

2008 Dinghy Roundup

From lightweight to luxury and everything in between, this year's guide offers a number of interesting and exciting choices



FORD FOCUS

Choosing the right dinghy vehicle these days is simply a matter of personal choice — no longer are you limited to manual transmissions and front-wheel-drive cars. Today, you can choose from lightweight economy models to luxury cars, all-wheel-drive (AWD) models and even a few hybrids.

As with previous years, we're only listing those vehicles that have been approved by their manufacturers for four-down towing

(along with their specific requirements) and only those that can be towed at a minimum speed of 55 MPH for no less than 200 miles at a time. Bear in mind that because intro dates vary widely these days, and because much of the information from the manufacturer may be preliminary at press time, some of the facts and figures presented are subject to change. In fact, some potentially approved vehicles may not be included here because there isn't

enough information on them yet.

That said, it behooves you to do some additional research before buying one of the vehicles listed in this guide. Visit the dealer, and ask to see a copy of the owner's manual. Look in the index under "flat towing" or "recreational towing" to find instructions for towing the vehicle in question. This will not only tell you if the vehicle is, in fact, towable, but what is involved. Some vehicles are easy to tow, while others may

require very specific procedures be followed before/during towing to prevent damage.

If the owner's manual contains no information about flat-towing, or the section recommends against flat-towing, you're not necessarily out of luck; there are kits and products designed to make flat-towing a nontowable vehicle possible, and you've probably seen many "nontowable" cars being towed with success. However, there is the possibility that the act of flat-towing,

NEW MODELS FOR 2008

Chrysler

Retaining its title as the only pickup in its segment to offer a V-8 engine, the 2008 **Dodge Dakota** ups the ante with a more powerful 4.7-L V-8 engine that not only offers 302 HP (31 percent increase) and 329 LB-FT of torque (13 percent increase), but also better fuel economy and increased refinement. Ordered as a 4WD, the midsize pickup is flat-towable with both the automatic and manual transmissions. The restyled Dakota is offered in two body styles — Extended Cab and Crew Cab — and six trim levels: ST, SXT, SLT, TRX4, Sport and Laramie.



DODGE DAKOTA

Ford

In some cases, it's a case of "what's old is new again" at Ford. The sole "new" offering is the '08 **Focus** (facing page), which features all new styling and towability when ordered with the manual transmission. Apparently, consumers didn't get the Ford 500, so the company reverted to the trusty Taurus name. Available in front- or all-wheel drive, Taurus is powered by a 263-HP 3.5-L Duratec V-6 engine and a six-speed automatic transmission.



TAURUS X

If the **Taurus X** looks familiar, that's because it's based on what used to be called the Ford Freestyle, but that doesn't mean it's the same vehicle. The seven-passenger Taurus X benefits from a new 3.5-L V-6 and six-speed automatic transmission, standard electronic stability control, side air bags and Ford's Safety Canopy curtain air bags for all three rows. One-touch flip-and-fold second-row seating and an available power lift

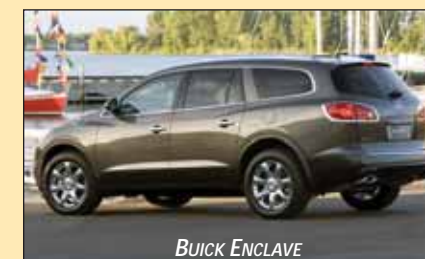
gate conspire to provide enhanced cargo convenience. A new look, inspired by the Ford Edge, features a three-bar chrome grille as well as a restyled hood, front fenders, front/rear fascia and chrome-tipped exhausts. You can also opt for AWD, as well as a number of other features, including DVD-based navigation.

GM

General Motors is definitely the star of this year's dinghy roundup, with many towable models to choose from. Having introduced the **GMC Acadia** and **Saturn Outlook** late in 2006 as 2007 models, this year it follows suit with the luxurious **Buick Enclave**. Like its sister products, the Enclave rides on GM's new Lambda chassis architecture and features smooth-riding four-wheel independent suspension, seating for up to eight and your choice of front- or all-wheel drive.

Chevy's smaller SUV, the **Equinox**, is now available in a Sport model that is also towable. The Sport brings the heat with a 3.6-L, 264-HP V-6 engine mated to a six-speed automatic transmission exclusively. Sport-tuned suspension and unique exterior/interior treatments are also part of the package.

Hummer has introduced an **Alpha** version of its popular **H3** SUV. Looking much like the current version, the Alpha model differs significantly in its underhood muscle with a 5.3-L V-8 pumping out 300 HP. It's connected to a standard four-speed automatic transmission.



