

# ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 1  
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025

**AUCTION WEEK!**  
**CONCOURS! SHOWS!**  
DRIVES INCLUDING SUV-EV-PHEV  
MOTORSPORTS: BAJA 1000  
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We are inspired by the **Cars and Camaraderie**® within automotive culture, found in equal measure among both enthusiast communities and industry professionals. **Drive Toward a Cure**® events harness the passion for cars and driving and turn that power into support for ongoing efforts to improve the lives of those living with **Parkinson's Disease**, as well as the research that will hopefully one day lead to a cure.

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# ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

## news & features

## January-February 2025

<b>A Week With Special Event</b>	<b>2024 Toyota Sequoia TRD Pro i-FORCE MAX Hybrid</b> ..... 10
<b>A Week With Special Event</b>	<b>Oliver Smith Jeweler's 19th Annual Cars &amp; Coffee</b> <b>A</b> ..... 13 Benchmark event featured rare top entries.
<b>A Week With Special Event</b>	<b>2025 Volvo V60 Cross Country B5 AWD</b> ..... 14
<b>A Week With Special Event</b>	<b>Arizona Concours d'Elegance 2025</b> <b>B</b> ..... 16 Featured classes and other highlights continue to grow.
<b>A Week With Special Event</b>	<b>Concours in the Hills 2025 / Fountain Hills</b> <b>C</b> ..... 19 Charitable event on track for another round.
<b>A Week With Special Events</b>	<b>2024 Lexus RX 450h+ AWD Plug-in Hybrid</b> ..... 20
<b>A Week With Motorsports</b>	<b>Arizona Auction Week 2025</b> <b>D</b> ..... 22 The biggest news is that we are down to just four, but they are key and core. Information on upcoming action-packed week.
<b>A Week With Motorsports</b>	<b>2025 Buick Enclave Sport Touring AWD</b> ..... 26
<b>A Week With Motorsports</b>	<b>Ford Performance at SCORE Baja 1000</b> <b>E</b> ..... 29 Not far away and sharing many similarities to our own off-roading, Baja results can have significant impact in our market.
<b>A Week With Motorsports</b>	<b>2025 Infiniti QX60 Luxe AWD Black Edition</b> ..... 30
<b>A Week With</b>	<b>Phoenix Raceway NASCAR 2025 Spring Weekend</b> <b>F</b> ..... 33 The fifth race of the new season happens here, on the path toward Championship Weekend here next fall.
<b>A Week With</b>	<b>2025 Ford Explorer ST RWD</b> ..... 34
<b>ARIZONA RIDER MAGAZINE</b>	<b>Polaris Factory Racing wins: SCORE Baja 1000, SCORE UTV Pro Open Class Series</b> <b>G</b> ..... 37 Thee SCORE events speak strongly to powersports in Arizona.
<b>A Week With</b>	<b>2025 Mercedes-Benz GLC 350e 4MATIC SUV PHEV</b> ..... 38
<b>ARIZONA BOATER MAGAZINE</b>	<b>Donald Campbell's Bluebird K7 returning to Coniston Water UK</b> <b>H</b> ..... 41 One of the most significant craft—and its tragic incident—take on a new life next year at their most significant location.
<b>A Week With</b>	<b>2025 Chevrolet Blazer EV RS AWD</b> ..... 42 The only full EV in this issue, this one introduces new mysteries.
<b>Technology &amp; Services</b>	<b>GM expanding EVgo and ChargePoint operations</b> ..... 45 Key to buying into the EV realm is knowing your charging options.
<b>Vehicle Comparo / Awards</b>	<b>TAWA Texas Truck Rodeo 2024: Part Two: category winners</b> <b>H</b> ..... 46 This event from last fall continues to stretch out the drama, first waiting for these category winners, and with the big title winners yet to be announced—but soon.

## departments

- FROM THE PUBLISHER ..... 4
- AUTOMOTIVE NEWS UPDATE ..... 6
- THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS ..... 50
- UPCOMING FEATURES ..... 54



**COVER:**  
**1974 Jaguar E-Type Series III V12 Roadster**  
 Chassis no. UE 1S 24659 / Engine no. 7S 16213 LA  
 Estimate: Refer to dept / Lot to be sold without reserve  
**Bonhams | Cars**  
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 Photo courtesy Bonhams | Cars



**H**appy New Year! It's January in Arizona, when a whole lot of the world wishes they were here. And January means Arizona Auction Week, when a whole lot of them are! This issue includes the latest auction schedules and highlights—there are just four this year—as well as information on the Arizona Concours d'Elegance at the start of Auction Week. You'll also find info on a few other upcoming as well as recent events.

You'll be seeing plenty of exotica at those events, but even for more routine driving duties, there are so many vehicle choices—sports cars, supercars, convertibles, pickup trucks, and of course crossovers and SUVs. Our weekly drives in this issue pretty much all fall into the crossover and SUV category. An asterisk goes to the Volvo V60 Cross Country, a wagon variant of a sedan, with a degree of crossover skills built in. And despite all the clamor and buzz, just one of these is an EV, though several are PHEVs or advanced hybrids—bucking the trend or redirecting the trend, as the case may be.

Last fall's TAWA Texas Truck Rodeo continues to release its results in measured stages. We finally know who won categories (and in the next issue, we'll finally know who won the top title awards). That feature in this issue shows basically as many trucks as SUVs by category. But our prior issue shows there were many times more SUVs by head count.

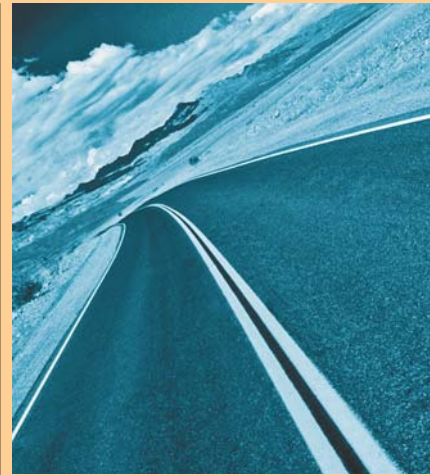
If you've been finding it hard to navigate the wealth of SUVs available in the marketplace, then after skimming our sampling here, you will find—well, you are not alone. There is a lot of great machinery being manufactured currently, while there is also a lot of overly ambitious technology being applied, sometimes to its detriment.

Good luck! May your compass find some bearings. Brand leanings still run strong.

Enjoy the ride!

**Joe Sage**

Publisher/ Executive Editor



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- USMA.....United States Motorsports Association

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Porsche 911 Carrera T

▼ Enthusiasts, rejoice! The **Porsche** 911 Carrera T is making a comeback, offered exclusively with six-speed manual transmission, in both coupe and, a first for the Carrera T, cabriolet versions. Weighing in at 3,316 pounds (coupe), modern touches include standard rear-axle steering and active suspension management (PASM), with damper specifically tuned to the Carrera T. This third modern iteration of the 911 Carrera T improves on the popular formula of an especially sporty chassis combined with the engine of the standard 911 Carrera, a focus on lightweight materials and that six-speed manual gearbox as the sole transmission offering. The 911 Carrera T uses the same 388-hp, 331-lb.ft 3.0-liter twin-turbo boxer engine as the standard Carrera, capable of zero to 60 mph in 4.3 seconds as a coupe or 4.5 seconds in Cabriolet form. Top track speed is 183 mph or 182 mph, for the Coupe or Cabriolet. Power runs through a special open-pore, laminated walnut ball shifter to the rear wheels, using the first six ratios of the seven-speed manual used previously in the Type 992.1 Carrera models. To help with smooth downshifts for new manual fans, the car comes standard with an autoblip feature that rev-matches the engine to the appropriate transmission speed, which can be manually disabled. This is part of a Sport Chrono package, standard equipment on the Carrera T, which also includes a dial integrated in the leather-wrapped GT Sport steering wheel for quick access to Normal, Sport, Sport Plus

and Wet drive modes, as well as a Track Precision app and a tire temperature display in the instrument cluster. A Sport Exhaust system is also standard, which, in combination with reduced sound deadening material, creates especially powerful drivetrain acoustics.

▼ **Hyundai** Motor Company unveiled its INITIUM hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) concept during a “Clearly Commit-



Hyundai INITIUM hydrogen fuel cell electric (FCEV) concept

ted” event held at Hyundai Motorstudio Goyang. INITIUM is Latin for “beginning” or “first,” intended to position Hyundai as a hydrogen energy pioneer, committed to achieving a “sustainable hydrogen society,” while providing a preview of a new production FCEV Hyundai plans to unveil in the first half of this year. The concept encapsulates the company’s 27 years of hydrogen technology development and its

ongoing commitment to this powertrain. The concept also debuts a new Hyundai design language, “Art of Steel,” intended to embody the character of HTWO, Hyundai Motor Group’s dedicated hydrogen value chain business brand. The styling integrates the HTWO symbol—a “+” inspired graphic, part of its lighting signature, is incorporated into the bumper, aimed at creating a distinctive FCEV-specific design cue. The vehicle’s SUV-like form integrates city living functionality with outdoor adventure capability, with bold lines and solid structure balancing sturdiness and sophistication, complemented by the concept’s 21-inch wheels and rugged roof rack. Development of the INITIUM has focused on three areas: superior driving range and enhanced performance (key strengths of hydrogen cars); a spacious interior and luggage area (making it ideal for families); and a range of convenience and safety features considered unique to hydrogen cars. With range in mind, the INITIUM concept is equipped with large hydrogen fuel tanks.

▼ **Toyota** introduced the 4Runner TRD

Surf Concept, inspired by Southern California’s vibrant surf culture, at the SEMA Show in November. Built at the Toyota Motorsports Garage, the 4Runner TRD Surf Concept combines the rugged, open-air spirit of the first-generation 4Runner with the cutting-edge technology and design of the all-new 2025 4Runner, a unique tribute to the adventurous lifestyle that shaped a generation. 4Runner TRD Surf Concept

(a special prototype, modified with parts and/or accessories not available from Toyota) began life as an all-new 2025 4Runner TRD Limited. The i-Force 2.4L turbocharged engine delivers 278 horsepower



Toyota 4Runner TRD Surf Concept

and 317 pound-feet of torque through an eight-speed automatic transmission. Power is distributed via a full-time four-wheel-drive system with an electronically controlled dual-range transfer case. A custom exhaust gives the factory powertrain a satisfying note. The team started by focusing on transforming this highly capable 4Runner into the perfect beach boss. Creating a “factory” 4Runner that looks as good and performs equally well with the top on or off posed a number of challenges. “Engineering a legitimate removable top; going from a 4-door to a 2-door while maintaining functional windows; flipping the front passenger seat for improved rear seat access; and adding 2 inches of width to both sides were all just tip-of-the-iceberg issues,” says Marty Schwerter, lead builder and Director of Operations at Toyota’s Motorsports Technical Center. “What makes this build so stellar has less to do with the changes themselves and more to do with the amazing way that they all work together—the result is truly greater than the sum of the parts.” As focus shifted to the removable top transformation, a practice run was done on a gen-five 4Runner. The removable top was built in-house, blending traditional fabrication with CAD and modern 3D printing technology to shape cutlines that perfectly mirrored both sides of the body, creating a perfect fit. Designed to be easily removed by a single person, this feature provides the open-air freedom synonymous with the 4Runner legacy. As rugged as it is stylish, the 4Runner TRD

Surf Concept’s long-travel suspension system features billet aluminum front upper and lower A-arms, designed to handle the toughest terrain while providing a smooth ride. Steering upgrades, custom front ax-

les, and a Toyota Tundra rear-end housing complement the custom suspension. At each corner, 37-inch tires, mounted to 17x8.5-inch custom wheels, complete the concept’s muscular appearance. The weatherproofed interior includes soft, waterproof flooring and a front passenger seat that flips forward to allow easy access to the rear seating area. Accessories include a custom surfboard Travel Quiver specific to this concept, pairing perfectly with the



Ringbrothers “TUKA” 1972 Chevrolet K5 Blazer

roof rack. The 4Runner TRD Surf Concept also highlights collaboration among various departments including TRD North Carolina, TMNA Production Engineering, Service Parts and Accessory Development (SPAD), AAP, and Motorsports and Engagement Marketing.

