

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 3
MAY-JUNE 2014

VEHICLE EVENTS

FORD MUSTANG 50TH ANNIVERSARY

VEHICLE DRIVES

NEW 2015 AUDI A3 | AUDI A8 L 4.0T

NEW 2015 CHRYSLER 200 | DODGE DART GT

NEW 2015 HYUNDAI GENESIS SEDAN

INFINITI Q50 S | HONDA ACCORD HYBRID

MOTORSPORTS

DRAG RACING WITH NICK CALDERONE

NASCAR MEXICO AT PIR

TECHNOLOGY

FORD F-150 AND ARIZONA DUST

SPECIAL EVENTS

COPPERSTATE 1000 ROAD RALLY

GOODGUYS SPRING NATIONALS

FORD ECOBOOST CHALLENGE

BRIDGESTONE TEENS

2015 Ford Mustang
50 Year Limited Edition

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Pomona Raceway
1963 Corvette Stingray

sting-ray [sting-rey]
noun

having a whiplike tail bearing a serrated venomous spine capable of inflicting painful weals on man



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THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

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COVER: 2015 Ford Mustang 50 Year Limited Edition in Wimbledon White, showing unique chrome accents on tri-bar taillamps.



Joe Sage

Steven Fabian

Joe Sage

Randall Bohl

Joe Sage

While we enjoyed a beautiful protracted spring in Arizona, New York City experienced a few beautiful spring days followed by a descent back into bitter winter. It was in those days that the New York International Auto Show's media sessions were held, and it was during the same stretch that Ford concentrated its 50th birthday celebration for the Mustang. Other Mustang events have continued for weeks, including cross-country caravans, one of which passed through Phoenix en route from Los Angeles to Charlotte, North Carolina, while another started in Norman, Oklahoma and ran to Las Vegas Motor Speedway. We bring you details of how Ford managed to plant a brand new 2015 Mustang convertible on the 86th floor of the Empire State Building as part of it all.

Closer to home, correspondent **Nick Calderone** took a turn behind the wheel—or next to the guy behind the wheel—in a drag racer at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park. Spy photographer **Brenda Priddy** caught the flavor of this year's Copperstate 1000 road rally. **Randall Bohl** picked out three particular treasures at the Goodguys Spring Nationals. And **Jennifer Johnson** covered a Ford EcoBoost Challenge at University of Phoenix Stadium.

We flew to Northern California to drive the all-new Audi A3 sedan and to Kentucky for the launch of the all-new Chrysler 200—both significantly different from their predecessors of the same name. And Hyundai launched an all-new Genesis sedan, at an event held on our home turf here in Arizona. Locally, we drove a number of other new cars.

Also on the local calendar was one of the semi-annual NASCAR races at Phoenix International Raceway, featuring a separate NASCAR Mexico race, following up on last year's highly successful inaugural event here—the first to be held in the US.

Enjoy the ride.

Joe Sage
Publisher/ Executive Editor

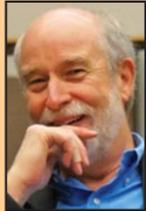


Photo: Brenda Priddy

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SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

If you're going to celebrate a 50th birthday, you have to do it right. For the Ford Mustang's anniversary, that meant a trip to New York City. The original 1964-1/2 Mustang was revealed in April 1964, at the 1964/65 New York World's Fair in Flushing Meadows, during the New York International Auto Show. Then in 1965, they planted a brand new Mustang high atop the Empire State Building—then still the world's tallest—on its 86th floor observation deck.

The stars aligned this year for a repeat performance. It was New York show time, a celebratory event was held next to the Unisphere at the old World's Fair grounds, and the new 2015 Mustang—one of the most highly anticipated launches in recent years—was again brought to the 86th floor of the Empire State Building, where dignitaries

and media braved a polar vortex to be among the very few to see the car in this lofty perch.

They did not chopper the car up there, swinging in the chilly breeze. (Nor did King Kong have any part in the operation.) "The deck is too high to reach with a portable crane from the street, and the spire that towers more than 400 feet above that narrow deck makes helicopter delivery impossible," said Ford design fabrication manager George Samulski. In fact, the car—a Mustang convertible in Triple Yellow—was built in place. Originally, it had been built the regular way, at a Ford assembly plant, but it was cut down into sections, each sized to fit in the Empire State Building's elevators—a freight elevator and two separate passenger elevators.

After carefully measuring the elevators and doors—the building is a historic landmark, with priceless art deco wood and brass trim in the elevators—a team in Dearborn took a scale model of the new Mustang and started drawing lines with a marker, figuring where it should be cut. DST

Maybe you've seen a car stripped in New York City, but you haven't seen one done this intentionally, nor put back together so carefully. The sliced and diced Mustang arrived from Ford in this big rig, then was staged for its bits and pieces ride to the top. Crews worked through the night. Lower left, Ford executive chairman Bill Ford and Anthony E. Malkin, Empire State Realty Trust chairman, president and CEO, admire the result.



Industries, of Romulus, Michigan—the same outfit who accomplished the sky-high 1965 event—did the work. "The band is getting back together," said Mustang chief engineer Dave Pericak.

The car that would make the trip to New York was completely stripped down and the surfaces cleaned, sectioned and perfectly painted. A second donor body was used to determine where to best make the cuts. Custom rolling carts and wooden crates were built for each section, and a custom-built tubular steel subframe would hold all the sections together.

A thousand feet above the street, a team of engineers worked feverishly—fingers freezing—to put it all back together in time for the event.

"The observation deck is open to the public from 8am to 2am, leaving our crew of six with only a six-hour window to get everything out onto the deck and get the car assembled," said Pericak. "Before we shipped the crates to New York, the crew spent several days practicing the entire assembly process—timing everything down to the minute—much like a NASCAR or Formula One pit crew."

The Mustang was on display for observation deck visitors on April 16-17. When the deck closed to the public at 2am on April 18, the crew jumped right in to perform the entire process again, in reverse, and was out of there by 8am. ■



Where the roads are dry and the cars are slick.



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Ford Mustang 50 Year Limited Edition

The 2015 Mustang 50 Year Limited Edition is based on the Mustang GT fastback and available in either Wimbledon White (the same color as Mustang No. 0001, in 1964-1/2) or Kona Blue—both exclusive to this model. The list of included features is extensive; the only decisions a buyer needs to make are between the two colors and whether to opt for a six-speed manual or automatic transmission. Only 1,964 examples will be built (that's right—no half example for 1964-1/2). "Chrome trim was much more prevalent on cars in the 1960s than it is today, so we added some discreet highlights for the grille, side glass and tri-bar taillamps," said Moray Callum, Ford vice president of design. Chrome bezels surrounding the taillamp blades (see cover) reflect an original 1962 design study that became the basis for the production car. The Limited Edition is the only 2015 model with the large faux gas cap badge on the rear fascia, with "50 Years" added to the GT designation. Louvered rear quarter-windows are another unique element—using layered sheets of glass developed for this car. Inside, aluminum trim with axel spin finish spans the double-brow instrument panel, with a serialized "50 Year Limited Edition" badge on the passenger side. A cashmere-stitched, leather-wrapped steering wheel reflects stitching also used on the instrument panel, shifter boot, center armrest, door inserts and two-tone cashmere and black leather seats with a "Mustang 50 Year" logo on the seat backs. The Mustang 50 Year Limited Edition will be available this fall. ▼



2015 Ford Mustang 50 Year Limited Edition



2015 Jeep® Renegade

NEW JEEP® RENEGADE

▲ The 2015 Jeep® Renegade is an all-new entry in the growing small SUV segment. Jeep promises the little Renegade will be true to the 4x4 capability Jeep is known for, with a combination of best-in-class off-road capability, open-air cruising, a segment-first nine-speed automatic transmission, outstanding on-road and off-road driving dynamics, two fuel-efficient engines and a full range of technology inclusions. Leveraging 4x4 technology from the new Cherokee, the Renegade will have two of the most advanced 4x4 systems in its class (one with a low range), each providing up to 1,475 lb-ft of available engine torque to the rear wheels for optimal grip. The Renegade features the segment's first disconnecting rear axle and PTO. Both 4x4 systems include the Jeep Selec-Terrain system, with five modes (Auto, Snow, Sand and Mud modes, plus Rock mode on the Trailhawk model). And yes, there is a Trailhawk.

DETROIT SHOW PROVES INFLUENCE

The North American International Auto Show in Detroit broke the 800,000 attendance barrier this winter for the first time since 2003. According to Foresight Research's attendance report, an even more impressive number is the show's ability to draw almost one in five of all Detroit

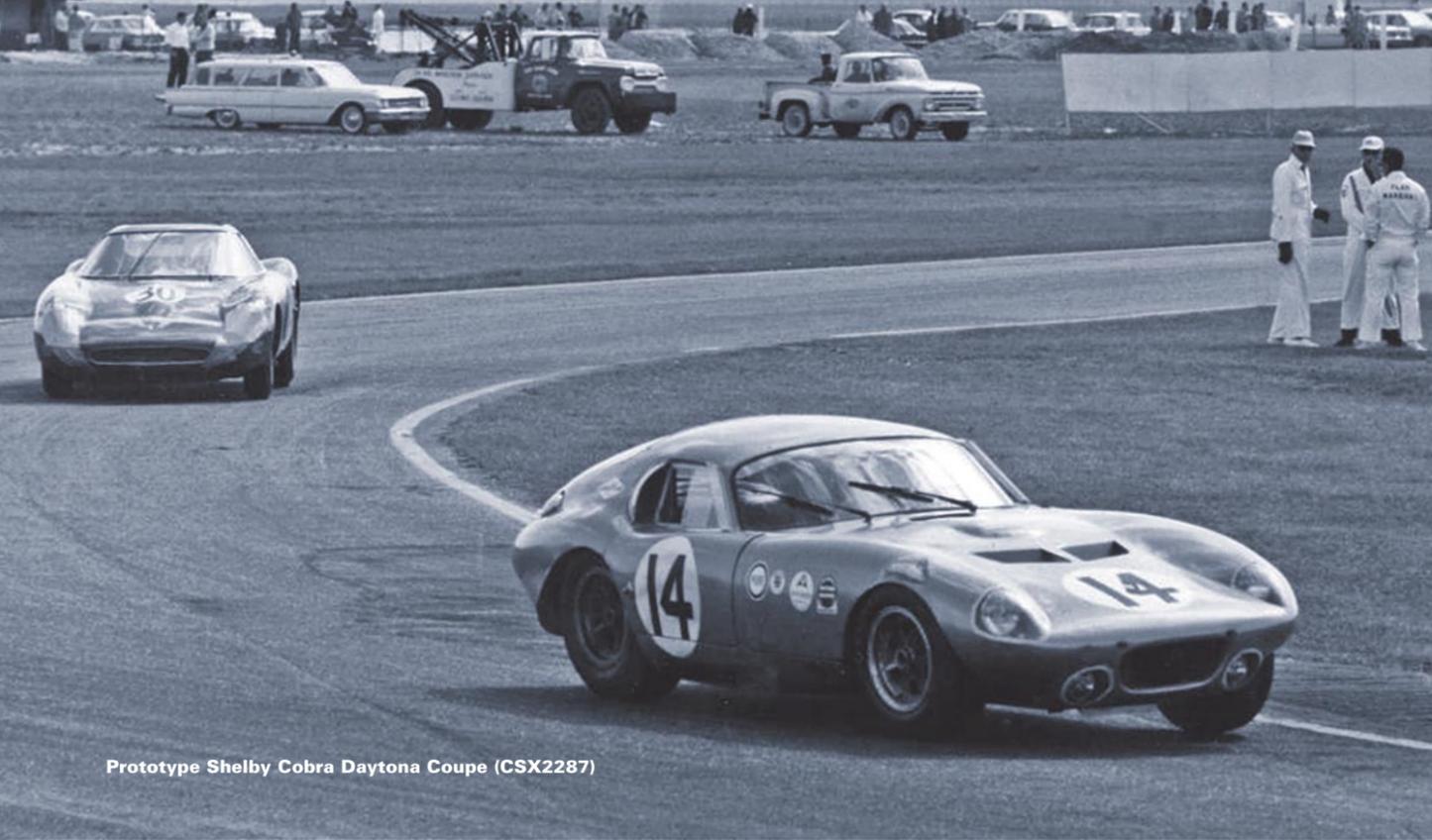
area households—even in record cold and snowy weather. "Foresight measures 45 auto shows each season," said Steve Bruyn, CEO of Foresight Research, "and the large incidence of metro area visitors to the Detroit show is the highest in the country." The Detroit show draws 38 percent of people in the market who intend to buy a car, which is in line with other markets. Over 500,000 households were represented at the show, including 58,000 auto employee households. Each household averaged about 1.6 people attending. Foresight also measures the incidence of influential people who give automotive recommendations, grouped by number of recommendations they make per year. The three top groups are Talkers (6-10 times a year), High Influentials (11-15 times per year) and Shouters (16 or more auto recommendations). The Detroit show attracts the highest incidence of these opinion leaders, who together represent a healthy 22 percent of show visitors.

HEAVY VEHICLE EFFICIENCY STANDARDS

The federal government has committed to reducing the nation's oil use with a new round of fuel efficiency and global warming pollution standards for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles by the end of 2016. Promising economic and environmental benefits, the new standards will

cover medium- and heavy-duty vehicles like school buses and long-haul tractor trailers. These vehicles collectively make up seven percent of traffic on US roads, but account for over 25 percent of the fuel used to travel them. The new round of standards are part of a suite of proposals included as part of a Climate Action Plan last year. The proposal for new standards is set for release in March 2015, coming just two years after the first-ever global warming pollution and fuel-efficiency standards for new medium- and heavy-duty trucks. When fully implemented, those standards—for trucks sold between 2014 and 2018—should reduce annual oil consumption by 390,000 barrels per day by 2030, roughly equivalent to the amount of oil we import each year from Iraq. CO2 emissions are forecast to drop by 270 million metric tons—equal to emissions from more than 4 million current cars and trucks over their lifetimes. An individual trucker should save \$73,000 in fuel cost over the life of a tractor, and the government forecasts a net increase of 40,000 jobs economy-wide in 2020 and nearly 80,000 jobs in 2030. Current standards have applied only to the tractor truck but not the trailer it is pulling. Trailer improvements may reduce fuel consump-

KEEP RIGHT >>



Prototype Shelby Cobra Daytona Coupe (CSX2287)

tion from tractor-trailers by as much as 35 percent with technologies available by 2017, compared with 23 percent required by the current standards. New trucks could nearly halve their fuel consumption compared to 2010 levels.

HISTORICAL STATUS FOR CSX2287

▲ The prototype Shelby Cobra Daytona Coupe (CSX2287) designed and developed in 1964 by Carroll Shelby's racing team, Shelby American, has become the first automobile recorded under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Heritage Documentation, as announced by the Historical Vehicle Association at a press conference in Washington DC. Carroll Shelby International has been cooperating with the HVA to help chronicle the car's story. Its Carroll Shelby Licensing division donated images and offered HVA access to materials. According to HVA, this documentation will be part of its National Historic Vehicle Register, permanently archived in the Library of Congress. HVA and US Department of the Interior collaborated on the effort and plan to document other historically significant automobiles.

