

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 16 NUMBER 1
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2017

**AUCTIONS / SHOWS /
DESTINATIONS / EVENTS /
TIRES / RACES / JETS /**

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ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

news & features

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COVER: This beautiful 1928 Mercedes-Benz 630K La Baule Transformable at Bonhams Scottsdale Auction last year features rare and coveted coachwork by Jacques Saoutchik and a 6240cc SOHC Supercharged inline-6 engine putting out 100hp at 3100rpm or 140hp with the compressor engaged. Built atop the legendary Supercharged Mercedes-Benz chassis developed by Ferdinand Porsche, the car has a four-speed transmission, four-wheel leaf spring suspension and four-wheel mechanical drum brakes. The car sold for \$973,500 including premium. **Photo: Joe Sage.**



We seem to get out of state a bit in this issue—Las Vegas for two things, Southern California for four, also Mexico on one of those. Maybe that's what happens as the hot summer months ease into fall and early winter, or maybe it's just coincidence. Be that as it may, going places is in the soul of every gearhead, and those travels take us to track time with Pirelli, a rare opportunity for a demonstration ride in Italian fighter jets south of Hoover Dam, the Los Angeles Auto Show (which is always on the calendar) and one that bends the definition of road trip, driving to Long Beach to catch an inexpensive cruise to Catalina Island and Ensenada on the Baja coast in Mexico. (That last one made us vow to do it again, by road the whole way.)

Jan Wagner also takes you to LA for the Red Bull Global Rallycross Season Finale, which just makes sense as we covered the opener here at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park last spring (and our ridealong guy from then, Scott Speed, took the championship in LA). Speaking of motorsports, Randall Bohl gives us a look at the fast and furious semifinal in NASCAR's Chase for the Cup at PIR, with three adventure-packed races.

New vehicles in this issue include the Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid, an innovative electric-hybrid-drivetrain version of the all-new Pacifica minivan; the second generation of the Honda Ridgeline pickup, highly revised from the original; two entries from Lexus that both seem to hit value spots, the RC 200t coupe and the GX 460 sport utility; another value-point SUV, the Mitsubishi Outlander; two evolutionary sedans, the now standalone-brand Genesis G80 and the quietly but effectively adapted Hybrid version of the Honda Accord; and a hot little BMW turbo wagon.

Old vehicles include the Goodguys 19th Southwest Nationals, as well as schedules and other information for this January's famous Arizona collector car auctions and the Arizona Concours d'Elegance.

Enjoy the ride.

Joe Sage - Publisher/ Executive Editor

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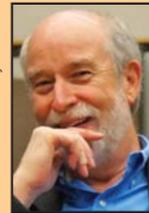
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- PAPAPhoenix Automotive Press Association
- RMAPRocky Mountain Automotive Press
- SAMA.....Southern Automotive Media Association
- TAWATexas Auto Writers Association
- USMAUnited States Motorsports Association
- WAJWestern Automotive Journalists

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Mercedes-Benz coast-to-coast off-pavement (in the UK)

▼ Something we've always wanted to do in the US: a dozen **Mercedes-Benz** four-wheel drive vehicles have successfully traversed the UK, from the east coast to the west coast, without the use of any open public roads. It is believed to be the first ever journey completed off-pavement. The 12 vehicles, including GLE, GLS and G-Class models, made the 65-mile journey across the Scottish Highlands over the course of two days. The vehicles were all standard UK-specification cars, fitted with road-legal mud tires, but with no modifications apart from the removal of side steps where fitted. Leading the expedition was the G-Class, with permanent 4MATIC all-wheel drive, low-range gearbox and three fully lockable differentials, ensuring it could cope with the roughest of terrain, including the gravel, rock, wet grass, rivers and gelatinous mud of the Highlands. The G-Class is hand-assembled in Graz, Austria, at the rate of just 15 vehicles a day. Although the quilted leather massage seats of a GLS (standard on designo Line) could suggest it is more about opulence than off-roading, an Off-Road package ensures it is equally at home off the beaten track, adding center differential lock, protective underbody paneling, low-range gearbox, fully manual mode for the automatic transmission, special off-road programming for ABS, ESP and 4ETS traction control, and an extra three selectable ride heights for the standard AIRMATIC air suspension. It also adds to the standard Driver Select system's Off-Road mode with

an Off-Road Plus mode for especially difficult terrain. The GLE was also equipped with the Off-Road Package. Now if we could just try this for 3000 miles here.

▼ The **Goodyear** Eagle-360 concept tire was named one of *Time* magazine's "Best Inventions of the Year 2016." This year's list includes 25 inventions, also including a virtual reality headset, shoes that lace themselves, a solar roof collaboration between Tesla and SolarCity, and the Chevy Bolt electric vehicle. The Goodyear



Goodyear Eagle-360

Eagle-360 is a spherical concept tire intended to provide self-driving cars with maximum maneuverability, connectivity and "biomimicry" to increase safety.

▼ **Samsung** Electronics has agreed to buy **Harman** International Industries for \$112 per share in cash, or total equity

value of approximately \$8 billion. Upon closing, the transaction will immediately give Samsung a significant presence in the large and rapidly growing market for connected technologies, particularly automotive electronics, which has been a strategic priority for Samsung, and is expected to grow to more than \$100 billion by 2025. More than 30 million vehicles are currently equipped with Harman connected car and audio systems, including embedded infotainment, telematics, connected safety and security. Approximately

65% of Harman's \$7.0 billion in sales are automotive-related, and its order backlog for this market at mid-2016 was approximately \$24 billion. The deal will combine Harman's position in new connected car technologies, including its top positions in infotainment, cyber security, over-the-air updates and telematics, with Samsung's

expertise and experience in connectivity technologies, including 5G, UX/UI, display technology and security solutions. Harman's brands include JBL, Harman Kardon, Mark Levinson, AKG, Lexicon,



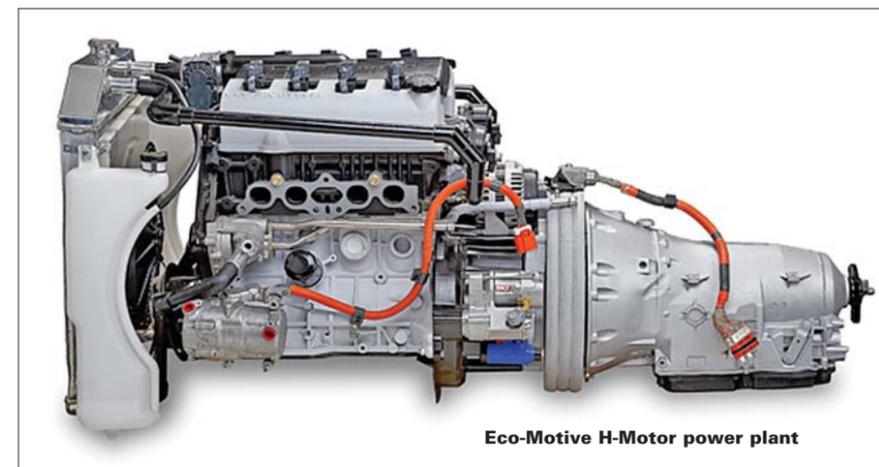
Aston Martin Vanquish S

Infinity and Revel. The company also licenses Bowers & Wilkins and Bang & Olufsen brands for automotive.

▼ The new **Aston Martin** Vanquish S super GT—the brand's flagship since 2001 and its second S generation—has sharpened its styling and upgraded its power, chassis and aerodynamics. Its 6-liter V12 engine output has been bumped from 565 to 592 hp, attributed to volume inlet manifolds that allow a greater volume of air to flow into the engine at high revs, creating steady power delivery and a stronger feel all the way to redline. The car's 8-speed Touchtronic III is revised for faster shifts and better feel at low speeds. Suspension, dampers, spring rates and anti-roll bars are retuned in line with sport GT driving. Quick visual cues include more exposed carbon fiber, revised front and rear splitters/diffusers and new quad exhaust tips. Option include carbon fiber hood louvers, new forged diamond-turned 5-spoke wheels, and multiple painted graphics packs. It's all capped off with a new Vanquish S badge on the rear deck. Interior options and features include quilted leather, satin chopped carbon fiber panels and Vanquish S headrest embroidery. Aston Martin president and CEO Dr Andy Palmer says, "From the moment the original Vanquish was launched, it became a modern icon. It propelled Aston Martin from an era of hand-built cars to one where craftsmanship and technology combined to create a new kind of great

British GT." The new Vanquish S is better distinguishing from the new DB11 within the overall Aston Martin lineup. Available in both coupe and Volante models, Vanquish S starts at \$294,950.

▼ **Eco-Motive** has released photos of a full-scale prototype of their patented dual-fuel "H-Motor" power plant, built to reflect the engine when it is installed in a vehicle. The H-Motor can cut emissions, slash oil consumption and increase fuel flexibility for owners. The Eco-Motive H-motor can run on either gasoline or compressed natural gas (CNG), at a driver's prerogative. Each bank of the engine is powered exclusively by one of the two fuels; with the push of a button, the engine can switch



Eco-Motive H-Motor power plant

from the bank of cylinders fueled by gasoline to the other set using CNG, or vice versa. "The Eco-Motive H-Motor will allow drivers to be an active participant in the reduction of CO2 emissions," said Hens Louis, founder and CEO of Eco-Motive. "Simply switching to the CNG mode will empower drivers to chip away at the nega-

tive impact traditional combustion engines can have on the environment." The H-motor is fed by dual fuel tanks on either side of the drive shaft. A filler for each tank can be located on the side of the car. Exact specifications may vary depending upon the OEM. The engine was invented by Hens Louis, veteran of more than 30 years in the parts manufacturing industry ranging from automotive to aerospace, with a specialization in computerized parts machining. This twin-bank engine is a result of Louis's experience, along with his vision to help meet an emerging market need for more efficient, lower-exhaust CNG engines. "By 2020, about 95 percent of the engine market will still be dominated by internal combustion engines, with the remaining being represented by hybrid at four percent and pure electric at one percent," said Louis. "The prototype H-Motor is a significant milestone in our journey to create a viable, cost-effective alternative to these options. The Eco-Motive H-Power Motor will offer an efficient, long-range alternative to electric and hybrid powered vehicles and environmentally-friendly option to traditional internal combustion engines. Being part of the next phase of testing and implementation would be a great opportunity for individuals and companies seeking to invest in the future of the automotive market and positively impact our environment. In the

KEEP RIGHT >>

▼ A new **JATO Dynamics** report on the future of Electric Vehicles and Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFVs) includes several key findings. | A global drop in oil price hasn't dampened demand for AFVs, and targets



set by manufacturers and governments suggest growth will accelerate over the next ten years. Volkswagen Group alone is expected to sell between two and three million electric vehicles by 2025. | Japan is the world leader in AFV sales, but demand for them in China has soared by 160 percent. Japanese brand dominance is led by Toyota, which held a 65 percent market share of global HEV sales. | By 2023, AFVs will account for 14.2 percent of global passenger car sales in the US, Europe, Japan, China and India. Hybrids will continue to dominate the AFV market over upcoming years, accounting for two of every three AFVs sold by 2023. ■

▼ Rather than relying heavily on electronics or incorporating complex interfaces for controls, the **Lotus Exige Sport 380** is engineered for an undiluted drive experience. With a dry weight of just 2350 lb and a power-to-weight ratio of 352 hp per metric ton, this new pure-bred aims to outperform supercars. Zero-to-60 time is 3.5 seconds (with either manual or automatic) and top speed is 178 mph—and if your peripheral vision is good, you can watch this develop through the car's exposed shifter linkage. The Exige focuses on three key attributes: reduced weight, higher performance and honed aerodynamics. The new lineup leader, sitting above the Sport 350 model, the Exige Sport 380 has a 375-hp supercharged V6 and has shaved weight with high-gloss visible weave carbon fiber from front to rear,

including the front splitter, revised front access panel, new rear wing and rear diffuser surround; a lightweight, clear polycarbonate rear window; carbon race seats; lightweight lithium-ion battery;

ultra-lightweight forged wheels; and grooved two-piece brake discs. Even the lights save weight, with two rear clusters instead of four and backup and fog lamps moved inboard. Despite its avoidance of gimmickry, the Lotus Exige Sport 380 has Dynamic Performance Management with Sport and Race settings, proportionally increasing throttle response, lowering traction slip thresholds and removing understeer recognition. Shooting to be the best supercar under £100,000, the Lotus Exige Sport 380 starts at £67,900, or



about \$84,200 US before import.

▼ The **Mercedes-AMG GT3** will be racing in the most important North-American sports car series for the first time, as Riley Motorsports will run two Mercedes-AMG GT3 race cars in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship—one as "AMG-

Team Riley Motorsports and one as WeatherTech Racing, with sponsorship from the series' title sponsor. With SunEnergy1 Racing, one further Customer Sports car from Affalterbach also has been confirmed already. During the race weekends, Mercedes-AMG will have an on-site presence with a comprehensive service portfolio to support the teams.

▼ A new connected-car technology app from **Volvo** could end the need for time-consuming trips to the gas station, car wash, service and more. Volvo Concierge Services is the first expandable digital ecosystem that connects car owners with convenience services via a smartphone app, expanding upon Volvo's current On Call connected car app. A pilot program rolled out in November in the San Francisco Bay area allows 300 invited drivers of new Volvo XC90 SUVs and S90 luxury sedans to order services such as remote fuel delivery, valet car cleaning and Volvo maintenance. When connected through their mobile device, Volvo Concierge provides a one-time-use digital key, which is location and time-specific, and is sent to the authorized provider to access the vehicle. When services are complete, the car is locked and the digital key expires. The car can either be returned to where the customer left it or delivered to a completely new location at the customer's

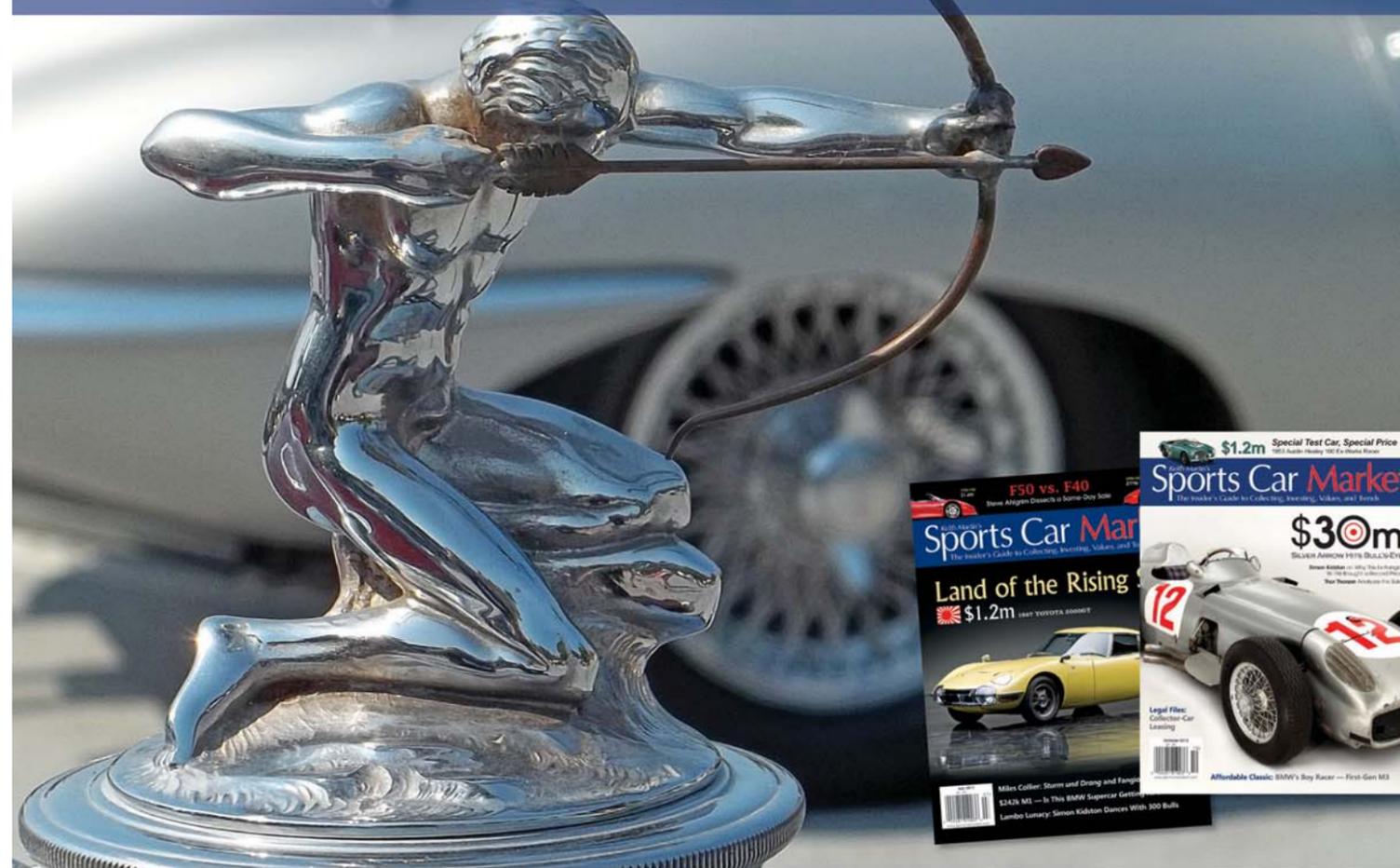
request. Seventy percent of consumers surveyed said they want fueling services at their fingertips, while 56 percent said they want their car taken for maintenance and 49 percent liked the idea of being able to have their car moved to another location. Additional services are anticipated in the future. ■

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SPECIAL EVENTS: AUCTIONS & SHOWS



Arizona Concours - 4th

The 4th Annual Arizona Concours d'Elegance has three panel discussions—auction week preview; pioneer women in racing; and race team owners—on Saturday; the Concours from 9am-4pm Sunday, featuring Lincoln, Vignale and Bugatti; and Monday's Tour d'Elegance with viewing in Old Town.

Arizona Biltmore, 24th & Camelback, Phoenix
Sunday, January 15, 2017
www.arizonaconcours.com



Jet Center Event - new

New from the folks who present Concorso Italiano (Monterey) and Desert Concorso (Palm Springs), visit JetLinx in Scottsdale for live music, jets, exotic and historic cars, wine, microbrew and spirits, fine art and a silent auction to benefit Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Tickets are \$115.

JetLinx, 7916 E Beck Lane, Scottsdale AZ 85260
Wednesday, January 18, 2017: 4-7pm
www.jetcenterevents.com



Barrett-Jackson - 46th

Eight cars set records at Barrett-Jackson's 45th Anniversary Auction in 2016, from a *Smokey and the Bandit* Trans Am T/A at \$555,000 to a 1947 Talbot-Lago T-26 Cabriolet at \$715,000. A total of 1,469 cars sold for over \$102 million, at 99 percent sell-through, with \$3.4 million raised for charity.