▼ Custom car builder and parts manufacturer **Ringbrothers** has unveiled a cus-

tom-built 1972 Chevrolet K5 Blazer known as “TUKA.” Investing more than 3,700 hours, designed with a dual focus on off-road agility and the city, the TUKA project enhances the K5 Blazer’s original lines and proportions by raising the tailgate and box sides by two inches to match the door height, creating a seamless profile. A hand-built fiberglass top integrates a panoramic roof from a modern Blazer, while the rear window was grafted from a contemporary Jeep Wrangler, canted to mimic the Blazer’s factory top. Sculpted bodywork is finished with a BASF Glasurit Waterborne mix called Galactic Black. Beneath the carbon-fiber hood is a 525-hp GM Performance 6.2-liter LS3 V8 channeling 487 lb-ft of torque through a Bowler Tru-Street GM 4L60E automatic transmission and NP208 transfer case. TUKA incorporates chassis elements from a third-generation Toyota Tacoma, with its independent front suspension purpose-modified with Total Chaos control arms and a custom rear suspension with King shocks fitted all around. The Blazer rides on a one-off set of HRE 18-inch bronze wheels and features a custom spare tire mount behind the rear seat. An entirely bespoke technoutilitarian cabin was penned by designer Sean Smith and crafted by Gabe Lopez and the team at Gabe’s Custom Interiors.

The carbon-fiber dashboard houses instrumentation from Dakota Digital as well as billet-machined and 3D-printed switchgear, gear selector, handbrake and a carbon-fiber steering wheel. “Almost every piece of this Blazer is custom,” added Ringbrothers co-founder Mike Ring. “None of this would be possible without our trusted

KEEP RIGHT >>

partners at BASF, Dynamat, Gentex Corporation and HRE Wheels helping us fulfill our vision.” Ringbrothers offers a number of billet aluminum parts, carbon-fiber steering wheels, side-marker light bezels

healthy injection of performance thanks to the addition of a Roots-style supercharger, prototype NISMO cold air intake and custom NISMO exhaust system to Frontier’s standard 3.8-liter V6 engine.

the concepts imagine the ultimate in capability, adaptability, utility and organization, all with an eye on sustainability—responsible engagement with nature. The Kia EV9 ADVNTR CONCEPT EV SUV modifies the all-electric three-row 2025 Kia EV9 with rugged custom front and rear fascias, reinforced rocker panels, a 3-inch lift, and a rugged tire and wheel package to maximize off-road capability. A custom roof rack can handle everything from standard luggage containers to bespoke roof-mounted tents. The Kia PV5 WKNDR CONCEPT EV VAN is based on Kia’s recently debuted line of EV PBVs, or Purpose Beyond Vehicles, designed for small businesses and deliveries. Lifted and equipped with off-road tires, the concept becomes an escape pod for extended weekends in nature. The PV5 WKNDR EV VAN features a highly flexible and adaptable modular interior that can be easily and efficiently customized to maximize space and function (akin to a Swiss Army Knife on wheels). The van’s “Gear Head” feature is the first-of-its-kind storage solution that provides an off-board, sheltered storage space for gear when the vehicle is stationary, allowing for maximum utilization of interior space still with easy access to gear outside. The “Gear Head” can also be transformed into a mobile pantry for



and more for enthusiasts looking to customize their own Blazer.

▼ **Nissan** has earned the #1 position in the mass market car segment of the JD Power 2024 US Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) Study, increasing its score in the segment by 34 points and marking the company’s best performance in 32 years. Nissan’s overall SSI index score also rose by 22 points, exceeding the industry average gain of eight points and boosting Nissan from 22nd to 11th place in the rankings. Nissan’s progress was fueled by substantial improvements in key areas including negotiation ease, transparency and paperwork efficiency.

▼ **Nissan** brought four project builds and an accessory concept to the recent SEMA Show—the vehicles highlighting how owners might modify the refreshed 2025 Frontier pickup and all-new 2025 Kicks crossover, while a Nissan Z Legend accessory package concept is inspired by the popular Z Heritage Edition. Embodying the spirit of sport and muscle trucks of the past, the Nissan Frontier TARMAC concept is a one-off street truck, a collaboration between Nissan Motorsports, Nissan Design America and Forsberg Racing. TARMAC immediately turns heads with its new-for-2025 Afterburn Orange paint, complemented by carbon fiber accents throughout, from an aggressive widebody kit, vented hood and roof cap, to spoiler, wheels, aero and more. The TARMAC concept receives a

The result: over 400 horsepower to the wheels. Keeping that added performance in check is a high-performance big brake kit featuring custom 15-inch floating two-piece rotors and mounts, utilizing the powerful brake calipers from the Nissan Z NISMO. Putting all this power down to the asphalt are carbon-barreled NISMO TARMAC 20-inch wheels wrapped in Yokohama Advan tires and a prototype NISMO high-performance suspension kit with ad-



justable coilovers. Other Nissan concepts at SEMA included Project Trailgater; Kicks Beach Patrol concept; Kicks Urban Shadow concept; and a Nissan Z Legend accessory package concept.

▼ **Kia** brought two custom EV concepts to the SEMA Show, under the shared banner, Destined for Adventure. From the Kia Design Center America (KDCA) in Irvine,

cooking aficionados who want to “cook with a view.” Aiming for self-sufficiency, the PV5 WKNDR EV VAN has solar panels and unique hydro turbine wheels that can recharge the batteries for many uses—for example, Kia installed an onboard compressor to handle needs for inflation, from adjusting tire pressure when out on the trail to inflating space efficient mattresses when setting up camp for the night. ■

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# Pretty awesome

TRD Pro loves everything you throw at it by Joe Sage

Toyota Tundra is a fine full-size pickup, which we've driven many times, here at home and at various comparo events. Really, the only things that keep it from being an absolute top-seller (although it has gained significantly) are [a] that the Big Three pickup mindset is a notoriously tough nut to crack (even with it built in Texas); and [b] we figure it could compete better if it had a heavy-duty version, although it's easy to understand why they don't pour resources into that, given "[a]."

Good news. Neither of those really matters in its SUV partner. The Toyota Sequoia full-size SUV,

new as generation three for model year 2023, retains classic body-on-frame build, durable, generally more easily repairable—especially perfect for an off-road build like the TRD Pro. And as for "[b]," demand for 2500-class SUVs is slim to moot.

The new Sequoia has independent front suspension, new rack-mounted electronic power steering and a modern multi-link rear suspension, not only for a smooth ride in its own right, but to accommodate available load-leveling variable air suspension for those towing regularly (up to 9,020 pounds maximum). TRD-tuned FOX internal bypass shocks

are key to both off-roading and in-town duty.

The Sequoia lineup starts just above \$60 grand, already a great value. At about \$80 grand, the value continues in TRD Pro, as it is not only an especially capable duty-build, but has extensive premium features, such as second-row captain's chairs, a heated steering wheel and much more, including new multimedia systems introduced in Tundra.

The first thing we did with this Sequoia TRD Pro was take it off-pavement at one of the largest off-highway vehicle terrain regions. Here, it was most impressive. (Our headline is sanitized from our voice memos—which were few overall, also a good sign, as annoyances tend to get more attention.)

It was good to grab the dirt immediately, as we had this for NASCAR week, meaning hundreds of miles of freeway driving, in generally crowded con-

ditions to boot. This may seem a bit off-target for the intentions of a TRD Pro, but it's a chance to look at the way many prospective buyers will—whether it can be a daily driver, as well as a week-end warrior. The answer is a definite "yes."

We had originally been scheduled in the Sequoia for a week with a long road trip, for which we wanted four-wheel drive and something we could sleep in the back of, given the unknowns of time, distance and winter weather. We changed, though, to the RAV4, for fuel economy. Not to say the Sequoia is thirsty. Sure, its fuel mileage ratings are lower, but that's a pure function of its size and strength, not of indulgence. Plus, the entire lineup is now i-FORCE MAX hybrid, optimizing the whole scenario. And even with its high horsepower and torque, it runs on regular gas.

We don't hypermile, but do glance at the readouts. This arrived with mpg in the 16s and stayed there throughout our varied week of off-pavement,

open highway, urban freeway and surface street errands. Your mileage, as they say, may vary.

Speaking of the original plan for a sleepable SUV, we did have some large, odd-shaped boxes to move. The third row power-reclines, its controls easily accessible in the cargo area. The folded seats still take up a lot of volume, and they create a storage area with multiple levels. Though not ideal for that sleeping plan, it was adequate for our box-moving. After the fact, we learned something we had not found intuitively—a multi-level adjustable cargo shelf system that can also slide the third row through six inches of range. What this offers in terms of odd cargo shapes or sleeping, we will have to save for another time.

Toyota Sequoia's gen-three restyling is strong and handsome, looking totally new and contemporary, while also immediately recognizable and perfectly on brand. This is a top notch SUV, and TRD Pro is a proven do-everything build. ■



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY .....	San Antonio, Texas
SEATING.....	seven (2nd row captain's chairs)
ENGINE.....	3.5L intercooled twin-turbo V6, 24v DOHC, chain drive w dual VVT-i
HP/TORQUE .....	437 hp / 583 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO .....	10.4:1
<b>ELECTRIC MOTOR &amp; BATTERY</b>	
ELECTRIC MOTOR.....	perm magnet synchr
SYSTEM.....	parallel hybrid w elec motor/generator btwn engine & transmission
<b>BATTERY PACK .....</b> sealed Ni-MH	
RATED/SYSTEM VOLTAGE .....	288V / 650V max
OUTPUT/TORQUE .....	48 hp / 184 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION .....	10-spd electronically controlled automatic w intelligence (ECT[-i]), sequential shift mode, uphill/downhill logic, tow/haul modes
<b>DRIVETRAIN .....</b> 4WDemand part-time 4WD, electronically controlled 2-spd transfer case (high/low range), automatic limited slip diff w parallel hybrid system w elec motor/generator btwn engine & trans	
<b>SUSPENSION .....</b> (TRD Pro) F: TRD off-road susp w 2.5-in FOX internal bypass coil-overs & rear remote-reservoir shocks, TRD Pro front stblzr bar; R: multi-link w coils & outboard-mounted twin-tube shocks	
<b>STEERING .....</b> elec pwr-assist rack & pinion	
<b>BRAKES .....</b> F: 13.9 pwr-assist vented disc w opposed dual-piston calipers; R: 13.36 vented w single-piston caliper	
<b>WHEELS .....</b> 18-in black forged-alum BBS	
<b>TIRES.....</b> 285/65R18 (33-in) AT Falken Wildpeak	
<b>LENGTH / WHEELBASE .....</b> 208.1 / 122.0 in	
<b>WIDTH / HEIGHT.....</b> 79.6 / 77.7 in	
<b>HEADRM (F/2/3) ....</b> (moonrf) 39.2 / 38.4 / 35.6 in	
<b>LEGROOM (F/2/3) .....</b> 41.2 / 39.2 / 28.1-33.7* in	
<i>*(sliding 3rd row w adjustable cargo shelf)</i>	
<b>OVERHANG (F/R) .....</b> 38.0 / 48.0 in	
<b>GROUND CLEARANCE .....</b> (TRD Pro) 9.1 in	
<b>APPROACH / DEPARTURE .....</b> (TRD Pro) 23° / 20°	
<b>TURNING CIRCLE .....</b> (TRD Pro) 44.6 ft	
<b>CARGO CAPACITY .....</b> 11.5-22.3* / 49.0 / 86.9 cu.ft	
<i>*(sliding 3rd row w adjustable cargo shelf)</i>	
<b>WEIGHT .....</b> 6150 lb	
<b>PAYLOAD .....</b> 1435 lb	
<b>TOW CAPACITY .....</b> 9020 lb	
<b>FUEL / CAPACITY .....</b> 87 oct reg unl / 22.5 gal	
<b>MPG.....</b> (4x4) 19/22/20 (city/hwy/comb)	
<b>BASE PRICE .....</b>	<b>\$78,710</b>
<b>DESTINATION CHARGE.....</b>	1850
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$80,560</b>

2024 model; see 2025 pricing below.