RM AUCTIONS PARIS RESULTS

The first-ever Paris event by RM Auctions saw numerous million-dollar-plus results

and several new records. Cars from the Harburg Collection were a highlight, and a crowd favorite was an exceptional 1936 Delahaye 135 S, which sold for about \$1,383,200 (euro conversions rounded off a bit). The top 10 at RM Paris were:

- 1955 Jaguar D-Type\$5,071,629
- 1982 Porsche 956 Group C Sports-Prototype\$ 44,393,216
- 1955 Ferrari 750 Monza Spider...\$2,689,500
- 1964 Porsche 904 Carrera GTS....\$1,767,386
- 1936 Delahaye 135 S\$1,383,171
- 1957 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Roadster\$1,129,590
- 1971 Mercedes-Benz 600 'Six-Door Pullman Landaulet.....\$737,691
- 1971 Lamborghini Miura P400 S 'SV Specification'.....\$714,639
- 1990 Ferrari F40\$706,954
- 1953 Mercedes-Benz 300 S Roadster\$614,743

LEASE VEHICLES IN DEMAND OVERSEAS

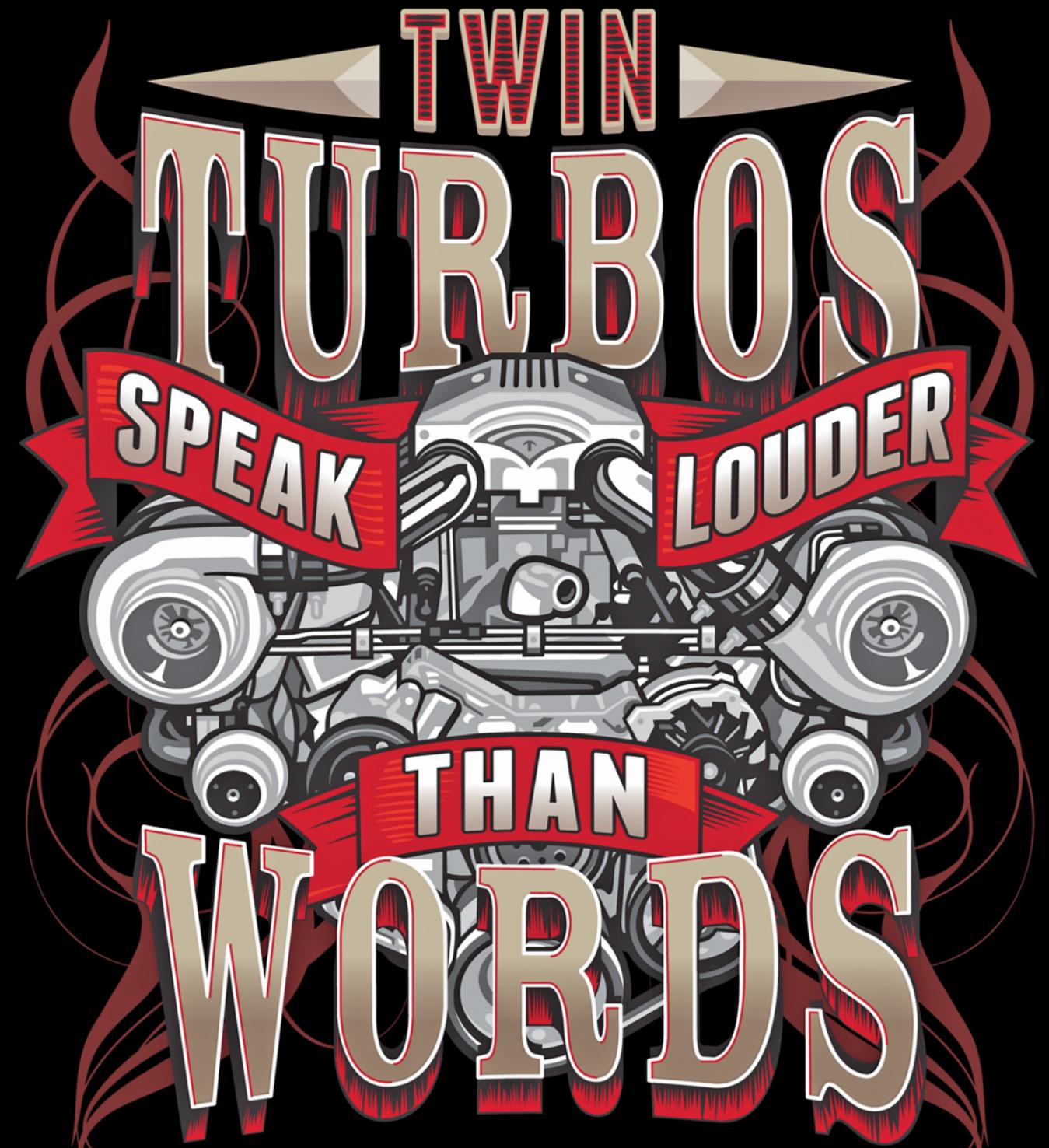
Swapalease.com, a car lease marketplace, believes a growing number of US leases are being taken over for the purpose of shipping vehicles overseas at the end of term, particularly as fewer lessees and dealers plan to keep the leases because of a changing equity position. In several European markets, pent-up demand is pushing up local car sales. Exports of cars from the US have been on the rise, with brands like Ford and Honda showing increasing exports recently. Ford's export

activity is up 50 percent since 2009, according to Bloomberg. Swapalease.com believes entry-level luxury car transfers are likely on the rise, with brands such as BMW, Land Rover, Lexus and Mercedes-Benz, and domestic brands such as Ford and Chevrolet, as popular vehicles in overseas markets. Fuel economy-friendly compact crossovers, such as Toyota's Rav4, are also in demand. The top five foreign markets where US lease transfers are being shipped, in order by volume, are Spain, France, Italy, Sweden and China.

MAZDA MOST AFFORDABLE TO OWN

Mazda has been recognized by Kelley Blue Book® (KBB) with their "2014 5-Year Cost to Own Award," as having the most affordable cost of ownership over five years among any other automotive manufacturer. The award honors vehicles and brands (luxury and non-luxury) that have the lowest projected ownership costs, based on KBB's data for new cars over their initial five-year ownership period. While depreciation (or loss of value) and fuel costs may be the greatest expense incurred in owning a vehicle, there are other factors that can have a significant impact. Information takes into consideration depreciation, expect-

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Lexus RC F GT3 Coupe concept



ed fuel costs, finance and insurance fees, maintenance and repair costs, and state fees for new models.

LEXUS RC COUPE REVEALED AT GENEVA

▲ Lexus revealed a 2015 RC 350 F SPORT coupe at the Geneva International Motor Show this spring. A sportier and more aggressive Lexus, the RC 350 F SPORT will feature enhanced driving dynamics and exclusive exterior and interior design features. This new model completes the RC model range, which includes the sporty RC 350 and the RC F performance coupe with over 450 horsepower. An RC F GT3 racing concept was also revealed, signaling the brand's intent to enter the GT3 racing series. The RC F GT3 concept, based on the stock RC F performance coupe, was developed to meet Group GT3 international racing standards. It weighs 2756 pounds and comes with a modified version of the base model's V8 engine, producing a maximum output exceeding 540 horsepower. Lexus will supply GT3-compliant 1 vehicles (certified by the FIA) to racing teams starting in 2015, with vehicle testing starting this year. GT3 cars can enter many races globally, such as the 24 Hours of Nürburgring endurance race in Germany and the Super Taikyu Endurance and Super GT series in Japan.

TECHNOLOGY AND PRIVACY CONCERNS

Many Americans have expressed concern about the potential for tracking devices in their cars. Stirring things up, Ford vice president Jim Farley was quoted saying, "We know everyone who breaks the law; we know when you're doing it. We have GPS in your car, so we know what you're doing." He did say, "We don't supply that data to anyone." He later retracted the statement, but by then it had caused some controversy. While many consumers are concerned about protecting their privacy, InsuranceQuotes.com senior analyst Laura Adams says in-car tracking devices can be a good thing, noting that millions of Americans have signed up for "pay-as-you-drive" car insurance policies that track your speed, your braking and more. About two-thirds of these policyholders are saving money, and no one is paying more. Nonetheless, the company also recently found that nearly four out of 10 drivers say they would never consider pay-as-you-drive insurance.

FEDERAL ACT ENDS ETHANOL SUBSIDY

The Agricultural Act of 2014, now signed into law, contains a provision that helps deter distribution of E15 fuels into the US marketplace. In addition to car and truck owners who have had any questions or concerns about E15 blends, this decision

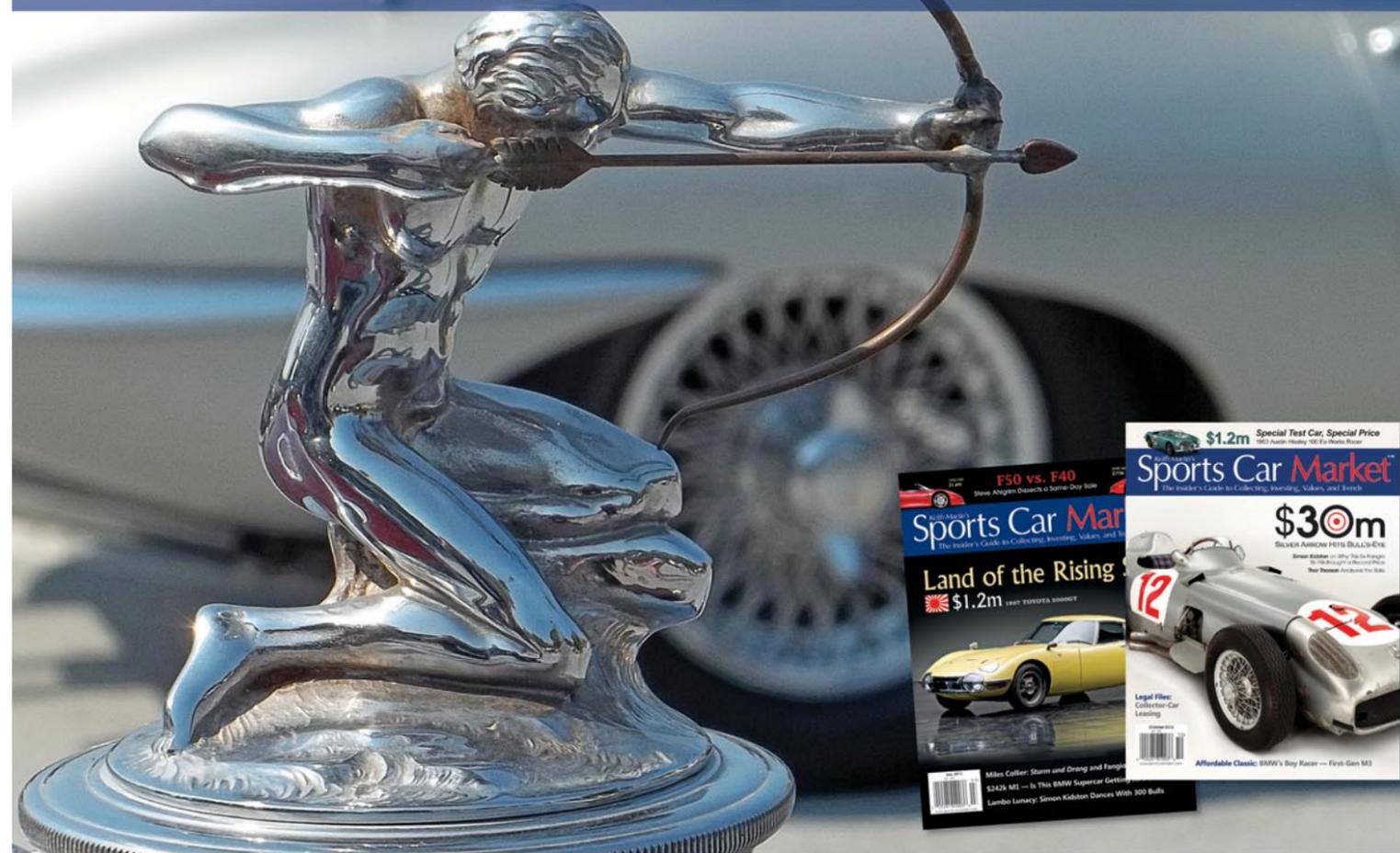
process has been closely followed by the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), which considers this farm-bill provision a major victory for the owners and riders of the estimated 22 million motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles currently in operation. The AMA says those vehicles could be damaged by the use of E15 fuel, a gasoline formulation that contains up to 15 percent ethanol by volume. The AMA also says that use of E15 can void owners' vehicle warranties. The Act, which extends through 2018, prohibits the use of Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grant money to purchase and install ethanol blender pumps to dispense E15 at the retail level. The Department of Agriculture had intended to use REAP funding to install 10,000 blender pumps by 2016. The AMA has worked since 2011 to prevent the distribution of E15 fuels, seeking independent scientific tests on their effect on motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle engines and fuel systems. After the introduction of E15 into the marketplace, the AMA fought its spread, because of concerns about inadvertent misfueling at blender pumps. Although the EPA has approved E15 for use in 2001-and-newer light-duty vehicles (cars, light-duty trucks and medium-duty passenger vehicles), the EPA has not approved its use in any motorcycles or ATVs. ■

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Audi A3: resized, reshaped and redefined

By Joe Sage

In the 1980s, when Audi barely had a toe hold in the United States, there were two front-wheel-drive models: the small 4000 and the big 5000. Much more interest in the brand was sparked by the introduction of the Audi quattro coupe, a high-performance, high-dollar rally winner, usually in bright red-orange, appearing in very limited numbers. Audi made a very wise chance next, applying its quattro AWD to the regular lineup (while still also offering FWD versions), with the first new 4000 quattro available at a very reasonable price. The 4000s used Audi's great five-cylinder engine, and two 5000 quattro models followed, both fives with one a turbo.

In the 1990s, the US lineup adopted European naming conventions, with the smaller car becoming the 80 or 90, depending upon trim level, and the large car the 100 or 200.

By the mid-early '90s, the Audi 200 quattro was supplanted by an S4, which was still the larger car, with its name simply implying that it was sporty and 4-wheel, or quattro, driven.

An even larger quattro sedan appeared about then, too, known simply as the Audi V8.

Within just a couple of years of all that, though, a new European naming convention reached our shores, which continues to this day. The smaller car became the A4, the larger one the A6 and the big V8 ultimately the A8.

That left the "S4"—today known to enthusiasts as the URS4—in an awkward spot for a year or two, since it was really the performance version of an A6, until it became the S6.

The little Audi A3 entered the European market in the late 1990s and came to the US during the following decade, as a hatchback only (or what Audi calls a Sportback).



WE REVISIT all that today because the lineup has done something else common to many brands and lineups—its individual models have grown in size over the years.

Two and a half years ago, when we wrote about the 2012 Audi A6 3.0T, we charted the changes in its size and weight, along with the A3, A4 and A8. This was noteworthy in the context of a push to more power out of smaller engines, with the use of lightweight materials throughout. But it revealed quite a bit.