BUICK ENCLAVE

Passenger Cars

Model	Base Curb Weight	Speed/Distance Limits	Towable with Manual Trans.	Towable with Auto Trans.	Mileage City/Hwy.	Approx. Retail Price Range
Chevrolet						
Cobalt Sedan/Coupe	2,780	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	24/33	\$14,295-\$19,495
HHR	3,155	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	22/27	\$16,795-\$17,795
Malibu	3,415	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	22/30	\$19,995-\$26,995
Chrysler						
PT Cruiser	3,070	None	Yes	No	21/26	\$15,655-\$23,300
Ford/Mercury						
Focus	2,588	None	Yes	No	24/35	\$14,695-\$16,995
Fusion/Milan	3,101	None	Yes	No	20/29	\$17,770-\$25,530
Taurus (FWD/AWD)	3,741	None	NA	Yes ⁽¹⁾	18/28	\$23,995-\$25,845
⁽¹⁾ All-wheel-drive vehicles cannot be towed on a dolly.						
Hyundai						
Accent	2,365	None	Yes	No	27/32	\$10,400-\$15,000
Elantra	2,723	None	Yes	No	25/33	\$13,400-\$17,900
Sonata	3,253	None	Yes	No	21/30	\$17,500-\$24,000
Tiburon	2,898	None	Yes	No	20/28	\$16,700-\$22,100
Infiniti						
G35 Sport Coupe	3,668	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	17/26	\$34,000-\$35,550
G35 Sport Sedan	3,532	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	19/26	\$31,000-\$33,000
⁽¹⁾ Idle engine in NEUTRAL for several minutes every 500 miles.						
Mercedes-Benz						
smart fortwo	1,800	None	NA	Yes	40+	\$11,590-\$16,590
Nissan						
350Z Coupe	3,339	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	20/27	\$27,650-\$36,850
350Z Roadster	3,580	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	19/26	\$35,000-\$41,000
Altima	3,107	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	26/35	\$17,750-\$29,650
Sentra	2,853	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	28/34	\$14,750-\$20,525
Versa	2,722	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	30/34	\$12,550-\$15,550
⁽¹⁾ Idle engine in NEUTRAL for several minutes every 500 miles.						
Pontiac						
G5	2,991	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	24/33	\$15,525-\$19,635
G6	3,305	65 MPH/None	No	Yes	22/30	\$18,495-\$27,215
<i>(all except convertible)</i>						
Torrent GXP	3,813	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	16/24	\$27,995-\$29,595
Vibe	2,700	None	Yes	No	26/33	\$17,345-\$21,000
Saturn						
Aura Green Line Hybrid	3,529	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	24/32	\$22,695
Aura XE I-4	3,529	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	22/30	\$20,395
Aura XR V-6	3,647	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	17/26	\$20,995-\$24,995
Astra 3-dr	2,833	65 MPH/Unlimited	Yes	Yes	NR	\$18,495
Astra 5-dr	2,921	65 MPH/Unlimited	Yes	Yes	NR	\$15,995-\$17,545
NR = No rating.						
Scion						
iC	2,905	None	Yes	No	20/27	\$15,300-\$17,000
xB	3,020	None	Yes	No	22/28	\$15,650
xD	2,625	None	Yes	No	27/33	\$14,550

Passenger Cars

Model	Base Curb Weight	Speed/Distance Limits	Towable with Manual Trans.	Towable with Auto Trans.	Mileage City/Hwy.	Approx. Retail Price Range
Subaru						
Impreza 2.5i Sedan/WRX/Outback Sport	3,064	None	Yes	No	20/27	\$16,995-\$21,640
Legacy	3,270	None	Yes	No	20/27	\$20,495-\$34,640
Outback	3,350	None	Yes	No	20/26	\$21,995-\$34,840
Suzuki						
SX4 Crossover ⁽¹⁾	2,849	55 MPH/200 MI	Yes	No	23/28	\$15,270
SX4 Sport	2,745	55 MPH/200 MI	Yes	No	21/28	\$14,770
⁽¹⁾ Console-mounted selector must be in the 2WD position.						
Toyota						
Camry	3,285	None	Yes	No	21/31	\$18,570-\$28,640
Camry Solara	3,175	None	Yes	No	21/31	\$19,930-\$22,200
Corolla	2,530	None	Yes	No	28/37	\$14,405-\$15,615
Corolla Matrix	2,679	None	Yes	No	26/33	\$15,510-\$16,990
Yaris	2,293	None	Yes	No	29/36	\$11,300-\$12,975