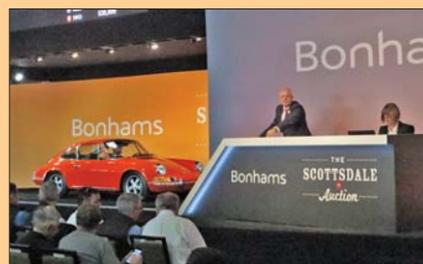
Westworld, Scottsdale
Nine days: Sat January 14 - Sun Jan 22, 2017
www.barrett-jackson.com > Scottsdale 2017



Gooding & Company - 10th

Gooding & Company Scottsdale auction in 2016 had sales of over \$43 million, with 86 percent sell-through and an average price of \$443,412 per car sold. Ferrari, Bugatti and Alfa Romeo were strong; a 1950 Ferrari 166 MM/195 S Berlinetta Le Mans set a new world auction record at \$6,490,000

Scottsdale Fashion Square
Friday/Saturday, January 20/21, viewing 18-21
www.goodingco.com/auction/scottsdale-2017



Bonhams - 6th

Bonhams' 5th annual sale in 2016 had an 84 percent sell-through rate, with over \$18 million in total sales, including a world auction record for a McLaren P1 at \$2,090,000 and other records including a new live auction record for a Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Dayton Berlinetta at \$1,155,000.

Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, Phoenix
Thursday, January 19, 2017
www.bonhams.com/auctions/23945



RM Sotheby's - 18th

RM sold the 1937 Mercedes-Benz 540 K Special Roadster shown above last year for an Arizona auction week record of \$9,900,000. Other highlights included a Cunningham at \$1,210,000, also a record, a 1939 Jaguar record at \$1,402,500 and a 1929 Duesenberg at \$3,000,000.

Arizona Biltmore, Phoenix
Thursday/Friday, January 19/20, viewing 18-20
www.rmsothebys.com/az17/arizona

Russo & Steele - 17th

Russo expanded to four days in Scottsdale last year and goes to five this year, with a new location. Last year's sales hit \$21.3 million on 723 lots offered with 521 sold, a 72 percent sell-through



and eleven percent growth over 2015. Top sale last year was a 2003 Saleen S7 at \$387,750

New location: Salt River Fields at Talking Stick
Wednesday-Sunday, January 18-22, 2017
www.russoandsteele.com/scottsdale

Silver Auctions - 20th

Vehicles at Silver are accessible to mere mortals. While \$10 million might buy one car at more stratospheric auctions, \$4 million could have bought



you all 288 vehicles sold here last January. Silver has three events in Arizona per year. Next up is March 17-19, then another in November.

Fort McDowell Resort & Casino, near Ftn Hills
Thursday-Sunday, January 19-22, 2017
www.silverauctions.com/auction_show.php

Worldwide - new

This new one-day auction, in south Scottsdale on the classic Motor Mile, brings the Auction Week count to seven. Based in Auburn, IN, Worldwide Auctioneers also has events there and in Houston.

6460 E McDowell Road, Scottsdale
Wednesday, January 18, VIP 3-5, auction 5pm
www.worldwide-auctioneers.com

Concours in the Hills - 4th

The 4th Annual Concours in the Hills, Saturday February 11, has an enlarged venue and new categories (off-road, military, motorcycles). Vehicle entry is a minimum \$50 donation to Boys & Girls Clubs. Spectator admission and parking are free.

Fountain Park, Fountain Hills
Saturday, February 11, 10am-3pm
www.concoursinthehills.org

Saturday 14	Sunday 15	Monday 16	Tuesday 17	Wednesday 18	Thursday 19	Friday 20	Saturday 21	Sunday 22
(Panels)	Concours	(Tour)						
Barrett-Jackson Auction								
				Bonhams				
				(Gooding viewing)		Gooding & Company		
				(RM preview)		RM Sotheby's		
				Russo and Steele				
				Silver Auctions				
Arizona Auction Week January 2017				Worldwide				

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Knocking 'em out of the ballpark

84 MPGe / 566-mile range / 33-mile electric-only range / EPA Green Vehicle Guide 10 rating – record-smashing early goals eclipsed even further in final testing by Joe Sage

The Chrysler Pacifica, introduced last spring in gasoline-engine form (an entirely new vehicle replacing the longstanding Town & Country in the lineup), already has a thousand tricks up its sleeve—seven-passenger seating (even with 32.3 cubic feet of luggage), Stow 'n Go seats (both second and third row, plus a button to tilt the front row while loading the second), a flat loading floor (with volume enough for 64 sheets of plywood), additional storage below the floor under the seats, a tri-pane panoramic sunroof for a spacious feeling front to rear, even a tough-duty in-vehicle vacuum cleaner with a 14-foot hose long enough to clean the whole area including your other car.

Calling the Pacifica innovative is an understatement. Now add another trick—really a bag of tricks—the all-new FCA eHybrid powertrain, an entirely new system FCA sees spreading through the majority of vehicles by 2025. Bearing both a

gasoline fuel filler on its rear flank and an electrical plug-in port on its front flank, this is not an electric vehicle, not a conventional hybrid, not like other plug-in hybrids and of course not a conventional gasoline vehicle. It's the best of all of the above, or better—what chief electrified powertrain engineer John Gibson calls a “blended plug-in hybrid,” with its gasoline engine joining the effort seamlessly whenever needed.

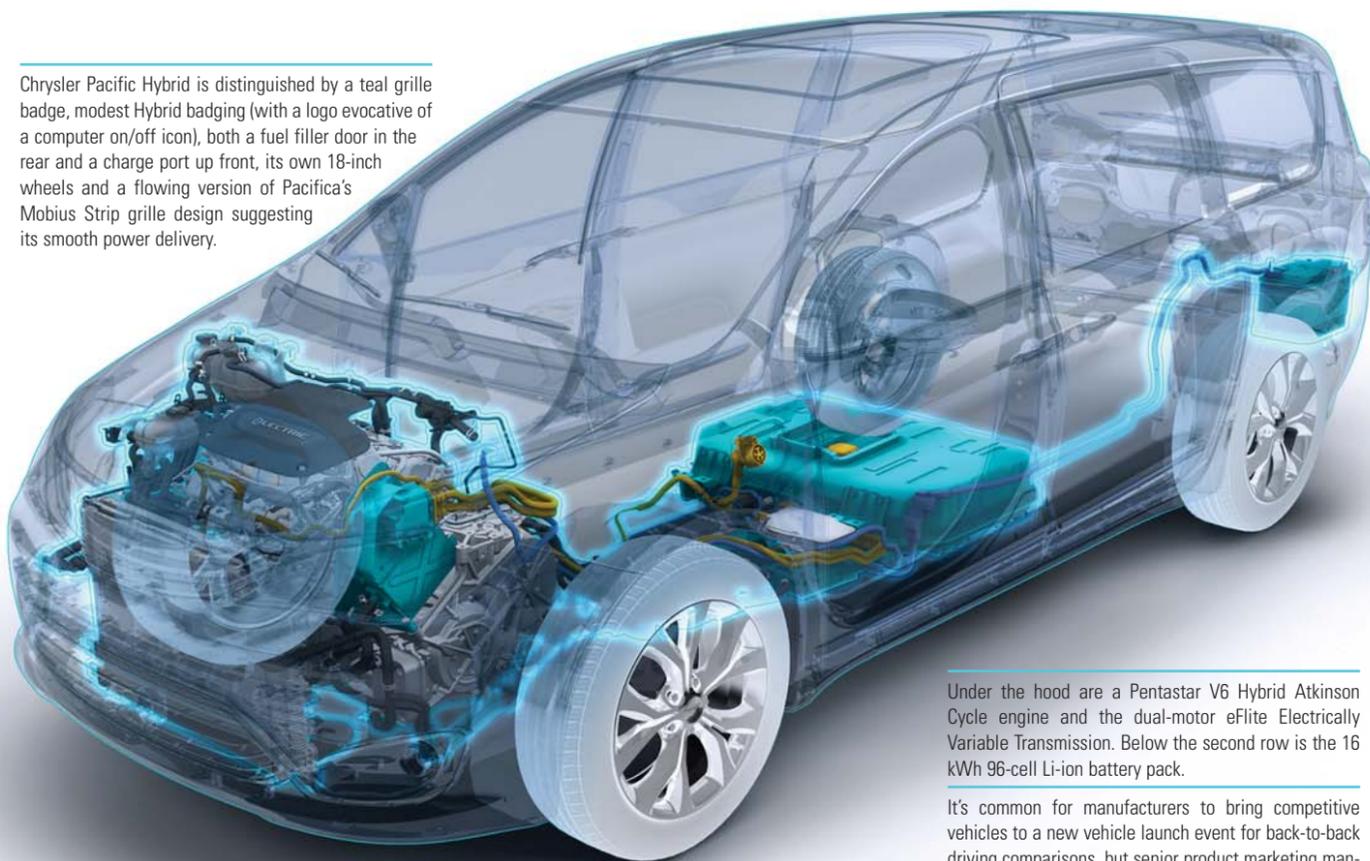
A key element of the Pacifica Hybrid is its eFlite dual-motor electrically variable transmission, developed in-house to deliver both powertrain efficiency and normal fully functional minivan duty. Most electrification schemes have one motor dedicated as a generator and a second, usually much larger, to send torque to the wheels. But Pacifica Hybrid's one-way clutch allows the motor typically used only as a generator to deliver torque to the wheels, depending on driving conditions.

The average daily commute is under 30 miles, and the Pacifica Hybrid can get you around town for “days, weeks, even months without a gas station,” says senior product marketing manager Matt McAlear. Yet a minivan also says take me somewhere and bring everybody and everything—and for this, the vehicle can run conventionally.

Pacifica uses regenerative braking for additional charging power in normal deceleration, but below 8 mph—or in a high demand situation—the van applies full friction braking.

Advanced aerodynamics achieve a Cd of 0.3, an industry best, and in the Pacific Hybrid, it's what chief engineer Kevin Mets calls a “bonus benefit”—all the more energy converted to range.

Engineers shaved 240 pounds to accommodate hybrid components while also offsetting battery weight. The 96-cell, 16-kWh lithium-ion battery pack is located under the second-row floor, keep-



Chrysler Pacific Hybrid is distinguished by a teal grille badge, modest Hybrid badging (with a logo evocative of a computer on/off icon), both a fuel filler door in the rear and a charge port up front, its own 18-inch wheels and a flowing version of Pacifica's Mobius Strip grille design suggesting its smooth power delivery.

Under the hood are a Pentastar V6 Hybrid Atkinson Cycle engine and the dual-motor eFlite Electrically Variable Transmission. Below the second row is the 16 kWh 96-cell Li-ion battery pack.

It's common for manufacturers to bring competitive vehicles to a new vehicle launch event for back-to-back driving comparisons, but senior product marketing manager Matt McAlear pointedly noted, “there are none.”



ing the rear cargo area as flat-floored and roomy as ever, with third-row Stow 'n Go seating and room for seven passengers. The Hybrid forgoes second row Stow 'n Go and loses the gasoline model's under-floor storage space to the battery. (In the wonderful world of tradeoff assessments, our codriver at the vehicle's launch event said he actually preferred the Hybrid's second-row seats.)

The Hybrid also is not recommended for towing, while the gasoline version tows 3600 pounds.

Recharging takes as little as two hours with a dealer-available Mopar 240-volt Level 2 charger.

With a 120-volt Level 1 charger (included with the vehicle), a full charge takes about 14 hours.

The wheels are powered by the electric drive system or, when the battery's energy is depleted to a certain threshold, supplemented by an Atkinson Cycle hybrid version of FCA's widely acclaimed Pentastar 3.6-liter V6 gasoline engine (three times named to the Wards 10 Best Engines list).

Family utility rules throughout the Pacifica's interior, with cupholders, map pockets, even seat-



SPECIFICATIONS

SEATING	.....7 (2/2/3)
ENGINE	.....3.6L Pentastar V6 Hybrid (Atkinson Cycle), transverse mount
DRIVETRAIN	.....FWD
BATTERY PACK	.....High voltage, 96 cell Li-ion, 16kWh total energy, 360 V nominal
TOTAL SYSTEM POWER	.....est 260 hp
TRANSMISSION	.....eFlite EVT Electrically Variable with dual-motor/one-way clutch EV drive capability
SUSPENSION	.....F: indep MacPherson strut, coil over gas shocks, stabilizer bar w hydroformed steel perimeter cradle R: indep twist-blade w coils, twin-tube shocks w integrated rebound springs
STEERING	.....electric rack & pinion
BRAKES	.....F: 13.0 vent, R: 13.0 solid 1-piston
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....203.8 in / 121.6 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.7 ft
LEG ROOM F/2/3	.....41.1 / 39.0 / 36.5 in
HEAD ROOM F/2/3	.....40.1 / 39.6 / 38.7 in
INTERIOR VOLUME	.....197.3 cu.ft
Passenger vol max	.....165.0 cu.ft
Cargo behind F/2/3	.....140.5 / 87.5 / 32.3 cu.ft
CARGO WIDTH AT WHEELS	.....48.8 in
LIFTOVER HEIGHT	.....24.3 in
WEIGHT/DISTRIB	.....4943 lb / 56.5/43.5
DRAG COEF (Cd) / AERO Cda	.....0.300 / 9.95
FUEL CAPACITY / FUEL	.....17 gal / 87 oct reg
MPG	.....in full electric mode 84 MPGe
DRIVING RANGE	.....566 miles
DRIVING RANGE ELECTRIC-ONLY	.....33 miles
EPA GREEN VEHICLE GUIDE RATING	.....*10
	*(best possible—a first for any minivan)

BASE PRICE PREMIUM	.....\$41,995
BASE PRICE PLATINUM	.....\$44,995
Less \$7500 federal tax credit, from	.....\$34,495



E-Flite Electrically Variable Transmission

A core component of the Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid's eHybrid system is its E-Flite Electrically Variable Transmission (above), an in-house development which operates in both electric vehicle (EV) or hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) modes, utilizing two electric machines and planetary gear set with one-way clutch. The innovative one-way clutch enables both electric machines to drive the front wheels in electric-only mode.

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back grocery bag hooks. The Pacifica Hybrid's interior—conceived as both a tool and an object of desire—emphasizes wide open space, functional “islands,” precision control points, an 8.4-inch Uconnect touchscreen plus a gesture-pad remote control, a pass-through console, and a drawer big enough for your iPad. A charge indicator sits at top center of the instrument panel, and the electric blue of efficiency instrumentation is reflected in teal interior stitching and a teal logo embedded in the steering wheel.

Layers of technical information include Hybrid Electric Pages in the touchscreen, with charging schedules and other information; a smartphone app providing the vehicle's current charge state, plus charging locations and schedules; and in the binnacle, customizable displays for battery and fuel levels, driving range and your own “onboard efficiency coach” to inform and motivate.

The 8.4-inch touchscreen is augmented by a 7-inch color cluster display. Premium audio by Alpine and Harman Kardon have up to 20 speakers and 760 watts, and Pacifica's all-new Uconnect Theater rear seat entertainment includes two 10-inch screens, wireless headphones and 115-volt power.

At the launch of the Pacifica six months prior, Chrysler had shown us a prototype of the hybrid version that would follow. It's not uncommon to release variants of a new model in phases, but the Pacifica Hybrid introduces so many break-

throughs, the team was surely devoting additional long hours to perfecting it. And perfect it they did, even beyond their own expectations.

Exceeding initial program targets, the Pacifica Hybrid has earned a fuel economy rating of 84 MPGe (miles-per-gallon-equivalent) from the EPA—no other minivan has ever come close to this rating. The results reflect combined city- and highway-cycle performance in electric-only mode, representing the distance a vehicle can travel using the same energy content as a gallon of gasoline. (FCA's target had been 80 MPGe.)

The 2017 Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid also achieves an EPA-tested total driving range of 566 miles (beating their goal of 530), and an electric-only range of 33 miles (against a goal of 30).

The EPA also gave Pacifica Hybrid the highest possible score of 10 in its Green Vehicle Guide, related to combined performance on fuel economy and greenhouse-gas emissions.

The EPA estimates the 2017 Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid's annual fuel cost—gas and electricity combined—at \$900. Purchase price starts at \$34,495 after an available \$7500 federal tax credit, and state and local incentives may also apply.

Pacifica has won the most awards in its category, and interest has been sky-high—online visits quickly shot from 5000 a day for Town & Country to 27,000 for the new Pacifica. Chrysler figures enthusiasm for the Hybrid will follow suit. ■



A workhorse of a different color

The all-new Honda Ridgeline does things utilities can't and a few things other midsize pickups don't by Joe Sage

The Honda Ridgeline has always filled a different niche in the pickup realm. The first was revealed in 2005, billed as the reinvention of the pickup. Reinvented anew for 2017, Ridgeline now fills its different niche differently—much more like a pickup truck, and a clever one, at that.

The modern pickup has been reinvented before—Ford Ranchero, Chevy El Camino, Subaru Brat, Chevy Avalanche, Cadillac Escalade. From B- or C-pillar forward, they are virtually indistinguishable from the car or SUV they derived from, while in the back is a bit of an open pickup bed.

As with gen one, the second-generation Honda Ridgeline shares fundamentals with the seven- or eight-passenger Honda Pilot SUV, which itself had entered a new generation (its third) for 2016. We

welcomed the Pilot's restyling, less chunky than its predecessor—nicer on a crossover, but less truck-like—and wondered how it would translate to the Ridgeline, which would inevitably follow.

Here it is, and it's a beauty, trucklike or not.

Unlike a traditional pickup with separate cab and bed on a ladder frame, Ridgeline is unit-body-built, enhancing aerodynamics. Lacking the rigidity of a full-cabin SUV, the gen-one Ridgeline added strength with a full-blown buttress structure from cab to bed (somewhat like Avalanche and Escalade). The new Ridgeline uses ultra-high-strength hot-stamped steel, aluminum and magnesium, with fully boxed frame members for body sides and tailgate. An unobtrusive high-strength hoop surrounding the rear edge of the cab and connect-

ing to the bed also plays a role. It all adds up to a 28 percent more rigid chassis, for handling, safety, ride comfort and better fuel efficiency.

Ridgeline rides on fully independent front and rear suspension with reactive dampers and has earned the highest 5-Star NHTSA crash rating.

We first drove the new Honda Ridgeline off-road at the highly competitive Texas Truck Rodeo, on the full off-road course, where the toughest pickups and utilities compete. They wouldn't designate it for that unless they knew it could meet or beat every challenge, and it did.

We then drove it for a week back home in Arizona. It's well known that a lot of people buy pickups without any strict, traditional need for them, and in fact sales are on the upswing. The new



Ridgeline feels like a crossover and provides a very enjoyable daily drive, with 70 percent of the inside utility of the Honda Pilot and a thousand percent of the outside utility, by virtue of its bed.