The A6 had outstripped the weight of an A8 from 15 years prior, with its lightweight parts offset by the increasing weight of safety systems, and it had matched the A8's combined dimensions (length plus width plus height) in 2008, although it then backed off.

The A3 by this point had exceeded the earlier A4 in its combined dimensions and its

EVOLUTIONARY COMPARISON	2015 A3 sedan		2012 A3 hatch		1999 A4 sedan	
	1.8T	2.0T	2.0T	2.0 TDI	1.8T	2.8
ENGINE CONFIGURATION	I-4		I-4		I-4	
POWER/TORQUE (HP/LB.FT.)	170/200	220/258	200/207	140/236	150/155	190/207
TRANSMISSION	6-spd S tronic auto		*6-spd au/m		*6-spd auto, 5-spd man	
DRIVETRAIN	FWD		*FWD,quattro		*FWD,quattro	
FUEL MPG (CITY/HWY)	23/33	24/33	21/28-21/30	30/42	20/29	17/25
LENGTH (IN.)	175.4		169.0		178.0	
WHEELBASE (IN.)	103.8		101.5		102.6	
WIDTH (IN.)	77.2		78.5		68.2	
HEIGHT (IN.)	55.7		56.0		55.8	
SEATING CAPACITY	five		five		five	
CARGO CAPACITY (CU.FT.)	12.3	10.0	19.5	(39.0 rear seats folded)	13.7	
TURNING CIRCLE (FT.)	36.1		35.1		36.4	
WEIGHT RANGE (LB.)	3175-3362		3219-3461		2998-3384	

* The prior A3 Sportback had frustratingly complex variables. To expand upon the simplified chart above, in 2012, the year shown for the A3 Sportback, an S tronic dual-clutch automatic transmission was available with quattro or FWD, while the 6-speed manual was only available on the FWD model. Too bad, manual quattro fans. TDI diesels were all S tronic dual-clutch automatics—and only FWD. Too bad, manual quattro TDI fans, or any quattro TDI fans. Other years varied, but it seemed to always be impossible to get certain combinations of engine, transmission and FWD-vs-quattro drivetrains.

weight, both, though not in length, largely due to the A3's distinctive Sportback format.

We've always liked the A3 Sportback—a distinctive little package like a 7/8 scale A4 Avant wagon—but had two issues with it. The interior was tight for anyone tall, with a brace on the center console that could interfere with the driver's knee. And the lineup never delivered the perfect combo of quattro drive, manual transmission and the preferred engine for power, fuel type and fuel economy

(our chart above gives a taste of that).

Meanwhile, the A4 had been growing larger, making it less of an obvious next choice.

WELL, problem solved. Meet the all new 2015 Audi A3, now a sedan, at least in the US. (In Europe, there is still also a Sportback.)

As you can also see on the comparative chart, the new A3 sedan is a very close match to the trim little A4 of some 15 years ago,



The chart above shows that while the new 2015 Audi A3 (lefthand page and lower right) of course replaces the prior A3 Sportback (below, red), with a sedan bearing significantly evolved specifications, it also could be seen as replacing the A4 of a decade or more back (below, silver), as the current A4 has grown.



SPECIFICATIONS: OUR DRIVES

2015 AUDI A3 SEDAN 1.8T FWD

ENGINE1.8T TFSI 4-cylinder
TRANSMISSIONS tronic®
DRIVETRAINfront-wheel drive
POWER/TORQUE170 hp / 200 lb-ft
ZERO-TO-60 MPH7.2 seconds
WEIGHT3175 lb
MPG23/33/27 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE\$29,900

PREMIUM EDITION: 180-watt 10-speaker/subwoofer AM-FM-satellite-CD audio, Pre-Sense basic, leather seats w 12-way power driver's, speed-sensitive electro-mechanical steering, 3-spoke multi-function wheel, alarm/immobilizer, xenon front lights, LED DRLs/taillights, manual-fold power mirrors, tilt/open panoramic sunroof, manual sunshade, rain/light sensor.

AUDI MMI NAVIGATION PLUS: incl driver info system w trip computer.....1900

COLD WEATHER PACKAGE: heated front seats, heated nozzles/mirrors500

ALUMINUM STYLE PACKAGE: interior package, inlays, window surrounds450

MUSIC INTERFACE / IPOD CABLE350

EXHAUST TIPS150

GLACIER WHITE / BLACK.....550

SINGLE ZONE CLIMATE CREDIT.....(350)

DESTINATION895

AS TESTED.....\$34,345

2015 AUDI A3 SEDAN 2.0T QUATTRO

ENGINE2.0T TFSI 4-cylinder
TRANSMISSIONS tronic®
DRIVETRAINquattro all-wheel drive
POWER/TORQUE220 hp / 258 lb-ft
ZERO-TO-60 MPH5.8 seconds
WEIGHT3362 lb
MPG24/33/27 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE\$32,900

PREMIUM EDITION INCLUDES: (as above).

AUDI MMI NAV PLUS: (as above)1900

COLD WEATHER PACKAGE: (as above) ..500

ALUMINUM STYLE PKG: (as above).....450

MUSIC INTERFACE / IPOD CABLE350

GLACIER WHITE / BLACK.....550

SINGLE ZONE CLIMATE CREDIT.....(350)

DESTINATION895

AS TESTED.....\$37,195



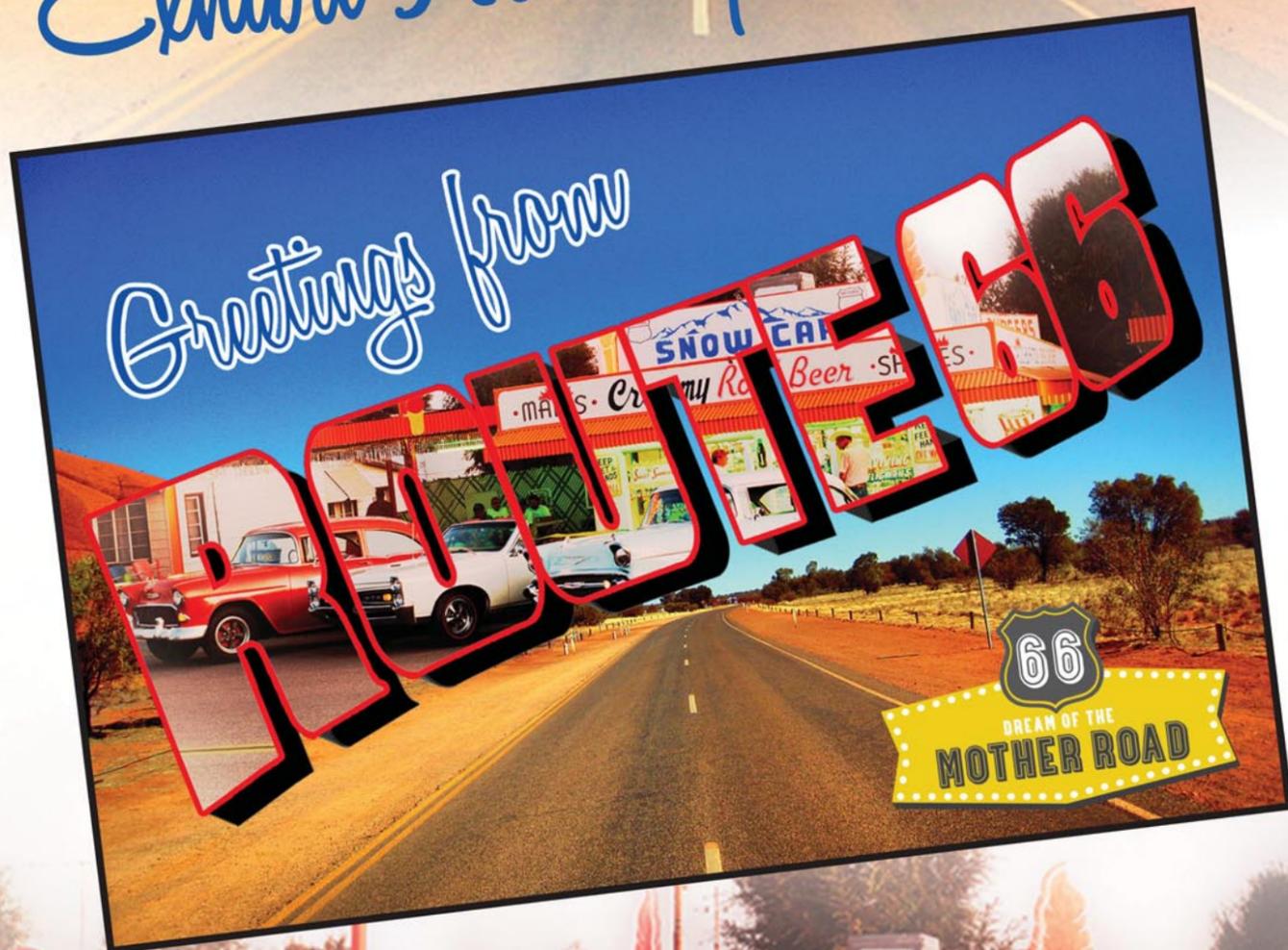
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while even shaving some height, width and weight from the recent A3 Sportback. It's longer and has a larger turning circle, though, while its trunk falls short of hatchback cargo capacity. But it's a beautiful entry in the compact sedan niche.

This may not be the best news for hatch lovers, but for sedan buyers—a huge market by comparison—it delivers a very compelling option in the premium compact segment.

We flew to Silicon Valley to meet the new A3. Our drive comprised a challenging pretzel-shaped route through the hills between Menlo Park and the Pacific Coast, through redwood forests on tight and steep highway-speed two-lanes, with a stop in Santa Cruz for lunch. We also of course had a little bit of freeway time near base camp.

There is a 1.8T model with front-wheel drive, and there is a 2.0T quattro. The 2-liter has 30 percent more power and torque, for 10 percent more cost, and it actually ekes out a hair better fuel mileage than the front-drive 1.8T. Both are PZEV emissions certified; both have a dual-clutch S tronic automatic. No manual is offered at this time.

We drove the 1.8T FWD first. It handled well, as usual exhibiting no front-drive torque (Audi has long since mastered that). The little premium sedan swept up the esses very nicely in demanding terrain and cruised strongly in the Valley.

The 1.8T FWD version lets Audi enter the mar-

ket under \$30k, but unless you just don't have, or can't finance, another three grand, we'd go with the 2.0T quattro every time.

SOME people have wrung their hands about whether Mercedes-Benz would dilute its luxury image with the introduction of its under-\$30k CLA (we think they will do just fine, as they have with the C-Class for a long time). Audi has been there for years already, with the A3. And it has been distinctive in its size and price group, with a simpler instrument panel that's less like a downscaled A8 and more like BMW's lively MINI. That approach gives the A3 personality, while overall it delivers every bit of Audi's prestige and panache.

One special piece of tech worthy of note in that interior: an all-new MMI system includes navigation with an amazing new trick—picture navigation. Load in a photo of where you were or where you want to go, and the system navigates to it.

As for those longing for an A3 Sportback, all is not lost. There will be one arriving this fall, though as a TDI only. The diesel is a wonderful option, of course, delivering huge torque and high fuel mileage, but if you prefer a gasoline engine, that is not in the cards for now.

Also arriving this fall will be an A3 Cabriolet and an S3 performance sedan. In 2015, there will be an e-tron® A3 Sportback PHEV plug-in hybrid. Now if only there were an S3 Sportback with 2.0T and manual transmission. Overall, the new A3 has in every way expanded—and in some ways you could say restored—the entire Audi lineup. ■



Phantom black powerhouse

We've met Audi's new smallest four-door on the previous pages. Now let's take a look at their flagship sedan, at four times the price of the A3. With the A8 L 4.0T, Audi continues its successful trend of ever more power and performance from ever smaller engines with ever better fuel economy—although this 4-liter takes a step back toward a larger engine and more power, yet still pretty well maintaining its MPG.

A year ago, we reported on the A8 L 3.0T, with a 3-liter V6 producing 333 hp (and 325 lb-ft of torque), rated at 18/28/21 MPG (city/hwy/comb). This year's test car, with its 26 percent advantage in horsepower (and 37 percent in torque) still rates about 90 percent the fuel mileage of that 3.0T (also still available). The 4.0T costs 40 percent more, as outfitted (though only eleven percent more, base).

And yes, this one is outfitted to beat the band. Despite its lofty aura in base trim, our tester required quite a list of add-ons to deliver its full dose of magic (see sidebar).

The car is a beauty—a pleasure to inhabit and potent on the road, especially once you shift its 8-speed Tiptronic from D to S.

The interior is very rich, very distinctive and very well-matched, with leather atop the dash, soft-touch materials on the lower face, dark wood across the center stretch, alcantara door inserts, more leather, more wood and gloss brown in the center console.

There are still S8 and W12 models above this one. Depending what kind of budget you're on and what kind of mood you're in, it's worth noting that the options at right total some \$32,350—more than the A3's base price. If cost is no object—or indeed the whole point—you will have a ball outfitting and taking delivery of your new A8 L. Or you could take another good look at the base A8 and grab a new A3 for the kids (or grab a world cruise).

Nonetheless, the A8 L is a car you'd rather be driving than sitting at home, with or without any real purpose, and within a block you know you could happily drive it forever. ■

By Joe Sage



A8: built to dominate.

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE ...4.0L TFSI V8 w cylinder on demand	
POWER	420 hp / 444 lb-ft torque
TRANSMISSION	8-spd Tiptronic
DRIVETRAIN	quattro all-wheel drive
WHEELS/TIRES	15-spoke 19", 255/45
MPG	16/26/19 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$87,600
PHANTOM BLACK PEARL EFFECT:.....incl	
BALAO BROWN INTERIOR:	incl
DESIGN SELECTION PACKAGE: Full leather, brushed aluminum inlays, white alcantara leather, fine grain ash inlays, white stitching and piping, dual pane glass	8500
BANG & OLUFSEN SOUND SYSTEM:	6300
PREMIUM PACKAGE: Side assist, 22-way climate/massage seats, LED headlights	4000
REAR SEAT COMFORT PACKAGE: Power/massage outboard seats, front passenger seat adjustment from back	3500
SPORT PLUS PACKAGE: Adaptive air suspension, quattro with sports differential, dynamic steering	3500
DRIVER ASSISTANCE PACKAGE: Adaptive cruise with stop/go, pre sense, lane assist, top view cameras, high-beam assistant	3250
PANORAMIC SUNROOF:	1300
WHEEL UPGRADE: 20" 10-double-spoke	1200
COLD WEATHER PACKAGE: Heated steering wheel w shift paddles, heated rear seats, rear seat pass-through w ski bag	800
DESTINATION CHARGE:.....	895
TOTAL	\$120,845

LOGBOOK NOTES

The auto start-stop feature (generally not one of our favorite things) is one of the smoothest we've encountered, all the more remarkable with a longitudinal engine.

The inside rearview mirror is just a little too small. We keep moving our head around, wishing it were about an inch bigger.

