

## CAR REVIEW

# French Fluence-y

Renault's new sedan looks set to compete directly with the Japanese

Is that the new Megane sedan?

In a manner of speaking, yes. The previous Megane was an all-French offering — in sedan, hatch and even coupe-cabrio format. Now, we only get the Gaulish hatchback model.

In keeping with Renault's truly global presence, things have changed a little. Besides its alliance with Nissan, Renault also owns Korean car maker Samsung (a once-owned subsidiary of the electronics giant), so we occasionally get Samsung-made cars here — the sport utility vehicle Koleos is one, and so is the new Fluence.

So it's Korean-French?

Think of it as fusion, and not any the worse for it. The Fluence might be Korean-born and bred, but the exterior and interior quality show no hint of this. In some minor areas, it isn't as polished as



the French Megane hatch, but you'd have to be looking very hard to find them.

As the Fluence enters the small sedan market, it's up against some heavy hitters — Kia's Cerato Forte and Toyota's Corolla Altis are two examples — but it acquits itself very well.

Its power of 112bhp and 0-100kmh time of 11.0 seconds puts it in the expected ballpark for performance, while the ride quality is excellent. Handling is good too, while still preserving easy to drive characteristics. The steering gets better with more input, though it's rather anaesthetic in a straight line.

Should I get one?

It has everything a car in this segment should have: It is easy to drive, comfortable and looks decent. But the main draw is the price of \$90,888 with COE — that's more than what the rivals cost, but the Fluence is quite convincingly Continental in everything but principle.

DERRY WONG

Renault Fluence

Engine: 1,598cc, 112bhp

Performance:

185kmh, 0-100kmh in 11.0 seconds

Price: \$90,888 with COE

## NEWS TRACKS

## Audi's new sexy number



AUDI has announced its new A6 luxury saloon, which is expected to make landfall in

Singapore some time in Q3 of 2011.

Arriving here will be the 204bhp 2.8-litre V6 engine in two trims — a base model with CVT transmission and a higher end one with all-wheel drive and seven-speed dual clutch gearbox. Above that is a 290bhp supercharged V6, also with quattro and dual-clutch transmission.

The A6 continues the styling markers laid down by the smaller A4, and pulls no surprises in terms of exterior design. Coming up against strong competition from the Mercedes-Benz E-Class and BMW 5 Series, the A6 will rely on Audi's trademarks to differentiate it from other Germans: The extensive use of aluminium to reduce weight, quattro all-wheel drive, and high technology. The latter is evinced in various driver assistance systems and Audi's recently-debuted Multimedia Touch interface.



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