

Suburban Observer & Eccentric Automotive Showcase

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CARreport



Buick Regal comes equipped for fun

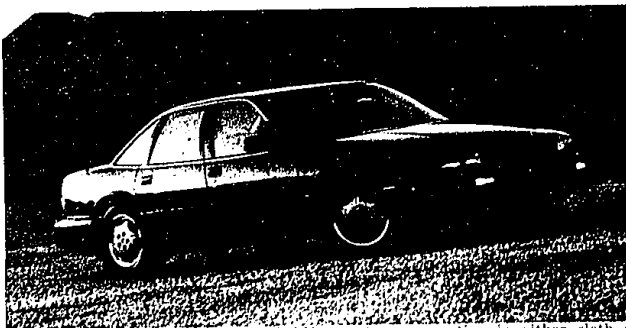
By Anne Fracassa
Avanti NewsFeatures

The 1996 Buick Regal is a true traditional vehicle in the Buick lineup. It's constantly updated to reflect its contemporary look, but Regal, essentially, remains the same -- a tried and true mid-size car.

Driven was the Regal Custom sedan, but it's available in lots of choices, including the Custom coupe, Gran Sport coupe and sedan and Limited sedan. Buick calls the Regal its "premium mid-size car." And with all the bells and whistles, it certainly is.

Last year, the Regal captured first prize when it came to the J.D. Power and Associates initial quality study that showed it had the fewest customer-reported problems. Anything that shows up on the Power reports deserves mentioning.

The standard engine on the Regal is a 16-horsepower 3100 V6 that provides a smooth, quiet and efficient ride. Its EPA rating is 20 mpg in the city, 29 on the highway. The V6 is joined with an electronically controlled 4-speed automatic transmission that's standard. Also standard are a 4-wheel



ROAD TEST
By
Anne Fracassa

independent suspension, 4-wheel anti-lock brakes and dual air bags.

But the list doesn't end there: Cruise control, power windows, power mirrors, automatic power door locks and an AM/FM cassette stereo were added this year to the standard equipment list.

The Regal's optional engine (although it's standard on the Limited and Gran Sport) is the 3.8-liter V6 that's rated at 205 horsepower. This is a 35-horsepower improvement over last year's 170-horsepower 3.8-liter.

This is Buick's newest generation of 3800 engines and boasts an all-new cast-iron block that's been reduced in size and weight and is still as quiet as a kitten.

As with a lot of GM cars this year, the Regal is equipped with an advanced on-board diagnostic system that alerts you to any problems in the power train or any other systems that affect emissions.

Also under the hood you'll find you won't have to change your coolant until your Regal is 5 years old or reaches 100,000 miles. There are also platinum-tipped spark plugs that don't have to be changed until you reach 100,000 miles as well as filled-for-life transmission fluid.

You wouldn't believe the room in this car -- and the trunk doesn't suffer, either. There's ample cargo space back there for anyone who needs to stuff three or four bags of clubs in there.

There's a 55/45 split seat up front. Bucket seats are an

option in either cloth or leather. The buckets are more comfortable, holding you in place a little better.

On the instrument panel you'll find analog gauges, including a tachometer and temperature readings. Knobs for the stereo and climate controls are larger than last year and are backlit for easier identification in the dark.

Also standard this year is the PASSkey theft-deterrent system. Nothing is more convenient than having a small key fob that controls the locking and unlocking system of a vehicle. It can be operated from about 10 feet away and provides a sense of security that is unmatched when it comes to fumbling for keys to get in your car or trunk at night.

Another plus with the PASSkey system is that there's a tiny coded pellet imbedded in the key. When inserted in the ignition, the Regal reads that pellet's code. If it isn't the right code, the car won't start. It's an added security measure that's

worth its weight in steel.

And Regal has a fantastically delayed lighting, which you would normally only find in the more expensive luxury models. The interior lights stay on for about 25 seconds after the door is closed. The lights turn off -- gradually fading -- as soon as the key is inserted into the ignition.

The standard equipment list is long and includes power steering, a tilt steering wheel, Dynaflex suspension, air conditioning, cruise control, a rear window defogger, automatic power door locks, tinted solar ray glass all around, power outside mirrors, an AM/FM cassette stereo, front-seat recliners, a remote trunk release and power windows with express down.

The Regal tested had about \$3,000 in extras, which pumped up the \$19,740 base price.

The Regal has a lot of Buick tradition built in it and can be a real plus when talking about comfort and convenience. It's worth a look if you need a no-nonsense car with a lot of spunk.

Anne Fracassa is senior editor of Avanti NewsFeatures.