The long-wheelbase A8 performed a boulevard U-turn with room to spare, though it felt as though it was at its limits. Surprisingly, its actual turning circle turns out to be 41.7 feet, one of the bigger we've driven.

Capable of shaking anything. Not that you'll ever need to.

Named World's Best Sedan by *Car and Driver*, the new Audi S6 is everything its aggressive looks suggest.* With a powerful 420hp twin-turbo V8, lightning-fast 7-speed S tronic® transmission and quattro® all-wheel drive, this race-caliber machine will add suspense to your every driving moment. Within the law, of course. Get the S Model story at audiusa.com/performance. The race-engineered S Models from Audi.

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FIRST TIME ON THE DRAG STRIP

By Nick Calderone
Photos by Steven Fabian

Even if you don't follow the sport of drag racing, there's a good chance you saw video of Ron Capps' NAPA-sponsored funny car erupt like a volcano. The 2014 NHRA drag racing season opened with a boom when Capps experienced a catastrophic engine failure at Pomona Raceway back in February. The incident was so violent and stunning to watch that the video exploded in the media and online, garnering hundreds of thousands of views. What was even more spectacular was that Capps walked away, shaken but uninjured, after his 5000-horsepower bomb blew up in his face. The event was an astounding testament to modern race car safety and a reminder of how heroic these guys are to me.

When I was about eight years old, I remember going to the school book fair and getting a softcover picture book called *Burnout*. It was packed with tire-shredding, flame-spitting, earthshaking images of funny cars and dragsters. I was fascinated. While other kids worshipped Batman and Spider-Man, the drivers in this book became my superheroes. They wore colorful fire suits and menacing helmets, and drove cars with names like The Avenger, Red Bandit, Banshee, and Challenger. They climbed under fiberglass bodies and slipped into narrow roll cages next to hulking engines that occasionally blew to bits in spectacular fashion. The book was

KEEP RIGHT >>



mostly pictures, but the few paragraphs inside taught me about the Christmas tree, burnouts, and most importantly, how much I loved motorsports.

The NHRA does a great job of reaching out and promoting their sport, and as a member of the media, I occasionally get to benefit from their public relations. I was giddy when their press release popped into my email offering rides in the Frank Hawley Drag Racing School two-person dragster.

I rewatched the Capps video multiple times—left me slack-jawed every time. I watched it about an hour before I drove down to Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park (formerly Firebird Raceway) to strap myself into the high-powered Hawley dragster. My excitement overwhelmed any fears.

Frank Hawley, a legendary drag racing champ, was in the pits himself and helped get me into my fire suit and hel-

met. Hawley's racing school is regarded around the world as the best of its kind.

The whole process of getting suited up, from pulling the balaclava over my head, to zipping up the fire-resistant jacket, to listening to the rundown of instructions, was exciting and made me feel a little like a superhero. The anticipation of knowing that I was about to go as fast as I'd ever gone on land was making my heart pound.

Protected and briefed, I climbed into the passenger seat of the narrow racer. Step on the seat, squat, reach up, grab hold of the roll bar, and slide down into the metal pan (DO NOT hold on to the three-inch plastic windshield!). Hawley helped cinch the multipoint harness tight and slipped my hands through a pair of loose retention loops. If we were to roll over, the loops would keep my arms from flying out and getting smeared on the tacky surface of the drag strip.

To my left, in the driver's seat, was the second closest man to Ron Capps' explosion. Jack Beckman, pilot of the Valvoline-backed top fuel funny car, had slowed down just before Capps' ride burst into a bunch of fiberglass and metal bits. Some of the larger pieces had landed in Beckman's lane, causing damage to his front end.

Beckman is simply a cool dude and a plain old nice guy. He's known as "Fast Jack" around the racing circuit and has trained thousands of drivers as an instructor at Frank Hawley's racing school. It's why he's so kind behind the wheel and understands that even though it may be his millionth time down the quarter mile, it's my first.

The 800-horsepower of the twin seater may be a fraction of the 5000 of a typical funny car, but it feels thunderous behind my back when Beckman flicks the starter. The pop of each cylinder rattles down my

spine. This truly is a childhood dream come true. Memories of that old book have just become reality as I stare at the Christmas tree. Jack stages the car, and I hold my right foot over an imaginary pedal to test my reaction time against his. I was slow, to say the least.

Blink, blink, blink, BOOM! I'm pressed into the cockpit and accelerated to 100 mph in less than 5 seconds. It's exhilarating and despite the speed, the blast down the quarter mile seems to take longer than expected. I belt out a primal roar the length of the track. Not from fear, but from pure joy of finally experiencing what gobs of horsepower really feels like. We flash across the line in less than 9 seconds at 154 mph. Beckman lifts off the throttle and I immediately let go of the dummy steering wheel in front of me and clap and giggle and yell. I wanted to do it again and again.

It was impossible for my brain to wrap around the fact that my 154 mph,

scenery-smearing run was approximately half as fast as a true top fuel car runs. How do these guys do it? How do they do it knowing the engine bolted inches from their ass is tuned to ride the line between explosive power and actual explosion?

I don't think I'll ever forget the heroic feeling of staring down that empty track and blasting off, much as I never forgot the book that introduced me to this sport so many years ago.

Want to catapult your own rear end into your lifelong racing dreams? Frank Hawley's Drag Racing School has courses starting at \$399, and you can take the wheel yourself. ■

NICK CALDERONE is a host of the nationally syndicated news and entertainment show *RightThisMinute*. A lifelong car and motorcycle fan, Nick may not be an expert, but he is certainly an enthusiast. The coolest car he's ever owned was a 1986 Nissan 300ZX, and he currently rides a 1984 Honda Goldwing. Nick can be reached at facebook.com/nscaldereone or on Twitter @nscaldereone.



FRANK HAWLEY DRAG RACING SCHOOL

Based in Gainesville, Florida, the Frank Hawley Drag Racing School offers Dragster Adventures (no previous experience required), drag racing competition licensing programs and group events (corporate, media, ride and drive, team building, bachelor parties and more).

The Dragster Adventure course is specifically designed for those drivers who want to drive a dragster and compete in side-by-side racing, without committing the time and resources required to become a licensed race car driver in one of Hawley's licensing programs. The Dragster Adventure provides drivers with full-size competition-styled cars that can travel 0-60 mph in just 3 seconds and reach 130 mph in the quarter-mile—and offers side-by-side racing!

You can purchase a Dragster Adventure gift certificate for your favorite adrenaline junkie for the surprise of their lifetime.

Dragster Adventure will be headed west again this year, with sessions scheduled in California during June and October.

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- www.racewildhorse.com



“We need your dirt.”

Arizona Dust is an SAE-spec material that puts Ford F-Series leather interiors to the test

By Joe Sage



Quite a few manufacturers cue into Arizona themes to name their paint colors (such as the recent Volkswagen Beetle Dune concept in a yellow-orange metallic paint simply called “Arizona”) or their interior themes (the Jeep Cherokee and Grand Cherokee’s “Grand Canyon”). It turns out Ford has been literally digging right in and carrying the real thing back to Michigan.

Ford engineer Tim Dunn and spokesman Scott Fosgard joined us by phone recently to describe how “Arizona Dust”—a type of dirt so unique and so useful, it carries a specification from the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE)—has become key to development and durability testing of leather seats for the new F-150, that can be “Ford tough” while still delivering that luxury leather look and feel.

Leather seats are now huge sellers, especially in the Platinum and King Ranch trims. While customers expect the trucks to be as tough as ever, withstanding anything a rancher or contractor can throw at them, perforated leather is actually needed for heated and cooled seats, which can’t be done with fabric. Tough conditions in the field include extreme cold and heat, so this is one reason even the top tier King Ranch model will be found on a work site as well as at a country club.

King Ranch leather used to be more like saddle leather, but tastes have evolved to expect more like what has been familiar from the automotive side.

Either way, as Fosgard points out, “if you had a saddle, you wouldn’t expect to just use it and have it look like the day you bought it. If you look after it, it will look after you. People use conditioning creams and so on.”

However, he’s the first to admit that “you can stick as many labels as you like on the seat, and educate the customer, but you can’t make them do it.” Fair enough. Most people just want to sit down and go. Year after year.



The robot above was always on time and never complained, but was not quite getting the job done. The lab produces more typical real world field abuse now, with truck seats used all day every day by volunteers in tough dungarees, getting in and out, in and out, on top of a coarse and abrasive paste of Arizona Dust—an SAE-spec dirt found only in the Salt River Valley and perfect for the job.

FIRST INDICATIONS OF A NEED

Ford had been receiving data from customers experiencing premature leather wear. Analysis showed that damage was in the top coat. “All automotive leathers are basically ‘painted on,’” says Ford seats engineering supervisor Dave Webb, loosely describing a high-tech chemical layer of color and grain that’s all rolled into the final materials process.

That kind of wear is the nature of the beast over time, but warranty work at low mileage is not. They needed to find the cause and come up with a fix. Robotized testing was done in a Michigan lab, but Dunn wanted to address the toughest customers where they lived and worked, and where the brand’s fierce loyalty and unmatched credibility are born. He would have to head out into the field.

THE MISSING LINK: THE REAL WORLD

Webb set out to devise a better test. They had the fabric, they had the motion and they had the seats. They needed tougher fabric and realistic motion. And they needed dirt.

Not just any dirt would do. It turns out the perfect stuff comes from Arizona’s Salt River Valley, outside metro Phoenix. Powder Technology Inc. of Burnsville, Minnesota prepares the dirt to a uniform SAE certification, as ISO 12103-1 Arizona Test Dust Contaminants. It is categorized from fine to coarse, by size in micrometers, by particle size distribution by volume, and so on. This is some dead serious dust and dirt. Ford calls it simply Arizona Dust.

WE NEED SOME VOLUNTEERS...

Now they needed a process.

That robotized test would slide a fabric-covered equivalent of a driver’s torso and



thighs in and out and across the seats (see above) for the equivalent of all those miles. The robot wore a standard cloth most car and truck manufacturers use to represent pants.

For the new testing, Ford lined up some big guys to get the job done—each over 250 pounds—“basically the offensive line from the Detroit Lions,” jokes Webb. These tough testers wear real world work jeans—the same pair every day. Arizona Dust is smeared on the seats, almost like a paste, and it’s smeared on those jeans.

The testers literally climb into the truck, squirm around on the seat, climb back out... and then do it again. And again and again. The process goes on and on, until the engineering team can deduce what’s going on.

Once Arizona Dust testing started, Ford was able to revisit its leather supplier. They were able to “dial up” the top coat—the amount, the type, the thickness, the amount of paint needed. “The test allows us to know that point,” concludes Dunn. The result: new materials that are much more truck-specific.

The team of testers varies from program to program. There are three different leather seats used on the F-150, and they typically have three testers rotate for each seat (thus adding up to enough offensive linemen to consider forming their own baseball team).

Ford spokesman Scott Fosgard challenges anyone to get in and out of their truck 10,000 times and see how things hold up. Then try it while wearing the same pair of jeans each and every time.

“When your last name is ‘tough,’” says Fosgard, “you have to do these things. We owe a debt of gratitude to Arizona,” he continues, “because without your dust, we wouldn’t have learned so much so fast.” ■



Big news in the biggest segment

BY JOE SAGE

The 2015 Chrysler 200 is an entirely new vehicle, delivering a significant offering in the midsize sedan segment as well as some adjustments to the overall Chrysler lineup and some fine tuning of its target markets.

Chrysler is the first to admit that their prior 200, derived from the venerable Sebring, was not their finest achievement. They have now set that straight, delivering a contender where an also-ran used to live. "We poured everything into this," said Chrysler's Andy Love. "Engine, technology, powertrain"—on a solid Alfa Romeo-based chassis, along with all new sheetmetal and a compelling interior.

Chrysler Group is on a roll, with huge successes in the Jeep®, Dodge and Ram brands, as well as Chrysler's long-popular 300 and minivan lineups. It was time to transform the midsize segment for the Chrysler nameplate.

It's not hard to see some family ties with the new-in-2013 Dodge Dart. The Dart is a compact, based heavily on Europe's highly successful Alfa Romeo Giulietta—courtesy of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles' parent brand. The Chrysler 200 is based on the same "compact wide" platform, also used in the 2014 Jeep Cherokee, but the 200 is adapted to fit into the midsize Dodge Avenger category.

The 200 will never be mistaken for a Jeep, though immediately recognizable from the new Cherokee are its 9-speed automatic—a smooth and efficient unit that impressed us in the Cherokee, as it does again in the Chrysler 200—and its fully disconnecting rear axle (on all-wheel-drive models), increasing fuel efficiency when cruising on front wheel power.

That's about all you will find in common with the Dart, Cherokee, Avenger or prior



Chrysler 200. The new car is truly all new, and it receives a premium treatment inside and out. (And in its least premium form, it starts in the low \$20s—and gets up to 36 MPG.)

THE WHEELBASE of the Chrysler 200 is about an inch and a half longer than the Dart, while overall the 200 is about 8.5 inches longer. The 200 is about an inch and a half wider and an inch taller. The Chrysler's coefficient of drag is a hair more slippery than the Dart—well done for the bigger of the two.

Inside, the Chrysler 200 is over three cubic feet larger than the Dart. Interior measurements are very similar in the front, but in the rear, the 200 has some 2.5 inches more leg and shoulder room. We spend our time in the

The 2015 Chrysler 200 comes in LX, Limited, 200S and 200C trim levels. Each is available with the 184-hp four-cylinder Tigershark MultiAir engine shown at upper right, while the 200S and 200C are optionally available with the 295-hp Pentastar V6 (second photo). Both the 200S or 200C have AWD available, with the V6 only.

front, but a look at the interior (see photos on third page) bears this out.

Interior volume in the front of the 200 is about one and a half cubic feet larger than the Dart, while in the back it's almost four cubic feet larger. Cargo volume is 16 cubic feet for the 200, compared to 13.1 for the Dart. For four adults, or a family with the kids growing up, the advantage is clear.

Chrysler 200 has about the same interior volume as Camry, Altima and Fusion, though a couple of cubic feet less than Hyundai Sonata and a couple more than Malibu.

NUMBERS tell the story of the Chrysler 200—9, 21, 36, 60 and one billion. **9:** the 9-speed transmission is available across the lineup. **21:** prices start at \$21,700 for the LX model. **36:** fuel economy with the Tigershark MultiAir inline-4 engine is EPA rated at 36 MPG highway. **60:** there are 60 safety and security features—the most in this segment. **One billion:** Chrysler has invested over \$1 billion in

KEEP RIGHT >>



SPECIFICATIONS: BASE AND TEST

2015 CHRYSLER 200 LX
 ENGINE2.4L Tigershark MultiAir I-4
 POWER/TORQUE184 hp / 173 lb-ft
 DRIVETRAINfront-wheel drive
 FUEL ECONOMY23/36/28 (city/hwy/comb)
 WHEELS17x7.0 steel wheels w cover
 BASE PRICE\$21,700

2015 CHRYSLER 200S FWD
 ENGINE3.6L Pentastar V6
 POWER/TORQUE295 hp / 262 lb-ft
 DRIVETRAINfront-wheel drive
 FUEL ECONOMY19/32/23 (city/hwy/comb)
 WHEELS18x8.0 painted satin carbon
 BASE PRICE\$24,495
 • AS TESTED\$31,220

2015 CHRYSLER 200C AWD
 ENGINE3.6L Pentastar V6
 POWER/TORQUE295 hp / 262 lb-ft
 DRIVETRAINall-wheel drive
 FUEL ECONOMY18/29/22 (city/hwy/comb)
 WHEELS19x8.0 aluminum polish/paint
 BASE PRICE\$30,195
 • AS TESTED\$35,670

TRANSMISSION9-speed 948TE automatic
 BRAKESanti-lock 4-wheel disc
 SUSPENSIONFRONT: MacPherson strut, dual-reacting twin tube shocks.
 REAR: multi-link independent, dual-reacting twin tube shocks
 DESTINATION CHARGE\$995



At left and above, the all-new 2015 Chrysler 200, based on the Fiat/Alfa compact wide platform adapted to everything from the Alfa Romeo Giulietta to Dodge Dart and Jeep Cherokee. At right, the 2010-2014 Chrysler 200, which always had a lukewarm reception.