The interior is much like the Pilot, ours with leather seats, 8-inch touchscreen with Apple/Android, clean and intuitive controls, and some of the best backup and surround cameras in the business. You buy the Ridgeline instead of the Pilot for its bed. And here, a great deal of extra attention has been paid to design and execution. Of note are its outdoor audio system, power outlet, in-bed trunk, large flat load surface and tailgate.

The audio system won Best Technology Award at the Texas Truck Rodeo. No need to crank up the tunes and leave the doors open at the barbecue—top trims get 540-watt audio with six weather-proof audio exciters, two each in the bed side and rear walls. Their resonance turns the bed walls into speakers, controlled via the head unit inside.

A 400-watt AC power outlet is also built in.

Ridgeline's weather-tight 7.3 cu.ft. locking in-bed trunk is perfect for travel, projects, golf bags and coolers and includes removable dividers, bag hooks and a drain plug for washing it out. It also contains the jack, tools and spare.

The bed in the Ridgeline is not eight feet long, as in the biggest pickups, but unlike midsize pickups, it's over four feet wide—flat. For carrying building materials, professionally or for weekend projects, this is indispensable and quite a coup.

Ridgeline's dual-action tailgate can drop down flat for extended loads or open like a door.

A Class III tow hitch and high-capacity radiator are standard. AWD models add a heavy-duty transmission cooler and 7-pin wiring harness and can tow 5000 pounds. 2WD models tow 3500 pounds. The hitch also doubles as an attachment point for a Honda accessory bicycle rack.

The original Ridgeline turned heads and generated questions. The new one did the same all week, but with a clear layer of buyer's lust added. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

BODY/CHASSIS...integrated closed-box frame with unit-body construction; seats 5
ENGINE ...3.5L SOHC 24v I-VTEC direct inj V6
DRIVETRAIN...AWD (FWD avail lower trims)
HP/TORQUE280 hp / 262 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION6-spd auto
SUSPENSION: F: MacPherson strut; R: multi-link; stabilizers: F: 25mm solid, R: 26.5 tubular
STEERING...motion-adapt elec rack & pinion
BRAKESF: 12.6 vented / R: 13.0 solid disc
WHEELS/TIRES ...18x8 machine-finished alloy
TIRES.....245/60 R18 / compact spare
LNTH/WB/TURN CIRC210.0" / 125.2" / 44.4'
BED WIDTH.....50" wheel wells, 60" bed walls
BED LENGTH...64.0" / 83.0" (tailgate up/down)
IN-BED TRUNK7.3 cu.ft
APPRCH/BRKVR/DEPART ...20.1° / 19.6° / 22.1°
WEIGHT(RLT-E AWD) 4515 lb
PAYLOAD / TOW CAPACITY1499 lb / 5000 lb
MPG.....18/25/21 (city/hwy/comb)

INCLUDES: Leather, 8-sprk premium audio, 8-in touchscreen, nav, rear camera, 4.2-in multi-info display, Apple/Android, next-gen HondaLink, tri-zone climate, keyless, heated seats, power rear window, power moonroof, front/rear park sensors, traction mgmt, fog lights, remote start, more

BASE PRICE\$41,370
DESTINATION CHARGE.....900
TOTAL\$42,270



LA AUTO SHOW

NOVEMBER 2016

The Los Angeles Auto Show is the first of the major international shows on the calendar and the handiest to Arizona, a 45-minute flight or six-hour drive away.

As consumer electronics, the automotive industry and urban planning continue to converge at a furious pace, the LA Auto Show Press and Trade Days were officially merged with the Connected Car Expo this year, under the title of AutoMobility LA. Ultimately, it wasn't that different—so far—with automotive manufacturers bringing their latest production model reveals, concepts and technological advances. Here are some highlights (alphabetically).

- The 2018 **Alfa Romeo** Stelvio midsize SUV brings the sexy and potent Italian brand into the utility realm with three models, from a 280-hp turbo to a line-topping 505-hp Stelvio Quadrifoglio with intercooled biturbo 2.9L V6 and race mode. All models have Q4 all-wheel drive standard.

- **Audi** introduced a new Q5 crossover, immediately recognizable by the sharpened grille making its way through the lineup and with an updated infotainment system. / The new Audi A5 and S5 Sportback models are a new breed, combining two of our favorites—an A5 with four doors, but more like an A7 in a bit smaller size.

- The **Chevrolet** Colorado ZR2 midsize pickup is a concept, but we'd be surprised if it didn't come to market, unchanged we hope. Taking on Tacoma TRD Pro, it has wider track, lifted suspension, electronic locking differentials, and increased approach and breakover angles. It also looks great. Chevy promises a ZR2 diesel option.

- **Elio** revealed its E1c engineering vehicle with enhanced frame, suspension and safety system (see *Briefs & Rumors* at back of book).

- The big news from **Ford** is its subcompact EcoSport utility, available with Ford's peppy 1.0L three-cylinder or a 2.0L four, the latter also with four-wheel drive. Ford EcoSport includes SYNC 3 with an 8-inch touchscreen, B&O PLAY audio from Harman, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

- The newly separate **Genesis** brand introduced



• 2018 Alfa Romeo Stelvio



• 2018 Audi A5/S5 Sportback



• Chevrolet Colorado ZR2 concept



• 2019 Ford EcoSport



• 2018 Genesis G80 3.3T Sport



• 2017 Honda Civic Si prototype



• 2017 Hyundai IONIQ Electric



• Jaguar I-PACE concept



• Jaguar XKSS continuation car



• 2017 Jeep® Compass



• 2017 Kia Soul Turbo



• 2018 Lamborghini Huracán rear-drive Spyder

a G80 3.3T Sport trim, which adds a 365-hp 3.3L twin-turbo V6 to the existing 5.0L V8 and 3.6L offerings in the G80 lineup. Add continuous damping control suspension, dark chrome and copper accent trim, leather sport seats, carbon fiber interior trim, aluminum sport pedals and 19-inch dark alloy wheels. The 3.3T Sport's 9.2-inch touchscreen accesses Lexicon premium audio. Genesis G80 3.3T Sport comes in Polar Ice or Sevilla Red. (See our drive review of the 5.0L V8 in this issue.)

- **Honda** revealed a Civic Si prototype, indicating near-final details of the Civic Si Coupe and Civic Si Sedan coming to market for 2017, the final members of this tenth-generation favorite. Power comes from a high-torque 1.5L DOHC/DVTC turbo through a 6-speed manual transmission. The interior, shown in radical Type-R trim, has front sport seats and red stitching.

- The **Hyundai** IONIQ Electric not only provides emissions-free transportation, but also introduces subscription-based ownership, in which owners can select one fixed payment that includes unlimited mileage, electric charging costs, scheduled maintenance, wear items and all typical purchase fees such as registration. The IONIQ Unlimited ownership experience will be available first in California in early 2017.

- Their first electric vehicle, the **Jaguar** I-PACE concept is on its way to a production reveal later in 2017 and sales in 2018. Its electric drivetrain allows for an aggressive cab-forward design, providing large interior space in a footprint smaller than midsize. I-PACE is projected to provide a 300-mile range per NEDC cycle or 220 miles per EPA. / Jaguar also celebrates the past, showing off their XKSS continuation car, built over an 18-month period, one of nine being built by Jaguar to exacting original specifications—replacing nine (out of a total of just 25 destined for North America) that were lost in a fire originally, almost 60 years ago. The cars will cost their lucky owners over \$1 million each and are sure to appreciate from there.

- Highly anticipated for the past year or two, an all-new compact **Jeep®** Compass replaces both

the prior Compass and Jeep Patriot, and then some, starting with gotta-have-it styling and delivering new advanced 4x4 systems, a 30-mpg 2.4L Tigershark engine and choice of transmissions—a 9-speed automatic or 6-speed manual for 4x4 models, and 6-speed auto or manual for 4x2 models. The new Compass has a fourth-gen Uconnect system including Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, with choice of 5-, 7- or 8.4-inch pinch/zoom touchscreens. And yes—there is a Trailhawk version, with 30/24/34-degree approach/breakover/departure angles, 20:1 crawl ratio, 17-inch tires, up to 19 inches of water fording and up to 2000-pound tow capacity. / Jeep also introduced two new Renegade models, the Trail Rated Deserthawk and a blacked-out Renegade Altitude.

- **Kia** adds power to its Soul with the new 201-hp Soul Turbo, a boost of 40 hp and 45 lb-ft to its 1.6L GDI engine in turbocharged form. The Soul Turbo's fuel economy is 28 mpg combined, which is actually above that of the 161-hp 2.0L version or the 1.6L naturally aspirated base model—win-win. The Soul Turbo also brings a new 7-speed DCT and is recognizable by 18-inch wheels, red and chrome body accents and dual chrome twin-tip exhausts. (Watch for our drive review in the next issue.)

- **Lamborghini** expands its Huracán lineup with a rear-drive Spyder, offering open-top roadrunning with traditional sports handling. The rear-drive Spyder has distinctive front and rear styling to differentiate it from the AWD version, and a 580-hp naturally-aspirated 5.2L V12 engine offering 0-to-62 acceleration in 3.6 seconds and a top speed of 198 mph. Its dry weight of just 3327 pounds provides a weight-to-power ratio of just 5.74 pounds per horsepower. The rear-drive Spyder's price falls between rear-drive and AWD Huracán coupe pricing.

- To introduce the new **Lexus** IS sports sedan, the company turned up the heat with a one-off spicy Sriracha IS build. Its red paint with chili-like

KEEP RIGHT >>



• 2017 Lexus Sriracha IS



• Lincoln Navigator concept



• Mazda FT24-P prototype race car



• Porsche 919 RSR hybrid racecar



• 2017 Ram Rebel / Sport special editions



• Subaru VIZIV-7 concept

flakes includes actual Sriracha hot sauce. A cast-resin "liquid" steering wheel promises hot handling; seat warmers and HVAC are upgraded to Sriracha hot; and there are bright green accents inside and out. The car included 43 bottles of Sriracha in the trunk, in case things start to cool off.

• **Lincoln** went all out with an over-the-top concept for a new version of its Navigator full-size luxury SUV, complete with gullwing doors and concertina triple steps. Taking cues from the yachting world, the Navigator has teak finishes inside, as well as a "wardrobe management system." The big utility is wired in every way, including WiFi and seatback monitors for rear passengers.

• **Mazda** revealed their RT24-P prototype race car for North America, which will compete under Daytona Prototype international (DPI) rules in the Prototype class, the top level of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. It will make its racing debut at the 2017 Rolex 24 at Daytona in late January. / Mazda also revealed an all-new CX-5 compact crossover, refreshingly familiar yet updated top to bottom, inside and out. The new CX-5 will be available with 2.0L and 2.5L gasoline engines and also adds a 2.2L SKYACTIV-D clean diesel powerplant to the lineup.

• The new **Mercedes-Maybach S650 Cabriolet** is a limited edition of just 300, of which just 75 are coming to the US (in choices of red, white or blue). Powered by a 6.0L biturbo V12, the car has 621 hp, 20-inch Maybach forged wheels and bichromatic paint. Based on the Mercedes-Benz S-Class, the Mercedes-Maybach S650 cabrio is a four-seater.

• **MINI** continues to grow larger, as their new Countryman becomes their biggest model ever. There are three models—Cooper, Cooper S and a plug-in hybrid Cooper S E—with all ALL4 models having turbocharged engines. The plug-in hybrid is powered by a 3-cylinder engine and electric motor, with 221 hp combined and electric power to the rear axle in ALL4 models.

• The **Mitsubishi eX** concept presents three major elements in a compact SUV format: an electric drivetrain, an evolutionary Dynamic Shield

styling direction for the brand, and autonomous driving capabilities. Its twin-motor configuration delivers power to both axles, for Mitsubishi S-AWC (super all-wheel control) 4WD, three drive modes automatically provide real-time road surface feedback, and new lightweight battery technology delivers about a 250-mile range.

• **Nissan** drew a lot of booth attention with their compact crossover Rogue One Star Wars Limited Edition, complete with Stormtrooper sensibilities. / Nissan also presented a Sentra NISMO with full performance treatment, including a 188-hp 1.6L turbo and a choice between 6-speed manual or tuned Xtronic transmission. Sentra NISMO joins five other models in the Sentra lineup.

• **Porsche** lit things up with their 919 RSR hybrid race car, built for Le Mans 24 Hours GT, with engine, transmission, suspension and body all designed from scratch and a top-mounted rear wing adapted from the LMP1 race car. This is a midengine 911, with its 510-hp four-liter flat-six mounted in front of the rear axle. For the first time, this Porsche GT racer has a radar-supported collision warning system, as well as a new safety cage and a chassis-mounted seat (pedals are moved to fit the driver). The Porsche 919 RSR is debuting at the Daytona 24-hour race in January.

• **Ram** introduced two special pickups. The new limited-edition Ram 1500 Rebel Mojave Sand brings a new color in this \$595 package, which also includes black-decaled performance hood, all-black interior including black anodized bezels and black upholstery with grey stitching. The Ignition Orange Ram 1500 Sport (a \$1595 package) returns for a limited production of just 1500 units (all V8 Crew Cabs), featuring vivid monochrome paint, performance hood with black decals and special black badging.

• Generally known for smaller vehicles, **Subaru** is taking a look at how big they can go, with the full-size three-row VIZIV-7 SUV concept, 204.7 inches long, on a 117.7-inch wheelbase, putting it in the size range of an Acura MDX, Ford Expedition or Chevy Tahoe, but with three rows of seat-



• 2017 Mercedes-Maybach S650 Cabriolet



• 2018 MINI Countryman



• Mitsubishi eX electric concept



• 2017 Nissan Rogue One Star Wars Limited Edtn

ing as in a Suburban or that MDX. Subaru expects to bring such a vehicle to market in early 2018.

• Introduced as a concept at the LA Auto Show last year by now-defunct sub-brand scion, the production 2018 **Toyota C-HR**, a subcompact utility—or, as its name signifies, a Coupe High-Rider—carries the design through faithfully. In two model grades, both loaded with premium features, the vehicle seems poised to tackle much the same market in which the premium subcompact Buick Encore has been such a surprise hit.

• **Volkswagen** has recently sworn off diesels in the US market and is putting an increased emphasis on electric. Their new 2017 VW e-Golf is a new generation (as are all Golfs) of their prior electric model, now with 50 percent greater range, about 120 miles, enough for many commuters to go all week, with about an 18 percent power boost, to boot. / Also revealed was the all-new 2018 Volkswagen Atlas, a seven-passenger SUV that will be the brand's largest vehicle in our market, offered with a choice of 2.0L TSI four turbo or 3.6L VR6, both with 8-speed automatics and choice of front-wheel or 4Motion all-wheel drive.

• **Volvo** brings both its wagon and its rugged all-weather Cross Country treatment to the 90 Series—making that lineup complete—in the new V90 Cross Country. / The Volvo S60 sedan and V60 wagon get upgrades to their Polestar performance versions, with a 362-hp Drive-E powertrain.

The LA Auto Show is also a major announcement venue for a variety of awards, including:

• The all-electric 2017 **Chevrolet Bolt** was *Green Car Journal* 2017 Green Car of the Year. Finalists included the BMW 330e iPerformance, Chrysler Pacifica, Kia Optima and Toyota Prius Prime.

• **Subaru** received the Best Overall Mainstream Brand Residual Value Award from ALG, the analytics division of TrueCar Inc.

• The 2017 **Dodge** Charger earned the Residual Value Award in the full-size category from ALG for its third year in a row.

• *Consumer Guide Automotive* awarded the **Kia**

Soul its Best Buy Award for 2017 in the Subcompact Car segment for the third year in a row.

• The all-new 2017 **Chrysler** Pacifica is winner of the *Kelley Blue Book* Best Buy Awards.

• *Kelley Blue Book* named the 2017 **Toyota** Prius Prime as the Electric/Hybrid Best Buy of 2017.

• *Kelley Blue Book* awarded Best Buy of the Year for small SUVs/crossovers to the fourth-gen **Kia** Sportage, the brand's longest running nameplate.

• The all-new 2017 **Ford** F-Series Super Duty won the 2017 *Motor Trend* Truck of the Year title, the first time for Super Duty.

• **Ford** Motor Company was honored for the second time for its water conservation efforts by CDP, an international not-for-profit that drives sustainable economies.

• Strategic Vision gave the 2016 **Kia** Sorento a Most Loved Vehicle award in the highly-competitive midsize crossover segment.

• The **North American Car, Truck and Utility Vehicle of the Year** awards for excellence in innovation, design, safety, performance, technology, driver satisfaction and value, judged by about 60 automotive journalists from the US and Canada, announced their finalists: Car of the Year: Chevrolet Bolt, Genesis G90 and Volvo S90; Truck of the Year: Ford F-Series Super Duty, Honda Ridgeline and Nissan Titan; and Utility Vehicle of the Year: Chrysler Pacifica, Jaguar F-PACE and Mazda CX-9. Truck of the Year can include pickups and light/medium commercial vans. Utility Vehicle of the Year, new for 2017, can include passenger minivans. The 2017 Car, Truck and Utility Vehicle of the Year are announced in January at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

• LA-based Motor Press Guild—North America's largest automotive media association—revealed **Jean Jennings** as 2016 recipient of the MPG Dean Batchelor Lifetime Achievement Award.