## 2025 TOYOTA SEQUOIA LINEUP

(ALL ARE I-FORCE MAX).....	4X2	4X4
SR5.....	\$62,175	\$65,175
Limited.....	68,575	71,575
Platinum.....	79,320	
TRD Pro.....	80,045	
1794 Edition.....	80,135	
Capstone.....	83,665	

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**OLIVER SMITH JEWELER HOSTS ANNUAL CARS & CIGARS EVENT**

Oliver Smith Jeweler's 19th annual Cars & Cigars event, presented by Gerald Charles, took place on Sunday, December 15, 2024, at the Oliver Smith Jeweler Flagship store in Scottsdale. The annual event, celebrated as one of the nation's most high-end private car shows, brought together 100 privately owned luxury sports cars, iconic race car drivers and an elegant blend of entertainment and hospitality, curated by Peter Volny, a director of the Arizona Ferrari Club and founder of Concours in the Hills.

This year's theme, "Race Cars," showcased some of the most extraordinary vehicles in automotive history. The centerpiece of the event was Red Carpet Row, a showcase for 13 of the world's most valuable and iconic cars from the world's leading brands, collectively valued at well over \$30 million. Featured vehicles included:

- Two Ferrari SP3s
- Ferrari SP2
- Ferrari 500 Superfast ("Best in Show" winner)
- Ferrari 275GTB Alloy
- Bugatti Chiron
- Cobra 427
- Ford GT
- Pagani Huayra
- McLaren Senna
- Iso Grifo
- Aston Martin Vantage V12

Attendees mingled with the "Flying Dutchman," legendary two-time Indianapolis 500 winner Arie Luyendyk, and former Formula One driver Derek Daly, both of whom judged the "Best in Show" award, presented to the Ferrari 500 Superfast.

Attendees were encouraged to embrace the race car theme with both contemporary and vintage-inspired race outfits. Guests enjoyed a cigar bar, gourmet catering and live music from a talented electric violinist.

The event was sponsored by Gerald Charles, marking the US launch of the Maestro 4.0 Ducati 30° Anniversario 916. A collaboration with Ducati, this timepiece blends the precision of Swiss watchmaking with the passion of Italian motorcycling in a limited edition of just 250 pieces. The watch features a revival of the iconic jumping hours complication, first introduced by legendary designer Mr. Gerald Genta with the Maestro GC39. Ducati motorcycles were on display to celebrate, courtesy of Go AZ Motorcycles, perfectly complementing the high-octane spirit of Cars & Cigars and capturing the essence of the collaboration. ■



Pretty much everyone knows the station wagon used to be widespread in America, though they have long since largely disappeared. But for decades, almost any sedan—long the dominant lifeform—begat a long-roofed alternative.

Today they linger, mostly in Europe, though few make it to our shores. But Volvo still comes through.

Volvo's lineup has included more familiar SUVs, XC-numeric models, some leaning toward tall wagons or lower crossovers with off-pavement skills. But anyone seeking a more traditional station wagon will discover the V-numeric models.

While we've seen the "V" explained as standing for such things as "versatile," in Swedish, wagon is "vagn," which makes more sense, as XC models share the propensity for versatility.

While Volvo's versatile vagns have variously

come in V40, V60, V70 and V90 sizes over time and place, in the US there are currently two sizes, V60 and V90, with Cross Country models of both—or CC, to avoid (or create) confusion with the taller XC models. A key characteristic of a V Cross Country is raised ground clearance, along with mild body cladding. (There is also a non-CC "Polestar Engineered" plug-in hybrid variant of the V60.)

Ground clearance aside, the three are differentiated by their powertrains. For the V60 Cross Country, as driven here, that's the 247-hp four-cylinder turbocharged B5, while for the V90 Cross Country, it's a 295-hp B6 version of the same, but with supercharging added. Both also have a mild hybrid system good for another 13 horses. Both are quite quick, with zero-to-60 times in the sixes. But mostly, the V90 CC is larger—and not that much prici-

er—and this is where most decisions will lie.

The V60 photographs long and lean, but is actually quite small. The rear doors are wide, though rear legroom not particularly generous—altogether, a mixture of balance and paradox. To a tall person, a hallmark of a smaller car is hitting one's head upon ingress or egress, but we realized at the end of the week that this had not been the case. Only one thing felt small to us, and that was the seat—back bolsters are adjustable, but not the seat cushion, and it is tight.

The engine is notable for its acoustics, quite satisfying under acceleration, occasionally unexpectedly dominant. We would be interested in driving the V60's B5 and the V90's B6 powertrains back-to-back, to get a solid comparison between the absence or presence of the supercharger. In the B5,

acceleration and cornering felt a bit uneven at times. We felt some uncertain steering at steady speed, too (in any drive mode), so maybe it's not the engine. Then again, maybe it is, as we noted a lack of punch in some open highway lane maneuvers, even in Polestar Engineered mode.

As the week went on, our drive experience was increasingly positive. Turning from a stop, 90 degrees onto an uphill freeway ramp, there's a brief pause, but then it's a bullet, pretty satisfying all in all. Exiting onto an uphill ramp, when already in motion, presented no such lag—a nice response, an authentic and healthy growl, with a perfect note, well above average for a 4-cylinder.

Other notes on features were many. The crystal shift knob has uncomfortably abrupt edges, and the shift itself has a pattern you need to develop a feel for. Controls are quite screen-dependent—not uncommon currently, but a few particularly confounding, such as needing both physical controls

and a screen dive to adjust seat ergonomics. Lane control was very invasive, but (also not uncommon) not safely accessible to change while in motion.

You expect a Swedish car—a vehicle from a small manufacturer in a small country—to be a little different. It may even be why you choose it. It can be a mixed bag, not so much between good and bad but between normal and unusual—a plus when it's simply neutral. Your moments of thrill or delight may sometimes interweave with small annoyances. Ultimately, it's a mainstream experience within the car's size, shape, style and power.

The Volvo V60 Cross Country B5 is a solid urban-slash-off-pavement combination—a strong turbo, AWD, 31 mpg highway, ample ground clearance, decent cargo volume and a bit of utility towing. Check it out in person. As always, block out distractions and work on your typical favorite settings and functions. And if it feels small for you, there's always the V90, for not that much more. ■

# When you Wish for a Wagon

An idiosyncratic rarity

by Joe Sage



Our V60 Cross Country's Bright Dusk paint could appear as a rather unexciting beige in some light, but then take on a gorgeous, deep satin-silvery look in other—all in all, a nice choice.

## SPECIFICATIONS

Note: manufacturer's specs are limited. Many specs here are from reputable third-party sources (noted as 3rd party or 3p); however, some 3rd party info differs from known info the manufacturer does supply, suggesting other variances may be in play. Other information comes from vehicle Monroney sticker, consumer build site, manufacturer parts sites or direct observation. Some information, e.g. complete brake info, was not available via any of the above. We spent hours cross-referencing; suggest you dig deeper if buying.

ASSEMBLY .....	Ghent, Belgium
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD .....	Sweden / Japan
PARTS CONTENT .....	Sweden 25% / Belgium 20% / US/Canada 0%
ENGINE .....	2.0L turbo-4 dir inj DOHC, VVT
HP/TORQUE .....	247 hp / 258 lb-ft
MILD HYBRID .....	48V mild hybrid system w regen braking & integrated starter generator w 13 hp
COMPRESSION RATIO .....	na
TRANSMISSION .....	8-spd Geartronic auto
DRIVETRAIN .....	AWD
0-TO-60 MPH .....	(per mfr) 6.4 sec
<i>(note: consumer site states 6.6 sec)</i>	
SUSPENSION .....	(3p) 4-whl indep, stblzr bars
STEERING .....	elec power steering
BRAKES .....	(per mfr parts) F: 18-in disc; R: 17-in disc
WHEELS .....	(opt) 20-in 7-spoke w A/S tires (std) 19-in diamond-cut alloy
TIRES .....	Pirelli P Zero all-season 245/40R20
LENGTH / WHEELBASE .....	(3p) 188.5 / 113.2 in
HEADROOM (F/R) .....	(3p) 37.4 / 38.1 in
LEGROOM (F/R) .....	(3p) 42.3 / 35.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE .....	(per mfr) 8.1 in
<i>(note: 3rd party source states 7.8 in)</i>	
APPR / DEPART .....	(3rd party) 17.0 / 22.4°
TURNING CIRCLE .....	(3rd party) 37.1 ft
CARGO CAPACITY .....	(3p) 25.5 / 60.5 cu.ft
TOW CAPACITY .....	2000 lb
WEIGHT .....	4082 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY .....	(3p) prem rec / 15.9 gal
MPG .....	(Monroney) 24/31/27 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE .....	\$55,400
ULTRA FEATURES:	Harman Kardon Premium audio, vented front seats, front passenger seat memory, power cushion extension & side support front seats, tailored dashboard, 4-zone auto climate, crystal geartronic gearshift, graphical heads-up display .....
AUDIO:	Bowers & Wilkins Premium .....
WHEELS/TIRES:	20-in 7-spoke wheel kit with all-season tires .....
CLIMATE PKG .....	750
LUGGAGE COVER .....	390
DESTINATION CHARGE .....	1195
TOTAL .....	\$64,135

## 2025 VOLVO V (WAGON) LINEUP

VOLVO V60 CROSS COUNTRY	
V60 CC B5 AWD, Plus .....	50,300
V60 CC B5 AWD, Ultimate .....	55,400
VOLVO V60 Polestar Engineered	
T8 eAWD plug-in hybrid .....	71,250
VOLVO V90 CROSS COUNTRY	
V90 CC B6 AWD, Plus .....	59,800
V90 CC B6 AWD, Ultimate .....	64,800





**ARIZONA CONCOURS  
"THE ART OF AUTO-  
MOTIVE ENGINEERING"  
THEME SHOWCASES  
EURO CLASSICS,  
TRANS AM RACERS**



1951 Delahaye 175-S Saoutchik Roadster



Ferrari 250 GT Competizione Berlinetta by Scaglione



Brewster-bodied Rolls-Royce Phantom II Town Car

The theme for the annual Arizona Concours d'Elegance, on January 19, 2025, is *The Art of Automotive Engineering*. More than 100 collector cars and classic motorcycles will be on display and competing for awards during this upscale lifestyle event that fills the lawns of the Scottsdale Civic Center outside the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts with rare examples of automotive engineering, design and sheer beauty.

**CLASSES AND FEATURED CLASS:** Sixteen professionally curated and judged classes range from horseless carriages at the dawn of motoring, through the classic and Art Deco eras, post-war sports and competition cars, to the high-performance exotic sports cars of recent years, and—for the first time since the event was established in 2014—a class for important and historic motorcycles, titled *Engineering on Two Wheels*.

Awards are presented in each class, along with special awards and the two coveted Best of Show trophies, one for pre-World War II and one for post-war. One of the special awards is presented for best period costume.

The **Featured Designer** class, *Carrossier* (coachbuilder) Jacques Saoutchik, honors Russian-born French designer and engineer, who emigrated to Paris to create bespoke luxury vehicles for wealthy clientele. His innovative and extravagant style had a powerful influence on the automotive landscape before and after World War II. From the Roaring '20s into the 1950s, Saoutchik competed with French design royalty, Figoni and Falaschi, as well as Franay, producing lavish, sometimes outlandish forms that characterized French custom coachwork. Postwar work included wildly flowing and stretched forms on the chassis of such exclusive marques as Delahaye (example shown at left) and Talbot Lago, as well as forging a close relationship with Spanish sports car company Pegaso.

Another class with a French accent is the **Featured Marque**, entitled *The Iconic Engineering of Ettore and Jean Bugatti*, including a most-glamorous Bugatti, a 1939 Type 57C Atalante by Gangloff. This exotic pre-war beauty is a factory-supercharged coupe that was among Bugatti's final examples of the exclusive Atalante model. With a body enhanced by French coachbuilder Gangloff, this is believed to be the only Atalante that combines the late-model "long-tail" design, retractable "bureau" roof and additional bright trim.

A fierce Ferrari 250 GT Competizione Berlinetta by Scaglione is one of just 45 examples of the aluminum-bodied competition coupes built in 1960. It debuted as part of Luigi Chinetti's NART team at the 12 Hours of Sebring, finishing 7th ov-

erall and 5th in the 3.0-liter class.