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its Sterling Heights, Michigan plant (once slated for shutdown) for a new-tech paint facility, fully robotic body shop and upgraded assembly area. The chassis is derived from Alfa Romeo but redone for American roads and tastes and built here.

There is no one top model, per se. The 200S has darker elements and an edgier feel, with black window surrounds and wheels sporting bright metal set against dark pockets—aimed toward a sportier, youthful customer.

The 200C follows a more traditional premium path, familiar from the 300C and generations of its forebears, with a slightly higher base price—\$25,995 vs \$24,495 for the 200S (a win-win for the 200S target market).

Paddle shifters are included on the 200S and available on the 200C, with a sport mode on AWD models. On the 200S, a rotary shifter drives a sportier throttle map and a neat trick: pull down the paddles once to get the lowest available gear.

STYLING for the new Chrysler 200 defines what they call “a 360 car,” with no corners. The Chrysler wing in its grille flows through the headlights and down the sides, while a gentle power bulge in the hood flows into the A-pillars and over the top of its streamlined coupelike sedan roof to the taillights.

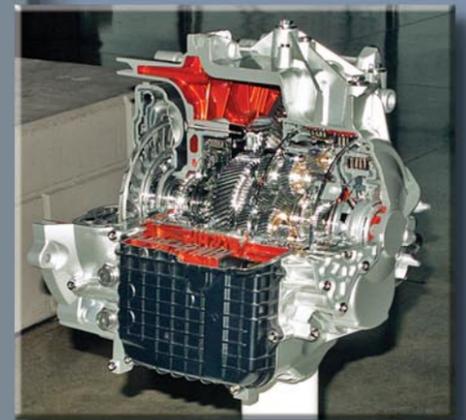
Projector beam headlights are joined by LED DRLs and fog lamps. Chrome or black window trim emphasizes the car's proportions: one-third glass and two-thirds body. Wheels range from 17 to 19 inches.

INSIDE, the instrument panel includes real wood formed into complex shapes that wrap onto the doors. Two-tone piped leather is stylish and supportive. The steering wheel's 360-degree chrome trim ring is a nice touch, but no doubt hot in an Arizona summer. Rear seat legroom benefits from sculpted front

seatbacks, and passengers enjoy their own air supply and console. The body is stiff but light—curb weight is 3473 pounds—with a six percent increase in torsional rigidity for smooth handling, enhanced by an isolated rear cradle suspension and stiff components for immediate response from driver inputs.

THE 200S goes up against entry luxe Germans, and we found an American sedan with European style and bearing that has every chance to be competitive. As Andy Love says, the 200S is “the best shot we have to get a younger customer into the showroom.”

All-wheel drive availability—rare in this segment—and great fuel mileage increase the 200's odds. And with a range from \$21,700 base, to \$35,000 or more for a top-range 200C with 295-hp V6 and all-wheel-drive, the Chrysler 200 should find a wide audience. ■



The 9-speed automatic transmission used in the Chrysler 200 displays the precision of a Swiss watch. Our test car's all-wheel drive was smooth and secure on patches of snow during our springtime drive in the Kentucky hills. The Chrysler 200's beautiful interior boasts significant rear seat room.



Lively

By Joe Sage

This color—Header Orange—may not be for everybody. Then again, once you've seen the Dodge Dart GT in Header Orange, everything else looks a little sedate by comparison. Of course, its sporty and powerful look leads any number of people to remind you that it's not a Dodge Challenger. That we knew. Then again, a Challenger (also a bargain) costs some 60 percent more than a Dart (\$26,495 base versus \$16,495 base). The Challenger has twice the horsepower, while the Dart gets 52 percent better fuel mileage. (And the Challenger applies its power via the rear wheels.) Different strokes.

The fact that we're even driven to compare the two speaks well for the Dart. We drove the 2013 Dodge Dart at its new vehicle launch in Texas, two years ago. Our headline then was "Top flight entry level." That is still an appropriate way of looking at it. We had also suggested that if you've always wanted a brand new Alfa Romeo, this was your opportunity, bearing full fruit from Chrysler's new ownership by Fiat. "By definition an entirely new Dodge," we mentioned, "the Dart is at its core the highly successful Alfa Romeo Giulietta"—though built at the Belvidere, Illinois plant. The company told us then that it represented "the reignition of 'Dodge fever.'" With upscale interior, upscale

wheels and best-in-class interior room, they compared it with the Mercedes-Benz C-Class, but at half the cost or better. Mercedes has now introduced the just-under-\$30k CLA, and Dodge Dart still beats that by 45 percent.

Settling down inside the Dart is a very cool experience. It's beautifully appointed, well beyond its price point.

The steering feels good, solid with no front torque steer. We might wish for more power in a tight squeeze, but not to the point of dropping below 30 MPG. This is a pretty good balance point, and in challenging situations, we were able to pull things off via its maneuverability if not its raw horses. At about 3300 pounds (the heaviest of the family, with 2.4L and automatic), its horsepower is not bad.

The power is enough that you can find yourself cruising at the posted limits even before you know it, as often as not. That's a sign of a decent cruiser, not a weakling.

The Dart lineup is extensive, though they have simplified your choices after promoting over 30,000 possible combinations in 2013 (before options, or over 100,000 with). Five models—SE, SXT, Aero, Limited and GT—range from base to hypermiler to entry lux to sport. Different models offer the 184-hp 2.4L Tigershark of our test GT, the base model's 160-hp 2-liter Tigershark, or a 41 MPG 160-hp 1.4-liter MultiAir Turbo in the fuel-frugal Aero. Both six-speed manual and six-speed automatic transmissions are available, depending upon model. ■

Header Orange Clear Coat paint is certainly a lively look, and beneath it lies a fairly lively car, especially at this price, with features galore and 30-plus MPG.



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE ...2.4L inline-4 Tigershark w MultiAir
POWER184 hp, 171 lb-ft torque
TRANSMISSION6-spd Powertech auto
DRIVETRAINfront-wheel drive
MPG22/31/26 (city/hwy/comb)
INCLUDED: 4-wheel discs w ABS, brake assist, traction control, roll mitigation, keyless entry and start, backup camera, tire service kit, Uconnect® 8.4 AM-FM-voice-Bluetooth, tachometer, auto-dim mirror w microphone, dual zone climate, heated leather-wrapped wheel, wheel-mounted audio controls, one year SiriusXM radio, iPod control, luxury door trim, soft touch instrument panel, ambient LED interior lighting, 6-way power and 4-way lumbar driver's seat, Hyper Black crosshair grille, fog lamps, DRLs, LED taillamps, body-color power heated mirrors, dual rear exhaust with bright tips, and more.

BASE PRICE\$20,995
TECHNOLOGY GROUP: Alarm, rear park assist, blind spot and rear cross path detection, auto high beams, rain sensing wipers, HID headlamps995
SIX-SPEED AUTOMATIC: With leather-wrapped shift knob, remote start, AutoStick1250
UCONNECT® 8.4N: AM-FM-NAV, Garmin GPS nav, one year SiriusXM Traffic, one year SiriusXM Travel Link495
WHEEL UPGRADE: 18x7.5 Hyper Black aluminum wheels395
DESTINATION CHARGE995
TOTAL\$25,125

LOGBOOK NOTES

The ride is quite firm and the drivetrain has a prominent growl. The six-speed auto has AutoStick manumatic but no sport mode.

This GT is not a gran turismo in the mold of an Aston Martin—that of course should be clear from its \$20-something price.

Uconnect® is one of the better infotainment systems. We found most of its functions pretty intuitive, and when we didn't, we were delighted to find a nice thin owner's manual that contained everything in simple, well-organized fashion.

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Beating the clock – and the tank

By Jennifer Johnson - Photos by Randall Bohl

Ford Motor Company gave Phoenix-area fans, and potential customers, a chance to get behind the wheel of its latest products with its second EcoBoost® Challenge consumer drive tour, which launched in mid-April at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale. It was the first time the tour has stopped in Arizona. The tour will make an additional 11 stops through July 2014.

The EcoBoost Challenge gets consumers behind the wheel of some of Ford's most popular vehicles on three closed-course tracks, including back-to-back drives with competitor vehicles. More than 28,000 people took part in last year's EcoBoost Challenge, for a fun and

free chance to test drive Ford's hottest new cars, truck and utility vehicles.

Several hundred Ford enthusiasts braved unseasonably warm temperatures in April to check out the Arizona event. Cristian de la Fuente, Ford Hispanic spokesman, former *Dancing with the Stars* contestant and telenovela star, attended the EcoBoost Challenge, got behind the wheel on the courses and met with local fans.

EcoBoost Challenge participants competed against the clock in a Fiesta ST, trying to score the best course time. The fastest participants who competed each hour were called back to compete against each other for the best time. Attendees

were also treated to the thrill of hot laps with a professional driver in the Focus ST.

"My son definitely enjoyed the hot laps in the Focus ST. We had been reading about the vehicle's performance capabilities, but we got a chance to experience it firsthand, which was pretty cool," said Christina Woolsey of Gilbert, who brought her 13-year-old son Anthony out to the event.

Ford also appeased hybrid fans with a course designed to put the Ford C-MAX Hybrid through its paces against the competition—namely the Toyota Prius. Ford's EcoBoost Challenge course pitted the Ford F-150 against the Chevy Silverado, the Ford Escape against the Honda CRV and the Ford Fusion against the Toyota Camry.

"Whether it's our EcoBoost or electrified products, there's no better way to experience the quality, innovation and fun of the Ford lineup than to get in the driver's seat," said Imran Jalal, Ford Escape brand manager, who flew out to Phoenix to kick off the event. "The EcoBoost Challenge lets consumers expe-

Ford's EcoBoost Challenge event cruised into the University of Phoenix Stadium in April to kick off the 2014 national tour that pits EcoBoost-equipped vehicles against competitors in three different driving courses.

rience for themselves the technology that helps us deliver better fuel economy and a more engaged driving experience than the competition."

By combining advanced engine technologies such as turbocharging, direct injection and variable valve timing, Ford designed EcoBoost engines to help customers conserve fuel without sacrificing power. In North America, EcoBoost sales make Ford the leader in turbocharged direct-injected gasoline engines in its core high-volume passenger vehicles, such as Fusion, F-150 and Escape. By the end of 2014, more than 90 percent of Ford's North American lineup will be available with an EcoBoost engine.

The EcoBoost Challenge tour runs through July, and more information can be found at ecoboostdrive.com. ■



RED RAGTOPS RULE, ALONG WITH ONE GOLDEN MERCURY

Story and photos by Randall Bohl



Attending the Goodguys Southwest Nationals and calling it work may sound absurd, but there is a hard part to it—choosing the car or cars to feature in a story. With a rumored 1,600 mostly beautiful (or if not beautiful, at least unique) vehicles on site at WestWorld in north Scottsdale, this is the challenge.

At first, this year looked like that of the 1956 pickup truck, as we were quickly drawn to examples from both Ford and Chevrolet. But that was not to be, as next entering was a big red boat of a 1950-something convertible, top-down gorgeous, minus a hubcap and rearview mirror. So there absolutely had to be something to hunt down on the polo field, had to be a story there.

After meandering through the swap meet area and almost every row of cars on the field, we spotted another big red and chrome convertible. But this one had all the pieces, as it's the **1949 Cadillac** owned by Earl Bumpass of Scottsdale, well worth a longer look and a chat.

We'd call this puppy a sleeper, hidden under its stock body and behind those white walls. Underneath, the Caddy has Art Morrison rear suspension (ladder bars/coil over), a 500-cubic-inch motor out of a 1976 Cadillac hooked to a Turbo 400 transmission, and a 9-inch Ford rear end. Creature comforts include air conditioning, power windows, 1982 Cadillac 6-way leather power seats and a tilt wheel. Drop spindles in the front carry 17-inch Cadillac wire wheels, while the rear has 18-inch Cadillac wires.

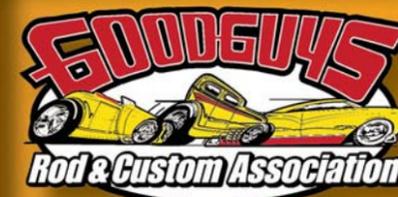
About a row over, we found the object of our search, a **1954 Pontiac Star Chief** owned by Ted and Robin Shaffer of Phoenix. Ted and Robin seemed to be out walking the show themselves, but a



couple of passersby happened to know a lot about 1954 Pontiacs—such as that this was the last year for the straight-8 engine. And this particular car must be rare, because it has stock air conditioning. Interesting. We would find Ted and Robin later, absolutely.

The morning had passed and it was

KEEP RIGHT >>



Earl Bumpass of Scottsdale, with family and friends and his red 1949 Cadillac convertible.



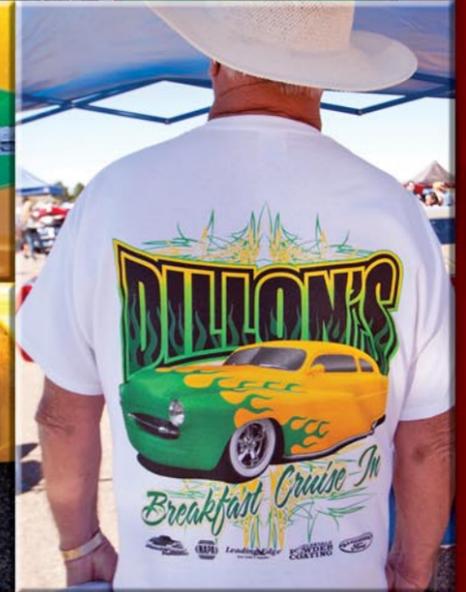


time for the concession stand and an icy cold Coke. While we were headed in that direction, Pat Neve introduced himself, asking what magazine we're with. It turns out Pat would be thrilled to have his **1951 Mercury** included in our pages. This wouldn't exactly fit into our apparent bent for big red convertibles, but it is one sweet custom lead sled.