The LA Auto Show was rich with reveals this year, and the manufacturers always have more on tap for the next round of shows. Up next, domestically: Detroit, Chicago and New York. ■



• 2018 Toyota C-HR



• 2017 Volkswagen e-Golf



• 2018 Volkswagen Atlas



• 2017 Volvo V90 Cross Country

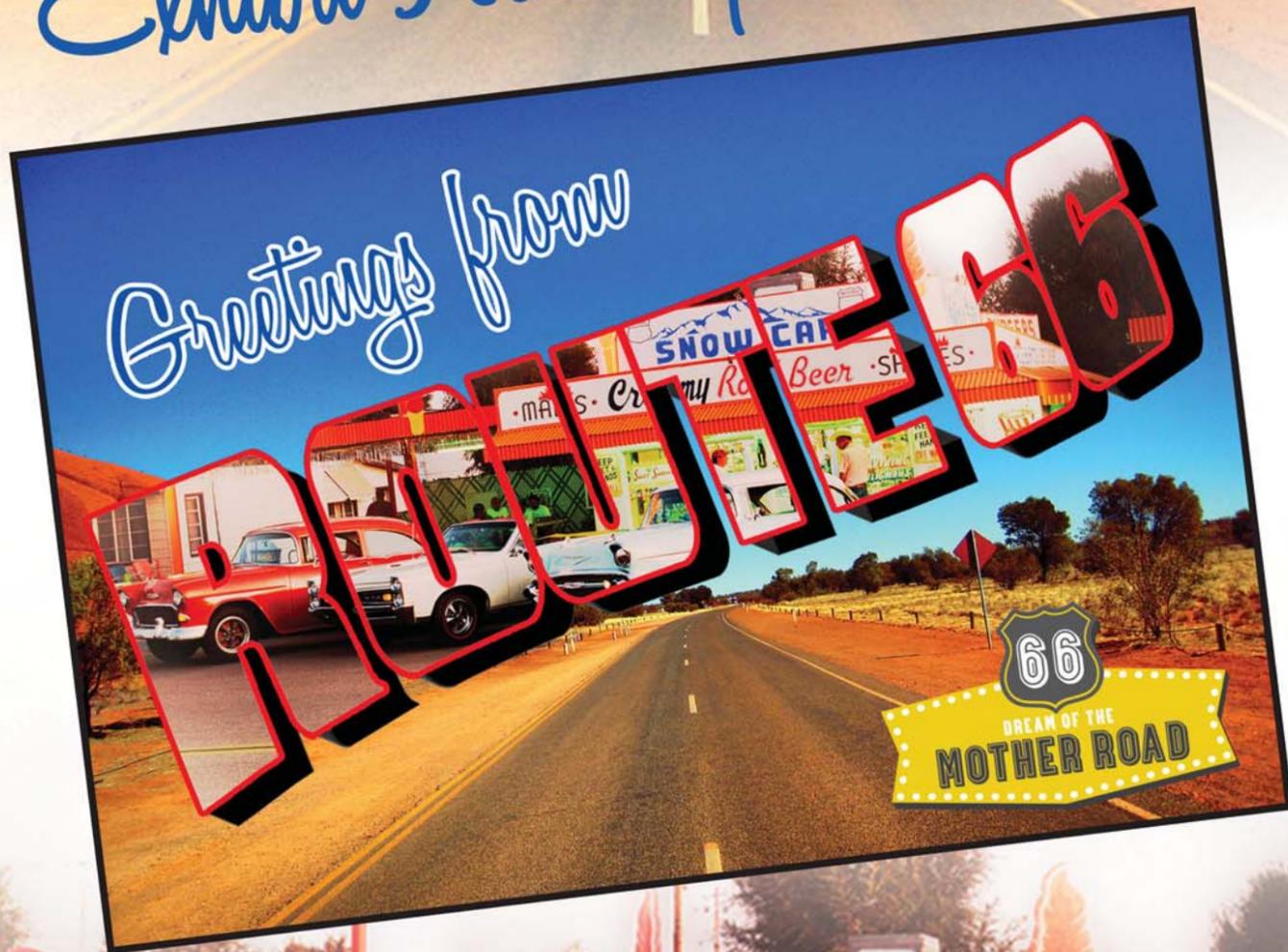


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VEHICLE IMPRESSION : 2017 GENESIS G80 5.0 RWD

Statement.

This understated premium brand leaves a big impression. By Joe Sage



Genesis G80 is both mostly completely new and completely completely new. Mostly, because it was a totally revised gen-two vehicle for 2015. Completely, because Genesis is now a stand-alone brand, rather than a model in the Hyundai lineup. Equus makes the same transition, and then some; while the Hyundai Genesis Sedan has become the Genesis G80, the Hyundai Equus is now the Genesis G90. It's equal parts learning curve and simplification. Simplification dominates, as neither Genesis nor Equus ever bore a Hyundai badge, so many may never even notice a change occurred. And Equus becoming Genesis is another layer of simplification. Genesis still falls under the greater Hyundai Motor America umbrella, a setup not dissimilar to, say, Ford and Lincoln—both have a volume brand sharing the parent company's name, as well as a premium/luxury brand.

For now, Genesis gets a boutique showroom-within-a-showroom at Hyundai dealerships. Equus always kept their customers separate from the Hyundai dealer experience with a program of compli-

mentary maintenance with valet pick up and drop off, and this now covers all of Genesis, both for separation on site and for the premium experience itself that the brand promises its buyers.

Genesis G80 seeks to pull buyers from such established premium brands as Audi, BMW and Lexus, by offering a meticulously finished and highly furnished alternative—premium leather, wood and aluminum inlays, 17-speaker premium audio, full electronics and more—at an aggressively competitive price (and still with that famous 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain warranty).

The rear-drive 420-hp 5.0L V8 sample here is, in fact, the priciest. There are also 311-hp 3.3L V6 models available in both rear- and all-wheel-drive versions, at \$41,400 and \$43,900. And a new 365-hp twin-turbo Genesis G80 3.3T Sport was just revealed at the LA Auto Show, showing up at dealers this spring (pricing to be determined).

Genesis has already been converting premium shoppers, in droves. Proven sales success has been, in itself, one of the prime motivators for the brand to split off as it continues its climb. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....5.0L DOHC GDI & dual CVT alum V8
HP/TORQUE	.....(w/prem fuel) 420 hp / 383 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION / DRIVETRAIN	.....8-spd auto / RWD
BRAKES	....FR: 14.2 vent 4 piston / R: 12.4 solid discs
STEERING	.....rack-mount elec power w/var ratio
SUSPENSION	.....FR: indep 5-link w/high-perf gas shocks, coils and solid stabilizer bar; R: same
WHEELS	....F: 19x8.5, R: 19x9.0 dark silver alum alloy
LENGTH / WB / CARGO	....196.5 in / 118.5 in / 15.3 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....4541 lb
MPG	.....15/23/18 (city/hwy/comb)

INCLUDES: Intelligent drive modes: eco-normal-sport-snow, matte wood and aluminum trim, auto bi-xenon HD headlights, LED DRLs/fogs, heated/cooled premium leather, dual zone climate, 16-way/12-way power front seats, rear camera/guides, front/rear park sensors, 7" multi-info display, heads-up display, 9.2" touchscreen w/ nav, Lexicon 17-speaker audio, hands-free power trunk

BASE PRICE	.....\$54,550
OPTIONS: Cargo tray	.....100
First aid kit	.....45
Wheel locks	.....55
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....950

TOTAL	.....\$55,700
Powertrain warranty	.....10-year / 100,000-mile
Complimentary sched maintenance	.....3-year / 36,000-mile
Complimentary maintenance valet	.....3-year / 36,000-mile



THE PERFECT FIT

PIRELLI AND TOP AUTO MANUFACTURERS JOIN EFFORTS TO CREATE THE PERFECT FIT BETWEEN SPECIFIC CAR AND TIRE BY JOE SAGE

Few brands have the rarified reputation of Pirelli, and probably none other has their panache (or "brio" in italiano). This comes from racing heritage, from OEM heritage, from its Italian flair, even from the famous Pirelli calendar girls...but above all, it comes from product.

Tire engineering is fascinating. We all hurtle down the highway with two or three tons of inertial force, confident that our vehicle's steering, brakes, electronic stability control and our own presumed skills behind the wheel—as well as a protective steel cage, belts and airbags—are a formidable barrier against catastrophe. Yet it really all comes down to four very small contact patches of rubber compounds against the road.

We joined Pirelli in Las Vegas recently for a

look at their latest P Zero™ range, starting with an evening presentation. Four elegant Italian supermodels opened the show, cruising gracefully down the fashion runway, when suddenly a heel gave way, triggering an unfortunate stumble and impending fall. Nobody wants that. Not on the runway and not on the road. As 40 concerned journalists started out of their seats to help, they realized it was all a dramatically entertaining part of the show, demonstrating the importance of a contact patch. As surely as the loss of that quarter-square-inch of heel could have sent all that beauty and science toward a potentially devastating crash, so could the wrong tires on your car.

Tire engineers are a tireless bunch. Every pattern, every sipe, every groove has a purpose, and

collectively each tire is geared toward a certain type of use. And even to a certain general type of car. And in many cases to its position on the car, left or right, front or rear.

But Pirelli is taking this all a step further with the new P Zero—engineering each tire to a specific brand and model of car. Once you think about it this way, the alternative starts to feel no more appropriate than a one-size-fits-all pair of pants.

Through the Pirelli Perfect Fit strategy, P Zero OEM-marked tires have been engineered in close collaboration with specific vehicle manufacturers, each the result of years of dedicated research and development for each car's unique characteristics and technical requirements.

The new P Zero comes in three variants, each tailor-made for specific cars, applications and performance levels. For luxury sedans, the P Zero pattern has been adapted with a deeply grooved external shoulder to better absorb road surface impact and boost comfort levels. P Zero for sports cars has a less sculpted tread pattern favoring dy-



“PIRELLI AND THE WORLD'S BEST CAR MANUFACTURERS JOIN THEIR EFFORTS TO CREATE THE PERFECT FIT BETWEEN CAR AND TIRE”



Pirelli P Zero



amic performance. And P Zero Corsa has a more aggressive tread design related to P Zero motorsports slick tires.

The new P Zero assures maximum stability at the highest speeds through its new F1 Bead technology, directly derived from Pirelli's Formula One efforts. An especially rigid compound within the bead area provides even distribution of force for quick precision steering without loss of lateral grip, for predictable linear performance even in the most aggressive maneuvers.

The tires have been given a flatter footprint—an Extended Range Profile—for more even wear and a longer life.

Dynamic as they are on dry pavement, the new P Zero has paid special attention to wet conditions, with deeper channels and more tread pattern grooves, for a ten percent increase in water expulsion, thus more resistance to lateral aquaplaning, also contributing to safer wet braking.

Transverse grooves are arranged in an irregular sequence, to disrupt percussive air noise by distributing sound over various frequencies, contributing to a quieter cabin. Peace is also produced by the Pirelli Noise Cancelling System, which deals with noise generated inside any tire cavity by air compression vibrations, which are transmitted to the wheel, the steering, the suspension and inside. Pirelli's system uses a polyurethane sponge layer inside the tire carcass as a dampener, reducing noise by two to three decibels, with no loss in performance characteristics.

The new P Zero also reduces fuel consumption with a 15 percent improvement in rolling resistance, achieved through new computer modeling, weight reduction and over 80 percent new high silica content materials.

These are run-flat tires, engineered to get you to a repair or replacement within 50 miles at

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speeds up to 50 mph. They also include Seal Inside technology to prevent air loss from a puncture of up to 4mm. The seal created in such an incident permanently blocks the hole after your hazard is removed, ensured by a protective film applied inside before remounting. Such punctures are responsible for 85 percent of flat tires.

Our classroom time was quite convincing, but if you want to find out what a set of new Pirelli P Zero tires will do for your car, pop on a set and take it for a spin. Or do what Pirelli did—pop 'em on two fleets of supercars and Cup cars and take them to the track. And put another fleet of performance sedans on a flooded autocross course.

We headed to Dream Racing, a five-star Pirelli-sponsored driving experience at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, about 13 miles north of Las Vegas, to really put the P Zero to the test.

Las Vegas Motor Speedway has a 1.5-mile tri-oval racetrack with 20-degree banked turns and seating for over 130,000 fans. Inside that is a flat 1.1-mile road course with eleven turns and an 1100-foot straightaway, which is where we would drive our supercars and Cup racers.

Different track setups let us experience the grip, handling and performance of the new P Zero on a rarified stock lineup including the Audi R8, Ferrari 488, Lamborghini Huracán Super Trofeo, Lamborghini Aventador SuperVeloce, Mercedes-AMG GT, Pagani Huayra and Porsche 911—a lineup tailor made for high style and high speed.

Between our supercar and Cup racer track sessions, we drove Dodge Charger and Tesla Model S sedans on a very wet slalom course and skidpad, pitting their high power—and emergency braking—against slick conditions when each is outfitted with a set of Pirelli P Zero All Season Plus tires.

In all cases, we focused on our controls, we focused on the track, we nailed the straightaways logging speeds routinely above 180 mph and hitting 193 mph on our fastest run. Never once did we pause to think about those four little contact patches and how they were doing. Throughout it all, they performed like the champions they are designed and engineered for. ■

Successfully competing in motorsport since 1907, Pirelli is exclusive supplier of the Superbike World Championship, many single marque championships around the world, and sole supplier for the Formula One World Championship since 2011. As Pirelli's halo product, P Zero has achieved a rich heritage and over 1,000 homologations since its introduction 30 years ago.

Founded in Milan in 1872, 145-year-old Pirelli specializes in the high end, premium market. With a commitment to Italian research and development, Pirelli has 20 tire factories in 14 countries—including a US plant in Rome, Georgia—and a commercial presence in 160 countries.



Pirelli P Zero Corsa



Italian engineering, flight-tested

BY JOE SAGE

Italian design—concept, styling and engineering—is well known and highly coveted worldwide. From illustrious automotive brands such as Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, Fiat, Lamborghini and Maserati, to fashion and decor, the brands are universally revered. (It was obvious the old Soviet Union

was on its last legs when it was revealed that Mikhail Gorbachev would travel to top choice Italy when he needed top quality suits.) And Italy manufactures aircraft, including stunning fighter jets.

To get a broader feel for the engineering culture behind Pirelli P Zero tires (see feature), in an over-the-top super trifecta of powerful engines and speed, our cool-down lap after hours of high speed driving at Las Vegas Motor Speedway had us moving straight from supercars to helicopters to jets.

We took a short walk from the paddock to an impromptu helipad, where we boarded an ECOStar EC-130, an Airbus-built single-engine helicopter powered by a Turbomeca Arriel 2B1 turbine engine with dual-channel FADEC digital engine control system and back-up control box, powering an auto-

matically-varying three-bladed Starflex main rotor matched to an enclosed Fenestron anti-torque, low-noise tail device. These aircraft, with a top speed of 155 knots (178 mph), have the largest cabin of any single-engine helicopter in their class, can carry over a ton, and have a ceiling of 15,655 feet (they are also adapted by EMS for medevac). Our six-passenger version is operated by Mavericks Helicopters, the craft's largest single operator in the world, who offer tours of Las Vegas, Hoover Dam and the Grand Canyon. Ours was a fast and low flight of some 30-35 air miles through rugged terrain from Las Vegas Motor Speedway (13 drive miles north of Las Vegas) south-south-east toward Lake Mead, then southwest to Henderson Executive Airport (20-25 drive miles south

Pirelli turned us loose for a flight south of Las Vegas in two SIAI-Marchetti S.211A fighter jets (in the back seat) to further absorb the connections among velocity, aerodynamics, style and control—all elements also inherent in the equally advanced Italian engineering of Pirelli P Zero tires.



of Las Vegas).

Here we met a team of NATO and commercial (or both) pilots, who would take us on a demonstration ride-along flight in the SIAI-Marchetti S.211A sweptwing fighter jet, a fully aerobatic version of the S.211 fighter jet trainer. There are about 60 of these jets in the world.

The airframe uses extensive structural bonding and composite materials—Kevlar, Nomex and carbon fiber composites. There are five hardpoints that can be armed with a range of weapons, photo and reconnaissance pods, or auxiliary fuel tanks. The S.211 has been in service with Singapore, Philippines and Haitian Air Forces (and is still in active use in the Philippines).

Powered by a single 2500-lb-ft JTI 5D-5C Turbofan engine from Pratt & Whitney of Canada, the SIAI-Marchetti S.211A can climb 5100 feet per minute, has a ceiling of 40,000 feet, and has a speed of 414 knots (475 mph) at an altitude of 25,000 feet. Dive speed is 400 knots (460 mph) and acceleration limits are +6g or -3.0g, with a load factor of +7 at 3.5g.

We would do all of that except the weapons part (or probably the 40,000 feet part).

After a briefing on the aircraft and the nature of our flight, we were fitted with flightsuits, flight helmets and oxygen masks, and headed out on to the tarmac. These are two-seat trainers, and we would be in the rear seat. Trained in the sequence of very specific steps involved, we climb up and in and are strapped in among the instruments and told to keep our legs and arms clear of the pedals and stick. We taxi out in tandem with a second jet. Takeoff is side-by-side, wingtip-to-wingtip.

Our flight took us east and southeast, throughout Nevada's southern tip, where Arizona, California and Nevada meet, along the Colorado River below Hoover Dam—though all of the above definitions are rendered somewhat meaningless during heavy aerobatics. The river, the sky, the mountains and rocks—all quickly alternate positions above, below and/or straight ahead of us.

The commonality is clear. We have dropped straight to earth, done barrel rolls and wingtip-to-wingtip maneuvers at over 400 knots, with total confidence in not only our highly skilled NATO pilot, but also our superbly engineered aircraft. We never gave one second's thought to our safety and security being in their hands.

We had driven 185-193 mph in a variety of supercars and Cup racers at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, on new Pirelli P Zero tires, and it was the same thing—total confidence, with never one second's thought to our safety and security being in the hands of Pirelli engineering. And that's just as it should be for anyone enjoying their time at the controls. ■



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Value 7-seater By Joe Sage



If you come to this crossover utility straight out of a track event with a fleet of supercars and Cup cars, you will immediately notice this has less power. And that's the exact back-to-back drive we did. Beyond that, 166 hp is what this has, and it makes no bones about it. We acclimated quickly.

Outlander was all new for 2016 and came to market on the wave of significant market growth for Mitsubishi—40 percent the prior year. It's doing so well, the price has gone up \$500 (third-model-up-out-of-four SEL trim here bumps up from \$24,995 to \$25,495, while base ES and next-up SE are \$23,495 and \$24,495). But the inclusions have gone up more than that. Many things requiring a \$5250 Touring Package a year earlier are now built into the base SEL, making it easier to stay at that price. Or round it out with the updated Touring package, which is now just \$4000, and you are \$750 lower than the prior year (though destination charge is up \$45, from \$850 to \$895, an industry trend, generally). Out the door, it's just \$320 more than a year prior, or \$275 prior to destination. Our

sample here also has Mitsubishi's S-AWC (Super All-Wheel Control) all-wheel-drive system, proven to be well engineered for on- or off-pavement use, at \$2000 well spent (or just \$1500 on the base ES).

You can go all out with the top-trim GT 3.0 S-AWC model, including full feature set, AWD standard, a 35 percent boost in power, to 224 hp, and a conventional six-speed transmission (versus the CVT in all other models), at \$31,695. The V6 GT also tows 3500 pounds, up from 1500 in the other models. Your towing plans may make this decision a slam-dunk. Otherwise, it's a tradeoff between power and fuel cost—the V6 uses premium fuel and knocks 5 mpg off city mileage, 3 off highway.

If that equation leaves you wanting more fuel frugality but full features and AWD, the vehicle here is exactly where you'll end up.

