

# Suburban Observer & Eccentric Automotive Showcase

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## LeSabre gets a new look for 1997

By Anne Fracassa  
Avanti NewsFeatures

This car has class. Or, should I say it's classic.

The 1997 Buick LeSabre has a new exterior design and is loaded with improvement on the safety and comfort side.

It's also the first 1997 model available in dealer showrooms right now.

It has been since January, as a matter of fact.

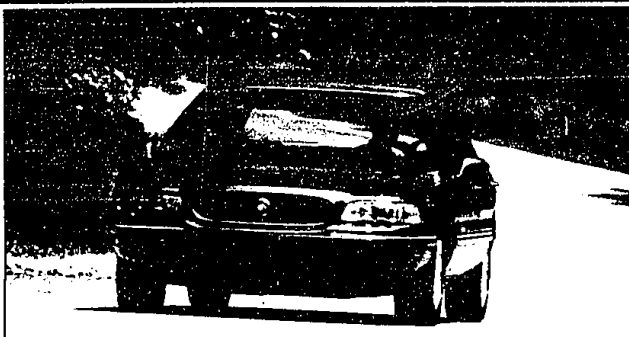
This is a true touring car, one that's perfect for long, cross-country trips. The suspension is remarkable. Run over a chuck-hole and it feels like you ran over a pebble.

The redesigned seats have something to do with that, of course. They're really comfortable.

The exterior has that familiar Buick look, but almost everything has been changed. This isn't a minor sheetmetal change. This is change that makes sense.

The new grill, which is incorporated right into the hood, looks smart. There are new front and rear fascias with individual "Buick" letters embossed in the rear. There are new headlamps and cornering lamps that feature fixed lenses, aluminum housing and easier-than-usual adjustment mechanism.

Even the park, turn and side



ROAD TEST  
By  
Anne Fracassa

premium — unlended gas.

Safety has not been put on the back burner in the new LeSabre. Some of the changes are simple, but translate into a lot. Like the safety belt release buttons being relocated to the end of the buckle for ease of use.

Or the fact the LeSabre surpasses the government's dynamic side-impact standards. Dual air bags, anti-lock brakes, air conditioning, power windows, rear-window defogger and the PASS-Key II anti-theft system are all standard equipment on the LeSabre as well.

Like most vehicles, the LeSabre has engine coolant and platinum-tipped spark plugs that don't need changing until you hit 100,000 miles. And the transmission fluid doesn't require changing — under normal operating conditions.

OBD II — the new on-board diagnostic system — is on the new LeSabre. OBD II can reduce exhaust emissions by locating

malfunctions before they cause emissions to rise. Don't ignore the "service" light — higher emissions temps can cause you to lose your catalytic converter prematurely.

An option on the LeSabre Custom, but standard on the Limited, is Personal Choice. Activated by the remote keyless entry fob, Personal Choice allows two drivers, with separate fobs, to "set" the car to their preference. You can set memory door locks, delayed locking security feedback and perimeter lighting.

Other features on the LeSabre include delayed entry and exit lighting, theater dimming interior lights, battery rundown protection, lockout protection on power door locks and warning chimes when you leave the parking brake on. Those annoying warning chimes are also activated when you leave the turn signal or headlamps on and for leaving the keys in the ignition when leaving the car.

Buick's added a new exterior

color this year: A really pretty Teal. The LeSabre is no longer offered in black, however. It wasn't a popular color.

The LeSabre isn't fancy, it isn't stunning, it isn't even sporty. But it's a practical car that screams comfort and luxury. Maybe that's why it's been the best-selling full-size sedan for the past four years straight.

### 1997 Buick LeSabre

Vehicle class: Full-size sedan.  
Engine: 3800 Series II SFI V6.  
Mileage: 19 city / 30 highway.  
Where built: Flint, Mich.  
Price: \$22,015 for the Custom; \$25,565 for the Limited. Plus destination charge of \$605.

## Consumer Corner

### Finding The World's Greatest Wagon

(NAPS) — It's definitely time to buy a larger car. The family is growing right out of your compact car or you've decided now that the kids are all off to college, it's time for that drive around the country that you've always promised yourselves. Or your weekend hobby of buying antique requires more car space to transport those treasures.

But what kind of car should you buy? If a minivan seems a little too large for your needs or may be hard to park in your parking space, you might consider a wagon.

No longer the road warrior that was used by moms in rollers to drive their commuting husband to the train station, wagon designs have been updated for modern families on the move.

Newer wagons are as sleek as sedans and may be the perfect solution for the car buyer seeking space, comfort and style.

Most people think of wagons as roomy, reliable and roadworthy, but the newest wagons like the 1996 Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable wagons are also stylish, luxurious and fitted with the latest safety features.

When buying a wagon, it's wise to carefully research what's

available. Here are some features that are now standard to the wagon:

- Advanced V-6 engines. The newest is a high performance, 3.0-liter, 24 valve DOHC V-6 Duratec.

- A three-stage air filtration system that keeps airborne dust, pollen and diesel particles from entering the passenger compartment.

- A safety engineering system made up of a protective impact-absorbing body structure, integrated 5-mph bumpers, rear door child safety latch and dual air bag supplemental restraint system.

- Optional seating for eight, with a patented center console that converts to a center front seat.

There's no substitute for firsthand experience. When considering a wagon, get behind the wheel and take it for a drive. Try getting into and out of the passenger seats. See what it's like to load in some cargo.

The wagons offer durability, reliability, value, as well as dramatic good looks. Taurus and Sable will complement Ford's segment-leading wagon lineup, which also includes Ford Escort and Mercury Tracer wagons.

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