Pat purchased the Mercury about eight months ago, after first having purchased a '51 for his son—who had so much fun with his, Pat decided to buy one for himself. This car is from Pennsylvania, where in 2009 it took 1st Place "Coolest Custom" at the Goodguys show in Pocono. Since then, it has won "Best Interior" at Motorama 2012 and "Most Outstanding Paint" at Motorama 2013 in Harrisburg. The car has a GM ZZ3 crate motor hooked to a Turbo 350 transmission and 10-bolt Positraction rear end, with disk brakes front and drum rear.

Originally a "rust free" California car, the Merc' was chopped three inches, with all moldings removed and smoothed, and the gas tank filler removed and installed in the trunk. Door handles were shaved, and the doors and trunk operate on remote. Paint is by Glazarath, with custom artwork deep in its pearlescent layers. The interior is all leather and all custom (well there is some 1998 Lincoln in it), with power seats, rear seat recliner, tilt wheel, remote stereo in the trunk and a backup camera. The whole thing is crowned by Pat's "KING51" license plate, complete with a twin cobra snake frame.

Glancing across the field, we noted that Ted and Robin were back with their Pontiac, and the sun had faded in the west enough to take some more photos—as well as ask a whole lot of questions about their Star Chief.

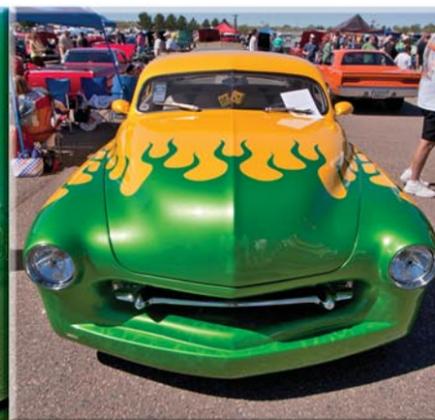


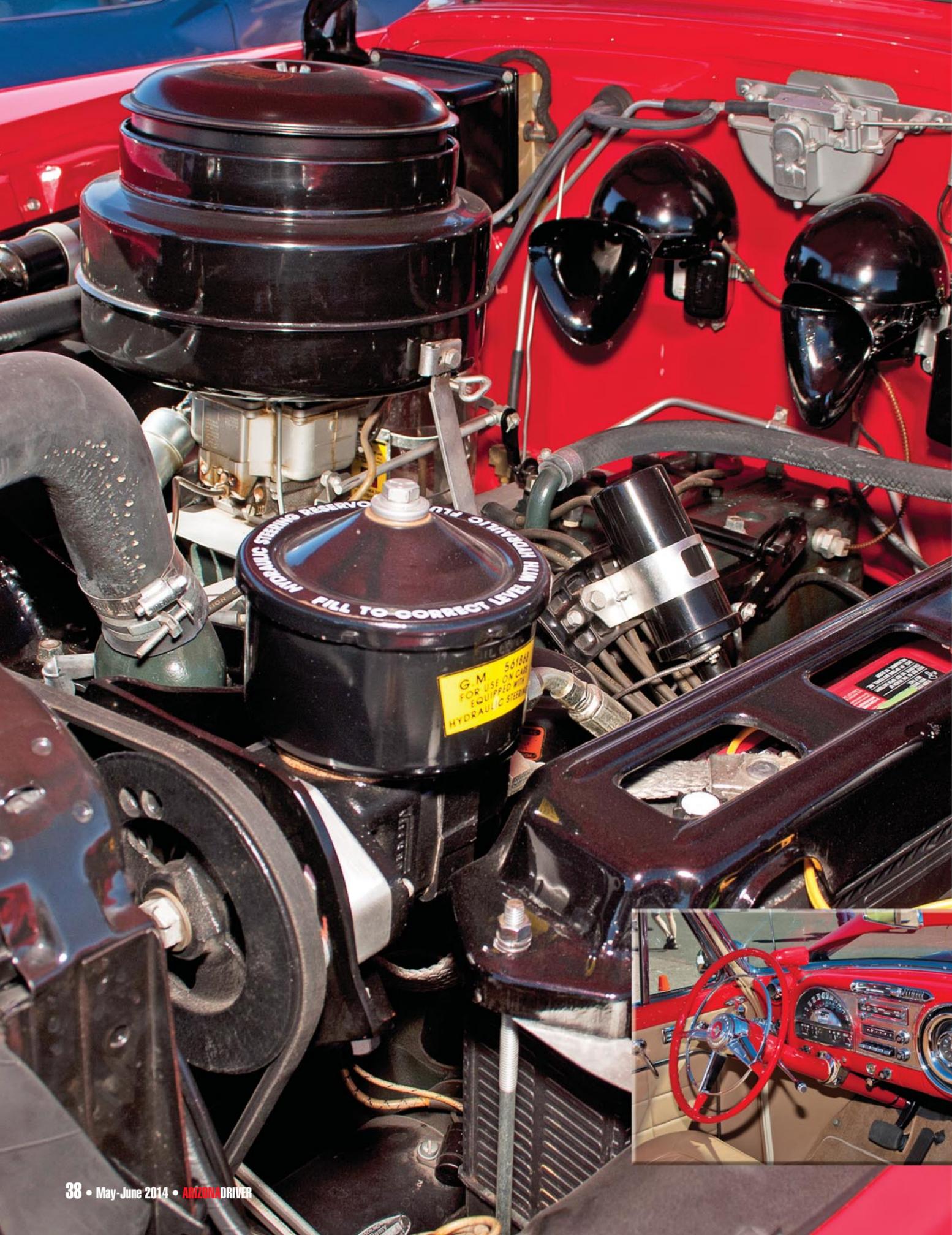
Ted says they bought the car from Benrich Auto Recyclers in Phoenix. That was owned by the Petty brothers, who race Dodge and Mopar and didn't want the Pontiac—so they sold him this and another parts car, in 1996. This is Ted's first restoration.

The car is loaded, with power every-



Pat Neve of Glendale AZ and granddaughter Gia show off their '51 Mercury lead sled coupe.





thing—steering, brakes, windows—plus an automatic transmission and straight-8 engine, 1954 being the last production year for this motor. The Pontiac also has GM's early oncoming traffic high/low headlight beam sensor, and indeed it is one of *only three* Star Chief convertibles produced with air conditioning. In fact, shortly after Ted had purchased the car, Harrison Radiator and Air Conditioning contacted him, offering to purchase the car "as is" to restore for a mobile museum they were putting together.

When we first saw it, part of this car's appeal to us was its slightly unfinished look as it first pulled in to the show.

Ted pointed out the original 6-volt spotlight on the driver's-side door, explaining that he has another original yet to install on the passenger side. Original emblems being nearly impossible to find, he has created his own for the hood, trunk and wire wheel centers—or for one wheel, anyway, which will actually become plural when he has finished the other three, as he explains they are difficult. "You can't get your fingers underneath the spokes, to polish the dish on the back side of it," he says.

A passerby had earlier told us there should be an Indian head on the hubcap emblem, but Ted had done his homework. When questioned on this, Ted said, "No, not in 1954. The '52s and '53s had Indian heads—gold one year and silver another—but the '54s did not." The Chief Pontiac hood ornament is original, and it lights up at night—very nice.

When he was looking for a project car at first, Ted didn't intend to buy the Pontiac. He had wanted something with more chrome. In retrospect, though, he says "holycow, if this had more chrome and stainless, I couldn't afford to do this



project. It's everywhere!"

Ted has come to know every chrome shop in the Phoenix area over the years. At one point, he said he had taken about six years off from working on the car, prior to the interior installation. Once the interior went in, and he was able to drive the car for the first time, he regretted that time off, as he says the car is just so much fun to drive. ■



Ted and Robin Shaffer of Phoenix, presenting their 1954 Pontiac Star Chief convertible.



Ahead of the curve

BY JOE SAGE

We've concluded before that Hyundai now has some of the most influential styling in the industry. It was not that way at the turn of the millennium, but the last decade or more has witnessed the company accelerating in tortoise-and-hare fashion past many a prior leader, with the brand's styling, fit and finish, and engineering massively improved—with American tastes in mind.

As only one or two others do well, Hyundai can be seen doing this in the new 2015 Genesis Sedan, in ways that, though radical, are subtle and evolutionary. It's a matter of being just ahead of the curve, or in fact creating the curve.

Audi is another one whose styling has led the curve in subtle but influential ways, while we've

credited Hyundai with influencing everyone from BMW to Ford (which draws emotional responses from BMW fans on social media). The Germans in particular comprise some rarified company for the ever-more-ragingly-successful Korean brand. But we find that Hyundai's complex and daring sheet-metal methods have become an industry leader.

It's the evolutionary approach that catches our attention in the new Hyundai Genesis Sedan. Its styling preserves the prior generation's sweeping grace, but with some smoothing of the skin, giving the car an increased level of refinement appropriate to its niche. They call it "fluidic sculpture 2.0."

A COUPLE OF DAYS at the launch of the new Genesis Sedan, held in Arizona, gave us a chance to see how well they've armed themselves for the

effort. Hyundai executives, stylists and engineers brought the new car to Paradise Valley for us to learn more about and to drive in different layouts.

Hyundai Motor America president and CEO Dave Zuchowski explained to us that with the new Genesis Sedan, they have almost completed a three-to-four-year "product cadence" that has transformed the lineup. (Later this year, we will see a Hyundai Tucson fuel cell electric—coming first to California, with its hydrogen infrastructure—and a new 2015 Sonata, a model which sold an amazing 200,000 units last year.)

Lined up for us were a variety of 2015 Genesis Sedan models and drivetrains—with three engine/drive combinations—making a dominant presence. It's a move from a traditional or even sedate model to something sporty and progressive.



THE IMPACT of all this progress has long since been felt, even before completion, with a halo effect that has worked in both directions: the huge successes from Elantra and Veloster on up have put the Hyundai badge on America's roads in record numbers, and the luxury and refinement of Equus and Genesis have reinforced the brand's strength and presence as a high-end contender. (Hyundai actually has a bigger market share in the premium segment than in all others.)

This is all more than just a marketing formula: the proof is in their customers' opinions. Hyundai is ranked number one in Total Value by Strategic Vision (2013); is ranked number one among mid-size premium cars per JD Power and Associates' Initial Quality Study (2013); is ranked number one in Customer Advocacy (as the saying goes, ask the person who owns one) by Market Probe (2013); and has been ranked number one in Customer Loyalty Engagement by Brand Keys for two consecutive years (2013 and already for 2014).

Genesis Sedan customers have a household income over 70 percent higher than the rest of their lineup, and the group is about 30 percent more college-educated. Hyundai tracks its customers effectively and has broken its first-time Genesis Sedan buyers to date into three groups. "Retention" customers are brand loyal, either coming back for another Genesis Sedan or moving up from Sonata or Azera. "Non-lux conquests" move up from such volume sellers as Camry and Accord. And the third category is where the Genesis Sedan

has been drawing customers from Lexus ES and Mercedes-Benz E-Class for some time—their "luxury conquest" customers.

Hyundai is ready to entice a lot more from this third group. E-Class and Lexus ES owners remain hot prospects, but now they have a broader list, divided into two levels. Their primary competitors are the rear-drive E-Class and Lexus GS—after all, the Genesis Sedan is a rear-drive and all-wheel-drive challenger—as well as America's hot-selling domestic premium sedan, the Cadillac CTS. Secondary targets are the Lexus ES again, while also in their sights are the BMW 5 Series and Audi A6.

Zuchowski says the car is ready to "compete in any segment against any global competitor."

ENGINEERS AND STYLISTS have given the car a longer wheelbase and have emphasized fundamental rear-drive proportions, with a short front overhang and tight body from the front wheels to the A-pillar, and a redesign from the C-pillar back, to draw the eye to where the power lies.

Of their three drivetrain models (see sidebar), we drove the all-wheel-drive V6 model and the rear-drive V8 from metro Phoenix, out US 60 east through Superior, Miami and Globe, then north to Roosevelt Lake. Here, we stopped for lunch and some specific demonstrations, such as its impressive electronic parking brake with automatic vehicle hold. From there it was north again, to join the



2015 HYUNDAI GENESIS SEDAN

HYUNDAI GENESIS 3.8 (RWD/AWD)

ENGINE.....3.8L 24v V6 DOHC w CVVT
 POWER/TORQUE.....311 hp / 293 lb-ft
 WHEELS/TIRES.....18/8.0 / P245/45R18
 BRAKES ..front: 13.6" four-piston vent disc
 ..rear: 12.4" one-piston solid disc
 WEIGHT.....RWD 4138 lb / AWD 4295 lb
 MPG..... RWD 18/29/22 (city/hwy/comb)
 ..AWD 16/25/19 (city/hwy/comb)
 BASE PRICE..... RWD \$38,000
 ..AWD \$40,500

HYUNDAI GENESIS 5.0 (RWD)

ENGINE.....5.0L 32v V8 DOHC w CVVT
 POWER/TORQUE.....420 hp / 383 lb-ft
 (or on regular fuel).....407 hp / 372 lb-ft
 WHEELS/TIRES ..front 19x8.5 / P245/40R19
 ..rear 19x9.0 / P275/35R19
 BRAKES ..front: 14.2" four-piston vent disc
 ..rear: 12.4" one-piston solid disc
 WEIGHT.....4541 lb
 MPG.....15/23/18 (city/hwy/comb)
 BASE PRICE..... (RWD only) \$51,500

TRANSMISSION.....8-speed automatic
 with SHIFTRONIC and paddle shifters
 STEERING.....rack-mounted electric, variable
 SUSPENSION.....front/rear: independent
 5-link, high-performance gas shocks, coil
 springs and solid stabilizer bar. OPTIONAL
 (5.0L): continuous damping suspension
 WHEELBASE.....118.5 in
 LENGTH OVERALL.....196.5 in
 FUEL CAPACITY.....20.3 gal

WARRANTIES:

NEW VEHICLE.....5 years / 60,000 miles
 POWERTRAIN.....10 years / 100,000 miles
 ANTI-PERFORATION.....7 years / unlimited mi
 ROADSIDE ASSIST.....5 years / unlimited mi

INCLUDED:

(Note: some features are included on 5.0 V8 only; see V6 options on our test cars, next page, for examples.) Stability management, Intelligent Drive Mode select, HID auto headlights, DRLs, LED accents, LED fog lights, high beam assist, rain-sensing wipers and windshield auto-defogger, power tilt/slide panoramic sunroof, power fold auto-dim side mirrors with puddle lamps, auto-dim rearview mirror, ultra leather seating surfaces, heated and ventilated seats, 12-way power front seats with power lumbar, driver seat power bolster, leather-wrapped power tilt/telescope haptic control steering wheel, front/rear parking assist, electronic parking brake, power rear sunshade, manual rear side sunshades, nav system with 8" display, rear camera, parking guidelines, 7" TFT LCD multi-info display, electroluminescent gauges, smart cruise with start/stop, Bluetooth phone, audio streaming, Blue Link® infotainment with Google access, AM-FM-SiriusXM-CD-MP3-HD Lexicon 14-speaker audio, genuine wood trim, aluminum trim, carpeted mats, cargo net, hands-free smart trunk open.

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Beeline Highway, AZ 87, back down into the Valley. This is a great route for this mighty premium sedan—with winding, climbing high-speed roads and broad flat-out stretches.

