

## 2010 BUICK LACROSSE CXS



The second-generation Buick LaCrosse, known formerly in Canada as the Allure, results from the combined efforts of engineers in the United States, Asia and Europe. This collaboration is a first for GM. The LaCrosse is a front-drive, big mid-size sedan and is offered in CX, CXL and CXS trim lines. A 3.0-litre V6 powers the first two, whereas the CXS gets a 3.6-litre V6. Only the CXL can be equipped with four-wheel drive.

### **Interior and trunk**

Small door openings complicate access to the front. On the way out, it is easy for the driver to bump his right knee against the bottom of the dash, left of the steering wheel. The seats are comfortable, though it is a bit difficult to find the right adjustments. Once that's accomplished, the driver enjoys a good driving position, thanks to such conveniences as a tilt-and-telescoping steering column. Legroom is generous, but headroom is a bit tight for tall people.

Access to the back is relatively easy. The seat is comfortable for two adults, as long as they are not too tall, as headroom is very limited. The seatback is split 60/40, with a small pass-through on the 60-side. The seatback folds with a slight forward slope and is several centimetres higher than the floor of the trunk.

The trunk is deep and roomy, with a good opening and a relatively low sill. The recessed hinges can't squash items placed underneath.

### **Convenience and safety features**

The very good quality of the materials and finish shows that GM has finally understood that improvements were necessary in this respect. However, soundproofing is an issue, with road noise producing a cavernous drone that is decidedly unpleasant. Total capacity of the few storage spaces is sorely inadequate. The location of the power outlet, in the centre console, is not the most practical we've seen.

Gauges and controls are well laid out. However, the radio buttons are a bit thin, especially when you're wearing gloves. In this vehicle, at least, GM has finally placed the windshield wiper control where it should be, i.e. on the right side of the steering wheel. Everything is illuminated at night. You cannot de-activate the automatic door-lock system.

***Photo: Buick***

Heating is effective. On our test vehicle, however, the sun sensor must have been sending the wrong signal to the system, which cranked out air that was unnecessarily cool and sometimes downright cold.

The windshield washer nozzles, located under the edge of the hood, are easily blocked by snow and ice.

Safety equipment includes dual front, side and curtain airbags, four-wheel disc brakes with ABS, stability control, four head restraints (for five seatbelt positions...), and good headlights. The large A-pillars and outside mirrors hinder outward visibility, as do the rear-view mirror on an angle to the right and the C-pillars on a three-quarter angle to the rear. It is hard to judge distances when backing up.

In crash tests conducted by the U.S. government, the LaCrosse obtained five stars out of five for the protection of front occupants in a head-on collision and of all occupants in a side impact. It earned four stars for rollover resistance. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety awarded the LaCrosse a Good rating, its highest, for roof strength, for driver protection in a frontal offset collision, and for the protection of all occupants in a side or rear impact.

### **Engine and transmission**

The direct-injection, 3.6-litre V6 engine develops 280 horsepower and 269 pound-feet of torque, easily powering the vehicle under all circumstances. Acceleration and pickup are lively and well felt. The engine climbs effortlessly through the gears and is well matched to the LaCrosse. Both of the V6 engines available to this Buick run on regular gasoline.

The six-speed automatic transmission functions very smoothly at all times and is well geared.

### **On the road**

The four-wheel independent suspension displays a nice mix of firmness and compliance and delivers a very smooth ride. Some bumps set off a firm reaction, but nothing more. There's no harshness here, even with 19-inch, 40-profile tires. There's also no hint of the soft, floating ride of Buicks past. Road holding is good, which is a pleasant surprise for such a large vehicle and one that's not a sports sedan. The LaCrosse drives with a sturdy feel.

The power steering is well weighted, stable, precise and relatively quick, but it provides little in the way of road sensation. The turning radius is quite short. The brakes are powerful and resist well to fade. Drivers should go easy on the brakes to make them last because parts, brake pads especially, are expensive. The front fenders, too, are pricey.

## Inspection

Our inspection at a CAA-Quebec technical inspection centre showed that the LaCrosse's platform is sturdy, but devoid of rustproofing. From the look of the parking brake design, it could seize up fairly quickly. The mesh of the front grille is large enough to allow debris to get through and damage the air-conditioner condenser. The windshield washer tank is placed left and front of the engine compartment, which is far from ideal for a roadside fill-up. The 3.6-litre V6's overhead camshafts are chain driven.

## Conclusion

The LaCrosse is a modern, comfortable, well-built vehicle with the requisite handling characteristics to attract younger buyers. Unfortunately, poor driver visibility and the price of certain parts may be a turn-off for some. GM's biggest challenge is to get buyers back into its dealerships, especially for a brand that has been struggling for years and has survived only because it's so popular in China.

**PROS:** comfortable seats, improved fit and finish, smooth ride, well-adapted 3.6-litre V6, smooth transmission, road holding.

**CONS:** deficient soundproofing, visibility, insufficient cabin storage, washer nozzles under hood edge, price of some parts, front access.

## 2010 BUICK LACROSSE

**Engine:** 24-valve, 3.0-litre V6; 24-valve, 3.6-litre V6

**Horsepower:** 255 hp at 6,900 rpm (252 hp with AWD); 280 hp at 6,300 rpm

**Torque:** 217 lb-ft at 5,100 rpm (215 lb-ft with AWD); 259 lb-ft at 4,800 rpm

**Transmission:** 6-speed automatic

**Suspension:** fully independent

**Brakes:** disc/disc

**Wheelbase:** 283.7 cm

**Length:** 500.1 cm

**Width:** 185.7 cm (without mirrors)

**Height:** 149.6 cm

**Weight:** 1,791 to 1,905 kg

**Tires:** P245/50R17; P235/50R18; P245/40R19

**Maximum towing capacity:** 454 kg

**Airbags:** dual front, plus two side and two curtain airbags

### Fuel consumption with 3.6-litre

Natural Resources Canada rating:

City: 12.2 L/100 km (23 mpg)

Highway: 7.3 L/100 km (39 mpg)

Test result: 11.9 L/100 km (24 mpg)

Test temperature: -4°C to 11°C

**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions:** 4,797 kg/20,000 km

**Fuel tank capacity:** 68 litres (72 litres with AWD)

**Fuel requirement:** regular grade gasoline

**Acceleration:**

0–100 km/h: 7.3 seconds

60–100 km/h: 5.6 seconds

**Competition:** Acura TL, Ford Taurus, Honda Accord, Lexus ES 350, Lincoln MKS, Nissan Maxima, Toyota Avalon and Camry**Warranty:**

- Full basic coverage: 4 years/80,000 km
- Powertrain: 5 years/160,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 4 years/80,000 km
- Perforation damage: 6 years/unlimited km
- Emissions control system: 4 years/80,000 km (full coverage); 8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter, electronic control module).

**Factory replacement parts:**

- Rear bumper: \$1,306
- Front brake disc: \$145
- Brake pads: \$370
- Muffler: \$813 (resonator included)
- Front fender: \$1,100

**Price according to trim level:**

- CX: \$32,795
- CXL: \$34,795
- CXL 4X4: \$38,295
- CXS: \$40,795

**Main options:**

- Sunroof: \$1,395
- Entertainment package: \$935 (CX)
- Options packages: \$995 to \$6,210 (CXL)
- Options packages: \$895 to \$5,215 (CXS)

**Price as tested:** \$47,220**Freight and preparation:** \$1,350**Dealers:** Quebec: 86      Canada: 435

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