Chassis number 1773 GT, powered by the high-performance Colombo V12 engine, became a well-known presence in competitive events, consistently finishing on the podium. This beautiful athlete has been restored to concours standards, painted in its correct shade of Giallo (bright yellow).

A spectacular Brewster-bodied Rolls-Royce Phantom II Town Car was created for screen legend Constance Bennett, who bridged the transition from silent films to sound and in the early 1930s was the highest-paid actor in Hollywood. Her personal life was also the stuff of legends, as she was married five times and connected with many of the film industry's most glamorous figures. Bennett would rent the Rolls to studios to appear in films, at \$250 per day, which was serious money at the time. The Town Car was restored to top level during the 1980s, and in 1992 it received the highest accolade, winning Best of Show at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

The thunderous excitement of 1960s Trans Am Series racing, when American muscle and pony cars battled for V8-powered supremacy, will be celebrated at the Arizona Concours, the first major concours to pay tribute to this golden age—the Glory Years from 1966 through 1972, a time of intense rivalry between major manufacturers, deep corporate funding, and top professional drivers including Mark Donahue, Dan Gurney, Parnelli Jones and Sam Posey racing throughout the US, Mexico and Canada. The Series helped define the muscle car era, when cubic inches ruled and the horsepower wars were in full swing.

Significant race cars on display will include the No. 6 champion 1968 Chevrolet Camaro Z28, considered the most-significant Camaro race car of all time—part of the Roger Penske team and sponsored by Sunoco—which started on the pole nine times and won 10 of the 11 races entered with Donahue at the wheel; and the No. 3 1969 AMC Javelin (with a 1970 body) race-prepped by Ronnie Kaplan and raced by the Penske team, with famed drivers including Jerry Grant and Ron Grable successfully competing against more prevalent and better-funded racers from the Detroit Big Three.

**SEMINAR SERIES:** The Trans Am Glory Years is also the topic of one of two public seminars, headed by historians and collectors, that will take place on Saturday, January 18, along with one about the spectacular designs of the French coachbuilder Jacques Saoutchik. The seminars will be available to Concours Plus ticket holders.

**SPONSOR-BENEFICIARY-PARTNER:** Scottsdale-headquartered Discount Tire, the world's largest independent tire-and-wheel retailer, has signed on as a top Automotive Sponsor for the 2025 Arizona Concours d'Elegance, driven by Discount's support

of the event's longtime beneficiary, Make-A-Wish Arizona, the founding chapter of the national organization that grants wishes for children facing life-threatening medical conditions. Discount Tire acquired Tire Rack, a major purveyor of tires for vintage vehicles, in December 2021, and the Concours sponsorship helps build this connection with the collector car community.

The Arizona Concours d'Elegance is presented in partnership with nonprofit organization Scottsdale Arts, responsible for an array of artistic services in the city. Proceeds benefit local artists and

art programs, and the Concours' longtime beneficiary, Make-A-Wish Arizona.

**TICKET INFORMATION** is available online, with general admission (opening is 9 am) at \$95, active-duty military admitted free of charge with current military ID. (Discounted rates end December 31.)

"Concours Plus" admission tickets, at \$120, allow entry to the Dawn Patrol starting at 7 am, to see the prized vehicles entering and being staged on the lawn. Concours Plus also includes admission to the January 18 collector car seminars.

Visit [arizonaconcours.org](http://arizonaconcours.org)



Mark Donahue Camaro, AMC Javelin



1969 Ford Mustang Boss 302



1967 Lamborghini Miura - Best of Show, Post War, 2024

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# Concours in the Hills 2025

*"The Greatest Car Show on Grass," Concours in the Hills, returns to its spectacular lake view setting in Fountain Hills for its 11th year on Saturday, February 15, from 10 am to 3 pm. The event takes place in Fountain Park, 12925 N Saguaro Blvd, Fountain Hills AZ. Admission is free, but donations are welcome. For more information: [phoenixchildrensfoundation.org/signature/concours/](http://phoenixchildrensfoundation.org/signature/concours/)*

The show features a stunning display of vehicles, showcasing everything from contemporary and classic race cars to exotic high-performance cars, muscle cars, sports cars, hot rods and military vehicles, as well as helicopters and motorcycles.

Concours display categories include:

- European
- Domestic
- Asian
- Race Cars
- Off-road
- Military
- Motorbikes
- Alternative Fuel

Attendees have the opportunity to get up close and personal with the rare and exotic, all for a good cause. You'll find a day of great cars, lots of tasty food and refreshment trucks, over 100 dealer and aftermarket tents, and music, all in the spectacular setting of Fountain Park. There are also a few big raffles with the chance to perhaps walk away with some great prizes, courtesy of

various major sponsors.

Cars come from all over Arizona, California, Nevada and New Mexico to participate. The event is supported by leading car clubs of Arizona representing Audi, BMW, Cadillac, Corvette, Ferrari, Ford GT, Jaguar, Lamborghini, Lotus, McLaren, Mercedes-Benz, Mustang, Porsche, Viper and others.

Concours in the Hills benefits Phoenix Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, as well as the Cardiothoracic Surgery Support Fund.

Funds raised finance innovative research, cutting-edge technology, recruitment of leading physicians, and child-friendly programs that make the hospital environment more comfortable for young patients.

Thanks to the Concours giving community, the event has raised over \$1.6 million for Phoenix Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders and the Cardiothoracic Surgery Support Fund since 2018, helping to ramp up advancements in world-class pediatric health care. ■

Photo courtesy of the event. Details subject to change.



# Top bag of tricks

Power, precision, luxury and a short-run EV trick up its sleeve *BY JOE SAGE*

Lexus RX, with us since the late 1990s and the brand's top-selling vehicle of all time, saw annual sales pass 100,000 in the US (at 114,000) with its new fifth generation in 2023.

Being a top seller earns more than just bragging rights. The gen-five RX was an immediate beneficiary of a new platform, and it offers a new plug-in hybrid (PHEV) version, which Lexus states as having been developed as an "RX-first powertrain."

A wide and low silhouette reflects benefits of the Lexus GA-K platform, which achieves a low center of gravity via new steels, adhesives and welds. Battery-flexible, the platform also provides generous legroom and low cargo loading.

The PHEV system has a combined 83 MPGe rating, a 6.2-second zero-to-60 time and 37-mile driving range rating in EV mode. Set up for home re-

charging from 120V outlets, the RX also comes with a Type 1 connector for public charging. (At its maximum 240V, it can recharge in about 2.5 hours using the standard 6.6 kW onboard charger.)

While lower trims offer FWD or AWD, hybrids and this PHEV are AWD-only (which suits us fine), with an electronically optimized, full-time system.

Choosing the RX that's right for you means diving into a whopping 18 basic variants (see at lower right; note our sample was a 2024, but this charts the 2025 lineup and pricing). You'll see the numerically highest is the F SPORT 500h, with the most power, though it is not the priciest. That would be our 450h+, which comes as Luxury trim only, with a list of top-end features and finishes from semi-aniline leather to heated second row power seats to triple-beam LED headlights. The 450h+ PHEV is

thus \$6,450 higher than the 500h F SPORT Performance, almost \$10,000 higher than a non-plug-in 350h hybrid in Luxury trim, and more than \$22,000 higher than the base RX. Definitely top dog.

Closest in the lineup in many ways is the 350h Luxury, at \$9,340 less. But power is closer to the 500h, thanks to the electrified layer of the 450h+.

Those comparatives alone could lead anyone to this version, plug-in aside. Our drive experience was, as with other recent RX drives, top notch. It corners superbly, steering is dead-accurate, with us noting that it's so good it makes us realize how average most are. Power is plenty and right on tap. Especially with freeway construction currently at record levels, it's easy to get bottled up in any number of ways. In the RX 450h+, given any good opening, we could accelerate instantly into another lane or barrel precisely up an exit ramp.

Suspension is so smooth, though solid, all the time, we were not surprised to pass over concrete

double rain troughs that trip up a lot of vehicles, but took special note of its lack of rebound—no trauma or shock, just smooth sailing, in and out.

The CVT feels like an extra-smooth, invisibly-spaced automatic, per the original intention of this tech (so much so, in fact, that we had to look it up again to doublecheck that that's what it was).

This RX has great fundamentals, and its position by power and price is clear, which brings us back to its plug-in trick. PHEVs are seen by many as best-of-all-worlds—a hybrid and then some, or an EV with gasoline as backup or for distance. To others, they may seem a compromise, not the real thing to a pure EV fan, but "feeling" better than an EV to someone unsure about the whole thing. To some, they're a perfect solution in their own right, because their daily commute can be full electric, with simple gasoline operation for road trips.

Many may contemplate the hybrid vs PHEV equation. PHEVs have more content, so generally cost more (this lineup doesn't have a pure comparison, but its apples and oranges give you a good idea).

It's at this point your comparison may often en-

counter a paradox. PHEVs in general add hardware, most notably a bigger battery, which will typically take away from cargo, fuel capacity, and/or cabin capacity—all of which you need if your basis is a daily EV you can also take on a road trip. Some may wonder if they're paying more for less.

This is a key place where the RX 450h+ PHEV will surprise you. With its new platform, there are near-zero tradeoffs, whatsoever. Legroom, headroom and cargo volume are the same for any RX. The PHEV's gas tank is in fact 2.64 gallons bigger than the 500h (delivering over 90 more miles between gas pumps) and just a fraction of a gallon less than even the non-hybrid 350. And even with its added weight, fuel mileage in the 450h+ PHEV is just one point off the 350h hybrid, virtually tied for the highest in the whole lineup (by far—non-hybrid 350 and performance 500h are in the 20s).

Nice, tight, strong engineering and performance. Luxury level. A solves-everything powertrain with near-zero tradeoffs. If the price of entry suits you, the Lexus 450h+ PHEV is a top winning combo in a proven winning vehicle. ■

**COUSINS:** The curvy hatchback styling of the RX may call to mind some possible pairings in the Toyota lineup, but first impressions may be dead wrong. The closest to RX turns out to be Highlander—a two-box design and always a favorite—and thus also to Grand Highlander and Lexus TX. Beyond that, powertrains, features and finishes are completely different—it's mostly just a curiosity point.

**NEW FOR 2025:** Lexus RX 500h F SPORT Performance adds a limited-run Black Line Special Edition package, with just 500 units in the US, featuring black exterior details, orange brake calipers and 21-inch black split-five-spoke wheels. In addition, 2025 brings the F SPORT Design grade to the RX 350 and RX 350h.



