

Roomy 2016 Buick Enclave SUV notable for quiet cabin

December 23 2015, by Ann M. Job



This undated photo provided by Buick shows the 2016 Buick Enclave. The Enclave is an attractive option for big families needing a roomy, feature-packed crossover sport utility vehicle that seats up to eight people. (Buick via AP)

The 2016 Buick Enclave is an attractive option for big families needing a roomy, feature-packed crossover sport utility vehicle that seats up to eight people.

Drivers will take note of its quiet interior, which is virtually devoid of

most road and wind noise. The Enclave also is a recommended buy of Consumer Reports magazine, where the SUV's reliability is rated better than average, and earned a top five-out-of-five-stars rating for occupant protection in [federal government](#) frontal and side crash tests.

The Enclave straddles the line between a mid-size and full-size SUV, and provides luxury features and lots of cargo space. If drivers fold down the second-row seats and remove the third row, the Enclave offers more than 115 cubic feet of cargo room—more cargo space than what's available in the larger, more truck-like Chevrolet Tahoe SUV.

Prices for the Enclave cover a wide range. The base model, which comes standard with a rearview camera, front-wheel drive and power rear liftgate, power front seats, remote vehicle start, three-zone climate control and built-in 4G LTE Wi-Fi hot spot, among other things, has a starting manufacturer's suggested retail price, including destination charge, of \$39,990. The lowest starting retail price, with destination charge, for an Enclave with all-wheel drive is \$46,585.

All Enclaves are powered by a 3.6-liter V-6 engine that produces 288 horsepower and 270 foot-pounds at 3,400 rpm. It's mated to a six-speed automatic transmission.

The engine isn't the most fuel efficient. The test, top-of-the-line Enclave AWD-Premium Group averaged 18 miles per gallon. That matched the federal government's average fuel economy, with city driving rated at 16 mpg and highway travel rated at 22 mpg. The Enclave's 22-gallon gas tank meant the travel range wasn't quite 400 miles on a single tank.

The V-6 is needed in the Enclave, as it is a hefty, 16.8-foot-long SUV. It feels substantial when being driven, and everyone sits high above the pavement. But the suspension, with coil over strut front design and independent, rear H-arm configuration, does a good job of delivering a

refined ride free from hard hits from potholes and other road bumps. It's worth adding that the Enclave comes standard with big wheels—19 inches on the base model, 20 inches are an option.

At times, though, the Enclave's size was noticeable. It was difficult trying to fit into some spots in a parking garage and slipping it into a constrained home garage.

The Enclave's interior feels spacious as the dashboard sits low and there's good headroom all around. Controls and the display in the middle of the dashboard are large and easy to use. Seats in the test vehicle provided decent support, though back seats had short cushions.

Adults riding in the third row can get comfortable legroom because second-row seats can move on their tracks to distribute legroom. And a nice feature on this SUV is the one-touch lever that manually moves second-row seats out of the way for easier access to the third row. Note that the Enclave can be fitted with seats for seven or eight.

A few nits: It's odd to see that the base Enclave comes with cloth [seats](#), not leather. Rearview visibility is difficult, so the backup camera is essential. The side pillars around the windshield are thick and can obscure bicyclists and pedestrians when the Enclave is making turns.

Exterior styling hasn't changed much in years. While it's now recognizable as a Buick, the Enclave could use some pizzazz to compete better and justify the pricing.

The 2016 Enclave was among 29,295 SUVs recalled in September because a manufacturing defect could cause the windshield wiper motor to overheat, potentially leading to a fire.

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