Ultimately, at any trim level from mid-\$20s to \$30ish, you get a spacious three-row, (standard) seven-passenger interior in a midsize crossover that turns tighter than a MINI, at a price competitive with many five-passenger compacts. ■

SPECIFICATIONS: 2.4 SEL S-AWC (AWD)

SEATING CAPACITY	7-passenger
ENGINE	2.4L MIVEC SOHC 16v 4-cyl
HP/TORQUE	166 hp / 162 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	CVT (continuously variable)
DRIVETRAIN	AWD (FWD available)
TURNING CIRCLE	34.8 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.5 in
TOW CAPACITY	1500 lb (GT with V6 = 3500)
CARGO CAPACITY	10.3 / 34.2 / 63.3 cu ft
WEIGHT	3505 lb
MPG	24/29/26 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE \$27,495

INCLUDES: Auto headlights, LED DRLs and taillights, foglights, heated power-fold mirrors, rain-sense wipers/de-icer, rear intermittent wiper, 18" alloy wheels, roof rails, extensive interior lighting, heated leather seats, leather wheel and shift knob, drive mode selector, 8-way/4-way power seats, 60/40 split second row, 50/50 split third row, dual-zone climate, 7" display w Apple/Android, hands-free Link System, rear camera, hill start, active stability control, traction control and much more.

SEL TOURING PACKAGE: Multi-view camera system, LED headlights w auto high beams, forward collision mitigation, adaptive cruise, lane departure warning, heated steering wheel, blind spot warning w rear cross traffic alert & lane change assist, 710-watt Rockford-Fosgate 9-speaker premium audio

DESTINATION CHARGE	895
TOTAL	\$32,390



ESSENCE

LFA supercar inspires RC coupe lineup, which begets 2.0L turbo with edge in price, weight and fuel mileage **BY JOE SAGE**

The Lexus RC lineup has friends in high places, conceived to carry the spirit of the \$375,000 LFA supercar. Last spring, we spent a week with the top entry in the RC lineup, the Lexus RC F, a bold, curvaceous beast that proved “sexy Lexus” need not be an oxymoron, from its 467-hp V8 to its retracting carbon fiber rear spoiler. Priced at \$64,000-plus, that car turned a lot of heads.

This time, we’re in the Lexus RC 200t, a fuel-friendly four-cylinder twin-scroll intercooled turbo-charged model at the lineup’s entry point—a premium performance coupe with generally the same alluring head-turning sheet metal, features and fitment, but with a price that starts barely above the threes. (Last year, the RC 200t was in the threes, at \$39,995. For 2017, Lexus lost that bragging right but pockets another \$160.) The RC 200t costs just 11 percent what its LFA bragging-mate does and even knocks almost 40 percent off the RC F’s price.

The RC is built on the rear-drive or AWD bones of the IS sedan, though it has the personality and feel of something bigger. The RC is an inch or two longer than the IS, while its wheelbase is shortened by about three inches, which does give it a nice, tight turning circle, useful for a U-turn or in a parking lot, but giving it considerable overhangs—so watch out for that nose in those same parking lots.

There are three engines in the overall RC lineup, rear-drive in some, all-wheel drive in others and a choice between the two in some. Plus

there is an F SPORT version of all but the already maxed RC F—for a total of nine ways to buy a Lexus RC even before the options.

It’s basically simple—a fuel-sipping turbo four-cylinder, a midrange V6 and a performance V8. Some lend themselves



	RC 200t	*RC 300 AWD	*RC 350 RWD	*RC 350 AWD	RC F
Engine	2.0 turbo 4	3.5L V6	3.5L V6	3.5L V6	5.0L V8
Transmission	8-spd DShift	6-spd elec auto	8-spd DShift	6-spd elec auto	8-spd DShift
Drivetrain	RWD	*AWD	*RWD	*AWD	RWD
HP	241 hp	255 hp	306 hp	306 hp	467 hp
Torque	258 lbft	236 lbft	277 lbft	277 lbft	389 lbft
Weight	3737 lb	3891 lb	3748 lb	3891 lb	3958 lb
Weight per hp	15.5 lb	15.3 lb	12.2 lb	12.7 lb	10.2 lb
Zero-to-60	7.3 sec	6.3 sec	5.8 sec	6.0 sec	4.4 sec
MPG (city/hwy/comb)	22/32/26	19/26/21	19/28/22	19/26/21	16/25/19
Base Price	\$40,155	\$42,770	\$43,010	\$45,175	\$64,165
Dollars per hp	\$166.62	\$167.73	\$140.56	\$147.63	\$137.40
Base w/ F Sport	\$44,160	\$46,470	\$47,115	\$48,875	

* RC 200t is RWD only. RC 300 is AWD only. RC 350 is available with RWD or AWD. RC F is RWD only.

The RC 300 AWD may be a case where engineering, marketing and accounting intertwine. Whereas the Lexus RC 350 comes in both RWD and AWD, perhaps the light and nimble bones of the RC 200t don’t lend themselves to an all-wheel-driver. The RC 300 AWD—based on the RC 350’s V6, though detuned by about 17 percent—is basically an all-wheel-drive entry semi-partner to the 200t. The RC 350 AWD weighs just 143 pounds more than the rear-drive 350, a small penalty for all-wheel-drive benefits. The detuned 300 AWD weighs the same (and gets the same fuel mileage) as the 350 AWD. The RC 350 in rear-drive is just eleven pounds heavier than the 200t, a remarkably small penalty for V6 power, though it brings a drop in fuel mileage. We suspect they’re still working on an AWD 200t, which if nothing else would simplify the lineup.

to all-wheel-drive availability, some don’t. Our chart shows variables through the range, some dramatic, some pretty tight.

The four-cylinder 200t has the best front/rear weight ratio in the lineup, and while the others have stronger power-to-weight ratios, the 200t’s torque-to-hp ratio is by far the highest. The 200t is just 221 pounds lighter than the RC F (itself with an aluminum V8), yet its high torque lets it punch below its weight and above its cylinder count.

Nifty style details range from blades in the rear corners and a slim upper brake light in the edge of the rear window, to fully heated, cooled and firmly bolstered sport seats with inlaid stitching in trapezoidal shapes and sweeping curves.

The shifter requires mild orientation, as its path from P to D takes some jogs that can leave you in neutral. Our main frustration is with the touchpad for the screen interface, an improvement over the jiggling joystick it replaces, but still needing work.

We played with drive modes quite a bit, our gut

tending to go for the sport setting, but finding eco operation transparent at steady speeds.

Our Lexus RC strikes a good balance on options. Its F SPORT package brings useful items both cosmetic and performance-enhancing at a fair price. The audio/nav bundle is also both impressive and reasonable. If you want to head a little closer to RC F wannabe territory, ours could add performance exhaust, lowering springs, a rear spoiler and orange brake calipers for \$3233 total, though now you’re within about ten grand of an actual RC F.

Someone on social media said, “I feel like it looks faster than it actually is.” Since the RC is available in a model with almost double the 200t’s horsepower, this may be true, but that’s also this model’s great appeal. Save some dough, save on fuel and still turn heads. Especially with a few options applied (and the Ultrasonic Blue Mica paint seems to help its impact overall), the entry point in the Lexus RC lineup proves itself to be one of the most compelling. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

SEATING CAPACITY	4-passenger
ENGINE	2.0L twin-scroll intercooled turbo 4
DRIVETRAIN	RWD
HP/TORQUE	241 hp / 258 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	8-speed Direct Shift auto
0-TO-60 MPH / TOP SPEED	7.3 sec / 143 mph
SUSPENSION	F: double wishbone, high mount upper arms, coils, gas shocks, stabilizer bar; R: multilink, coils, gas shocks, stabilizer bar
STEERING	rack & pinion elec power
WHEELS	18x8 base/standard, temp spare
BRAKES	F: 14.06" / R: 13.15" vented discs, ABS, EBD, brake assist, ESC, traction
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	184.8 in / 107.5 in
TURNING CIRCLE	34.2 ft
CARGO VOLUME	10.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3737 lb
FUEL	91-octane premium
MPG	22/32/26 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE \$40,155

F SPORT PACKAGE: LFA-inspired digital instrumentation, F SPORT front fascia & grille, vehicle dynamics management with sport mode, F SPORT 19-in" split 10-spoke alloy wheels w FR 235/40R19 & R 265/35R19 summer tires, high-performance F SPORT brakes, F SPORT wheel & shift knob, power tilt/tele steering wheel, aluminum pedals, silver performance interior trim, black headliner, bolstered heated/vented seats & drive memory, adaptive variable suspension, active sound control, blind spot monitor w/RCTA, TFT cluster	4105
NAV / PREMIUM AUDIO: Mark Levinson 5.1 Surround 835w 17-speaker Clari-Fi™ high-efficiency audio incl subwoofer and in-dash DVD/CD player, navigation, machined-aluminum knobs, remote touchpad control, voice command, Lexus Insider, app suite, 1-yr trial Lexus Enform Destinations, fuel guide, sports and stocks	2550
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DESTINATION TRAVEL & EVENTS



Canyon Villa Bed & Breakfast Inn, Sedona

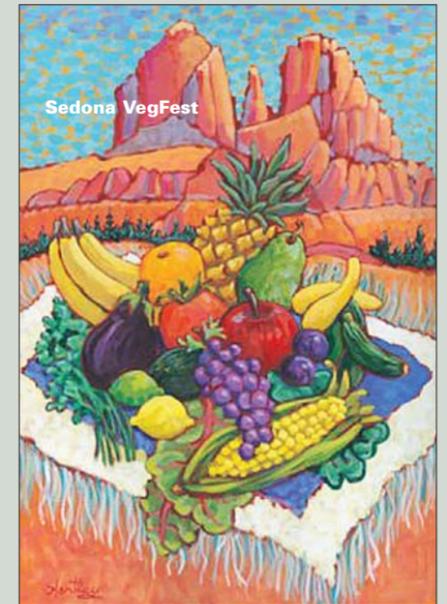


Casa Sedona Inn

▼ Bed and breakfasts and inns are popular ways to immerse in **Sedona** like a local. Wake to a chorus of birds or the cascade of water over stone, then explore the verdant woodlands in your back yard. In warmer months, cast a fishing line in the creek or take a dip in your own personal swimming hole. Something about the setting inspires innkeepers to create little masterpieces of lodging. Quaint accommodations include fireplaces, private hot tubs, architectural flourishes, unique decor and personal artistic touches, all with an emphasis on guest services. There are plenty of options for bed and breakfasts. | A Sunset Chateau embodies timeless elegance with Old World comfort and charm. | Award-winning Lodge at Sedona—A Luxury B&B Inn has an estate setting on two acres of gardens among mature evergreens, waterfalls and rock formations. Guests can also explore the property's on-site labyrinth. | At Canyon Villa Bed and Breakfast Inn, magnificent views of Bell Rock and Courthouse Butte loom over a glass-tiled swimming pool and landscaped gardens. Here, guests enjoy a full three-

course breakfast with freshly baked cinnamon rolls, an afternoon social and appetizer hour, and outdoor amenities across the entire property. | Only minutes to dining, shopping and attractions, Casa Sedona offers visitors and staycationers alike rooms perfect for a relaxing getaway, spiritual retreat, intimate wedding, romantic honeymoon or any special occasion. The property has an impressive on-site restaurant, instant access to hiking trails and a concierge. | Find more information on B&B and other Sedona lodging options at visitsedona.com/where-to-stay.

▼ The 12th Annual **Sedona** Marathon on Saturday, February 4, is expected to host more than 3,000 runners and walkers in four events: 5K, 10K, Half Marathon or Full Marathon. The course passes through scenic Coconino National Forest and the streets of Sedona. Spectators, supporters and participants alike can visit the Expo and Packet Pick-Up at classic Elk Lodge of Sedona, with vendors and entertainers (and a fully loaded virtual goodie bag and tech running T-shirt for registrants). All fin-



Sedona VegFest



ishers will receive a medal. For details and to register, visit SedonaMarathon.com.

▼ A two-day celebration of everything veg, with something for everyone from the committed vegan to the simply veg-curious, **Sedona** VegFest on January 14-15 presents world-renowned educational and inspirational speakers covering the medical, ethical and environmental benefits of a whole-food, plant-based diet and lifestyle, while celebrity chefs share their secrets of food preparation, and dozens of exhibits showcase the latest foods, products, services and information. Details can be found at visitsedona.com.

▼ **San Juan County** is **Utah's** largest by area, yet with fewer than two people average per square mile. Bordering north-east Arizona, it's a prime destination for hiking, biking, camping or off-roading in five national parks and monuments—Canyonlands, Glen Canyon, Hovenweep, Natural Bridges, Rainbow Bridge—three

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state parks—Edge of the Cedars, Goose-necks, Dead Horse Point—and two Nava-jo tribal parks—Monument Valley and Four Corners—where you enjoy ancient native ruins, sunsets, constellations at

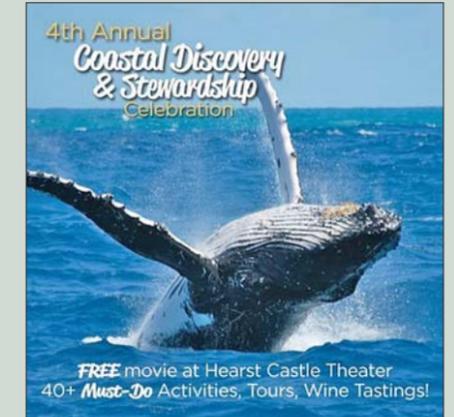


night. The 19th annual Bluff International Balloon Festival (January 13–15), above the town of Bluff and the Valley of the Gods, is free for spectators, with plenty of food and activities, and the balloons become more striking during the nighttime glow-in. Edge of the Cedars State Park, on the outskirts of Blanding, includes an original 1,000-year-old Ancestral Puebloan village and a museum with an extensive collection of artifacts from the people who lived here long before Dominguez and Escalante. Or try a day hike to Owachomo Bridge, then grab dinner in Monticello. Between now and late spring high season, temperatures are perfect, crowds are thinner and hotel rates can drop by as much as 60 percent. For more information on the region, visit www.utah.com.

▼ The 10 destinations along **California's Highway 1 Discovery Route** (H1DR) in San Luis Obispo County—from Ragged Point and Cambria, to Avila Beach and Oceano—are serious when it comes to the annual Coastal Discovery & Stewardship Celebration. Coastal San Luis Obispo

County, along with California State Parks and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, welcome visitors to immerse themselves in the local marine culture, coastal heritage and natural attractions

Day, docent-led educational elephant seal walks, hands-on citizen science programs at San Simeon Cove and many others. Take a whale-watching adventure, a planned pier and beach walk or learn



along this stretch of the famous CA Highway 1 through a series of events and activities, from January 13 through February 28. Enjoy special marine-focused events, unique wine and food tastings and festivals and stewardship travel activities where you learn more about dedicated Marine Protected Areas and how to make a difference, while on vacation. "Throughout the annual Coastal Discovery & Stewardship Celebration, guests are invited to explore marine life from abalone to elephant seals, learn about nature preserves, participate in fun citizen science activities and enjoy the many seaside hikes found on the Central Coast," says Stewardship travel director Katie Sturtevant. "There are more than 40 must-do activities the whole family will enjoy." These special events and activities are designed to connect visitors with the land, wildlife, history, people and culture along the H1DR. Must-see attractions and must-do events include a Free Film Festival at Hearst Castle Theater, the 3rd Annual BlendFest on the Coast wine tasting event, a fun Bird Sanctuary & Wildlife

about H1DR marine birdlife with the free SeaPhoto App from Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Visitors will appreciate the Wildlife Viewing and Stewardship Tips when they visit the new Whale Trail (www.TheWhaleTrail.org) locations and will delight in special wine tasting room pairings from eleven wineries located along the Pacific Coast Wine Trail, as well as numerous Edna Valley, Arroyo Grande Valley and Avila Beach wineries. Located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco, the H1DR is made up of ten diverse artisan towns and seaside villages, starting just south of Big Sur from Ragged Point and San Simeon, Cambria, Cayucos, and Los Osos/Baywood Park to Avila Beach and Valley, Edna Valley, Arroyo Grande Valley, Oceano and Nipomo, just south of San Luis Obispo. Many lodging properties along the H1DR are offering specials and packages during the Coastal Discovery & Stewardship seven week celebration. For more information on H1DR and the annual Coastal Discovery & Stewardship Celebration, visit highway1discoveryroute.com. ■

PIR NASCAR FALL RACE WEEKEND

CHASE FOR THE SPRINT CUP: NOVEMBER 11-13, 2016 / PHOTOS BY RANDALL BOHL

Phoenix International Raceway hosted the Can-Am 500 on Sunday, November 13, the semifinal race in the 2016 Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season. Under the Chase for the Sprint Cup format, the 500-km race in Phoenix (312 laps, 312 miles) was the last of the Eliminator Round, determining the final four contenders for the championship the next weekend at Homestead-Miami. In all, there were three races over three days, Friday through Sunday.

**FRIDAY NOV 11: LUCAS OIL 150
DANIEL SUÁREZ SCORES LATE VICTORY**

Friday's Lucas Oil 150 at PIR was setting up to be a dominant win for 18-year-old William Byron, driver of the No. 9 Liberty University Toyota Tundra, who led for 112 laps. But with 10 laps to go, both the race win and the hope of a NASCAR Camping World Truck Series championship went up in smoke—Byron fin-

ished 27th after a blown engine. He had six wins this season, but did not advance to the Championship 4 at Homestead.

Instead it was Daniel Suárez, Byron's Kyle Busch Motorsports teammate, driving the No. 51 ARRIS Toyota, who took home the victory. Suárez held off No. 21 Johnny Sauter on a restart with five laps to go, to earn his first NASCAR Camping World Truck Series win by 0.551 seconds—Suárez's second NASCAR win at PIR after a victory in the 2014 NASCAR Mexico Series race.

The four drivers heading to the next week's championship would be Sauter, who won the first two races of this round; No. 88 Matt Crafton, who finished third; No. 4 Christopher Bell, seventh; and No. 17 Timothy Peters, fifth.

Suárez would be back in action the next day, competing in the Ticket Galaxy 200 for a spot in the Championship 4 in the NASCAR XFINITY Series.

**SATURDAY NOV 12: TICKET GALAXY 200
KYLE BUSCH 10-RACE RECORD AT PIR**

Kyle Busch, driver of the No. 18 NOS Energy Toyota, dominated in Saturday's Ticket Galaxy 200 for his 10th win at PIR, a track record for a single series. Busch led 190 of 200 laps, the fourth consecutive XFINITY race at Phoenix where he has led at least 175 of the 200 laps. He lost the lead on the final restart to Justin Allgaier, but never sweated the outcome.

It was Busch's 13th overall win at PIR, tying Kevin Harvick for second place on the track's all-time win list. Versatile racing legend Ken Schrader, with 16 career wins, is tops.

Behind Busch, eight drivers in contention fought hard for the final four spots in the inaugural XFINITY Series Chase. Daniel Suárez came in fifth and would compete at Homestead-Miami, along with Justin Allgaier, Erik Jones and Elliott Sadler.

Busch would return to the track on Sunday

for the Can-Am 500, hoping to advance to the Championship 4 in search of a second-consecutive NASCAR Sprint Cup Series title.

