wheel and reserved just for the wipers. A push down activates the MIST function; lifting the lever controls the other functions.

The climate system has a separate passenger setting and works efficiently though your hair can get mussed up with the fan full blast when you start off on a hot day. The climate controls should be placed under the radio's, not over.

Safety equipment includes dual front and side airbags, four-wheel ABS disc brakes and reasonably powerful headlights. The view is good on all sides except rearward, when backing up. The top of the dash reflects permanently off the windshield. The front head restraints do not lock when raised. The restraints are a bit too far back but in a rear collision they move up to provide better protection. There are no head restraints in the rear.

### **Engine and transmission**

The 3.5-litre V-6 comes courtesy of the Intrigue. It provides vigorous acceleration and pickup. Torque steer is quite strong at times, especially in sharp passing manoeuvres on rutted roads, in which case to keep the car from zigzagging, drivers should lift their foot slightly off the accelerator or keep a firm hold on the wheel. With this one exception, engine power flows easily and flexibly at all times.

The four-speed automatic transmission shifts up smoothly but can be harsh at times when gearing down, whether kicked down or not.

### **On the road**

The fully independent suspension, self-levelling in the rear, provides a firm, comfortable ride on good pavement and over long bumps. On cracks and small bumps the suspension reacts harshly. It lacks the suppleness that makes driving fun and keeps a permanent smile on the driver's face. The Aurora holds on very well in corners as long as the suspension's firmness does not bounce the car and cause the rear end to swerve.

The variable-assist steering is well tuned, stable, accurate and quick. It provides little road sensation and the turning circle is a bit too long. Braking is powerful but prone to fade. Braking distances were longer after the first stop from 100 km-h.

An inspection at the CAA-Quebec test centre showed that while the Aurora is generally well put together, there is room for improvement. Some joints underneath including the front suspension tower joints were not sealed, there are holes in the front fender wells and though the rear brakes have backing plates, the front brakes do not.

### **Conclusion**

GM intends its Oldsmobile to go head to head with the imports, a difficult task indeed. Though the division's preview efforts seemed to lack consistence and conviction, Oldsmobile is gaining some ground on the competition, with the Aurora in particular. Though suspension firmness and braking endurance need some fine-tuning, the Aurora is reasonably well-balanced, roomy, comfortable, well-equipped and nice to drive. A choice of two lively engines provides an added edge.

#### **FOR**

Roominess  
Front-seat comfort  
Lively engine  
Well-equipped  
Efficient climate control  
Better finish

#### **AGAINST**

Bad reflections in windshield  
Radio controls too low  
Non-locking head restraints  
Fade-prone braking  
Suspension sometimes harsh  
Strong torque steer

### **2001 OLDSMOBILE AURORA**

**Engine:** 24-valve, 3.5-litre V-6;  
32-valve, 4.0-litre V-8  
**Torque:** 230 lb.-ft. @ 4,400 rpm;  
260 lb.-ft. @ 4,400 rpm  
**Suspension:** fully independent  
**Length:** 506.2 cm  
**Height:** 142.3 cm  
**Weight:** 1,649 to 1,728 kg  
**Towing capacity:** 450 kg

**Horsepower:** 215 h.p. @ 5,500 rpm;  
250 h.p. @ 5,600 rpm  
**Transmission:** 4-speed automatic  
**Brakes:** 4-wheel disc  
**Width:** 188.6 cm  
**Wheelbase:** 285 cm  
**Tires:** P225/60R16; P235/55R17  
**Air bags:** standard front plus two side

**Fuel consumption:**

- Transport Canada rating: city: 13.3 L/100 km (21 mpg); highway: 8.1 L/100 km (35 mpg)
- Test result: 12 L/100 (24 mpg)

**Fuel tank capacity:** 70 litres (V-8: 66 litres)

**Acceleration:** 0-100 km/h : 7.8 seconds    60-100 km/h : 5 seconds

**Competition:** Acura 3.2TL, Audi A4, BMW 3-Series, Chrysler 300M, Infiniti I30, Lexus ES 300, Lincoln LS, Mazda Millenia, Mercedes C-Class, Saab 9-3, Volvo S70

**Maintenance (amount may vary from dealer to dealer):**

Not available. Frequency and extent of maintenance is determined by the on-board computer depending on driving habits, weather, etc.

**Warranty:**

Full basic coverage: 3 years/60,000 km

Powertrain: 3 years/60,000 km

Surface corrosion: 3 years/60,000 km

Perforation damage: 6 years/160,000 km

Emissions control system: 3 years/60,000 km  
(full coverage); 8 years/130,000 km (catalytic  
converter and electronic control module)

**Factory replacement parts:**

Rear bumper: \$882

Front brake disk: \$210

Brake pads: \$102

Muffler: \$796 (dual)

Front fender: \$614

**Average insurance premium** (Quebec City, replacement cost endorsement, claim-free insurance record, female driver or male driver 30 to 40 years old): \$778 to \$1,046

**Price according to trim line:**

V-6: \$39,035

V-8: \$45,575

**Main options:**

Equipment group: \$1,130

Sun roof: \$1,475

Chrome wheels: \$1,080

**Price as tested:** \$40,165

**Freight and preparation:** \$960

**Dealers:** Québec: 173; Canada: 647