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Miyawaka, Fukuoka, Japan
ENGINE	.....2.5L 4-cyl 16v DOHC, chain drive w VVT-iE and VVT-i, SFI fuel inj
HP/TORQUE	.....180 hp / 168 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....14.0:1
<b>ELECTRIC MOTOR &amp; BATTERY</b>	
ELECTRIC MOTOR GENERATORS (F/R):	
.....	permanent magnet synchronous
BATTERY PACK	.....lithium-ion (Li-ion)
NOMINAL VOLTAGE	.....355.2V
TOTAL MAX SYSTEM OUTPUT	.....304 hp
TRANSMISSION	.....CVT
DRIVETRAIN	.....AWD
TOP SPEED / 0-60 MPH	.....124 mph / 6.2 sec
SUSPENSION	.....F: MacPherson strut; R: multi-link
STEERING	.....rack & pinion elec pwr steering
BRAKES	.....F: 13.39 x1.49 vented disc; R: 13.39 x0.71 vented disc
WHEELS	.....21-in alloy
TIRES	.....235/50R21 101V Bridgestone Alenza Sport A/S
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....192.52 / 112.2 in
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....(pano rf) 37.6 / 37.03 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....41.06 / 37.36 in
OVERHANG (F/R)	.....42.52 / 37.8 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....8.07 in
APPROACH / DEPARTURE	.....15° / 25°
TURNING CIRCLE	.....38.8 ft
CARGO CAPACITY	.....29.59 / 46.19 cu.ft
TOW CAPACITY	.....999 - (or w brake) 3494 lb
WEIGHT	.....4800 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....prem unl / 14.53 gal
MPG	.....36/33/35 (city/hwy/comb) / 83 (MPGe)

BASE PRICE	.....\$68,730
HEADLAMPS: premium triple-beam	.....1565
AUDIO: Mark Levinson Premium	.....1160
TECHNOLOGY PKG: digital key (3-yr trial) 4G dependent, digital rearview mirror	.....475
CONVENIENCE PKG: pano view monitor, traffic jam assist (3-yr trial, subscrip req'd) 4G network dependent	.....1420
ILLUMINATION PKG: illuminated cargo sills, illuminated door sills	.....760
POWER REAR DOOR w kick sensor	.....150
ADVANCED / REMOTE PARK	.....480
CARPET CARGO MAT	.....150
MUDGUARDS	.....165
WHEEL LOCKS	.....85
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1350

**TOTAL** .....\$76,490  
2024 model; see 2025 pricing below.

## 2025 LEXUS RX LINEUP

RX 350 (275 hp)	.....FWD	.....AWD
Standard	.....\$50,325	.....\$51,925
Premium	.....52,575	.....54,175
Premium+	.....56,065	.....57,665
Luxury	.....61,120	.....62,720
F SPORT Design	.....54,905	.....56,505
F SPORT Handling	.....	.....59,175
RX 350h hybrid (246 hp)	.....AWD	
Standard	.....\$52,475	
Premium	.....54,725	
Premium+	.....58,215	
Luxury	.....63,270	
F SPORT Design	.....57,055	
RX 450h+ plug-in hybrid (304 hp)	.....AWD	
Luxury	.....	▼ \$72,610
RX 500h hybrid (366 hp)	.....AWD	
F SPORT Performance	.....	.....\$66,150

# Arizona Auction Week 2025

PREVIEWS ■ AUCTIONS ■



## Barrett-Jackson Rock The Block: Sammy Hagar and Friends: Friday January 17:

Rock the Block returns to Barrett-Jackson on Friday, January 17, at WestWorld of Scottsdale, featuring Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Sammy Hagar and Friends, with Michael Anthony, Vic Johnson and Kenny Aronoff. Hagar's hits include "I Can't Drive 55," "Dreams," "Summer Nights" and "When It's Love." Reserved seating and premium hospitality packages are available. Photo: Leah Steiger.

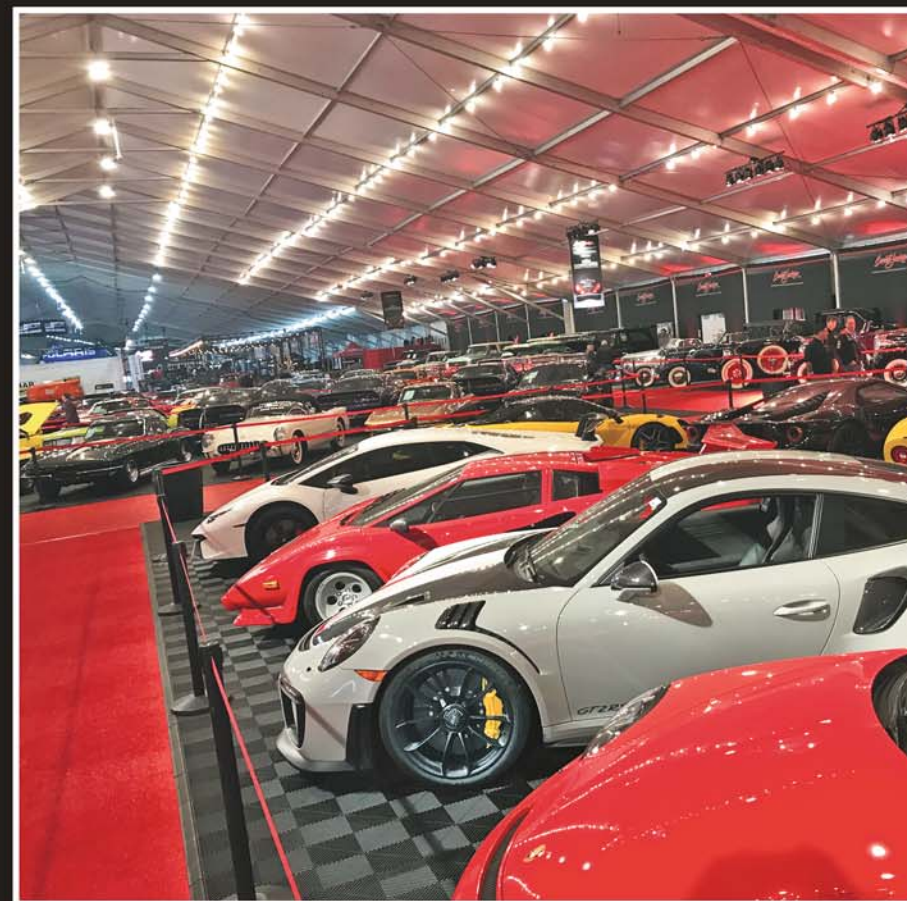


Arizona January Auction Week hit its high of eight events in 2020, just as pandemic restrictions entered the realm. Affected years saw various live, remote, restricted, canceled or rescheduled events.

There has been attrition since then. Leake, which seemed very well run, was one-and-done in 2020. Russo & Steele exited after 2021. Gooding & Co. exited after 2022. Worldwide Auctioneers skipped 2023, returned for 2024, but is skipping 2025.

This brings the week down to these four major auctions this January.

Check individual auctions online for any final updated details.



## Barrett-Jackson

54th Annual Scottsdale Auction

Nine days: Sat Jan 18 - Sun Jan 26, 2025

This comprehensive nine-day event—the season opener for the collector car hobby—kicks off with Family Day on Saturday, January 18 (kids 12 and under free with an accompanying ticketed adult) with activities from STEM organizations including Barrett-Jackson's Gearing Towards the Future initiative in conjunction with the SciTech Institute.

• Fifty contenders in the Barrett-Jackson Cup Competition, to be judged by custom builders Bobby Alloway and Troy Trepanier, parade across the block that first Saturday. Competing vehicles will be displayed all week, with voting on social media and one Top Five finalist to be revealed each day, then the People's Choice and Ultimate Best in Show awards on Saturday, January 25. • The auction blocks fires up on Monday, January 20, for automobilia and collector cars, continuing through Sunday, January 26. Tickets and hospitality packages can be purchased online. Registered premium package bidders and consignors will also receive invitations to Barrett-Jackson's exclusive Opening Night Gala on Sunday, January 19.

**ROCK THE BLOCK CONCERT: Friday January 17:**

See info with photo at left.

**FUTURE COLLECTOR CAR SHOW:**

This event moved to last fall's new event.

WestWorld of Scottsdale (AZ Loop 101 & FLWright Blvd)  
16601 N Pima Road, Scottsdale AZ 85260  
www.barrett-jackson.com

## Bonhams | Cars

14th Annual Scottsdale Auction

Saturday, January 25, 2025 (starts at 10am)

(preview Thursday-Friday Jan 23-24, 9am-6pm)

Bonhams | Cars achieved the top sale of Arizona Auction Week 2024 with the 2022 Bugatti Chiron Super Sport 300+ Coupe (Lot 425) at \$5,175,000.

• Returning to the Westin Kierland, a sampling of Bonhams offerings includes the 1961 Land Rover Series II 88-inch Hardtop originally owned by Arthur Miller and his wife, Marilyn Monroe; the 1987 Nissan Skyline 2000 GTS-R 'Type R31' Group A 'Calsonic' Racecar; the 1970 Oldsmobile 442 W-30 Hardtop Coupe from the Golden State Muscle Car Collection; the 1999 Rolls-Royce Park Ward Limousine; the 1959 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz Convertible; the 1934 Packard Twelve 1107 Coupe; the 1990 Mercedes-Benz 250GD 'Wolf'; and the 1950 Bentley R-Type SSS Saloon. • Bonhams | Cars —part of the Bonhams global network of auction houses, with dedicated motoring departments in London, Paris, Los Angeles, New York, Brussels and beyond—offers live, online and private platforms, with 17 live collector car auctions annually and serving as official auction partner for prestigious events from Formula 1 to Historic Grand Prix of Monaco to Newport. Upcoming auctions include Paris, Goodwood, Miami, Bonmont Switzerland and Monterey.

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**MAG Auctions**

**January 2025 Collector Car Auction**  
Fri-Sun, Jan 24-26, 2025 (8am bidders, 9am gen.)  
(check-in Tues-Thurs, Jan 21-23, 9am-5pm)

With \$10 a day general admission (\$5 for military and first responders), MAG Auctions runs three full days—this year at a new location (previously at the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort). • This remains one of the most accessible and down-to-earth events, where the heartbeat of the hobby is alive in hundreds of generally more affordable, driveable vehicles, many at no reserve. Most are well under \$100,000, though two years ago there were five sellers in six figures, and last year's top seller was a very original 1970 Ford Mustang Boss 302 Fastback (Lot 589) at \$120,000. • Entries include a 1966 Dodge Cornet 1500; 1955 Chevrolet Nomad wagon; 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle Coupe; 1979 Chevrolet K10 Short Bed 4x4 (no reserve); 1995 GMC 3500 Club Cab Dually; 1962 Austin-Healey MK III Convertible; 1934 Chevrolet Sedan; 2000 Mercedes-Benz SL 500 Roadster; 1958 Chevrolet Bel Air 2-Door; 1966 Ford Bronco Pickup; 1970 GMC Sierra K1500 4WD Pickup; 1983 Toyota Land Cruiser Wagon 4x4; and a 2000 Pontiac Firehawk Coupe. • Parking and food are simple, too. Bring a few bucks and be ready to bid—it's a don't-miss.

**NEW LOCATION:** Cubs Stadium at Sloan Park  
2330 W Rio Salado Pkwy, Mesa AZ 85201  
[www.motorsportauctiongroup.com](http://www.motorsportauctiongroup.com)



**RM Sotheby's**  
**27th Annual Automobiles of Arizona**

**Inaugural Concierge Auction:**  
Thursday, January 23, 2025 (2pm, reception 1pm)  
Friday, January 24, 2025 (auction: 11am)  
(preview Thurs 9am-6pm, Fri 9-11am)

RM Sotheby's returns to the Arizona Biltmore after completing its European calendar in late November at Munich, where the top seller was the 1923 Mercedes Type 22 Indianapolis Racer at 3,605,000 euros, followed by the 1955 Porsche 550 Spyder by Wendler 3,464,375 euros and 1929 Mercedes-Benz 710 SS Roadster by Corsica at 2,761,250 euros. • Last year's top sellers at Arizona were the 2020 McLaren Speedtail at \$2,012,500 and the supercharged 1938 Mercedes-Benz 540 K Special Roadster in the style of Sindelfingen, by Cass Nawrocki at \$1,545,000. • Consignments this year include the 1958 Ferrari 250 GT LWB Berlinetta "Tour de France" by Scaglietti from The PCH Collection (est. \$3,500,000-4,500,000); the 1931 Bentley 8-Litre Convertible Victoria by Murphy (est. \$2,750,000-3,250,000); the 1939 Bugatti Type 57 C Atalante by Gangloff (est. \$1,750,000-2,500,000); the 1956 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing (est. \$1,600,000-2,000,000); and the 2020 McLaren Senna GTR (est. \$1,000,000-1,200,000). • With over 40 years in the business, RM Sotheby's holds seven of the top ten individual auction sales records.

Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa  
2400 E Missouri Ave, Phoenix AZ 85016  
[www.rmsothebys.com](http://www.rmsothebys.com)

**B**y the turn of the century or so, GM had hit an all-time high of brands—Hummer, Geo, Saturn and Saab their newest; GMC trucks a stalwart; and decades-familiar mass market Chevrolet and rich-blooded Cadillac bracketing Buick, Oldsmobile and Pontiac, each seeking its own particular flavor of customer and vice versa. This wealth of product carried complexities, and the axe soon fell on many, leaving just Chevy, Buick and Cadillac, plus GMC. (And Hummer is now back as EV-only.) This has been good for defining Buick, whose US lineup is now simplified to just four SUVs—Envista, Encore GX, Envision and Enclave, in turn defined by their succession of size and price, with Enclave the largest of the set. The gen-three Buick Enclave for 2025, completing their current internal combustion portfolio, is all Buick, and that's what's

important. Equally of note is Buick's new direction—premium, at the same time both aggressive and refined, perfectly suited to its corporate position. Buick has a decades-long heritage of proprietary styling cues—various evolutions of waterfall grille and portholes (VentiPorts), which had already faded away, as well as “sweepspear” side styling, more subjectively echoed in various ways. Enclave itself has been a three-generation study in Buick variables—curvaceous gen-one with its modern waterfall grille, then gen-two with a more conventional shape and less distinctive grille. Now they've turned the page to a new wave of styling based on the Wildcat EV concept revealed at Pebble Beach in 2022 (shown at upper right). GM has always been good with concepts. Their glimpse of the future gets people excited, though

production often brings more of an echo, for reasons of practicality. Adapted to an SUV, this is the case here, yet the Wildcat concept takes another giant step forward as the new face of Buick. Many future indicators from Wildcat are adopted, including an ultrawide 30-inch-diagonal screen (largest in its class) and Super Cruise hands-free driver assistance available on all trims. Most noticeable is the new grille and with it, but less obvious, the move of the tri-shield emblem from grille to body. These lead to the hood seeming broader than before—we sort of caught the feel of a Buick pickup, if there were one—although vehicle shape overall is really not as different as it seems. Numbers are good. Power is ample, legroom and cargo volume are generous, and there is tow capability (1,500 lb out of the box or 5,000 lb with

a package). With decent fuel economy and three-row capacity, you're looking at a solid road trip cruiser, as well as daily driver. The drive experience can combine both crisp, modern power and classic cushy comfort. Hints of shift or acceleration hesitancy at times led us to its four drive modes. Front-drive-based, Enclave commits to four-wheel-drive in snow/ice or off-road modes (conditions with slippage), while tour and sport are front-drive-based (thus sport didn't seem to affect dry pavement performance grip). Brakes are excellent. Steering feel varies. The shifter takes some getting used to. The powertrain offers an acoustic layer to back up its turbo-horses, which you'll want to judge for yourself. Notes about features and implementations included largely what you would expect in a mid-optioned trim from a mainstream premium brand. Most significant is the impact of its restyling. The new look successfully takes you quickly across



Buick Wildcat EV concept

the threshold from “it doesn't look like a Buick” to “Buick has a whole new look.” It's a reinvention—heritage and continuity are there, while it's definitely a step into an exciting new realm. Their strategy is working. Buick claims a spot as the industry's fastest-growing mainstream brand, with 70 percent of sales to new customers. ■

**Modern Buick: no portholes, no waterfall grille, no sweepspears—all Wildcat. And the tri-shield carries forward in a clean new location.**

# Domestic Wildcat

New identity for Buick defined by multiple relativities by Joe Sage





## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Lansing, Michigan
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	.....Mexico / US
PARTS CONTENT	.....US/Can 35% / Mexico 22%
SEATING	.....seven
ENGINE	.....2.5L turbo-4 16v DOHC SID1 w VVT, alum/alum
HP/TORQUE	.....328 hp / 326 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....na
TRANSMISSION	.....8-spd auto, electronic/OD
DRIVETRAIN	.....AWD
SUSPENSION	.....F: MacPherson strut w direct-acting stblzr bar, all w passive plus dampers; R: five-link indep, coils w stblzr bar, all w passive plus dampers
STEERING	.....elec var-effort pwr w Active Return Assist
BRAKES	.....17-in rotors, variable system
WHEELS	.....20-in alloy, high gloss black machine finish
TIRES	.....P255/55R20 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....207.6 / 120.93 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....6.77 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.04 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	.....42.6 / 39.96 / 38.27 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	.....44.29 / 41.46 / 32.13 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....22.9 / 57.1 / 97.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....4713 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....1500 / HD 5000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....reg* unl / 21.7 gal *(per multiple 3rd parties; no mfg info)
MPG	.....19/24/21 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	.....\$47,400
CHASSIS, ALL-WHEEL-DRIVE SYSTEM	.....2,000
PAINT: Cherry Red tintcoat	.....645
SUPER CRUISE PKG: enhanced auto parking assist, Super Cruise™, wifi, apps, OnStar safety services (subscrip req'd)	.....3255
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1395
TOTAL	.....\$54,695

## 2025 BUICK ENCLAVE LINEUP

	FWD	AWD
Preferred	\$45,000	\$47,000
Sport Touring	47,400	49,400
Avenir	58,000	60,000

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MOTORSPORTS : FORD AT SCORE BAJA 1000

“The Baja 1000 is brutal,” says Mark Rushbrook, global director of Ford Performance Motorsports. “It pushes every part of a truck to its limits and demands everything from the drivers and teams. This isn't just about crossing the finish line—it's about proving that our vehicles can take on and conquer challenges as tough as Baja.”

In the heart of Baja California, where the desert is the ultimate rival, Ford Performance celebrated a two-truck victory in the 2024 SCORE Baja 1000, with the Bronco DR (Desert Racer) and Ranger Raptor triumphant after navigating hundreds of miles of brutal terrain, seeking to prove their strength in one of the toughest races on Earth.

The **Ford Bronco DR** is a purpose-built desert racer created with the spirit of Baja competition in mind. Running in the Heavy Metal Limited class at the SCORE Baja 1000, this was the third win of the year for Bronco DR, which

had won every race it had taken on in 2024. Brad Lovell and navigator Roger Lovell ran the first third, followed by Jason Hutter and Paul Blangsted, who had helped secure the Bronco DR's August victory at Vegas to Reno. Jason Scherer and Jason Berger took the final leg of the 864-mile race.

“Baja doesn't hand out wins,” said Lovell. “You earn them by enduring the worst it throws at you and pushing through when it seems impossible. That's what makes this race so special.”

The **Ford Ranger Raptor** at Baja, based on the production truck available worldwide, delivered a win that speaks to global technology transfer and the truck's capability on and off the showroom floor, running at Baja in the Stock Mid-Size class.

The Ranger Raptor is built with advanced FOX suspension, a rugged chassis and a twin-turbo 3.0-liter EcoBoost engine—the same engineering that is available in the global production truck.

The #773 Ranger Raptor was specifically engineered to meet SCORE's Stock Mid-Size class regulations, outfitted with key modifications to enhance performance, safety and durability in the grueling off-road environment.

The truck was also equipped with a MoTeC data acquisition system. “One of our top priorities is always to gather as much data as possible, and we see so much varied conditions here that helps that,” said Brian Novak, North American off-road program manager. “When we take this truck back to Dearborn, we'll analyze every piece and part in detail to see what we can do to make our consumer trucks better.”

Loren Healy and navigator Eric Davis took the Ranger Raptor for the first part of its journey, John Williams III and Nate Williams the second. Bailey Campbell and Bryan Crofts took it across the finish line in the last part of its 736-mile Baja trail. ■

**Ford Performance takes dual class wins at Baja 1000 in Bronco DR and Ranger Raptor**



# HIGH VALUE AT FACE VALUE

BY JOE SAGE

Having killed off their last sedan, the compact Q50, at the end of 2024, Infiniti's lineup now comprises four SUVs—three if you count the compact two-row QX50 and its QX55 coupe derivative as one. At the top is the three-row, full-size QX80. And in between is the three-row, midsize QX60 we are driving here. The Luxe level, second-up among four, ours also includes a new Luxe-only Black Edition package, which brings it within a few hundred dollars of Sensory trim.

All QX60s have a 268-hp 2.0-liter turbo-four and 6,000-lb tow capacity. All but the base have 20-inch wheels (Pure has 18-inchers). Any are available as front- or all-wheel-drive. Black Edition adds

black grille, badging, wheels, headliner and such, as well as specific branded lighting.

A commanding new gen-three QX80 (see our Nov/Dec 2024 issue), is described as the "first new model in Infiniti's product renaissance." Can a new QX60 be far behind? QX80 was born in 2004 (as QX56), while QX60, born in 2013 (as JX35), is not only still in gen-two, but that really only just arrived, for 2022. It's a family with long generations.

Comparatives between QX60 and QX80 start with price and power, where the QX60 rings in at about 60 percent of a QX80 for both—more than fair, as this is not often linear. From there, it gets better still—legroom is close to the same in the first two rows, and though QX60's third row is more in line with a midsize, it's just 14.9 percent less. Cargo and towing comparisons are even more generous than that 60 percent benchmark.

The fuel tank is smaller (78%), but fuel mileage is higher (133%), leading to about the same range for either, on a longer road trip. But you'll have cost savings on shorter trips or daily, period.

In other words, our little curiosity-prompted chart shows the QX60 delivers considerably generous bang for its relative bucks.

One difference is that the QX60 is front-drive-based, the QX80 rear-, though in 4WD versions, you will likely never notice the difference.

We had the QX60 for Thanksgiving, with a drive from greater Phoenix to greater Tucson, over in daylight and back at night, a good chance to contemplate various features and overall driving.

On the road, the QX60 is a nice cruiser, great at just maintaining its speed, with casual braking to keep distance when someone turns off, a little gas to get right back up to speed, with a nice light

**QX60 vs QX80:** A number of vitals are pretty much pro rata between the two—power and price most directly in line at about 60 percent. Against that benchmark, QX60 can claim an edge on a number of other indicators.

	QX60	QX80	QX60:QX80
Engine	2.0L	3.5L	57%
HP/torque	268 / 286	450 / 516	60 / 55%
Legroom (F/2/3)	42.1 / 37.7 / 28.0	43.8 / 39.2 / 32.9	96 / 96 / 85%
Cargo	14.5 / 41.6 / 75.4	22.0 / 59.0 / 101.9	66-74%
Tow	6,000	8,500	71%
Fuel capacity	18.5	23.6	78%
MPG (comb)	24	18	133%
(Range: tank x mpg)	444	424.8	105%
Pure 2WD	\$50,200	\$82,450	61%
Autograph AWD	\$66,150	\$110,595	60%

growl. The seats were great, as was the audio.

Back home, it was a solid everyday driver. We used it all over town—deeper into the grid than usual, on freeway runs, through construction, in rush hour. All in all, it's a good, solid, transparent experience. The user interface was decent for all our basic functions—entertainment, shift and mirrors, auto start-stop defeat—finding most every-

thing intuitively. The transmission could be a weak point, shifting from red lights or through turns (and we are often more forgiving of CVTs than others).

The Infiniti QX60 is a solid entry. Pricing is quite reasonable, even when done up with the Black Edition package. Though not needed for function or value, we'll be keeping an eye out for a future "product renaissance" facelift with interest. ■



Infiniti QX80

## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Smyrna, Tennessee
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	.....Japan / US
PARTS CONTENT	.....US/Canada 45%
SEATING CAPACITY	.....7 (6 on Autograph)
ENGINE	.....2.0L 4-cyl turbo, DOHC 16v, direct injection, alum/alum
HP/TORQUE	.....268 hp / 286 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....8.0:1 - 14.0:1
TRANSMISSION	.....9-spd auto, paddles, shift-by-wire selector
DRIVETRAIN	.....intelligent AWD
DRIVE MODES	.....personal, sport, standard, eco, snow
SUSPENSION	.....F: MacPherson strut, 29mm stblzr bar; R: multilink indep, 28.6 stblzr bar; twin tube dual-flow path shocks
STEERING	.....vehicle speed var assist
BRAKES	.....F: 13.78 x1.18 vented, twin-piston; R: 12.99 x0.63 vented, single-piston
WHEELS	.....(opt) 20x8 machined alum-alloy w glass black finish
TIRES	.....P255/50R20 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....198.2 / 114.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....6.7 in
APPR / DEPART / BRKOVER	.....15.0 / 22.5 / 15.5°
TURNING CIRCLE	.....38.7 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	.....40.8 / 37.5 / 35.7 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	.....42.1 / 37.7 / 28.0 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....14.5 / 41.6 / 75.4 cu.ft
TOW CAPACITY	.....6000 lb
WEIGHT / DISTRIB	.....4696 lb / F/R: 56/44%
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....prem unl / 18.5 gal
MPG	.....(AWD) 22/27/24 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	.....\$58,800
PAINT: Harbor Gray	.....695
BLACK EDITION:	black grille w radiant emblem, black roof rails, black rear emblems, gloss black finish wheels, black headliner & upper interior trim, Infiniti-branded radiant exterior welcome lighting, Infiniti-branded illuminated kick plates.....1900
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1350
TOTAL	.....\$62,745

## 2025 INFINITI QX60 LINEUP

	FWD	AWD
Pure	\$50,200	\$52,200
Luxe	56,800	58,800
Luxe Black Edition	+1,900	+1,900
Sensory	59,100	61,100
Autograph		66,150







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## MOTORSPORTS : PHOENIX RACEWAY NASCAR 2025 SPRING WEEKEND

# NASCAR SPRING WEEKEND MARCH 7-9, 2025

Phoenix Raceway's Spring Weekend begins on Friday, March 7, with the **ARCA Menards Series General Tire 150**. The ARCA Menards Series has announced a television broadcast agreement extension with FS1 and FS2 that features a full season of live television coverage in 2025. The relationship, which began with Speedvision in 1999, is now extended through at least 2028. The race at Phoenix Raceway in March, a tandem race with the NASCAR Cup Series, will be a combination race with the ARCA Menards Series West.