And this is where we feel it: the 2015 Hyundai Genesis Sedan has increased its rigidity by 45 percent, through use of advanced structural adhesives applied even before welding. Chassis rigidity on the Genesis Sedan exceeds that even of its competitive BMW.

Any longitudinal engine—which leaves considerable space in the area between the front bumper and wheels on either side, compared with a transverse engine—is particularly challenging in federal crash testing. The Genesis Sedan has already been built with the structural strength in front to withstand new standards, as they are raised from a 40 percent to just a 25 percent offset in frontal crash testing. Ahead of the curve.

Eco, Normal and Sport Intelligent Drive Modes change gearing in both cars, and in the 5.0L V8 also change settings in its optional continuous damping suspension system. We didn't hypermile in Eco mode on our open highway testing, but it will be effective in your daily commute, as borne out in other Hyundai models we've driven. The Normal mode is plenty satisfying, but we tended to stick with Sport, in the spirit of our route.

The electric steering system takes an uncommon approach—a rack-mounted unit, more responsive than typical column-mounted units. Better than many competitors, it felt to us like the best of conventional mechanical rack-and-pinion.

AS WITH the flagship Hyundai Equus, the company is creating a new dealer experience for Genesis Sedan shoppers, too—a “showroom within a showroom,” dedicated to the model and conceived to additionally elevate the brand.

If you're deciding among all three models—V6 in RWD or AWD, V8 in RWD—the choice is typically complex. Your tradeoffs appear readily in MPG and price (see specs in sidebar). Since AWD is not available with the V8, we tend to simplify this to a two-car faceoff: the extra power and rear-grip presence of the 5.0L V8 in RWD versus the all-wheel-drive capability of the 3.8L V6 in AWD.

If you're comparing with any number of midsize premium rear-drive sedans, the power and price of the RWD V8 are very competitive, and we love the car's performance and presence. If you're comparing with all-wheel-drive champs in this segment, the AWD V6 is runaway competitive by price, and neither its performance nor presence were particularly diminished by lack of a V8, in our fairly lengthy and aggressive drive. (And when comparing with anything at all, don't forget the incredible Hyundai warranties—see specs, sidebar.)



The RWD V6 is also a contender, but for \$2500 more, and only a 157-pound weight gain, we'd opt for the Genesis Sedan AWD 3.8. The only thing that nags at us then is that the fuel economy for the RWD 5.0 nearly matches the V6 in its AWD configuration, so for those who don't care about AWD, it's just a matter of the \$11,000 difference.

“Brand is a substitute for knowledge,” we were once told. If you haven't explored Hyundai yet, this is a great place to start. As CEO Zuchowski said, they are “looking for people who are making the right decisions for the right reasons.” This is an exceptional car, on a par with any of the competition. It's extremely well built, well appointed and a solid road performer. Its specs and inclusions far exceed most competitors, for the price point in particular. Even some fairly spectacular options on our AWD 3.8 were very reasonably priced. (Options on our V6 bring it up to V8 pricing, but this is how you almost match the top model, without the V8 but with AWD.) Whether you opt for V6, V8 or AWD, you really can't lose. ■



OUR LAUNCH DRIVE CARS

HYUNDAI GENESIS 3.8 AWD

BASE PRICE (AWD) \$40,500

SIGNATURE PACKAGE: Power tilt/slide panoramic sunroof, memory/ventilated front seats, power tilt/tele wheel, HID headlights, auto-dim mirrors, blind spot / rear cross traffic detect, power rear / manual rear side sunshades.....4000

TECH PACKAGE: Ultra leather seats, 7" TFT LCD display, power driver seat cushion extend/bolster, lane departure, lane keep, smart cruise w start/stop, haptic steering wheel, pre-safety seatbelt, auto emergency braking, high beam assist, electronic parking brake w vehicle hold, front/rear parking assist.....3500

ULTIMATE PACKAGE: Wood and aluminum trim, heads-up display, power trunk, premium DIS nav with 9.2" high-def display, Lexicon 17-speaker discrete Logic 7 audio, dual-mode vent w CO2 sensor3500

DESTINATION950

TOTAL PRICE \$52,450

HYUNDAI GENESIS 5.0 RWD

BASE PRICE \$51,500

ULTIMATE PACKAGE: Heads-up display, premium DIS navigation with 9.2" high definition display, Lexicon 17-speaker discrete Logic 7 audio, continuous damping suspension, power trunk, dual-mode vent w CO2 sensor3250

DESTINATION950

TOTAL PRICE \$55,700

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Chance To Win The Annual Goodguys Giveaway Car	✓	✓	
Membership Card	✓	✓	
Members Decal	✓	✓	
Goodguys Sticker Pack**	✓	✓	✓
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VEHICLE IMPRESSION : 2014 INFINITI Q50S 3.7

CONFUSION?

INFINITI'S NEW NAMING SCHEME ALMOST CONCEALS AN ALL-NEW MODEL

We remind ourselves that this is not the G37 sedan. It's the all-new Q50. You have probably noticed by now that Infiniti has renamed its entire lineup. The Q50 seems almost G-sized, but is in fact a bit smaller and sleeker. (G models are now the Q60, but the G Sedan exits the scene.)

All Infiniti cars are now Q-numeric, and all the SUVs and crossovers are QX-numeric. The numeric portion of the equation no longer has anything to do with engine displacement, nor does it have anything to do with the prior models (for example, the big QX56 is now a QX80).

So meet the Q50. More properly, the Q50S, in this case, as this builds upon the top Q50 (sans S), a Premium model with 14-speaker audio and HomeLink, then adds 19-inch alloy wheels and sport brakes, to earn the S designation.

To be even more precise and complete, this is the Q50S 3.7 (after all this, the name is now not complete until the engine displacement sneaks back in at the end).

Nissan—premium-brand Infiniti's mainstream sister and parent brand—has seen significant market share gains recently. Infiniti is seeking the same, as they embark upon a complete restyling of the lineup over the next year or two. The name

game is intended to prepare us for this, and this car is the first to hit the pavement.

Our time in the Q50S gave us a mixed impression. In driving, we had times we were pleased with immediate power from the 328-hp V6, while other times (several other times), we noted more of a lag-and-lunge at critical times. We noted a high level of distraction when using the touch-screen interface, with basic tasks requiring too many levels of interaction. And the locks drove us nuts, at least when we had a passenger.

The Q50 is available in four trim levels—a base 3.7, an AWD version, a Premium and a Premium AWD—ranging from \$37,150 to \$41,800 base. Two Q50S models build upon the Premium and offer RWD and AWD models, at \$43,650 and \$45,450 base (our sample showed a slightly lower base price). There is also a 3.5-liter V6 hybrid lineup, in Premium, AWD Premium, S and S AWD trims. The hybrids range from \$44,400 to \$48,600 base.

A base Q50 3.7 rates 30 MPG highway, dropping only one point with the sport setup in our test sample. Hybrids are rated as high as 36 MPG, though an S AWD hits just 31 MPG, a negligible gain for its \$3150 price difference. ■

BY JOE SAGE



The Infiniti Q50 is all new, from the name to the car itself. Yet it remains very familiar.

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE.....3.7-liter DOHC 24-valve V6
TRANSMISSION.....7-speed automatic with manual mode with downshift rev match
DRIVETRAIN.....rear-wheel drive
POWER.....328 hp / 269 lb-ft torque
MPG.....20/29/23 (city/hwy/comb)
SUSPENSION.....sport-tuned independent F/R
TIRES.....summer performance run-flats
WHEELS.....19-inch alloy
INCLUDED: One-touch power slide tinted glass moonroof, sport front fascia, LED auto headlights, LED fog lights, turn lamps and brake lights, leather appointments, aluminum interior trim, 8-way power/heated front seats, driver lumbar and torso power adjust, manual thigh extension, dual zone climate, welcome lighting door handles, keyless entry and start, rear camera, dual display, InTouch apps, InTuition memory for climate-audio-driving prefs per key, Bose 14-speaker premium audio, voice recognition audio-Bluetooth-vehicle info.

BASE PRICE.....\$43,200
NAVIGATION PACKAGE: InTouch voice nav, SiriusXM Traffic, Infiniti Connection.....1400
SPARE TIRE PACKAGE: Temporary spare and jack kit.....200
DESTINATION CHARGE.....905
TOTAL.....\$45,705



LOGBOOK NOTES

The Bridgestone Potenza run-flat tires are very good, without the characteristics that have plagued so many so far. Nonetheless, we're happy to have that extra-cost spare, as long as we can afford its trunk space.

Brown is big this year; however—nothing against UPS—we'd chose a different color.

We would favor the car's RWD layout, yet it wanders at the slightest distraction—dangerous given the complex screen interface.

There is a remarkably dominant fuel economy display: the most prominent screen is half nav and half fuel economy. Given that we were achieving 16.4 MPG, we don't think it's worth this much prominent real estate.

¡EL SEGUNDO!

NASCAR MÉXICO RETURNS FOR ITS SECOND US RACE

PHOTOS BY JOE SAGE

SUAREZ CAPTURES FOURTH CONSECUTIVE WIN IN THE TOYOTA 120 NASCAR MÉXICO TOYOTA SERIES RACE AT PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY

SUAREZ TRIUNFA POR CUARTA VEZ CONSECUTIVAMENTE EN LA CARRERA TOYOTA 120 DE NASCAR MÉXICO EN LA PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY

The NASCAR México Toyota Series celebrated the start of its 11th season, its second year in Arizona, and the 50th anniversary of Phoenix International Raceway with a thrilling ending to the Toyota 120. Daniel Suarez claimed his

fourth consecutive victory in NASCAR touring series races by making a daring last-lap pass of Antonio Perez in the backstretch dog-leg and fending off a late charge from defending series champion Rodrigo Peralta, to claim victory by .097 seconds.

With the top three all on fatigued tires,

Peralta was able to slip past Perez coming out of turn 4, for a second-place finish.

The first half of the Toyota 120 was plagued by wrecks and caution flags, but it still got off in daring fashion as Perez dove from his position in third below pole-sitter Ruben Pardo in turn 1, allowing outside pole-sitter Suarez to pull into the lead.

The first caution period came on lap 5 as Hector Felix spun his Toyota off turn 3. It was only the beginning: the yellow flag waved six times in the first half of the race. Things settled down after that, with Perez showing the way, and the race went caution-free from a restart on lap 65 to the end.

Suarez was caught speeding on pit road on a lap 46 pit stop and was assessed a pass-through penalty, forcing him to roll down pit lane as the rest of the field sped past, in the process dropping from first to 12th. He clearly had the fastest car, but the question became whether he could get around Perez as the laps ticked by.

Pole-sitter Pardo also ran into challenges, as a handling issue sent him tumbling back through the field and behind by a lap at mid-race, but the 34-year-old then came charging forward to claim a top-five finish.

NASCAR and OCESA, the leading live entertainment company in Latin America, have announced a ten-year extension of their cooperative event agreement.

NASCAR México has been an exciting addition to the calendar at Phoenix International Raceway. Thrilling, accessible and flavorful, we recommend the NASCAR México Toyota Series as a don't-miss event. Stay tuned for details of next year's race. ■



POWER AND GLORY... AND MILES

PHOTOS BY BRENDA PRIDDY

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THE 24TH ANNUAL BELL LEXUS NORTH SCOTTSDALE COPPERSTATE 1000

The Copperstate 1000 road rally sees the finest working examples of vintage, sports, racing, classic and grand touring automobiles—model year 1973 or earlier—brave the pavement and the elements over a thousand miles of beautiful Southwest roads. This year's 86 cars ran through southeast Arizona. Complete route information will be revealed soon via the event's mobile app, so you can make the same drive.

DAY ONE: SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2014

Field of Dreams at Tempe Diablo Stadium lets the public see all the Copperstate cars as they prep and depart. In the west parking lot is a cruise-in, with a Cool Cars & Hot Eats food truck feature added this year.

• Copperstate drive: Tempe Diablo Stadium to Tubac Golf Resort and Spa, via Kitt Peak National Observatory: 254 miles

DAY TWO: MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2014

• From Tubac Golf Resort, out and back, with a lunch stop in Bisbee, Arizona: 251 miles

DAY THREE: TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2014

• Tubac to JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort and Spa in Tucson, with lunch and tours at the Pima Air & Space Museum: 228 miles

DAY FOUR: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2014

• JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort and Spa in Tucson, to the JW Marriott Desert Ridge in north Phoenix, with a lunch stop at Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park: 225 miles

SUPPORTERS AND BENEFICIARIES

Event proceeds benefit Phoenix Art Museum and the Copperstate 10-90 Foundation.

MEN'S ARTS COUNCIL

The Men's Arts Council (MAC) of Phoenix Art Museum was founded in 1967 to support museum programs and activities. The group organizes four distinctly different annual events, including the Copperstate 1000.

• www.mensartscouncil.com

PHOENIX ART MUSEUM

Since 1959, the Phoenix Art Museum has served as a cornerstone of Phoenix's art and cultural community, providing the people of Arizona with great art and cultural experiences from around the world.

• www.phxart.org

COPPERSTATE 10-90 FOUNDATION

The Copperstate could not happen without the help and support of eight Arizona Department of Public Safety Motor Officers who accompany the rally. In 2011, Sergeant Robert Bowers and members of the Copperstate 1000 host committee formed the 10-90 Copperstate Foundation, a nonprofit, charitable organization that provides emergency benefits to families and dependents of officers killed in the line of duty, and tuition assistance to eligible family members.

• www.10-90copperstatefoundation.org



With great power comes great responsibility.



BRIDGESTONE
TEENS DRIVE SMART



Bridgestone's Teens Drive Smart Driving Experience had a record turnout of more than 350 young drivers at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale on March 22-23, as the program's national tour kicked off with its first stop here in Arizona. The program gave young drivers an opportunity to participate in this valuable hands-on program—at no cost.

The grim statistics

You've no doubt been reminded before: motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of America's teens, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. In 2012, there were 825 motor vehicle related fatalities in the state of Arizona. Of those fatalities, 99 (or about 12 percent) involved young drivers aged 16 to 21. Each time a young driver gets behind the

wheel, they're taking an enormous responsibility into their hands. Driving represents freedom and maturity, yet it requires a high level of care and safety. Most teens don't immediately realize the power they hold, when they fire up the ignition.

Getting with the program

The Bridgestone Teens Drive Smart Driving Experience is a free half-day program designed to equip teens and young adults with the skills to handle the challenges of today's roadways.

Parents are strongly encouraged to attend. The Teens Drive Smart driving clinic simulates real life situations, focusing on vehicle dynamics, smart driving choices and elimination of distracted driving. Each session combines classroom instruction with hands-on driving exercises—including a skid pad session—to teach defensive

driving skills and reinforce behaviors that will lead to solid decision-making on the road.

Spending time behind the wheel of a BMW with a professional precision driver as your instructor is not a bad way to spend part of your weekend. Bridgestone's Teens Drive Smart sessions are led by highly-trained instructors, many with extensive motorsports, stunt driving and test track experience.

The Teens Drive Smart Driving Experience is a significant component in Bridgestone's mission to educate—and save the lives of—young drivers.