**SUNDAY NOV 13: CAN-AM 500
WILD FINISH GIVES LOGANO THE WIN**

Joey Logano would need a good finish to advance to the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series championship finale. The race was extended by 12 laps (to 324) due to two late collisions that significantly affected both the race and the Chase. In the second overtime, Logano held off Busch over the last two laps to win by 0.587 seconds. For Logano, it was the best finish possible at Sunday's Can-Am 500.

"Everyone's racing for a championship," said Logano, who led 58 laps and averaged 102.865 mph. "This isn't just a race. This is for the championship, or at least a shot at it next week. The No. 22 car is going there, we've got a hell of a shot at it, and I couldn't be more proud of this team executing under pressure. They were better today under pressure, and I couldn't be more proud of everybody and giving me the opportunity to do what I can on that last restart."

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No. 20 Matt Kenseth seemed poised to win his spot in the next round. Quick pit work and a great restart on fresh tires on lap 262 enabled him to charge past No. 11 Denny Hamlin with an aggressive short cut of the dogleg. He gradually pulled an advantage of more than three seconds, but the yellow flag came out after Michael McDowell blew a tire with less than two laps to go in the extended 324-lap race. This bunched the field for an overtime restart. Kenseth chose the outside lane and powered into the first turn, where he tried to cut down and in front of Tucson native Alex Bowman, substitute No. 88 driver in place of injured Dale Earnhardt Jr. But Bowman was also pushing hard, and the two cars collided, sending Kenseth into the outside wall as his championship hopes vanished in a cloud of tire smoke. Bowman (who had earned his first NASCAR Sprint Cup Series pole award on Friday) had had the dominant car, leading 194 of 324 laps, with a chance to retake the lead late, until the Kenseth wreck.

It was Logano's first Sprint Cup win at PIR and third overall following triumphs in the XFINITY Series races in 2012 and 2015. No. 18 Kyle Busch finished second and also advanced to the Championship 4 on points. Busch and Logano would join No. 48 Jimmie Johnson and No. 19 Carl Edwards, who advanced by winning the first two races of the Round of 8.

HOMESTEAD-MIAMI CHAMPIONSHIP

William Byron went on to win the Ford EcoBoost 200, Camping World Truck Series at Homestead-Miami Speedway on November 18. Daniel Suárez won the Ford EcoBoost 300, XFINITY Series, putting him over the top to win the 2016 XFINITY Series Championship, the first Latin American to do so. Jimmie Johnson won the Ford EcoBoost 400, NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, becoming a seven-time Cup champion, tied with Dale Earnhardt and Richard Petty. Joey Logano was runner up to Johnson, taking 4th place at Homestead. ■



COMING UP AT PIR:

NASCAR CAMPING WORLD 500 SPRING RACE WEEKEND: MARCH 17-18-19, 2017

Phoenix International Raceway will host the Camping World 500 on Sunday, March 19, during the 2017 Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season. In all, there are three races over three days, Friday through Sunday, March 17-18-19, 2017. Tickets during Spring Race Weekend start at just \$35, \$10 for Juniors.

FRIDAY MARCH 17 Gatorade Pole Day, practice sessions for both NASCAR Cup Series and NASCAR XFINITY Series before the starting line-up is set for the Camping World 500.

SATURDAY MARCH 18 Up and coming drivers in the DC Solar 200, NASCAR XFINITY Series Race.

SUNDAY MARCH 19 See NASCAR Champions Kevin Harvick and Kyle Busch take on young guns like Kyle Larson and Chase Elliott in the Camping World 500.

INDYCAR SERIES PHOENIX GRAND PRIX: APRIL 28-29, 2017

The 2017 Verizon IndyCar Series Desert Diamond West Valley Phoenix Grand Prix returns to PIR on Saturday, April 29, 2017, under the lights. This will be the fourth race of the 2017 Verizon IndyCar Series season, with all events broadcast by ABC and NBCSN.

Spring 2016 marked the return of IndyCar to Phoenix. "Last year's race was a great event that brought back the tradition of IndyCar racing to Phoenix Raceway," said track president Bryan R Sperber. "Our April night race has quickly become one of the most important events of the Series and one that the drivers and teams have circled on their calendars."

Young guns of the Series such as 2016 Indianapolis 500 winner Alexander Rossi and Josef Newgarden will go head-to-head with some of the most proven veterans in the sport, including Tony Kanaan, Juan Pablo Montoya and Will Power.

NOVEMBER NASCAR RACE WEEKEND: NOVEMBER 10-11-12, 2017

Fall Race Weekend 2017 at PIR includes the Lucas Oil 150, NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Chase Race on Friday, November 10, the Ticket Galaxy 200, NASCAR XFINITY Series Chase Race on Saturday, November 11, and the Can-Am 500, Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Semi-Final Race on Sunday, November 12.

2017 SEASON TICKETS

Season Tickets for the 2017 season at PIR start at \$99 and range up to \$512. New for 2017, you can not just renew—you can upgrade, with an optional IndyCar Weekend. Season Tickets offer big savings off individual ticket prices—up to 70% off in select seating areas; no service fees (a \$10 savings); PIR's Season Ticket ZOOM Pass—just show and go; dedicated customer relations managers (and a toll-free number); ability to buy additional tickets at Season Ticket prices; first crack at seat upgrades; special event invitations; an exclusive e-newsletter; and a free race weekend program.

TICKETS

Get tickets online at PhoenixRaceway.com, or by calling 866-408-RACE (7223) or in person at the PIR ticket office, 125 S Avondale Blvd, Suite 200, Avondale AZ 85323 (Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm). ■



Goodguys wraps another season

The curtain closed on the Goodguys 2016 event season in November, at Westworld in Scottsdale, as the stars and cars of hot rodding gathered for the 19th Southwest Nationals, with chrome and color under sunny desert skies. The three-day weekend event attracted over 3,400 vintage hot rods, customs, muscle cars and trucks, a great many from Arizona plus others from throughout the US and Canada (the Long Distance Award went to Donnie and Brenda Hayes of Ontario, Canada, who brought their 1939 Ford Deluxe). A crowd of revved-up enthusiasts numbered in the tens of thousands.

The event kicked off on Thursday night, with a Hot Rod Cruise around the Valley. Friday through Sunday, down on the Westworld polo field, automotive mania took the shape of thousands of colorful cars, cruising and carrying on. It resembled a vast sea as every blade of grass was covered with hot rods, customs, classics, and tricked out trucks. Car club banners flew, privateers partied and

everyone came together like never before.

The show field itself was ringed with the biggest swap meet and Cars 4 Sale corral this event has ever known. It was in such demand, all available spaces were sold out five weeks prior to the event gates opening. The swappers and sellers enjoyed a brisk business as everyone gathered for one last blast before the Thanksgiving holiday.

But wait. There was more. In addition to all that, the vendor midway was stacked with heavyweights, still on a west coast layover from the SEMA show. The industry's top manufacturers held court and didn't mind the swarms of spectators. They also filled the big top tent offering everything from electronics to wheels, to go-fast goodies and more. The model car show offered up some fantastic plastic, while the Revell Model Car Make & Take insured every kid went home with a free model kit.

There are sponsored awards by category—99 total this year—including 26 (something) of the Year Awards, the Top 10 Hot Rods by Dean Builder's Choice Awards and 63 general awards in categories profound and/or whimsical. The Top 10 Builder's Choice Award winners, the Vintage Air Custom Rod of the Year and the F.A.S.T. AutoCrosser of the Year combine for a final Top 12 display in the upper paddock area on Sunday.

Dean Livermore chose the ten Builder's Choice Award cars and trucks from among heavy hitters parked on the pavement in a jam-packed Saturday

parking area display. This left two more Top 12s, from another seven custom rod finalists on hand.

When the final votes were cast on Saturday afternoon, Paul and Betty Gilliam of Birmingham, Alabama claimed the Vintage Air Custom Rod of the Year crown, for their sensational black '53 Studebaker built by Alan Johnson.

Just one more Top 12 spot remained open—the Goodguys 2016 F.A.S.T. AutoCrosser of the Year Award. Unlike all the other awards, which are won through a scoring sheet or expert opinion, this one is earned via a checkered flag. With a national cast of 32 gear-grinding G-machines and track-tested trucks vying for the spoils, the winner of Saturday afternoon's Duel in the Desert presented by BF Goodrich, Spectre Performance, Turnology, and Tremec would need to negotiate five flawless rounds of mechanical fury. With qualifying all day Friday plus Saturday morning, final eliminations began with Scott Fraser sitting on the pole position. Fraser extended his dominance all the way until the final round, squaring off against defending champion Danny Popp. Fraser had his slowest run of the weekend, just five one hundredths of second too slow in the final, handing the win to Popp, Popp's third title.

Goodguys, based in Pleasanton, California, will once again open (and close) their season in Arizona this year, starting with the 8th Spring Nationals, March 10-12, 2017, once again at WestWorld in north Scottsdale. ■ —with John Drummond

The Top 12 Winner's Circle includes the Top 10 Builder's Choice Award Winner's Circle, with Custom of the Year chopped, nosed and decked 1954 Mercury two-door hardtop with original 292, belonging to Scott and Holly Roberts of Moorpark CA, up front. | We noticed that the Top 12 this year were heavy on black, beige and olive drab, a departure from the gumball collection most years. We're told these have been the current go-to colors for fashion and decorating and such. Apparently its magic had taken root in recent jobs and/or in the judges' eyes. Always the last ones to a fashion trend, we're pressing our khakis for the March event.



A few random memories from Goodguys (above, left to right, top to bottom) The modified 409 V8 at the heart of a Classic Chevy Pick-winning 1962 Chevrolet Bel Air 4-speed belonging to Bob and Kathy Cantwell of Phoenix. | US Mags-outfitted 1963 Chevy pickup belonging to Paul Tracy of Scottsdale won Cool Commercial. | Ron Wight's 1962 VW Single Cab (pickup) from Regina, Saskatchewan won Wild Card Just Cause It's Neat. | Dale Skorera of Appleton WI won Best Wide Whites with his immaculate black 1960 C1 Corvette. | 1935 Chevy Standard rod in Lamborghini yellow paint belonging to Jeff Beard of Midland TX won PPG Dream Car. | Dave Bertram of Scottsdale has owned his Memory Lane Award-winning 300-hp 1958 Pontiac Bonneville since 1985. | Jerry Logan of Hillsboro OR brought his stunning chopped and copper-bullet-laden custom 1960 Cadillac with ZL1 Ram Jet 454 V8, a Custom Rod of the Year Finalist and winner of Hot Rods by Dean Builder's Choice Award. Rumored cost was well into the hundreds of thousands. | Danny Popp of Cincinnati's 1972 C3 Corvette, winner of the Duel in the Desert and his third Goodguys AutoCross of the Year title. | This 1955 Chrysler Imperial convertible with 6.2L 392 V8 belonging to Wayne and Mary Ann Davis of Southlake TX won Goodguys Pick.

Trifecta

Three desirable elements add up to one particularly useful 3 Series by Joe Sage

Wagons are immensely popular in Europe, where car enthusiast humans not dissimilar to those in America know their stuff, and they have an almost cultish following here. All-wheel drive is a Le Mans-worthy addition to any performance vehicle and to any vehicle ever tackling slick or loose surfaces. And the BMW 3 Series has long been a yardstick for premium compacts and a focal point in BMW's own broad lineup. Put the three together in one happy package, and you have the BMW 330i xDrive Sports Wagon, with a base price just over \$40,000.

Being a BMW, of course it's not ready at that point, but needs options and packages. Three we consider indispensable (if not for yourself, for resale)—keyless entry, backup camera and nav—as usual are scattered among three complete pack-

ages, totaling \$5400. Heated seats are also hard to do without, all the moreso in a snow country-ready wagon, another \$800. The M Sport and handling packages (along with that Estoril Blue paint, which in fact requires the M Sport Package) round out the car so well, they're almost indispensable in this case, thousands more.

And now you have a \$60,000 car.

There are fully 13 base models in the 3 Series lineup now, with four engines (one is a diesel) and three body styles (sedan, wagon and GT sport-back), before you even get to the 12 other coupes and convertibles now split off as 4 Series. The full price range is only about ten grand among the four-cylinders, fifteen including the six-cylinder 340i. It's easy to see how someone shopping the brand can work through the many forks in the road that lead to a freely willing final decision fully 50 percent more costly than their starting point.

If you take its 3-Series-ness as a given, then a third element of the trifecta is its 2.0L four-cylinder TwinPower turbo, a well-developed little powerplant providing both 248 hp and 33 mpg highway.

BMW makes a splash when they introduce engineering changes or model alternatives, while

most do it for new model years (they don't even produce specifications every year, other than for changes, if any). There's something to be said for this, in a world of endless obsolescence. Thus it's not completely unusual that we received a 2016 328i model just before New Year's Day 2017. Yet, in this case much is changing. The 2017 330i model has all the same fundamentals, even the same pricing, but a new engine (with a good little boost in horsepower, from 240 to 248) and remapped transmission (see sidebar), with higher gear ratios in the acceleration range for more spring in its step (zero-to-60 drops from 6 seconds to 5.7), while lower 7th and 8th gears help this load-capable, distance-loving sports wagon's fuel mileage.

Despite a few eccentricities in its interfaces (see photo captions), the car proved quick, handy and head-turning—and we didn't even crack the surface on its cargo capabilities nor the full range of its all-wheel-drive abilities (that's always a pleasure even around town on pavement, with catlike grip upon acceleration and in the corners). When we get our hands on the new engine and transmission, we just may need to load the thing up and head for a weekend in snow country. ■



(Above) Our BMW 3 Series xDrive Sports Wagon with four 18-inch tires and three 17-inch pizzas has plenty of room left over for cannolis in its 27.5 cu.ft. cargo area (61.5 cu.ft. with the rear seats down). Neat design details abound, such as the recessed bevel around the BMW Roundel up front, or the intricate work in the surround-LED headlights. The shifter is, let's say, tricky: it looks like a normal PRND pattern, but pushing it up toward P actually just pushes it into reverse—P is achieved by pressing a button. You'll get used to this, to a point, but will have to always remind yourself which car you're driving if this is not the only one. The car also punishes you for having your own ideas. It refuses to let you crack your door open in reverse, to make sure your kid or your daisies are not in your path—electronically forcing you back into park. Similarly, you cannot reach over and turn up your climate control fans if it's stuffy (which it often was)—you have to look over, first turn off auto, then go for the fans, too many distracting steps while driving. BMW always pushes packages, for instance here requiring an M Sport Package to get Estoril Blue paint; yet, ironically, if you want sporty Coral Red Dakota leather, they make you remove the M Sport Package. With all these options, it still has a manual tilt/telescope steering wheel.

2016 328i xDRIVE SPORTS WAGON	2017 330i xDRIVE SPORTS WAGON
ENGINE.....2.0L (1997cc) TwinPower turbo	ENGINE.....ALL-NEW 2.0L (1998cc) TwinPower turbo
DRIVETRAIN.....AWD	DRIVETRAIN.....AWD
HP/TORQUE.....240 hp / 258 lb-ft	HP/TORQUE.....248 hp / 258 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION.....8-spd sport automatic	TRANSMISSION.....8-spd sport automatic
GEAR RATIOS.....1: 4.714, 2: 3.143, 3: 2.106, 4: 1.667, 5: 1.285, 6: 1.7, 7: 0.839, 8: 0.667	GEAR RATIOS.....1: 5, 2: 3.2, 3: 2.143, 4: 1.72, 5: 1.314, 6: 1, 7: 0.822, 8: 0.64
FINAL DRIVE RATIO.....3.154	FINAL DRIVE RATIO.....2.813
0-TO-60 MPH.....6.0 sec	0-TO-60 MPH.....5.7 sec
TOP SPEED.....130 mph	TOP SPEED.....130 mph
SUSPENSION.....standard 2-link with five front upper anchor points, rear dampers, dynamic stability control; M Sport or Track Handling packages available	SUSPENSION.....standard 2-link with five front upper anchor points, rear dampers, dynamic stability control; M Sport or Track Handling packages available
STEERING.....rack & pinion elec power (EPS)	STEERING.....rack & pinion elec power (EPS)
WHEELS/TIRES.....17x7.5 / 225/50R17 standard	WHEELS/TIRES.....17x7.5 / 225/50R17 standard
LENGTH / WHEELBASE.....182.8 in / 110.6 in	LENGTH / WHEELBASE.....182.8 in / 110.6 in
CARGO VOLUME.....27.5 to 61.5 cu.ft	CARGO VOLUME.....27.5 to 61.5 cu.ft
TURNING CIRCLE.....38.4 ft	TURNING CIRCLE.....38.4 ft
WEIGHT.....3825 lb	WEIGHT.....3867 lb
MPG.....22/34/26 (city/hwy/comb)	MPG.....23/33/26 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE 2016.....\$42,650	BASE PRICE 2017.....\$42,650
ESTORIL BLUE METALLIC.....700	ESTORIL BLUE METALLIC.....550
SADDLE BROWN DAKOTA LEATHER.....1450	Other options, packages and destination charge are unchanged in the new 330i as of now.
M SPORT PACKAGE.....3100	
TRACK HANDLING PKG: variable sport steering, M Sport brakes, adaptive M suspension.....2300	
STAINLESS STEEL PEDALS.....285	
COLD WEATHER PKG: heated steering wheel, heated front and rear seats.....800	
DRIVER ASSISTANCE PKG: rear camera, park distance control.....950	
DRIVER ASSISTANCE PLUS: active blind spot detection, active driving assistance, side and top cameras.....1700	
LIGHTING PKG: AUTO HIGH BEAMS.....800	
PREMIUM PKG: keyless entry, lumbar support, satellite radio w/ 1 year.....1700	
TECHNOLOGY PKG: navigation, heads-up display, BMW online and apps, advanced real time traffic, remote services.....2750	
18" ALLOY WHEEL SPORT W A TIRE.....600	
BLACK KIDNEY GRILLES.....230	
REAR MANUAL SIDE WINDOW SHADES.....250	
ACTIVE CRUISE CONTROL.....1200	
ENHANCED BLUETOOTH/SMARTPHONE.....350	
HARMAN KARDON SURROUND SOUND.....875	
DESTINATION CHARGE.....995	
TOTAL 2017 as tested.....\$59,835	



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**Modest
Superachiever**

by Joe Sage



Hybrid powertrains have gone mainstream—locomotives, ships and world champion racecars have implemented them widely for years. You've been able to go to a car dealership and buy one for twenty years. Yet some production hybrids cling to specific "look at me" styling and branding. We like that the Honda Accord Hybrid doesn't make a show of its hybrid nature. It just transparently goes about its remarkably frugal business.

The exterior is basically indistinguishable from other models, and instruments are quite normal, without hypermiler game boards dominating. It is what it is, and that's something quite remarkable.