The action continues with NASCAR on Saturday, March 8, as the **NASCAR Xfinity Series** sees the sport's future stars continue to prime themselves for the season ahead, in the **Call811.com Every Dig. Every Time 200**.

Then, on Sunday, March 9, the stars of the **NASCAR Cup Series** will vie for a key early-season win in the **Shriners Children's 500**, working to lock themselves into the 2025 Cup Series Playoffs, heading toward NASCAR Championship Weekend, also once again being held here in November.

**NASCAR CHAMPIONSHIP WEEKEND 2025**  
This coming fall, Phoenix Raceway will once again host the **NASCAR Championship Weekend**, October 31 to November 2, 2025.

**TICKETS AND INFORMATION**  
Given the typical overwhelming demand, fans are urged to secure their seats and experiences immediately. For tickets, as well as for information on additional experiences and entertainment—including camping, parking, scanners, Infield Experience, Busch Light Lounge, Ally Curve hospitality club and more—call the Phoenix Raceway ticket office at 866-408-RACE (7223) or visit phoenixraceway.com.

Fans looking to buy or resell reserved seats can also do so at SeatGeek.com. ■

**FRIDAY, MARCH 7**  
NASCAR Xfinity Series Practice .....tbd  
NASCAR Cup Series Practice .....tbd  
**ARCA Menards Series General Tire 150 .....5:00 pm**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 8**  
NASCAR Xfinity Series Qualifying .....tbd  
NASCAR Cup Series Qualifying .....tbd  
**NASCAR Xfinity Series**  
**Call811.com Every Dig. Every Time 200 .....5:00 pm**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 9**  
**NASCAR Cup Series Shriners Children's 500 ....3:30 pm**  
*Schedule and details subject to change.*



# Emphasis

As a rear-driver, what this sporty Explorer does not have underscores what it does have BY JOE SAGE

Ford Explorer has been through a fair amount of transformation over 35 years and six generations, while its position and mission have remained quite consistent—even as an entire industry has evolved to mimic its no-longer-lonely niche.

Born in 1991, and as evidence of how things go full circle over time, Explorer originally replaced the departing Bronco II, retaining its trucklike body-on-frame structure and rear-based 4x4 drivetrain under a new utility body—a sporty utility body, you might say. And a vehicle category was born.

Explorer went through four generations as a truck-based, body-on-frame, rear-drive-based vehicle, through 2010, before evolving to a front-drive-based unibody for gen five in 2011—something lost and something gained, more in line with more of the competition, and yet farther from its roots.

Explorer returned to rear-drive for gen six, in 2019, which we welcomed for reasons of soul as much as function. Although most usage would still be 4WD, increasingly automatic systems switch to two-wheel when appropriate, and in that operation we'd still rather have rear drive, especially as there is little slick-surface penalty, with 4WD and vehicle stability systems kicking in as needed.

This generation also brought the Explorer ST—a Sports Technologies version, with an emphasis on performance (along with key style points applied). Key to the ST is its 400-horsepower 3.0-liter

EcoBoost V6, rather than the 300-hp 2.3L EcoBoost inline-4 of other Explorer trims. (Blending the variables a bit, though, the bigger engine is now also an option in the luxe-oriented Platinum.)

This set the stage for a rear-drive ST, which arrived in the lineup two years later—an opportunity, correction or both, in pursuit of more power to the pavement. Whatever the case, like other trims, Explorer ST is now available either way, rear-drive or 4WD. (Evolution or emphasis aside, RWD is considered standard and 4WD an option on all trims.)

All that said, if you still think a Ford Explorer is a 4x4, period, that's understandable—as is ST suggesting pure performance, in turn suggesting the advantages of RWD. If interested, here's what you do or don't get with the rear-drive Explorer.

You save \$2000 (or \$2100 on base Active trim). Ford states only one weight per powertrain, re-

gardless of trim level (4,303 lb with the 2.3L, 4,631 lb with the 3.0L). While you have gained 328 lb with the V6, RWD shaves off some weight—not stated, but third-party guesstimated at about 100 lb. This should lead to slightly higher fuel mileage, also not broken out, and slightly more tow capacity (for the same GVWR). Acceleration could be quicker for RWD due to less weight or for 4WD due to more traction; on top of that, the drivelines are engineered differently for the two. Thus this result can vary, but is also not stated for this vehicle.

Mostly, you'll just want to hands-on feel it. The rear-drive ST is powerful and responsive, with a solid exhaust note. It bears its ST bones well.

Yet as both paved-performance and off-road adventure fans, we still knew that while we were enjoying its RWD basis, it has no 4WD to go to if-and-when needed. We would have been curious to take this up into snow (on some lesser-traveled roads), to see how it performed on slick or loose surfaces, dependent upon traction control in lieu

of 4WD, but that weather was not available.

The newest Explorer has a book's-worth of new tech features, including Google-Amazon-Apple-Android-compatible Ford Digital Experience infotainment—even available BlueCruise (if, after all this driver's car emphasis, you'd rather go hands-free). Massaging seats were a highlight in ours.

It nags at us to spend \$40-60,000 and not spring just a tiny percentage more to get what many would consider an SUV's most defining feature—four-wheel drive. Then again, some people might be certain they'll never need it, two grand is two grand, and other differentials mentioned above may add value in their own right.

We bought a classic muscle car from a guy in Utah some years back, lacking power steering and brakes common for its era. When we mentioned this, he grinned and said, "This is the horsepower model"—all the power, stripped of a bit of weight (and function). You might think of the rear-drive Explorer ST in much the same way. ■

Comparing with a typical 4WD SUV is one thing, but the current general absence of sedans provides another perspective. For some, a rear-drive SUV could fill that need, while providing easy ingress-egress and great cargo volume, as well. It's all relative.



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Chicago Assembly Plant
ROWS / SEATS	three / six
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	Lima OH / na
ENGINE	3.0L EcoBoost V6, DOHC, 24v, dir inj, roller finger follower, twin indep var cam timing, compacted graphite iron alum block, alum head, cast alum pistons, composite shell-welded intake manifold w runner pack, exhaust manifold integrated into alum head
HP/TORQUE	400* hp / 415* lb-ft <i>(w premium fuel, though reg is req'd, but figures are not provided for that)</i>
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.5:1
TRANSMISSION	10-spd auto, SelectShift, paddles
DRIVETRAIN	REAR-WHEEL-DRIVE
AXLE RATIO	(ST) 3.58
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	(no info)
SUSPENSION	4-wheel indep w stblzr bars
STEERING	(no info)
BRAKES	(ST) performance brakes (no further information)
WHEELS	21-in Magnetite-painted alum
TIRES	P275/45R21 all-season BSW
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	198.7 / 119.1
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	40.8 / 40.5 / 38.9 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	42.9 / 38.3 / 32.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	7.8 in
APPR / DEPART / BRKOVER	19.7 / 20.6 / 16.8°
TURNING CIRCLE	(no info)
CARGO CAPACITY	16.3 / 46.0 / 85.3 cu.ft
WEIGHT	4631 lb
TOW CAPACITY	5000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 20.2 gal
MPG	18/25/21 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	<b>\$55,505</b>
PAINT: Star White Metallic Tri-Coat	795
DESTINATION CHARGE	1595
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$57,895</b>

*Note sticker price varies from current info below.*

## 2025 FORD EXPLORER LINEUP

	RWD	4WD
Active		
300-hp 2.3L EcoBoost	\$39,755	\$41,855
ST-Line		
300-hp 2.3L EcoBoost	44,615	46,615
Platinum		
300-hp 2.3L EcoBoost	52,250	54,250
400-hp 3.0L EcoBoost available		
ST		
400-hp 3.0L EcoBoost	54,260	56,260





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# ARIZONA RIDER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO POWERSPORTS LIFE

**B**rock Heger dominated the field at the 57th SCORE Baja 1000, going solo in the Polaris Factory Racing RZR Pro R Factory for his first Baja 1000, not only dominating the entire UTV field across the punishing desert landscape, but finishing seventh among all four-wheeled vehicles, including the elite Trophy Truck classes, the highest finish by a UTV since they were introduced in 2007.

This Baja 1000 triumph capped off a second consecutive undefeated season for Polaris Factory Racing, with UTV overall wins at all four SCORE series events, and marked the brand's third straight Baja 1000 victory.

The race began just outside of Ensenada, where Heger quickly surged to the front, es-

tablishing a strong pace early, leading nearly every mile of the grueling 864.13-mile course.

By mile 77 he was followed by teammate Cayden MacCachren in 6th (who had opted to start at the back of the field, making his impressive climb through the ranks all the more notable). Heger was still leading by mile 167 while MacCachren moved up to third. Approaching mile marker 211, Heger extended his lead to four minutes, while MacCachren slipped back to fifth.

Near the halfway point, Heger remained the first UTV, skillfully extending his lead after briefly getting stuck in a bottleneck. By this stage, he had also climbed to an impressive 13th overall among all four-wheel vehicles.

During the second half of the race, Heger continued to dominate, while MacCachren sliced and diced through the field, working his way into second and closing the gap by mile 720. Over the final 100 miles, Heger never relented, powering ahead to secure the UTV Overall and UTV Pro Open class victory.

(MacCachren's race ended unfortunately, with only 78 miles remaining, as unforeseen challenges forced him to retire, dashing his hopes for the championship.)

Winning the race by 45 minutes over Polaris-supported racer Branden Sims (who finished second in a race-modified Polaris RZR Pro R), Heger's victory added the points needed to come from behind and clinch the 2024 SCORE UTV Pro Open Class Series Championship for the second consecutive year.

Heger's RZR Pro R Factory showcased its combination of power, strength and control, performing flawlessly throughout the unrelenting Baja terrain.

To learn more, visit [Polaris.com/RZR](http://Polaris.com/RZR). ■

## Polaris Factory Racing's Brock Heger captures first SCORE Baja 1000 victory and secures 2024 SCORE UTV Pro Open Class Series Championship



# Subtly but effectively green

BY JOE SAGE

GLC is closest to GLE in the Mercedes SUV lineup—GLC a compact and GLE a mid-size very similar in style and spirit, easy in fact to mix up at a glance, though distinct side by side.

GLC is in its tenth year for 2025, as generation two, available as both box-SUV and Coupe (see sidebar). We had a consistent run of GLC Coupe drives in generation one, but for generation two, we have been getting the SUV—most recently the base GLC 300 rear-driver in fall 2023, just over a year ago. A bump in dimensions brought generous legroom, especially up front, along with decent cargo capacity. A more powerful 255-horsepower turbo-four with EQ Boost had become standard for all non-AMG versions, all as GLC 300.

We had noted the GLC 300's new digital instrument panel and central touchscreen (derived from

the flagship S-Class, as are other details), with voice control and navigation, and a "transparent hood" camera feature available on the 4MATIC.

We had said the base unit (the only rear-drive version) "speaks for itself"—it's exactly what you expect, generous in all regards, even before considering its highly competitive pricing, delivering on high expectations while still keeping it simple.

This year adds something new atop the seven other builds of GLC and AMG GLC. The GLC 350e brings a third powertrain—a plug-in hybrid (or PHEV). Our sample is the Pinnacle version (which, as you can see in the sidebar pricing chart, is a trim level officially achieved as a package).

