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Practical Rides for 2012: the Mazda 3 and the Dodge Grand Caravan by [Carson Wininger](#)

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With the number of new vehicles introduced each year, it is difficult for buyers to decide on what their next car will be. Choosing between car models is already hard enough. But purchasing can get a little more challenging if you find yourself undecided between two vehicle types. The Mazda 3 and the Dodge Grand Caravan are two wholly different beasts but they both give you reasons to consider them as your next purchase.

Compact cars have always been the practical choice for car buyers. The fuel efficiency and ease of driving these small cars are the main reasons why they never fall out of fashion. Mazda 3 is among the highly-ranked vehicles in its class, rating high in terms of fuel economy, safety, and engine performance.

Minivans, on the other hand, are a popular choice among families because they can comfortably seat at least seven passengers with enough legroom and space for luggage. The Dodge Caravan of the 1980s is greatly responsible for the minivan's popularity when it redefined the comforts of suburban travel. Though the market share of minivans has dropped significantly since sport utility vehicles became popular, minivans continue to be a practical choice for families and frequent movers.

The latest generation Mazda 3 compact car comes in a four-door sedan body type and a five-door hatchback. Toronto Mazda 3 dealers offer the 2.5-liter straight-4 engine that carries a rating of 167 hp. The Mazda 3 comes in 5 or 6-speed versions, manual and automatic. This sporty compact has a high fuel economy rating at 30 miles per gallon in city limits and 40 mpg on highways.

The Dodge Grand Caravan is a four-door minivan that continues the automaker's line of vans that has been in production since 1983. The newest version features a Stow N Go minivan with a seating system that folds completely under the floors for more cargo space. The standard engine for Canada's Caravans is a 3.3-liter V6 with a power rating of 175 and a four-speed automatic transmission. The fuel economy of the minivan is rated at 17 mpg on city driving and 24 mpg on highways.

For more information, you can visit chryslergroupllc.com and mazda.com, the manufacturer websites of the Dodge Grand Caravan and the Mazda 3. You can also find reviews at cars.com and thecarconnection.com. If you like to test drive either model, you can go to carpages.ca and autotrader.ca for a listing of Toronto Mazda 3 and Dodge Grand Caravan dealers.

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