

SHIFT

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FAMILY CAR SHOPPING

How to avoid a backseat brawl

RAHUQ

Growing up, large family trips were always difficult. Most large cars back then were of the 'rental microbus' variety, which was cramped and uncomfortable, with little consideration given to the needs of passengers. For many, the ability to ride in a car was a luxury in and of itself, so the idea of comfort and convenience was at the back end of most people's minds.

But times have changed, and personal luxury family cars are now the norm. However, with so many options available, choosing the perfect car can be daunting. This article aims to guide you through the essential things to keep in mind when buying a luxury family car, including road presence and creature comforts, so that you can make an informed decision that both you and your family will enjoy.

ROAD PRESENCE

In Bangladesh, having a car with a strong road presence is important not only for its status symbol but also for making other drivers more cautious when driving near you. The front of any vehicle is the most noticeable part, where designers put in the most effort. Premium automakers currently feature a long hood with a large studded grille, flanked by heavily accented DRL headlamps, often including faux intakes under the headlamps to enhance the 'look-at-me factor.'

On the other hand, one can opt for something completely unique, such as the 'Dynamic Shield' wedge on the Mitsubishi

Outlander. Complementing the side profile are large wheels with thin-wall tires and subtle chrome accents. A practical addition would be plastic/rubber curb guards at the door bottoms to avoid damaging the metal bodywork while disembarking on high sidewalks. Bright LED taillamps are both aesthetically pleasing and safe, but don't forget to check for a rear wiper and an automatic tailgate for convenience.



Lastly, the paint colour is often overlooked but can make a car stand out in the sea of white and silver vehicles. Any deep shade of paint will be hard to miss, even for the most absent-minded people.

CREATURE COMFORT

While it is nice to impress others with your car, ensuring your loved ones are comfortable inside takes top priority. Although leather upholstery has been a traditional hallmark of

luxury, most automakers offer good quality leather alternatives if you are environmentally conscious or do not want to deal with the hassle of maintaining real leather.

However, both leathers and their alternatives are not that effective at soaking up heat, making a beefy climate control system with temperature settings adjustable by zones and dedicated vents for every row most desirable in a hot country. While some cars such as the Chery Tiggo 8 Pro offer vents for every row, the third row in most cars doesn't get their own. Heated and cooled seats are available in some cars, though the former is largely impractical in our climate, while the latter might make you feel like you've soiled yourself, especially if you are not used to it.

Once the tactile needs are met, consider the overall atmosphere. A large panoramic sunroof can let in natural light during the day, while subtle lighting from hidden RGB strips can create a pleasant ambience at night. For the aural needs, a minimum of four speakers and two tweeters are required, but in a three-row car, additional speakers and a dedicated amplifier from a reputable audio equipment manufacturer should be expected.

In addition to physical comfort, convenience tech has become a hallmark of upmarket cars. A large infotainment screen with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay has become a necessity, while a wireless charging pad to juice up your device is a nice added touch. A fully digital instrument cluster lets

the driver monitor the car's systems more effectively, while dedicated reading lights and USB chargers for every seat are appreciated for personal space.

While a centre console that doubles as a cooler is a neat party trick, those with their own climate control are much more practical for storing items. Some automakers are implementing voice commands in their top models, although from personal experience, many of them struggle to comprehend our APAC accents.

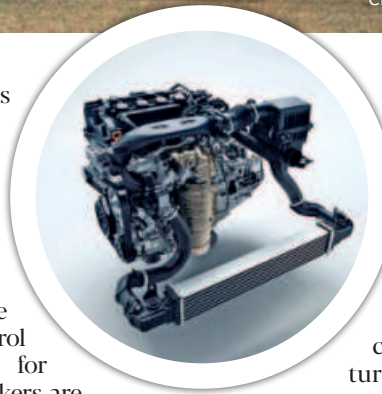
SAFETY

Modern cars offer two types of protection: active and passive. Active safety features aim to prevent accidents, and these features are bundled in a suite, such as Honda's Sensing®, which includes blind spot sensors, parking sensors, cameras, automatic headlights, automatic braking, collision warning and more.

Passive safety features come into play during unavoidable accidents and are designed to absorb force and mitigate impact. Crash safety structures and airbags inside the cabin protect occupants, with a minimum of front, side, and curtain airbags. Top automakers add more airbags for extra protection. A car's passive safety is considered good when it receives an NCAP rating of 4.5 to 5 stars.



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POWER AND COMFORT

A large car is impressive, but it can be embarrassing if it struggles to get up to speed. One solution is to opt for an engine with more than four cylinders, but our tax structures can make this costly. A better option is a turbocharged engine, which can generate more power from

a smaller size. The Chery Tiggo 8 Pro is an excellent example with its 1.6-liter turbo 4-cylinder making 194 HP and 290 Nm of torque. Dual-clutch transmissions provide a fun alternative to belt-driven CVT gearboxes.

For a comfortable ride, McPherson struts and multi-link suspension are more desirable than torsion bar suspension. ABS with brake force distribution should come standard for smooth stops, and any car without it in 2023 should be avoided.

COST OF OWNERSHIP

When purchasing a new car, it's crucial to keep maintenance costs in mind. Ensure that the car's parts are easily accessible, and for new cars, the warranty is extensive and long-lasting. The Toyota RAV 4 is a top contender in this category, with its sturdy design and ample aftermarket support. It's also recommended to browse car forums to learn about a model's common issues and anything else you should be aware of.

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