Trucks/SUVs

Model	Base Curb Weight	Speed/Distance Limits	Towable with Manual Trans.	Towable with Auto Trans.	Mileage City/Hwy.	Approx. Retail Price Range
Buick						
Enclave 2WD CX/CXL	4,780	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	16/24	\$32,790-\$34,990
Enclave 4WD CX/CXL	4,985	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	16/22	\$34,790-\$36,990
Chevrolet/GMC						
Acadia 2WD SLE/SLT	4,722	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	16/24	\$29,845-\$36,255
Acadia 4WD SLE/SLT	4,936	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	16/22	\$31,845-\$38,255
Avalanche 1500 4WD	5,645	None	NA	Yes	14/19	\$36,610
Colorado/Canyon	3,375	None	Yes	Yes	17/22	\$13,810-\$24,900
Sierra	3,818	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes (Sport only)	16/24	\$27,995-\$29,595
Silverado 1500 4WD Reg Cab	4,687	None	NA	Yes	15/20	\$21,185
Suburban/ Yukon XL 1500 4WD	5,745	None	NA	Yes	14/19	\$40,985-\$41,790
Suburban/ Yukon XL 2500 4WD	6,328	None	NA	Yes	NR	\$42,370-\$43,190
Tahoe/ Yukon 4WD	5,537	None	NA	Yes	14/20	\$38,795-\$39,490
TrailBlazer/Envoy 4WD	4,594	None	NA	Yes	14/20	\$25,440-\$35,280
Note: Chevrolet weights shown. GMC weights may be higher, depending on model. NR = No rating.						
Dodge						
Dakota 4WD	4,485	None	Yes	Yes	16/20	\$23,685-\$31,100
Durango 4WD	4,952	None	NA	Yes	13/18	\$29,735-\$37,215
Ram 4WD	5,240	None	Yes	Yes	13/17	\$26,050-\$48,925
Ford/Mazda/Mercury						
Edge (FWD/AWD)	4,078	65 MPH	NA	Yes ⁽¹⁾	16/24	\$25,330-\$32,070
Escape/Mariner Hybrid	3,594	75 MPH/None	NA	Yes	34/30	\$26,265-\$28,705
Escape/Tribute I-4	3,176	70 MPH/None	Yes	No	22/28	\$18,770-\$25,520

