

URBAN PICKS



Saturn SL1

With Saturn, you're buying more than a car. You're buying into a family. From the moment you walk into the showroom until the day you trade your car in, Saturn and its dealers go to great lengths to let you know they're standing behind you. No wonder the Saturn division consistently leads the pack on the oft-quoted J.D. Power Customer Satisfaction Index. But how does the SL1 itself stack up against the competition? As far as *AAOW* Editor Jacqueline Mitchell is concerned, "It can compete with any import car in its class." The SL1 went through a major makeover a year ago, and the changes yielded some big improvements. You'll find better isolation from vibration and road noise. And gauges and controls are much friendlier to use. Transmission shifting has been improved. And the peppy little 1.9 liter engine seems a good bit quieter.

Honda Civic DX

To borrow a line from an old cigarette commercial, Civic owners "would rather fight than switch." And for good reason. In the under-\$12,000 category, Honda long ago set the gold standard. "This car is fun," declares *AAOW*'s Blair Walker with a big grin. "Civics flat out handle." And perform. Though the DX features one of the smaller engines in our test sample, at 1.6 liters, it delivers a respectable 106 hp. Those with active lifestyles might consider the Civic Hatchback, one of the few hatch models left on the market. Another neat touch: Honda offers a unique, continuously variable transmission. No more shifting. But you'll have to buy the coupe, and the option will price you out of this month's Urban Picks category.

