

America's own German sport sedan

BY
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We stayed in Oregon for an extra day after Run to the Sun—and we lucked out. One of the manufacturers got wind of our bonus time and offered us the overtime use of their car.

We had finished the event in the Performance Sedan category, and the last four were all sport-modified variants of basic sedans—Lexus F Sport, Buick GS, Volkswagen GT and BMW M. At about \$130,000, the BMW was in a different realm (see the prior feature on Run to the Sun for a few more specs and details), but the other three, ranging from roughly \$30,000 to a bit over \$50,000, are all quite reasonably available to the sports-minded buyer without a stratospheric budget.

The Buick Regal GS AWD inhabits roughly the middle of that price range, at \$39,070 (or \$44,115 with a maximum variety of extras on our sample). And yet it has the highest horsepower of the three. In fact, for 2018, its engine was boosted by 51 hp, just in time to win this faceoff, and its transmission and always welcome all-wheel-drive unit have also been upgraded.

The Regal also comes in an appealing package—a “sportback” body form that looks for all the

world like a sedan until you open the rear hatch, revealing not just a trunk, but a cavernous cargo area, with 31.5 cubic feet of volume behind seating for five, or 60.7 behind the front seats. We went for an Oregon waterfall tour with a family of four and could have had a week's luggage for all five of us, had we needed. With the rear seats down, two people can easily load up for an extended beach or ski vacation, enjoying the feel of a fastback grand tourer en route. Bonus: the rear liftgate has a sturdy grab handle and can be yanked shut quickly if so desired, two rarities. Another bonus: active noise cancellation in the cabin makes any kind of drive even more tranquil inside, while offering an exhilarating drive.

On top of the car's basic value pricing, our sample's add-ons were all very reasonable priced (see sidebar—e.g. Bose audio, touchscreen, nav and HD radio all for just \$945), another huge advantage of a domestic brand over its German competitors. We'd expect domestic service to cost far less, too.

That's right—the Buick Regal GS not only seeks to be a BMW 3-killer, as so many do, but states out loud that they also have Audi in their sites. Can they back that up? Indeed they can. Not only does the Regal GS have the winning formula outlined here, but it has the pedigree. Benefitting from long-standing GM-Opel synergies, this Buick is built in Rueselsheim, Germany. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	cast aluminum 3.6L V6
HP/TORQUE	310 hp / 282 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	9-speed automatic
DRIVETRAIN	AWD
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut w coils, continuous damping control; R: five-link independent
STEERING	elec variable-power assist
BRAKES	4-wheel disc, ABS/ESC, red Brembo front calipers
WHEELS/TIRES	19" alum / Continental A/S 245/40R19
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	192.9 in / 111.4 in
SEATING	five
HEADROOM (F/R)	38.8 / 37.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	42.1 / 36.9 in
CARGO CAPACITY	31.5 / 60.7 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3796 lb
FUEL ECONOMY	19/27/22 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE **\$39,070**

INCLUDES: teen driver feature, 8-way pwr driver & passenger seats, one-touch pwr front windows, 40/20/40 tri-fold fold-flat rear seat, keyless entry/start & EX Key passive entry, ambient interior lighting, dual zone climate, auto-dim mirror, cruise, heated front seats, heated steering wheel, cabin active noise cancellation, Apple/Android, solar absorbing glass, LED tail-lamps, remote start and more.

SIGHTS & SOUNDS PKG: Buick 8" touchscreen infotainment w nav, HD radio, Bose premium audio945

DRIVER CONFIDENCE PKG: adaptive cruise, following distance indicator, forward collision alert, forward auto braking, lane keep assist w lane departure warning, forward pedestrian detect, heads-up display, power moonroof1690

APPEARANCE PKG: wireless charging, LED headlamps, cornering lamps, auto leveling headlamps485

DESTINATION CHARGE925

TOTAL**\$44,115**



Our Buick Regal GS AWD in the shadow of St Johns Bridge, Portland, Oregon.