Trucks/SUVs						
Model	Base Curb Weight	Speed/Distance Limits	Towable with Manual Trans.	Towable with Auto Trans.	Mileage City/Hwy.	Approx. Retail Price Range
Ford/Mazda/Mercury (continued)						
Explorer 4WD V-6	4,606	None	NA	Yes ^(e)	13/19	\$30,770-\$34,540
Explorer 4WD V-8	4,702	None	NA	Yes ^(f)	13/19	\$29,345-\$35,835
Explorer Sport Trac 4WD V-6	4,740	None	NA	Yes ^(e)	13/19	\$30,770-\$34,540
Explorer Sport Trac 4WD V-8	4,830	None	NA	Yes ^(f)	13/19	\$29,345-\$35,835
F-150 4WD ^(g)	5,058	55 MPH/None	NA	Yes ^(b,h)	13/17	\$23,190-\$38,795
F-150 V-6	4,904	None	Yes ^(c)	No	14/20	\$17,345-\$22,895
F-250/F-350	5,970	None	Yes ^(a,b,c)	Yes ^(b,h)	NR	\$22,390-\$39,100
Ranger/B-Series	3,012	55 MPH/None	Yes ^(a,c)	Yes ^{(d)*}	21/26	\$16,170-\$18,165
Taurus X (FWD/AWD)	4,033	65 MPH	NA	Yes ⁽ⁱ⁾	15/24	\$26,615-\$32,185
<small>^(a) Electronic Shift-on-the-Fly rotary control in 2-high position and transmission in NEUTRAL (with 4 x 4 only). ^(b) Manual transfer case shifted into NEUTRAL (with 4WD only). ^(c) Manual transmission in NEUTRAL. ^(d) Only 4WD with dealer-installed Neutral Tow Kit (Part #3L2Z-7H332-AA). ^(e) Only 4WD with dealer-installed Neutral Tow Kit (Part #1L2Z-7H332-AB). ^(f) Only 4WD with dealer-installed Neutral Tow Kit (Part #6L2Z-7H332-A). ^(g) Excludes Harley-Davidson model. ^(h) 4WD with manual transfer case only (not Electronic Shift-on-the-Fly). ⁽ⁱ⁾ All-wheel-drive vehicles cannot be towed on a dolly. * With Neutral Tow Kit available from Ford dealer (Ranger and B-Series mechanically similar). NR = No rating.</small>						
Honda						
CR-V FWD/AWD	3,500	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes ⁽¹⁾	23/30	\$20,600-\$28,000
<small>⁽¹⁾ Recirculate transmission fluid every eight towing hours following the procedure in the vehicle owner's manual.</small>						
Hummer						
H2	6,614	None	NA	Yes	NR	\$55,510
H2 SUT	6,614	None	NA	Yes	NR	\$55,555
H3	4,700	None	Yes	Yes	13/18	\$30,695
H3 Alpha	4,854	None	NA	Yes	13/16	\$38,645
<small>NR = No rating.</small>						
Hyundai						
Santa Fe 2WD	3,727	Legal/None	Yes	No	18/24	\$21,100-\$28,100
Tucson 2WD	3,240	Legal/None	Yes	No	20/25	\$17,000-\$23,900
Veracruz 2WD	4,266	Legal/None	Yes	No	16/23	\$26,300-\$34,000
Jeep						
Commander Sport ⁽¹⁾	4,796	None	NA	Yes	13/18	\$18,225
Grand Cherokee	4,640	None	NA	Yes	14/19	\$30,490
Laredo 4WD ⁽¹⁾						
Liberty Sport 4WD	4,222	None	Yes	Yes	16/22	\$20,990-\$26,795
Wrangler 4WD	3,760	None	Yes	Yes	15/19	\$19,320-\$30,195
<small>⁽¹⁾ With 4.7-L engine and NV245 transfer case (Quadra-Trac II/Quadra-Drive II option).</small>						
Nissan						
Frontier 2WD I-4	3,675	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	22/25	\$16,000-\$17,100
Frontier 2WD V-6	4,139	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	17/21	\$18,950-\$25,100
Frontier 4WD V-6	4,307	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	15/20	\$21,650-\$27,500
Xterra 2WD	4,150	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	17/22	\$20,050-\$25,900
Xterra 4WD	4,360	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	17/21	\$22,100-\$27,950
<small>⁽¹⁾ Idle engine in NEUTRAL for several minutes every 500 miles.</small>						

Trucks/SUVs						
Model	Base Curb Weight	Speed/Distance Limits	Towable with Manual Trans.	Towable with Auto Trans.	Mileage City/Hwy.	Approx. Retail Price Range
Saturn						
VUE Green Line Hybrid	3,789	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	25/32	\$24,795
VUE XE AWD	4,325	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	15/22	\$24,515
VUE XE FWD	3,825	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	19/26	\$21,395
VUE XR AWD	4,035	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/22	\$26,895
VUE XR FWD	4,076	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/23	\$24,895
Outlook XE AWD	4,905	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/22	\$29,990
Outlook XE FWD	4,700	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/24	\$27,990
Outlook XR AWD	4,955	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/22	\$32,990
Outlook XR FWD	4,750	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/24	\$30,290
Subaru						
Forester 2.5X	3,090	None	Yes	No	20/27	\$21,195-\$27,895
Suzuki						
Grand Vitara ⁽¹⁾	3,582	55 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	17/21	\$19,349-\$23,749
<small>⁽¹⁾ Only Grand Vitara models fitted with 4WD are recommended for flat tow. Automatic-transmission models: flat tow with transfer case in NEUTRAL and transmission in PARK. Manual-transmission models: flat tow with transfer case in NEUTRAL and transmission in second gear and the steering wheel lock must be in the unlocked position.</small>						

NEW MODELS FOR 2008

Subaru

The **Subaru Impreza** and **WRX** sedan/wagon are all new this year. A more mainstream look, more interior space and improved overall refinement were Subaru's goals. And although larger in almost every dimension, Subaru maintains that there is no increase in weight. The engine and drivetrain are likely unchanged, although the engines have been retuned to improve low-end power. The Impreza and WRX are towable with a manual transmission, and all Subaru models benefit from full-time AWD.



SUBARU IMPREZA

Suzuki



Suzuki SX4

Suzuki introduced its diminutive AWD **SX4** compact sport crossover last year, and follows up for '08 with the front-wheel-drive SX4 sedan. The SX4 sedan is powered by a 2.0-L four-cylinder engine that is rated at 143 HP, and is towable with the five-speed manual transmission only. Standard features include an AM/FM/MP3/CD audio system with four speakers, four-wheel disc brakes with ABS and six air bags. *