



Summary Report – December 2018 U.S. Automotive Sales

The industry closed out 2018 with the second-best selling month of the year. Volume increased 2.2 percent as several automakers posted record highs in various categories. 2018, despite all the news of economic uncertainty and predicted slumping sales, ended up being the fourth-biggest year on record with 17.33 million cars and light trucks sold.

The seasonally adjusted annual rate of sales (SAAR) soared to a 2018 high 17.72 million units providing much needed excitement and optimism for 2019. The positive factors – low fuel prices, high employment, decreased taxes – are predicted to remain in place for the upcoming year, but negative factors like rising interest rates and anticipated high volumes of quality pre-owned vehicles will be looming as well.

It is very possible that new car sales will decline in 2019. NADA predicts 16.8 million deliveries. Even if this proves to be the case dealerships should still enjoy high success and profitability with Certified Pre Owned sales and a continuation of the consumer shift away from cars, which accounted for only 31 percent of sales last year, to more lucrative trucks, crossovers and SUVs.

Automaker	December 2018 (Units Sold)	December 2017 (Units Sold)	Percent Change	12 Months 2018	12 Months 2017	Change
Fiat Chrysler US	197,470	173,373	13.9%	2,246,467	2,073,075	8.4%
Nissan North America	148,720	138,226	7.6%	1,493,877	1,593,464	-6.3%
Hyundai - Kia	113,149	106,633	6.1%	1,267,618	1,275,223	-0.6%
American Honda Motor Co.	155,115	149,317	3.9%	1,604,828	1,641,429	-2.2%
Industry-wide	1,639,131	1,604,448	2.2%	17,334,481	17,238,915	0.6%
Subaru of America	64,541	63,342	1.9%	680,135	647,956	5.0%
Toyota Motor Sales USA	220,910	222,985	-0.9%	2,426,672	2,434,517	-0.3%
General Motors	2,970,717	308,539	-3.7%	2,954,037	3,002,241	-1.6%
Mazda North America	25,870	26,893	-3.8%	300,325	289,470	3.8%
VW Group of America	59,157	61,561	-3.9%	637,689	625,107	2.0%
BMW	37,244	38,950	-4.4%	355,778	353,819	0.6%
Mercedes-Benz USA	36,254	39,416	-8.0%	355,413	375,311	-5.3%
Volvo Cars N.A.	8,826	9,679	-8.8%	98,263	81,504	20.6%
Ford Motor Co.	219,632	240,910	-8.8%	2,485,222	2,575,200	-3.5%

Additional Notes by Manufacturer

Fiat Chrysler: FCA's sales jumped 14 percent versus last December's totals capping off the manufacturer's best year since 2001. The Jeep and Ram brands both enjoyed record sales years and the company as a whole increased deliveries by 8.4 percent despite a 12 percent sales decline for the Chrysler brand.

Ford: The good news: Ford set an annual record for utility sales and F-series deliveries were the second highest all time as the pickup continued its reign as the nation's best-selling pickup for the 42nd consecutive year. The bad news: slumping sedan sales weighed heavily on Ford causing the manufacturer to post an 8.8 percent decline for the month of December and a 3.5 percent decline for 2018.

General Motors: GM closed out the year with a 3.7 percent decline in December. For 2018, the manufacturer saw overall sales decline 1.6 percent with total sales under 3 million units for the first time since 2014. Responsibility for the decline can be shared across all four brands as neither Buick, Chevrolet, Cadillac or GMC improved over 2017. A 2.6 percent increase in pickup sales and 6.8 percent jump in utilities was not nearly enough to offset a 21 percent decline in car sales.

Honda: Honda finished 2018 strong posting nearly 4 percent growth for the month of December. For the year, however, the manufacturer posted a 2.2 percent decline despite setting an annual truck sales record. Acura, behind continued strong RDX sales was up 11 percent in December and 2.8 percent for the year. In a truck-hungry market, the Accord posted a 29 percent sales increase for December but overall sales for the year were down 9.8 percent.

Hyundai-Kia: December sales at Hyundai-Kia were up 6.1 percent. For the year, the manufacturer posted a 0.6 percent decline. Major strides were made in 2018 as the automaker adjusted its lineup to better align with consumer demand. The Hyundai Tucson set a high sales mark for the 22nd consecutive month and the Kia Sportage enjoyed its best sales year ever.

Mercedes-Benz: In what is typically a very strong month, Mercedes-Benz sales were down 8 percent in December. For the year, sales for the automaker were down 6.3 percent. Despite the decline, the company extended its streak as the luxury sales leader to three years narrowly edging out closest rival BMW.

Nissan: December was a bright spot in what has been a pretty rough year for Nissan. Deliveries rose 7.6 percent for the month but even with that surge the manufacturer's yearly results were off 6.2 percent from 2017's total. Nissan attributes much of this decline to their move away from fleet sales and points to rising transaction prices as a sign of their success with the initiative.

Subaru: Subaru closed 2018 by posting its best sales month ever and set an annual record for the tenth consecutive year. For the month sales were up 1.9 percent, for the year the manufacturer surpassed its goal of 680,000 deliveries representing a 4.9 percent increase over 2017's total. With the success of the all-new Ascent and Forester and new products on the way, Subaru is confident its growth trend will continue into 2019 and beyond.

Toyota: December results were mixed for Toyota. Record light truck and a slight increase in Lexus deliveries were not enough to offset plummeting car sales ultimately equating to a sales decline of 0.9 percent. For the year, sales were down slightly, but essentially flat. The Camry retained its crown as best-selling car in the U.S. for the 17th consecutive year despite selling nearly 44,000 fewer units than were sold in 2017.

Volkswagen: Volkswagen ended 2018 down 3.9 percent for the month based on opposing results from the VW and Audi brands. While the former posted a 5.8 percent increase, the latter was down 16 percent. It was Audi's third consecutive losing month after seeing its 109-month growth streak end in September. The manufacturer ended the year up 2 percent overall. As if more evidence demand for cars is waning was needed, the Volkswagen Tiguan was the manufacturer's top seller, the first time any nameplate other than the Jetta sedan has paced VW sales since 1985.

For more information about the December numbers, and to review the complete report, click [here](#) to read the full *Automotive News* article.