The Earth Dreams® gasoline engine itself is a showpiece of new lightweight, low-friction, fuel-sipping technologies. Add hybrid electric power, and horsepower rises by almost 50 percent.

You do have elements of control over performance. When you're feeling a bit more competitive and perhaps a bit less virtuous, Sport mode provides an immediate kick in the pants.

Handling, steering and tight cornering are impressive, though some speedbumps were harsh. Honda's right side blind spot camera, activated by the right turn signal, is as magical as a crystal ball.

A non-hybrid Honda Accord starts at \$22,355 for an LX, and seven trim levels, with two Sport

models and three EX models (including a V6), run up to top-trim Touring at \$34,830. Accord Hybrid starts at \$29,605, but stays close in price through three trims total, capping it off with our top Touring example at \$35,955, where just an \$1125 differential brings you hybrid powertrain magic that boosts your highway fuel mileage from 32 mpg to 47, and your city mileage from 23 to a whopping 49 mpg—well more than double your fuel mileage for a three percent price bump. It adds up to our persistent thought while driving the Honda Accord Hybrid: why don't all cars do this?

Do you buy a hybrid to show off your green credentials? Or just to save fuel, reduce emissions and generally act upon your own sensibilities? For the latter, we have a perfectly normal and very popular compact-midsize sedan, but with all the rewards of a hybrid powertrain, yet you can keep the virtue all to yourself if you want.

The Honda Accord Hybrid will provide satisfaction guaranteed *and* your money back, a smooth operator that makes you feel good about yourself while enjoying solid performance and a very full feature set—all the while slashing more than half your annual fuel budget. It won't take long to come out ahead on this deal. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....2.0L DOHC 16v I-VTEC Atkinson cycle
HP/TORQUE	.....143 hp / 129 lb-ft
HYBRID ELECTRIC MOTOR	.....AC synch perm magnet
HP/TORQUE	.....181 hp / 232 lb-ft
TOTAL SYSTEM HORSEPOWER	.....212 hp
TRANSMISSION / DRIVETRAIN	.....elec CVT / FWD
BRAKES	.....vented front, solid rear discs
STEERING	.....rack & pinion electric
SUSPENSION	.....FR: McPherson strut; R: multilink, front and rear stabilizer bars
WHEELS / TIRES	.....17x7.5 alloy, P225/50 R17 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....194.1 in / 109.3 in
SEATING / CARGO CAPACITY	.....five / 13.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....3483 lb
MPG	.....49/47/48 (city/hwy/comb)

INCLUDES: Leather trimmed seats and steering wheel, 7" touchscreen display, sat nav, voice recognition, multi-view rear camera and right lane camera, premium 7-spkr audio w subwoofer, Apple/Android, wheel-mounted controls, Bluetooth, Pandora, SMS text, USB, keyless entry/start, dual-zone climate, rear console vents, driver 10-way power seat w 2 memory sets, 4-way passenger, heated seats, auto-dim mirror, visor lights, map lights, sunglass holder, one-touch power moonroof, LED headlights/DRLs/fogs/taillights, heated side mirrors w turn signals, remote engine start, rear deck spoiler, ACE body structure, stability assist, ABS, brake assist, EBD, forward collision warning, collision mitigation braking, adaptive cruise, lane keep assist, lane departure warning, road departure mitigation.

BASE PRICE	.....\$35,955
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....835
TOTAL	.....\$36,790



Speed wins

Story and photos by Jan Wagner / AutoMatters & More

Another thrilling season of Red Bull Global Rallycross has come to a close. Despite the departure of perennial series regular and crowd favorite Ken Block last year, as well as the absence of Las Vegas from the event calendar, but with the season opening at the series' inaugural event at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park in Phoenix (see our July/August 2016 issue), the competition was as exciting as ever.

A double-header event at the Port of Los Angeles in October determined the season champions for both Supercars and GRC Lites. Multiple heats in two complete events—one Saturday and another on Sunday—produced numerous race starts, plenty of on-track battles and close finishes.

SUPERCAR

Brian Deegan had not won a Supercar race in five long years, but that changed in what some said was “the move of the race,” if not the move of the year. Here’s how it went down.

In the early stages of Sunday’s feature race, Patrick Sandell, Scott Speed and Tanner Foust all took the Joker Lap and were ahead of Deegan, who described it this way (according to *Red Bull GRC News*):

“It came down to patience in the final. There was a lot of carnage in that first turn, and I knew there was going to be—it was the last race of the year. I survived it and I was fourth. The guys (in front) took the Joker, I went around, and no one took the Joker in between us.”

While the three of them battled each other, putting lots of wear and tear on their equipment, Deegan worked his way toward them, lap after lap, biding his time for one big move near the end of the race: “My spotter Troy (Adams) was like, just take a breath and relax. I always get way too aggravated. He was like, you don’t say! I started laughing. I hung in there and I was right with Tanner. (Adams) kept telling me just wait and I kept wanting to take the Joker. He was like, ‘just wait.’

“It came down to the last laps in the final and I

saw Scott (Speed) making a move for the lead and I thought I had to go before he gaps. I went (to take the Joker) and cleared three cars—I couldn’t believe it. I came across and I was thinking they’ll have to blow me out of the way for this one. I was just taking the line and went as wide as I can get. I just held the main line and brought it home.”

Deegan could not contain his euphoric joy on the podium.

The battle for the series championship in Supercars was a real nail biter. Going into Sunday’s races, Tanner Foust led his Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross teammate **Scott Speed** (last year’s champion and former Formula One racer), but in dramatic fashion Speed overtook Foust to win his second consecutive series championship for Andretti Motorsports by a slim six points, with 571 for the season—eleven starts, four wins, seven podiums, 18 heat wins and four poles. Tanner Foust, himself a multiple-time Red Bull Global Rallycross champion, accepted defeat graciously.

GRC LITES

In another tight, close-fought battle—this time in GRC Lites—**Cabot Bingham** advanced in a chaotic final feature race from a last place start to pass and beat 2015 series champion Oliver Ericksson by only five points for the year.

(Below) GRC is a contact sport. (Right) The big jump.

This gave Bingham 452 points for the season and the series title for Dreyer & Reinbold Racing. Bingham had eleven starts, two wins (Washington DC and LA), five podiums and five heat wins for the season.

In past years the series finale has been held in Las Vegas, at the same time as the huge SEMA automotive aftermarket trade show. Last year’s Red Bull GRC finale was particularly spectacular. Hail and lightning in the afternoon—which was so bad that it forced the temporary, complete evacuation of the event venue—and then more driving rain during the feature races on a bone-chillingly cold November evening, transformed the racetrack into a sea of mud, causing the racecars to go in every direction, on and off the track. While it made for great television, the weather was brutal for spectators, race crews, racers and members of the press alike.

In stark contrast, this year’s season finale was held under beautiful, sunny skies, in balmy weather next to the Pacific Ocean at the Port of Los Angeles. This made it easier and much more comfortable for the spectators who were there in person to see and enjoy the close racing, complete with cars, dirt and car parts flying through the air.

For more information and the 2017 schedule, visit redbullglobalrallycross.com. ■

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GRC 101

Red Bull GRC events offer an unparalleled viewing experience for fans at the track and watching broadcasts alike. Events are designed for fast and exciting racing, without lengthy breaks in the action.

- One of the core principles of Red Bull GRC is that fans can rub elbows with some of the biggest names in the sport. With a completely open paddock, fans are free to walk through, interacting with drivers and watching mechanics at work.

THE CARS

Red Bull GRC cars roll out of the factory as production models, but receive significant improvements to chassis, engine and safety features to bring them up to racing spec. GRC vehicles are incredibly versatile. They produce 600 hp and can hit 0-60 mph in 1.9 seconds, but are also built to withstand 70-foot jumps and contact with other cars. Unlike many other racing series, they do not have electronic traction aids.

- Ford, Volkswagen, Subaru and Honda serve as Official Manufacturer Partners of the series.

THE TEAMS

Red Bull GRC teams are sophisticated and technically advanced, with experience competing in the FIA World Rally Championship, IndyCar and NASCAR Sprint Cup. A Red Bull GRC team is typically led by an engineer, who decides how to set up the car and plans race strategy. A small team of mechanics perform maintenance work on the car, and an engine technician keeps the 2.0-liter engine performing at its maximum potential.

- Red Bull GRC drivers are some of the most talented and versatile in the world. Many have switched to rallycross after enjoying success in other racing series, from Formula 1 to NASCAR. Others have had legendary careers in other action sports, from motocross to BMX to skateboarding. It’s not uncommon to see athletes transition from another sport to rallycross with great success.

THE TRACKS

Red Bull GRC tracks are some of the most diverse and technically challenging in the world of motorsport. They can be built almost anywhere, leading to incredibly varied layouts. Half a mile to a mile in length, they have a mixture of dirt and tarmac and a 70-foot jump.

- Each course has a main route and a joker lap route, which each driver must take only once per race. The GRC joker lap route typically shortens the length of the track significantly (unlike World Rallycross, which is longer), forcing a driver to make strategic decisions about when to take it. Taking it on an early lap allows a driver to get it over with, while waiting can allow a driver to gain positions before the finish. Depending on venue, the joker lap may have additional obstacles which significantly slow the cars. Since 2015, drivers are not allowed to take the joker lap on the first lap.
- The Penalty Box deals with on-track infractions without having to red flag or restart the race. In the event of a jump start, rough driving or joker lap infraction, offenders pull off-track into a 50-meter lane and are held until a track official releases them. If an infraction takes place too late in the race for the Penalty Box, a time penalty is assessed.

THE HEATS

Race weekend begins with two rounds of heat races, usually with four cars and six laps each, running for up to five points.

- The field is then combined into two groups of equal size for semifinals, also six laps each.
- The top three finishers from each semifinal head to the main event, giving their teams time to work on their cars while others continue to compete.
- Drivers who do not make it into the main event via heat races compete in a four-lap last chance qualifier for the final remaining spots.
- Ten cars then compete in the 10-lap main event.

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

Championship points are awarded to drivers as follows:

- There are Position Points for finishing as follows: 1st 50, 2nd 45, 3rd 40, 4th 35, 5th 30, 6th 25, 7th 20, 8th 15, 9th 10 and 10th 5.
- In addition, points are awarded in all rounds of heats and semifinals. First place earns five points, second place earns four points, and so on through fifth place and below, which earn one point. ■



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VEHICLE IMPRESSION : 2017 LEXUS GX 460 LUXURY

90% POWER, 60% PRICE

LEXUS GX INEVITABLY INSPIRES COMPARISON WITH ITS BIG BROTHER, THE LX By Joe Sage



The Lexus GX, which slots in below the LX in the lineup by size, has grown to almost the size and weight the LX was just a few years ago, which is not unusual, while the LX has grown less and the gap between the two has grown tighter. The GX has always been easy to spot from the rear, because of its tall and narrow nature, but proportions have evolved, too, and this is now less so.

The GX 460 has a 301-hp 4.6-liter V8, and the LX 570 a 383-hp 5.7-liter V8. While some brands might offer these as engine options in one model, GX and LX are two completely different vehicles.

While the Lexus LX (\$89,380 base) is basically a luxe-trim version of the already-luxe-itself Toyota Land Cruiser (\$84,325), the GX (\$51,280 base) is basically a luxe-trim version of the Japan-only Land Cruiser Prado, which on our shores is the basis for the Toyota 4Runner (\$32,210). The difference in Lexus build and badge is thus much more dramatic in the GX, delivering a premium vehicle

quite distant from its roots, for a price almost 40 percent lower than the LX.

Deep Nightfall Mica paint adds to our example's richness, along with its black leather and mahogany interior. Individual heated leather front seats (and steering wheel) are matched by individual second row heated leather captain's chairs, giving the vehicle an executive jet feel. Three-zone automatic climate control keeps everyone happy.

With Torsen full-time all-wheel drive, healthy approach/breakover/departure angles (21/23/21) and 8.1 inches of ground clearance, there's not much this premium SUV can't handle.

The LX has 27 percent more horsepower than the GX, but weighs 15 percent more (a full three tons), providing just a half-second quicker zero-to-60 time for the LX (seven percent better), and fuel mileage in the LX is even lower than in the GX.

And the LX costs 74 percent more than a base GX. The value point of the GX is hard to miss. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	4.6L aluminum V8
HP/TORQUE	301 hp / 329 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	6-spd ECT sequential
DRIVETRAIN	full-time 4WD
BRAKES	FR: 13.3 vented / R: 12.3 vented discs
STEERING	speed-sense pwr variable rack & pinion
SUSPENSION	FR: Double wishbone, coil springs, stabilizer bar; R: 4-link rigid axle, coils, stabilizer bar (hydraulic on Luxury model)
LENGTH / WB / TURN CIRC	192.1 in / 109.8 in / 41.4 ft
WIDTH / HEIGHT	74.2 in / 74.2 in (73.8 H Luxury)
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.1 in
SEATING / MAX CARGO CAPACITY	seven / 64.7 cu.ft
WEIGHT	5198 lb
TOWING CAPACITY	6500 lb
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	7.8 sec / 110 mph lim.
MPG	15/18/16 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$62,980
DUAL-SCREEN REAR ENTERTAINMENT	1970
SPORT DESIGN PACKAGE: wheels, trim items	1625
DRIVER SUPPORT PACKAGE: Mark Levinson audio, electronic driver aids, crawl control	4340
DESTINATION CHARGE	975
TOTAL	\$71,890



OTRO PUERTO

About the same drive distance as Rocky Point—just add a few days of shipboard time

by Joe Sage



The drive to Puerto Peñasco, Sonora—commonly known here as Rocky Point—is a classic Arizona road trip, about two hours south from Phoenix to the Mexican border, then another four hours to the white, sandy beaches at the Sea of Cortez. You can hop in your truck and go any time. But with just a little more planning, in about the same drive time—about two hours to the California line, another four hours or so to the Port of Long Beach—you can board a ship to Ensenada, on the Pacific Coast of Baja California.

The drive is easy—west on I-10 from the Valley, south at I-215 near San Bernardino or I-605 near Covina, and a beeline to Long Beach.

A cruise can be good for one or two people, but also for a larger group. Twelve of us went.

PHOENIX TO LONG BEACH

Since the cruise would entail one formal dinner (our group was committed, though you could skip this), it required each of the two guys to bring one suit bag, in addition to the usual single suitcase and gear bag. Ten ladies generated their own above average volume of luggage suitable for a four-night trip. Two drove over in a Ford Escape, four in a Subaru Forester, and six rented a three-row Ford Expedition EL at Sky Harbor Airport. Our big and little SUVs gobbled up all those belongings, and we were off.

Because we would embark on our cruise late Monday afternoon, we drove over on Sunday, rather than try to drive and embark the same day. (After all, our standard answer to how long it

takes to drive to greater LA is “six hours, but the last hour can take three or four hours.”) Our only delay was in southwest metro Phoenix, at the construction of the I-10 and Loop 303 interchange. Traffic on the Interstate barely slowed for one substantial sandstorm en route.

Some stopped in Blythe, California, others in Indio, to fill our gas tanks and our bellies—there are several easy options just off the Interstate.

We beat the rest to the coast by quite a bit, so we headed to Newport Beach to get our toes wet.

Long Beach—primarily a shipping port, not a beach resort—has a number of reasonable lodging choices. We stayed at the better of two Best Westerns, two per room (a chance to acclimate to shipboard cabin roomies) for just under \$65 each.

CRUISE BASICS

The basic cost for our Carnival Cruise would be just \$365 each, for four nights aboard—our departure evening, three full days including one on Catalina Island, one in Ensenada, one at sea, then one more night and one last quick breakfast aboard. The mastermind of our trip was able to wrangle us upgraded rooms on a better deck, still under \$400.

Carnival offers a variety of add-ons, easily ordered in advance online. We bought four 12-bottle flats of water for our cabin (just \$4 each). This would be more than we needed, and it turns out you can buy it onboard for the same price, so plan ahead, but don't overdo it. We each bought the ship's WiFi plan. Over the course of the cruise, we treated a couple of people to drinks and sent a few

items in for laundry. A \$12.95 per day gratuity is mandatory. All of the above totaled under \$180.

We knew we might have to check on a phone message or text while in Ensenada, so we added an international component to our cell plan for one month for \$40, to avoid huge roaming charges.

We had been curious about the ship's logistics, path and timing. You can drive from Long Beach to San Diego in under two hours and from there to Ensenada in about the same (it's little more than half again the distance, but with a border crossing). By sea, we would leave late Monday afternoon, boarding next to the historic Queen Mary in Long Beach Harbor and setting sail at sunset, arriving at our first stop—Catalina Island—Tuesday morning. Since it looks like a 20-minute swim to Catalina, we wondered whether we would do donuts all night, or just drift over, to kill time. Catalina to Ensenada would take from late afternoon until dawn Wednesday, which seemed about right. On our return, we would leave Ensenada late Wednesday afternoon, but not arrive back in Long Beach until Friday morning—with no stops. This is the Day at Sea. We wondered whether we might toy with the international limit well out to sea.

Once in motion, all that is largely forgotten. It's a relaxing pace, and you're largely oblivious to time and place, other than generally during the ports of call, and even those allow quite a bit of flexibility. If you spend time in clubs and theaters



on board, you can be quite unaware of your aquatic surroundings, though we spent lots of time cruising the decks, where you definitely know you are at sea, only occasionally passing another distant cruise, very much like two ships in the night. Everyone had brought something for seasickness. Nobody needed it. We felt nary a ripple.

AVALON, CATALINA ISLAND

Catalina is much bigger up close than it may seem when viewed on a clear day from the hills above Malibu, and it has the same rugged terrain as Baja (or Southern California before irrigation). The ship anchors offshore, and power launches shuttle to circumnavigate the island, maybe stopping for some zip-lining along the way, gave way to reality. Time goes quickly in Avalon. Four of us walked

along the waterfront to the landmark casino and movie theater, with a couple of quick shop stops, then grabbed a sit-down fish taco

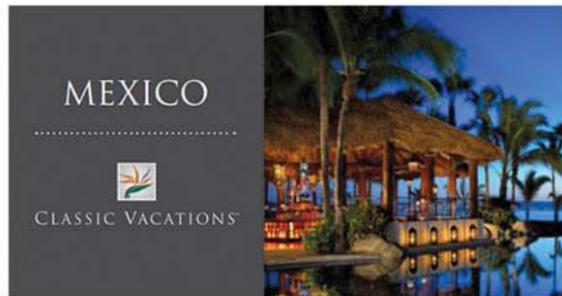


Our ship, the Carnival Inspiration—a 70,367 gross tonnage vessel from Carnival Cruise Lines, well known in our region for the affordable dash to Baja—docked at the port of Ensenada.





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lunch along Crescent Avenue, the main strip. Then back to the ship, to come about and head toward Mexico as the sun dipped low.

