



Driving Music

Car designer **EARL LUCAS** found inspiration in music when creating the 2010 Ford Taurus.

AFTER 23 YEARS ON THE ROAD, even an icon needs a makeover. When the Ford Motor Company decided to revitalize the image of their popular Taurus SHO (Super High Output), they called on design manager Earl Lucas, 38, to handle the nuts and bolts. Coming off the success of the 2009 Ford Flex, the Dallas native was honored to get a shot at updating one of the automotive manufacturer's most successful models. "You cannot work on a Taurus without understanding that it's a car that made a ton of connections with Joe Public," says Lucas. "It's always been the everyday man's car. It'd be tough to say that previous Tauruses have been athletic. They've been considered more

functional. So with the 2010, from the very beginning, we knew we wanted a much more athletic and fashionable car. It had to be a head-turner."

Mission accomplished. Gone are the dull rounded edges and the static chassis that had defined the Taurus for well over two decades. In their place is a sportier body and an overall up-to-date design that speaks to a savvy consumer. Lucas and his team hooked up the 2010 with nifty features like keyless Intelligent Access with push-button start, voice-activated communication and entertainment systems, as well as a Capless Fuel Filler System. Other than the name, the only thing that stays the same is the price tag.

"This new model comes in at the same price as the outgoing model at around \$37,995," says Lucas. "We're providing something that has greater value but being sensible in terms of the [financial] issues customers are going through. It's just smart business."

Another clever move was using current music as inspiration for the Taurus SHO redesign. According to Lucas, listening to albums like Alicia Keys' *As I Am* and Anthony Hamilton's single "Ball and Chain" was instrumental (no pun intended) to the creative process. "Music gets creative people in a mindset where they can create new shapes and products without any pressure," he explains. "The tracks we used [were] melodic tunes that transition into something that is much more contemporary and modern. That's exactly what we're trying to do [with the Taurus]. We're taking a classic, iconic car that has history, but we're transitioning it and making it into something more modern, now and today." **ANSLEM SAMUEL**