1996 Buick Regal Custom sedan
Vehicle class: Mid-size.
Power: 160-horsepower 3100 V6.
Mileage: 19 city / 30 highway.

If you'd like to see a particular model tested or if you have a car question, send Anne Fracassa a message at AVANTI 1054, Avanti's America Online mailbox... Or comment through the Internet at AVANTI1054@aol.com

Anne Fracassa is senior editor of Avanti News Features.

Where built: Oshawa, Ontario, Canada.

As tested: \$23,137.

Car Theft Rate Declines As Security Gets Tighter

(NU) - The theft of automobiles in the United States has declined for three consecutive years. Police say that a significant part of the decline in thefts can be directly attributed to a steady increase in car owner awareness about how thieves work and the security systems that may foil them. There is an indication, however, that the trend may be shifting back toward more thefts. Audiotex Corporation is marketing the latest in security devices which use intelligence technology and satellite communications to make properly protected vehicles harder to steal in the first place, and more easy to find if they are stolen. (News USA)

Facing Carjacking Threat, Best Advice: 'Walk Away'

(NU) - Carjacking is a terrifying crime that may provoke dangerous behavior from the intended victim in order to protect their vehicle. The best response for the victim of a carjacking is to say, by word and deed: "Take it, I won't try to stop you." Then, get away from the vehicle as far and as fast as you can. A new security device called The Posee, by Audiotex Corporation, uses satellite tracking gear to pinpoint your vehicle after it has been high-jacked. The Posee will give you the courage to walk away. For information about The Posee and about carjacking and other vehicle security problems, call 1-800-645-7760. (News USA)

Save A Lot With Bob Jeannotte

1995 GRAND PRIX SE SEDAN Dual air bags, 3.1 V6, reclining bucket seats, power windows, power door locks, pass key theft deterrent, cruise, rear defogger, AM/FM cassette, aluminum wheels, remote trunk release & more. Stock #950245 SALE PRICE \$15,995* GM OPT II Deduct \$320.10	1996 GRAND AM GT COUPE Automatic transmission, 3100 V6, dual airbags, anti-lock brakes, cruise control, rear defogger, AM/FM stereo cassette, power door locks. Stock #960265 36 MONTH SMART LEASE \$223.99** per mo. SALE PRICE \$11,995* GM OPT II Deduct \$640.45	1996 JIMMY 4X4 4 DOOR 4.3 V6 engine, air conditioning, automatic transmission, ABS brakes, air bag, power windows/door mirrors, tilt, cruise, AM/FM cassette stereo, and much more! Stock #96241 SALE PRICE \$23,995* 30 month Smart Lease \$299** per mo. SALE PRICE \$19,695* 36 month Smart Lease \$299** per mo. GM OPT II Deduct \$1079.45	1996 SONOMA EXT. CAB 2.2 liter, four cylinder engine, four speed automatic transmission, air bag, ABS brakes, air conditioning, tilt, cruise, aluminum wheels, AM/FM stereo cassette, tachometer and much more! Stock #960679 SALE PRICE \$14,495* GM OPT II Deduct \$806.95
1996 FIREBIRD V6, automatic transmission, air conditioning, dual air bags, rear defogger, tilt, AM/FM stereo cassette, anti-lock brakes, tinted glass and more. Stock #960221 SALE PRICE \$16,495* GM OPT II Deduct \$887.60	1996 SUNFIRE SE 2 DOOR COUPE Air conditioning, tilt, AM/FM cassette, defogger, ABS brakes, dual air bags. Stock #960163 SALE PRICE \$11,995* GM OPT II Deduct \$640.45	1996 BONNEVILLE SE 3800 V6, automatic transmission, air conditioning, AM/FM stereo, rear defogger, power windows, power locks, ABS brakes, dual air bags. Stock #960314 SALE PRICE \$19,695* 36 month Smart Lease \$299** per mo. GM OPT II Deduct \$1079.45	1996 SIERRA PICK-UP Vortec 4300 V6 engine, auto transmission, air conditioning, air bag, ABS brakes, painted rear step bumper, AM/FM stereo and much more! Stock #960263 SALE PRICE \$15,995* GM OPT II Deduct \$819.55 36 month Smart Lease \$299** per mo.
1996 GRAND AM SE COUPE Air conditioning, AM/FM cassette, defogger, ABS brakes, power locks, dual air bags. Stock #960302 SALE PRICE \$13,995* GM OPT II Deduct \$734.70 36 month Smart Lease \$199** per mo.	1996 SAFARI VAN Vortec 4300 V6 engine, auto trans, vortec drive, dual air bags, ABS brakes, air conditioning, dutch doors, 8 passenger seating, power windows, locks and mirrors, tilt & cruise, luggage carrier, rear defogger, AM/FM cassette stereo and much more! Stock #960154 SALE PRICE \$19,695* 36 month Smart Lease \$319** per mo. GM OPT II Deduct \$1070.50		

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