

**B**y the turn of the century or so, GM had hit an all-time high of brands—Hummer, Geo, Saturn and Saab their newest; GMC trucks a stalwart; and decades-familiar mass market Chevrolet and rich-blooded Cadillac bracketing Buick, Oldsmobile and Pontiac, each seeking its own particular flavor of customer and vice versa. This wealth of product carried complexities, and the axe soon fell on many, leaving just Chevy, Buick and Cadillac, plus GMC. (And Hummer is now back as EV-only.) This has been good for defining Buick, whose US lineup is now simplified to just four SUVs—Envista, Encore GX, Envision and Enclave, in turn defined by their succession of size and price, with Enclave the largest of the set. The gen-three Buick Enclave for 2025, completing their current internal combustion portfolio, is all Buick, and that's what's

important. Equally of note is Buick's new direction—premium, at the same time both aggressive and refined, perfectly suited to its corporate position. Buick has a decades-long heritage of proprietary styling cues—various evolutions of waterfall grille and portholes (VentiPorts), which had already faded away, as well as “sweepspear” side styling, more subjectively echoed in various ways. Enclave itself has been a three-generation study in Buick variables—curvaceous gen-one with its modern waterfall grille, then gen-two with a more conventional shape and less distinctive grille. Now they've turned the page to a new wave of styling based on the Wildcat EV concept revealed at Pebble Beach in 2022 (shown at upper right). GM has always been good with concepts. Their glimpse of the future gets people excited, though

production often brings more of an echo, for reasons of practicality. Adapted to an SUV, this is the case here, yet the Wildcat concept takes another giant step forward as the new face of Buick. Many future indicators from Wildcat are adopted, including an ultrawide 30-inch-diagonal screen (largest in its class) and Super Cruise hands-free driver assistance available on all trims. Most noticeable is the new grille and with it, but less obvious, the move of the tri-shield emblem from grille to body. These lead to the hood seeming broader than before—we sort of caught the feel of a Buick pickup, if there were one—although vehicle shape overall is really not as different as it seems. Numbers are good. Power is ample, legroom and cargo volume are generous, and there is tow capability (1,500 lb out of the box or 5,000 lb with

a package). With decent fuel economy and three-row capacity, you're looking at a solid road trip cruiser, as well as daily driver. The drive experience can combine both crisp, modern power and classic cushy comfort. Hints of shift or acceleration hesitancy at times led us to its four drive modes. Front-drive-based, Enclave commits to four-wheel-drive in snow/ice or off-road modes (conditions with slippage), while tour and sport are front-drive-based (thus sport didn't seem to affect dry pavement performance grip). Brakes are excellent. Steering feel varies. The shifter takes some getting used to. The powertrain offers an acoustic layer to back up its turbo-horses, which you'll want to judge for yourself. Notes about features and implementations included largely what you would expect in a mid-optioned trim from a mainstream premium brand. Most significant is the impact of its restyling. The new look successfully takes you quickly across



Buick Wildcat EV concept

the threshold from “it doesn't look like a Buick” to “Buick has a whole new look.” It's a reinvention—heritage and continuity are there, while it's definitely a step into an exciting new realm. Their strategy is working. Buick claims a spot as the industry's fastest-growing mainstream brand, with 70 percent of sales to new customers. ■

**Modern Buick: no portholes, no waterfall grille, no sweepspears—all Wildcat. And the tri-shield carries forward in a clean new location.**

# Domestic Wildcat

New identity for Buick defined by multiple relativities by Joe Sage



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Lansing, Michigan
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	Mexico / US
PARTS CONTENT	US/Can 35% / Mexico 22%
SEATING	seven
ENGINE	2.5L turbo-4 16v DOHC SID1 w VVT, alum/alum
HP/TORQUE	328 hp / 326 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	na
TRANSMISSION	8-spd auto, electronic/OD
DRIVETRAIN	AWD
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut w direct-acting stblzr bar, all w passive plus dampers; R: five-link indep, coils w stblzr bar, all w passive plus dampers
STEERING	elec var-effort pwr w Active Return Assist
BRAKES	17-in rotors, variable system
WHEELS	20-in alloy, high gloss black machine finish
TIRES	P255/55R20 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	207.6 / 120.93 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	6.77 in
TURNING CIRCLE	39.04 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	42.6 / 39.96 / 38.27 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	44.29 / 41.46 / 32.13 in
CARGO CAPACITY	22.9 / 57.1 / 97.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT	4713 lb
TOW CAPACITY	1500 / HD 5000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg* unl / 21.7 gal
*(per multiple 3rd parties; no mfg info)	
MPG	19/24/21 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$47,400
CHASSIS, ALL-WHEEL-DRIVE SYSTEM	2,000
PAINT: Cherry Red tintcoat	645
SUPER CRUISE PKG: enhanced auto parking assist, Super Cruise™, wifi, apps, OnStar safety services (subscrip req'd)	3255
DESTINATION CHARGE	1395
TOTAL	\$54,695

## 2025 BUICK ENCLAVE LINEUP

	FWD	AWD
Preferred	\$45,000	\$47,000
Sport Touring	47,400	49,400
Avenir	58,000	60,000