The program runs coast to coast through early November and is open to drivers 21 and under who have a valid license or permit.

For information, see: teensdrivesmarttour.com. It's fun. It's free. Most of all, it's an important early step toward a lifetime of smart driving. ■

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winterdrive.com



Pony up

Historic 50th anniversary cross-country road rally passes through Arizona

Story by Jennifer Johnson
Photos courtesy of Sam Haymart / Mustangs Across America



It's the year of the Mustang. At least here in America, it is. And on April 11, the Mustangs Across America 50th Anniversary drive cruised through Arizona, with approximately 200 Mustang enthusiasts stopping in Phoenix on a cross-country trek that had begun in Los Angeles the day prior.

The epic journey, which included 500-plus registered Mustang drivers from more than 45 states and 13 foreign countries, took seven days to cross the United States along a southern route beginning in LA, and then stopping in Phoenix; Las Cruces, New Mexico; Midland, Texas; Dallas; Jackson, Mississippi; Atlanta; and finally arriving in Charlotte, North Carolina on April 16.

Event coordinator Sam Haymart, a resident of Gold Canyon, Arizona, has organized the event since its inception back in 1994. "What started on a whim really has grown into a huge celebration, including Mustang enthusiasts from across the country and around the world," Haymart said. "This year's event was extra special, since it marked 20 years since our first drive and, of course, the 50th anniversary of the Mustang."

It was also special for Haymart because he drove the pace car this year, a restored 1995



Mustang nicknamed "Mustang One" that was nearly identical to the 1994 model that paced the inaugural Mustangs Across America drive. He also had his 17-year-old daughter, Savannah, join him for the trip, and his 19-year-old son, Sidney, participated for part of it.

At the Arizona stop, Mustang enthusiasts gathered at Rawhide Western Town & Steakhouse in Chandler on the evening of their arrival, for dinner and entertainment. Tom Raber of California was there with his "Legend Lime" Mustang convertible named Gator. For Raber and many others, this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel across country celebrating a significant milestone for a vehicle that has won the hearts of many over the years.

"We're having a blast," Raber said, posing the question, "What other manufacturer has kept a vehicle in production for 50 years?"

Upon arrival in Charlotte, Mustang enthusiasts participated in the Mustang Club of America's Mustang 50th Birthday Celebration at Charlotte Motor Speedway. Filmmakers who traveled along on the drive documented the once-in-a-lifetime event.

Participants received a commemorative coin, dash plaque, printed travel guide, windshield placard and post cards as part of the national drive. For more information about Mustangs Across America visit www.MustangsAcrossAmerica.com.

No stigma, no limitations and 50 MPG

We first drove the Honda Accord Hybrid in 2005, when most of the buzz was going to Prius and Insight (and to the Civic Hybrid). As we cruised a Valley freeway, we thought, "why doesn't everybody do this?" They've delivered cutting edge technology in a regular mainstream sedan, with mostly routine instruments—not a hypermiler's bragging-board science project. Nice.

Since then, there have been others—Ford Fusion, Hyundai Sonata and Lexus ES hybrids, for example. But Honda has an extensive track record. The new Hybrid is the final model in their ninth generation Accord lineup (which also included a new Plug-In Hybrid a year and a half ago). We welcome the new Accord Hybrid, as a benchmark lesson in effective simplicity—its hybrid powertrain delivers a nearly invisible layer

of extraordinary fuel economy, with plenty of punch behind it. Acceleration is strong—beyond what its numbers might suggest—and power is delivered with no vestige of front-drive torque steer. Its EV mode lets you cruise the neighborhood for a couple of miles on electric power only.

We found the car's performance above average—in aggressive traffic, we rated power, handling, steering and tight cornering as impressive.

This is a highly competitive segment, and we like a lot of the competition. The Accord is one of the more expensive, though fully equipped—no options particularly needed. Then again, if you are on a budget, the full features are unavoidable. Then again, the Honda Accord Hybrid rates 50 MPG. Don't miss this car, when shopping this group. It's a strong contender. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE.....	2.0L DOHC 16v i-VTEC
	4-cylinder Earth Dreams Engine
POWER.....	141/122/196 hp/torque/total power
TRANSMISSION.....	Electric CVT
DRIVETRAIN.....	FWD
MPG.....	50/45/47 (city/hwy/comb)
INCLUDED:	4-wheel discs, electric power rack-and-pinion steering, front/rear stabilizer bars, ECO Assist, theft immobilizer, voice nav, rear camera, leather-trimmed seats and wheel, 360-watt 7-speaker touchscreen audio, XM satellite, Honda-Link, Bluetooth, SMS text, keyless start, dual-zone climate, rear vents, 10-way power driver's seat and 4-way passenger, heated seats, power windows/locks with auto up/down, adaptive cruise, one-touch power moonroof, heated power mirrors, rear spoiler.
BASE PRICE.....	\$34,905
DESTINATION CHARGE.....	790
TOTAL.....	\$35,695



LOGBOOK NOTES

The car has an Econ (not eco) mode via a button to the lower left of the steering wheel. Indicators in the binnacle include a leafy green logo to congratulate fuel frugality.

We rated the audio as superb at one point, but came back to downgrade it to above average, depending upon music content.

With the right turn signal on, a side mirror-mounted camera fully displays your blind side. This is a great innovation, beating the pants off a typical beep or yellow triangle.

Headlights seemed weak. We even double-checked to see whether they were on.

The otherwise routine grille has an almost holographic ripple effect—a neat detail.

As with Acura, the lefthand side mirror has a hairline seam separating its wide view, providing not a bubble but a confusingly distorted double image at times. We would replace this with a flat pane and a bubble.

When you fire up the Accord Hybrid, the instrument readout says "ready to drive." And indeed it is very much so.



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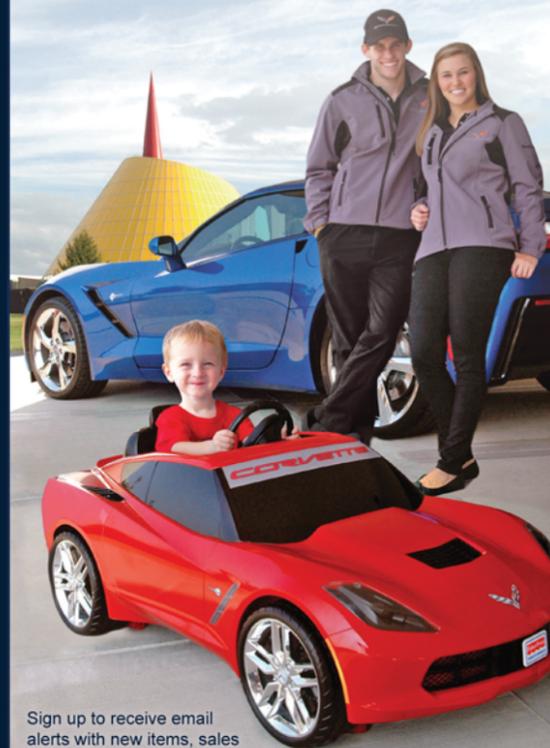
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With over one mile of frontage on Interstate 65 and located across from the National Corvette Museum (NCM) and the Corvette Assembly Plant, the 184-acre Motorsports Park will be one of the most centrally located and easily accessible driving facilities in the country.

Opening Labor Day Weekend 2014, the Park will offer Museum-sponsored High Performance Driving Schools for all makes and models of vehicles, track rental opportunities, corporate hospitality and more.

Contact us to secure our next event date or visit our website to see how you can get involved!

www.motorsportspark.org



THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS



Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross GRC Beetle

■ **Volkswagen** and Andretti Sports Marketing have announced details of their 2014 rallycross program. Volkswagen will partner with Andretti Autosport to form the Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross team, running two cars in the series for drivers Tanner Foust and Scott Speed. The team will initially compete this season with modified Polo rally cars, built on the chassis that won the 2013 World Rally Championship for drivers and manufacturers, then switch to the all-wheel-drive Rallycross GRC Beetle, with over 560 hp from its TSI turbo.

■ Luxury furniture, cotton, petroleum and paper—these are products exported around the globe from Mississippi. Now joining the list is the **Toyota** Corolla. At a ceremony in April with elected officials and community leaders, Toyota Mississippi rolled out its first Corolla for export to Central and South America and the Caribbean. More than 7,500 Mississippi-built Corollas will be exported this year to 18 countries in those regions. Nine US-built Toyota models from all four of the company's US assembly plants are now exported to 32 countries around the world. Toyota Mississippi employs 2,000 and represents an \$800 million investment. Since November 2011, Toyota has announced 11 new investments in North America manufacturing facilities, totaling \$2.1 billion and increasing employment by 4,000.

■ The first Carroll **Shelby** Cal Baseball event was held in February at the University of California Berkeley. It will become an annual event beginning in 2015. A Show and Shine exhibit was held outside the stadium, with Shelby and Ford-powered cars owned by Team Shelby members and Ford enthusiasts from across northern California. A video presentation told about Carroll Shelby and his contribution to American muscle car performance. An animated race video featuring a Shelby Super Snake GT500, Shelby Daytona Coupe and Shelby Cobra was also created for the event. Shelby executives and trustees threw out the opening pitches for both games of a doubleheader. 2015 dates will be announced later.



David Brown Automotive Project Judi

■ **BMW** has launched a global campaign for the new BMW 2 Series Active Tourer, with the tagline “Whatever you have in mind.” The vehicle is aimed at those with an active lifestyle, who combine fitness and fun into their outdoor activities. To meet this market's needs, BMW aims to deliver a vehicle suitable for urban driving as well as recreational needs, with plenty of room for the family or outdoor equipment, all in a small vehicle. The new model will combine interior space efficiency with compact exterior dimensions, while promising BMW driving dynamics. The promotional campaign portrays the BMW 2 Series Active Tourer as a solid choice for people with a wide range of interests. Marketing activities will include art shows, film presence, advertising, brochures, social media and point-of-sale.



BMW 2 Series Active Tourer

■ New British luxury automotive brand **David Brown Automotive** has released outline specifications for their first car, along with teaser images of its bespoke exterior. “Project Judi” uses an optimized chassis and powertrain from the Jaguar XKR, reworked by Envisage group—a supercharged 5.0-liter V8 engine, with 6-speed automatic and rear-wheel drive—with a 0-to-60 time of 4.6 seconds. Brown says, “I wanted all the impact and style of a classic sports car, but with modern capabilities and conveniences. This is what I want in a car, but it's not something anyone really offers. So, I've created it myself.”

■ **Rinspeed** has developed its conceptual take on autonomous driving, with the XchangeE, revealed at the Geneva Motor Show. With the car itself at the wheel, occupants are free to enjoy business class



Rinspeed XchangeE

comfort and infotainment options. While the major automakers are putting the finishing touches on the vehicle technology, expected to become a reality in the not-too-distant future, the Swiss idea factory Rinspeed puts the occupants at the center of the driverless car. Rinspeed boss Frank M. Rinderknecht says, “So far hardly anyone has taken this to its logical conclusion from the perspective of the driver. After all, traveling in a driverless car will no longer require me to stare at the road, but will let me spend my time in a more meaningful way.” They have developed a fully electric touring sedan, with all-new seats reminiscent of the relaxing business-class seats of major airlines, offering similarly elaborate functionality. A completely new operating and display concept includes innovative entertainment, safety and service functions, so occupants can work or relax in comfort while riding in the driverless car. Each passenger can enjoy a wide variety of media or access in-depth information. The steering wheel is simply “parked” in the middle of the instrument panel, and steer-by-wire technology takes over. Sit back and read, listen to music, surf the web, play games, watch movies theater-caliber image and sound, or hold a meeting at 75 mph while working on your files. Rinspeed suggests autonomous driving can actually make individual travel even more attractive than traveling by train or plane.

■ **Mercedes-Benz** of Mexico is launching the 2014 S-Class with HD Radio technology, expanding the brand's implementation of HD across North America. HD Radio delivers crystal-clear sound quality



and additional digital-only local FM channels (HD2/HD3 channels), as well as program service data (PSD), which displays song title, artist and album name on the screen. HD is subscription-free broadcast radio. The first production vehicle with HD Radio technology hit the US in 2007. The technology was approved as a digital standard for AM and FM broadcasting in Mexico in June 2011 and has seen a rapid rollout from automakers and radio stations across that country. There are 13 stations broadcasting HD in Mexico City and 24 additional stations in other areas of the



u-blox BX-M8030-Kx-DR chip

country. Nearly 30 percent of the Mexican population has access to HD Radio broadcasts already, with more digital rollouts planned. Canada is currently evaluating HD Radio technology, while many of its border residents already have access to HD Radio broadcasts from the US.

■ Swiss company **u-blox**, maker of wireless and positioning modules and chips, has introduced next-generation chip technology dedicated to advanced in-dash navigation, emergency call, usage-based

insurance (UBI), road-pricing, and stolen vehicle recovery systems. The u-blox UBX-M8030-Kx-DR chip integrates a new technology, 3D Automotive Dead Reckoning (3D ADR), which calculates a vehicle's position, speed and elevation in areas of poor or no satellite visibility—a common issue in high-density urban environments. “Drivers expect car navigation systems to be fast, accurate, and work everywhere, regardless of satellite visibility,” says Thomas Nigg, VP product marketing at u-blox. “As cities expand, construction of more tunnels, multi-level overpasses and park garages is increasing. Our solution meets this challenge head-on; regardless of satellite visibility, our 3D ADR chip shows movement in three dimensions to maintain continuous and accurate positioning in tunnels, stacked highways, multi-level or underground parking facilities.” The technology aids traditional GNSS navigation systems such as GPS, GLONASS and BeiDou by blending them with individual wheel speed, gyroscope and accelerometer information to maintain accurate 3D positioning even when satellite signals are completely lost. The new chip self-calibrates for sensor aging and temperature. It is compatible with virtually all vehicles and drivetrains, and sensor information can be derived from the vehicle's sensors for the most cost-efficient implementation, or from external sensors for after-market solutions. ■

UPCOMING FEATURES

2015 Subaru Legacy launch, Big Sur



2014 Jaguar XJL



2015 Subaru WRX STI



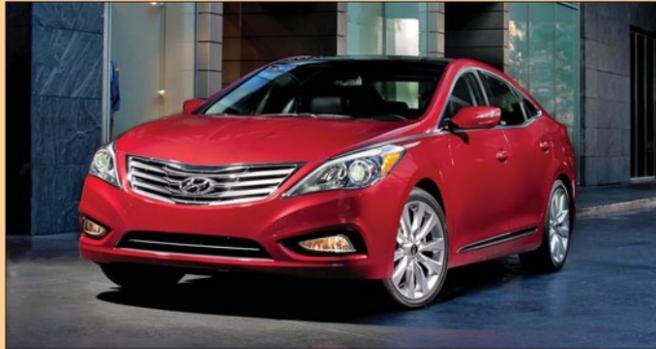
2014 BMW 435i



Mudfest 2014 : Outdoor Activity Vehicle of the Year



2014 Hyundai Azera



Overland Expo with Nick Calderone



Aerial combat planes with Nick Calderone



Photo: NWAPA/Armin Aulsejo

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