Meals on board are plentiful, varied and generous. Your passage includes all you can handle at restaurants, buffets, cafés, pizza bars, burger bars and more. Dinner in the main dining room is top notch, with impeccable service from an international crew with plenty of personality and flair, who also cut loose with song and dance routines. Save room for dessert, if you can, because if they all look good to you, they will bring them all.

There are also swimming pools and a giant waterslide, so bring your surf trunks.

ENSENADA, BAJA CALIFORNIA

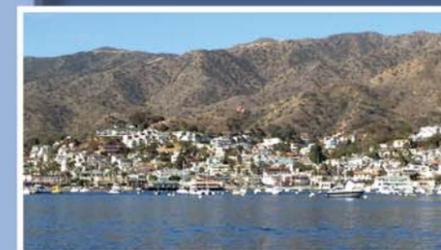
We awoke on our second full day to a motionless ship and opened our cabin's curtains. Today, we were tied up tight to the pier, our side facing parks and parking lots, with a wider view of the coastal hills and mountains of Baja California and a corner of Ensenada. We headed to the top deck, where Mexico's flag now flew, to take in the view. The harbor is relatively small but vibrant, with a mix of fishing and pleasure boats, a couple of cargo cranes, our pier and a waterfront park with fountains. Beyond that lay the town proper, and we took guesses about spots we might visit if we disembarked, and how we might best get there.

Four in our group left early by bus for La Bufadora, the famous Ensenada Blowhole south of town, a rock formation that gushes seawater sky high. Several of our group had already decided



they'd just stay aboard. They didn't feel like dealing with customs—although cruise ship customs is a streamlined process—and had the general idea that Ensenada is like Tijuana, a place most everybody had already seen enough of.

A couple of us set off for a random tour of town. Immediately adjacent to the ship is a collection of shop stalls in Cruiseport Village (sí, es en inglés). Anyone on board should at least check out that much. We passed through a minimal checkpoint and found a horse-drawn carriage and driver waiting for someone just like us. A quick conversation had us on board for five or ten bucks, cantering into town via a circuit with several highlights—Acuario Oceanico, a beautiful new aquarium nearing completion; the Caracol Museum; several historic government, school and church buildings—then up Avenida Alvarado (Alvarado Street, by the Pioneer Chicken Stand, in Warren Zevon's "Carmelita"). We were bemused as we passed an incongruous pair of adjacent businesses—Maya Cacao, "Chocolate from the bean to the belly!" (inglés otra vez),



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As fate would have it, our carriage circled around and dropped us off on the other side of the street, at the corner of Alvarado y Avenida Adolfo López Mateos (named after Mexico's president from 1958 to 1964). This is Zona Centro, downtown Ensenada, the main drag for tourists.

We forgot the aforementioned delights, as one of many farmacias caught our eye (its sign once again en inglés: pharmacy). These shops are spacious, well lit, well organized, as tidy as a boutique shoe shop in Fashion Square. Some meds are bargains, while others were pretty close to here, often based on generic availability. If you find what you need, cheap, that alone could pay for you to take a periodic cruise. (Don't overstock in one trip. We heard that someone not in our group bought so much, customs took it all away, as they presume too much is for illegal resale.)

Ensenada did not remind us of Tijuana in the least. Sure, there are some T-shirt and trinket vendors, but uncrowded and uncluttered. Most of the vendors spoke inglés, and we considered a few choice souvenir possibilities. Our long carriage ride had actually brought us back to only a few blocks from the harbor, so we walked back, enjoyed a classical-music-responsive fountain display in the waterfront park and reboarded our ship.

It's kind of silly, in a way, to travel all the way to a town on the Baja coast and just spend a couple of hours there, but that's the nature of the beast, on the Long Beach-Ensenada cruise.

DAY AT SEA

We sailed out of Ensenada as darkness fell, past moored ships of the Mexican Navy, out beyond Las Islas de Todos Santos (the Islands of All Saints) and out into the wide open Pacific, as another over-the-top endless dinner was served.

Somewhere along the way, we did find a satellite track of our route. Unlike Long Beach to Catalina, and unlike our other conjectures, we neither

Ensenada looks relatively small from the vantage point of its avenida de los turistas, but is a city of over half a million people. (Tijuana is closer to a million and a half.)



drifted nor did donuts, but rather thrust and parried, hither and yon, through the night and the next day, our full Day at Sea. The oddities of route and timing are not noticeable. We passed the day easily, with a little miniature golf on the top deck, some laps on the exercise track, more restaurants and pizza bars to work off that exercise, and just zoning in the lounge chairs, staring out to sea.

The Ensenada-Long Beach run feels much like a distance cruise, though in a straight path at normal speed, we could have covered eight or nine hundred miles in those 36 hours, bringing us, say, up to Eureka, California or down to Puerto Vallarta.

Hmm. Those routes sound pretty good. One thing about a commercial cruise. It has its good points and its lesser points, but you inevitably start thinking about other cruises you might take.

ROAD TRIP FINALE

The drive back was easy. As on the drive over, we grabbed quick fuel and food in Blythe. And back in Arizona, skies were blue with light clouds, and the rugged peaks were dramatically lit.

If you'd rather drive to Ensenada from Arizona, it's not far—about seven hours, probably easier than driving to San Diego, considering traffic. The border crossing at Calexico, California (population 40,000) and Mexicali, Baja California (700,000) may slow you down but is part of the adventure.

The trip made us realize we haven't been to Rocky Point—Puerto Peñasco—in awhile and are overdue for a weekend there. But now we're also thinking about that road trip to Ensenada. ■



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Mercedes-Benz at the world's toughest single-handed race: with three racing yachts at the Vendée Globe

▼ November 6 marked the start of the world's toughest single-handed race from Les Sables d'Olonne on the French Atlantic coast: the Vendée Globe.

Mercedes-Benz is represented for the first time with three racing yachts.

In the capacity of co-sponsor and technology partner, the company is supporting British extreme sailor Alex Thomson, who finished third in this non-stop 'round-the-world regatta in 2013.

Mercedes-Benz is also once again co-sponsor of French racing yachtsman Vincent Riou, who won the Vendée Globe in 2004, and of Irish circumnavigator Enda O'Coineen, who is making his debut in this solo race.

The competitors have to sail on average 29,000 miles—non-stop and single-handed—from France past the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, Cape Leeuwin in Australia and Cape Horn in South America, back to Les Sables d'Olonne in France.

Alongside HUGO BOSS, Mercedes-Benz

has been a co-sponsor of Alex Thomson Racing since 2015 and supports the sailing team with technological know-how. This year, Thomson is competing in the new IMOCA 60 racing yacht. Key features include carbon-fiber technology from Formula One, which makes the boat five percent lighter, and an all-new black, infrared-reflective "XCool" paint finish for the hull and deck, developed by BASF in collaboration with Mercedes-Benz, which prevents overheating inside the yacht.

Thomson plans to make history with his new yacht and wants to become the first Briton to win the Vendée Globe. "The team has worked incredibly hard to develop and build the HUGO BOSS," he says. "I'm confident we now have a boat with which we can win this race. This racing yacht is the fastest and lightest we've ever had."

Riou is competing in the Vendée Globe for the fourth time. On his debut in 2004, he won in 87 days, 10 hours, 47 minutes and 55 seconds to set a new record. At

that time, Mercedes-Benz was already a co-sponsor with French company PRB.

Sixty-one-year-old businessman and circumnavigator Enda O'Coineen is the first Irishman to compete in the Vendée Globe. Together with the MSL group of automotive dealerships, Mercedes-Benz is sponsoring his "Kilcullen Voyager—Team Ireland" racing team, as well as an education program for primary schools set up by O'Coineen. The schoolchildren will be able to plot the progress of the race on a map—with live tracking, weekly videos and entertaining lesson plans.

The solo yacht race, which takes place every four years, pushes sailors to their limits. Of the total of 138 competitors since 1989, only 71 have completed the full distance. The race is open to monohull yachts conforming to the Open 60 class criteria. The race can be followed live by race tracker at www.mercedes-benz.com/alexthomson as well as on the Vendée Globe social media channels. ■

Partners HUGO BOSS and Mercedes-Benz / Copyright: Alex Thomson Racing/Cleo Barnham



▼ A 2017 **Ford F-450 Super Duty** with 6.7L Power Stroke turbo diesel V8 (925 lb-ft of torque and 440 hp) has claimed a Guinness World Record for the World's Largest Flag Pulled by a Moving Vehicle, pulling a 45-by-92-foot US flag over four laps on Homestead-Miami Speedway's 1.5-mile track in November, without the flag touching the ground. Ford had to beat the previous 100-meter (328-ft) record set by Chevrolet with a 40-by-80-foot flag at Texas Motor Speedway in September. The F-450 more than exceeded that, with an official distance of 109 meters (360 feet) and also completing four full laps around Homestead-Miami, site of NASCAR's Ford Championship Weekend. Forty-five-foot riggings from eyelet to eyelet were constructed, enabling the F-450 to perform a driving roll-out of the massive flag. A team of 20 launched and retrieved the flag, ensuring it did not touch the ground. Super Duty delivers maximum gooseneck towing of 32,500 pounds for F-450, 27,500-pound fifth-wheel towing and conventional towing of 21,000 pounds, plus a maximum payload rating of up to 7,630 pounds.

▼ **Kia** is using a Facebook Messenger bot to introduce the all-new 2017 Niro hybrid utility vehicle. Developed by Ansible, KMA's agency partner, an interactive Niro-Bot chat experience includes full screen galleries, guided vehicle discovery, expansive technical knowledge, step-by-step tutorials, test drive scheduling and more. The NiroBot can connect the user to a live

Kia representative at any time. With a targeted 50 mpg combined, Niro fills a position between the hybrid-electric vehicle and CUV segments and is the next step on Kia's path to roughly tripling the brand's global green car line-up by 2020. A Niro plug-in hybrid will join the lineup later.

▼ **Elio Motors** has introduced one of its engineering vehicles to the public, the E1c, with enhancements in its frame, suspension and safety system. While Elio prototypes were essentially hand built, the E1c was built with manufacturability in mind—more than 80 percent of the E1c was as-

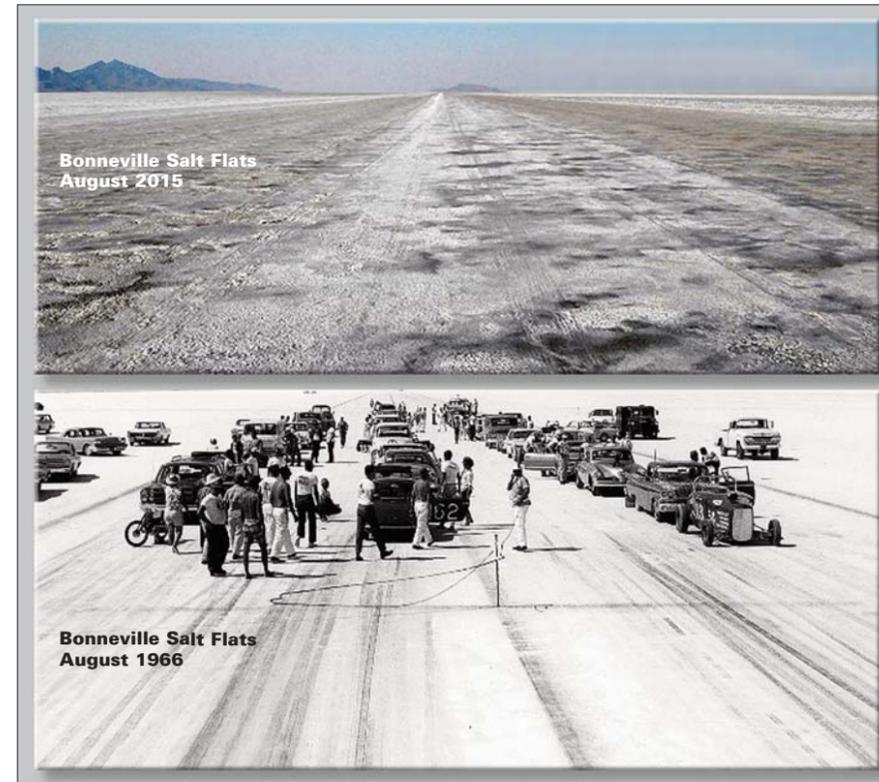


sembled with soft tooling. The E1c is part of a series of engineering vehicles developed to move Elio from the prototype phase to a production vehicle. Elio Motors is headquartered in Phoenix, with a Pilot Operations Center in Livonia, Michigan.

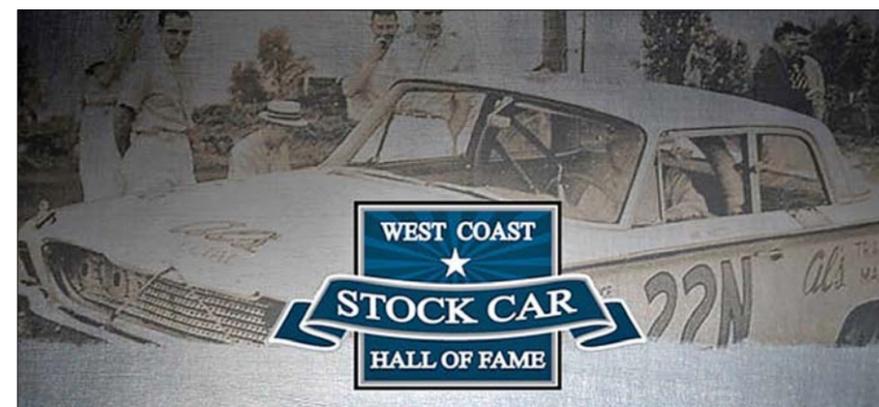
▼ The Petersen Automotive Museum and its Board Chairman Peter Mullin were both honored at the 2016 **International Historic Motoring Awards** in London in November—the Petersen for Museum or Collection of the Year, in honor of the Los Angeles landmark's total transformation and reopening in December 2015, and Mullin for Personal Achievement of the Year, in honor of his role in that. The awards, given out since 2011, are based on nominations from the automotive industry and enthusiast public and decided upon by a panel of judges including Derek Bell, Jochen Mass, Nick Mason, Dave Kinney and Jay Leno. For more information on the awards, visit HistoricMotoringAwards.com. For information on the Petersen Automotive Museum, visit Petersen.org.

▼ In a break with tradition, the Lifetime Achievement Award in the 2016 International Historic Motoring Awards—the highest accolade of the event—rather than to a person, went to a place and the events held there: America's **Bonneville Salt Flats Land Speed Racing**, in tribute to over 100 years of inspirational achievements in a unique location. Originally nominated by "LandSpeed" Louise

crust to wither to an almost paper thin layer less than a half-inch in many places. "We may well witness the end of land speed racing on the Bonneville Salt Flats in our lifetime," warned Noeth, the



acknowledged LSR author and historical expert. "Racing returned in 2016 after two years of rainouts that diluted the fragile crust to a point that many of the plus-300-mph speed machines chose to pack up



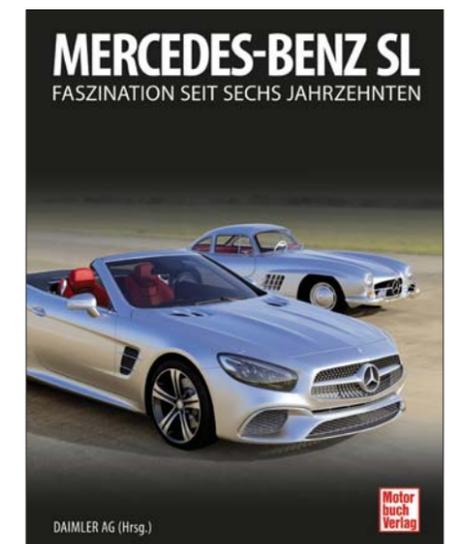
and go home instead of risking a wreck. I am so very grateful for the recognition spotlight the IHMA has cast upon the home of so many extraordinary speed deeds by ordinary people." For information on the awards, visit historicmotoringawards.com. For information on the Salt Flats, visit savethesalt.org.

▼ Voting has begun for the 2017 **West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame**, with 25 nominees including track promoters, car builders, drivers, owners and crew chiefs

from historic (pre-1970) and modern eras of the sport. Eligibility was broadened to include those who competed in full-bodied racing vehicles primarily on road courses under sanction by FIA, International Motor

and 114 top-10 finishes. The Board of Directors' first round of balloting, from which 12 semi-finalists will be chosen, runs November 21 through January 9. Final voting runs January 12-31, and five inductees are named on Sunday, March 19, during the NASCAR weekend at Phoenix International Raceway. The Class of 2017 will be enshrined June 22 at the Meritage Resort and Spa in Napa, during NASCAR and K&N Pro Series West weekend at Sonoma Raceway. WestCoastStockCarHallOfFame.com.

▼ **Mercedes-Benz SL—Six Decades of Fascination** is a new book on the model series, published by Motorbuch Verlag, Stuttgart. Its 528 pages provide in-depth information on every SL from 1952 through the current 2017 model year, with over 800 photos (some previously unpublished), comprehensive tables and complete descriptions of all SL special models. A glimpse into the design studios of the mid-1960s describes the development of a successor to the "Pagoda" SL and a possible mid-engined car as an addition to the SL model range. A chapter on the 107 model series has color photos of motor-sports with the SLC coupés in the late 1970s. The book also details all special models and unique specimens of the 129, 230 and 231 model series, as well as "tender drawings" from the Mercedes-Benz design department, with a total of over 30 variants documenting the W 194 to R 129 model series. An online link also gives



access to promotional films and brochures. The book, in German, is available for 69 euros at www.mercedes-benz-classic-store.com: ISBN 978-3-613-03908-7. ■

UPCOMING FEATURES

Motorsports: Arizona Cycle Park



Road trip: southeast Arizona's Willcox Playa



Audi S3 Sedan



Kia Niro 50 mpg advanced hybrid utility launch



Events: Arizona Concours d'Elegance and auctions



Infiniti QX30



Road trip: National Parks family RV tour



North American International Auto Show, Detroit



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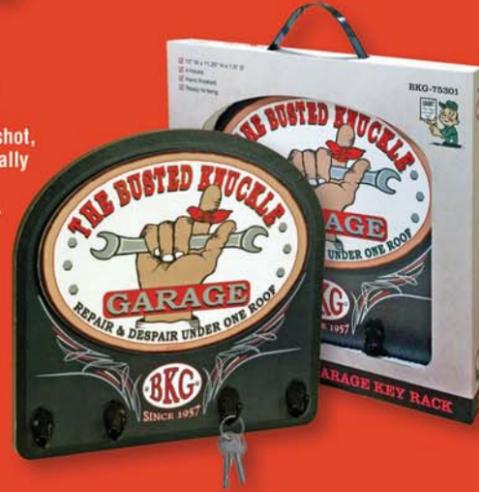
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