Our sample came in Verde Silver Metallic paint, which looks like a rich silver at first glance, but has a definite subtle green cast to it when in the com-

pany of other silver vehicles (or in certain light, as in our photo, below). This matches the spirit of the 350e's PHEV powertrain. By both measures, ours is subtly yet effectively "green," in both its color and mission, in this era of expanding full electrification.

Plug-in hybrids, long been considered a "best solution" by many, used to be harder to explain—run on gas only, run on electric only, keep track of either or both and drive accordingly. Now that EVs are common, PHEVs' skills are more invisible and more apparent, both, able to simply and transparently tackle the job at hand at any given moment.

Tradeoffs include a bit higher purchase cost and a bit more weight, as well as complexity, although Mercedes has long since mainstreamed their powerful EQ Boost systems. But they deliver the potential of using one as an EV for your weekly commuting—this one with a range of up to 54 miles in pure electric mode, at up to 87 mph, rechargeable in 30 minutes—while also able to road trip freely,

without the concerns of range, charging locations or charging time spent on longer travels. Nice. Road miles can also replenish the battery, perhaps enabling a return to EV-only at your destination.

The gasoline-only fuel mileage rating is 28 mpg highway, which is not hard to match or beat. But the alternate MPGe formula for combined usage jumps to 70. More significantly, the combination brings a 201-horsepower turbo-four up to a 313-hp combined system. All specifications, statistics and data aside, the PHEV also gives you its own sufficient bragging points with the green crowd.

Best of all is its ability to let you just forget all that, even if it's the main reason you bought it. It has a familiar feel, force and acoustics, whether you're used to gasoline or EV (and you may well be in one, one minute, the other the next). Some of this is PHEV-universal, to degrees, but this transparency reaches ideal balance with the new GLC 350e. And again, all with range or charging worries erased. The whole experience is seamless.

All that—and you get that thrill of driving your first EV at launch, as its 406 lb-ft of torque are im-

mediately on tap and flowing, providing a pleasing electrified whine and as much ramp-dominating power as you'll ever need. You'll notice right away that there's no auto start-stop defeat switch, as not only is the gasoline engine expected to shut off at a red light, but you don't need it when the light turns green—no delay. While some such systems are more conditions-based, this one guarantees the EV start. Punch it and go, go, go. That, in fact, may be all you need to try, to be sold. ■

*A JUDGMENTAL OBSESSION: As noted on others, a current interior design point uses smooth black plastic membranes atop certain controls—some touch and slide, others concealing pushbuttons, that mix itself confusing, and in some cases combining multiple functions. They are surely intended to be sleek, sexy and uncluttered, but to us have a degree of uncertainty of touch, and when functions are combined, uncertainty of aim—e.g. it can be quite difficult to set seat memory without turning on the heated seats or vice versa, as they share the same membrane. The surfaces are also very cold in winter, yet do not seem to work with gloves on. Various other Mercedes models have discrete metallic controls, easily as sexy and much more functional. Those get our vote. •*



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY .....	Bremen, Germany
ROWS / SEATS .....	two / five
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD .....	Poland / Germany
PARTS CONTENT .....	Germany 40% / US/Can 0%
ENGINE .....	2.0L inline-4 turbo plug-in hybrid, diecast alloy block and head
HP/TORQUE .....	201 hp / 236 lb-ft
<b>ELECTRIC MOTOR &amp; BATTERY</b>	
BATTERY PACK .....	23.3 kWh (usable)
HP/TORQUE .....	134 hp / 325 lb-ft
COMBINED SYSTEM OUTPUT .....	313 hp / 406 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION .....	9G-TRONIC 9-sp auto
DRIVETRAIN .....	4MATIC AWD
0-TO-60 .....	(est) 6.2 sec
TOP SPEED .....	130 mph / 87 mph (all-elec)
SUSPENSION .....	4-wheel indep: (F) 4-link; (R) 5-arm multilink w self-leveling rear air suspension
STEERING .....	electromechanical power rack & pinion
BRAKES .....	(no information)
WHEELS .....	(F/R) 8x18 / 9x18 staggered 5-spoke
TIRES .....	(F/R) 235/60R18 / 255/55R18 a/s
LENGTH / WHEELBASE .....	185.7 / 113.1 in
HEADROOM (F/R) .....	41.3 / 39.7 in
LEGROOM (F/R) .....	40.7 / 37.4 in
GROUND CLEARANCE .....	tba
TURNING CIRCLE .....	38.7 ft
CARGO CAPACITY .....	24.4 / (folded tba) cu.ft
WEIGHT .....	tba
TOW CAPACITY .....	tba
FUEL / CAPACITY .....	prem unl / 13.0 gal
ELECTRIC-ONLY RANGE .....	up to 54 miles
MPG .....	(gas only) 23/28/25 (city/hwy/comb)
MPGe .....	(gas+elec) 60/70/64 (city/hwy/comb)
<b>BASE PRICE .....</b>	<b>\$59,900</b>
<b>PINNACLE TRIM .....</b>	<b>3,600</b>
PAINT: Verde Silver Metallic .....	750
INTERIOR: natural grain black wood w aluminum lines trim .....	200
DASHBOARD: MB-TeX w Nappa look .....	350
VENTILATED FRONT SEATS .....	450
PANORAMA SUNROOF .....	1500
ADVANCED USB PKG .....	300
DRIVER ASSISTANCE PKG .....	1950
DESTINATION CHARGE .....	1150
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$70,150</b>

## 2025 MB GLC 350e 4MATIC SUV

Standard .....	\$59,900
Exclusive .....	61,550
Pinnacle .....	▼ 63,500

## 2025 MB+AMG GLC FULL LINEUP

	RWD	4MATIC
GLC 300 .....	SUV	\$49,250 \$51,250
" .....	Coupe	59,300
GLC 350e .....	SUV	▼ 59,900
AMG GLC 43 .....	SUV	\$67,100
" .....	Coupe	72,900
	4MATIC+	
AMG GLC 63 S E Performance .....	SUV	\$86,050
" .....	Coupe	91,450

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### Donald Campbell's Bluebird K7 hydroplane returning to Coniston Water UK in 2026

Australian Dave Warby—son of Water Speed World Record holder Ken Warby MBE and a current world water speed challenger in Spirit of Australia II—is to be the pilot of Donald Campbell's Bluebird K7 hydroplane when it runs on Coniston Water, in the Lake District of North West England, in 2026 the Ruskin Museum has announced.

His reserve will be RAF pilot Flight Lieutenant David-John Gibbs from Grantham, Lincolnshire, who is the designated pilot for the Longbow speed record challenge being led by Dave Aldred.

With two Orpheus engines being examined and prepared for use, this announcement is the latest step toward putting Bluebird K7 back on Coniston Water for the first time since the crash that killed Donald Campbell CBE during a World Water Speed Record attempt on January 4, 1967.

Warby notes that Campbell and Bluebird K7 had been the inspiration for his father, Ken Warby MBE to successfully challenge and achieve the World Water Speed Record in 1978, reaching 317 mph. The trophy remained with him until his death last year, then was returned by the family to its custodian, the Royal Motor Yacht Club, and in Oc-

tober 2024 was reunited with K7 for the first time since Donald Campbell's tragic death.

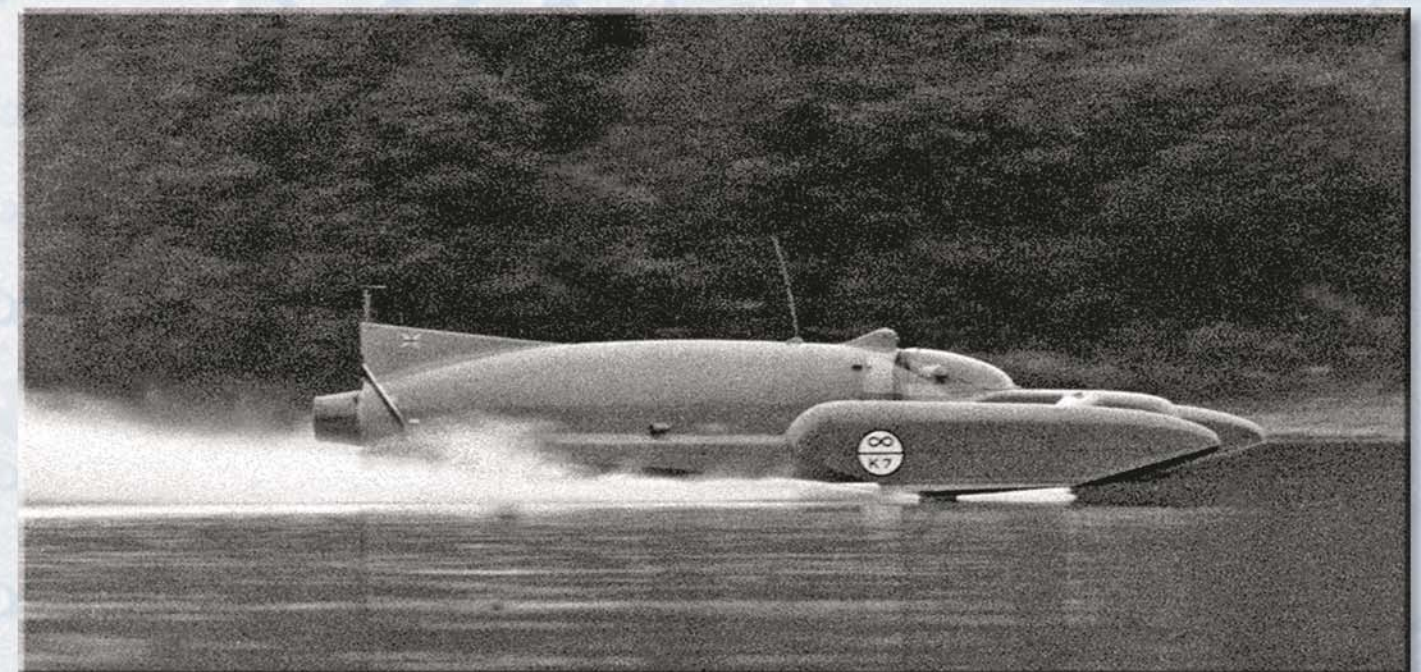
"Seeing my father design and build Spirit of Australia in the family backyard, then setting two World Water Speed Records was a huge inspiration for me," says Warby. "Now having built and driving my own boat, Spirit of Australia II ... will be invaluable in driving Bluebird K7 on Coniston Water in a safe, successful manner."

Fit Lt David-John Gibbs is Officer Commanding Tutor Standards Flight in the RAF, where he and his team ensure all Tutor flying instructors operate to the required level of proficiency. An active pilot outside work, he instructs on historic ex-military airplanes, including the Jet Provost, L29 Delfin, Chipmunk and Tiger Moth, and operates a collection of vintage gliders. To date he has logged over 6,000 flying hours on 50 different types of aircraft.

Gibbs says, "I feel exceptionally privileged to have been selected as a pilot for Bluebird K7. I'm looking forward to not only the challenge of driving the boat, but also working closely with the Ruskin Museum and the team as we bring Bluebird K7 back to running order." ■



(Top right) Dave Warby in the cockpit of his hydroplane Spirit of Australia II.  
(Right) Fit Lt David-John Gibbs. Photo: AS1 Georgia Calloway, RAF Wittering.  
(Below) Bluebird K7, © Geoff Hallawell collection c/o The Campbell Family Heritage Trust



# Equal parts magic carpet, magic eight ball BY JOE SAGE

Reborn in 2019 after a 28-year absence, Chevy Blazer slots into a considerably wide-ranging overall realm of fully seven Chevrolet SUVs and crossovers. Rather than echoing the early full-size Blazer, this two-row midsize joins all but Tahoe and Suburban in being quite similar in style and form.

The new Blazer received a facelift in 2023, and was joined for 2024 by Chevy Blazer EV—stylistically similar, but on a different platform. It's part of Chevrolet's emerging subset of full-electric iterations of the familiar gasoline lineup (so far, this and Equinox). And it does have other differences.

At first blush, the 2025 Blazer EV is basically unchanged from 2024. (Here's the caveat: as of now, GM only has official specifications for 2024, while various third parties show significantly new builds for 2025. We've compared a range of sources and recommend you dig for the very latest. Official specs should certainly be forthcoming very soon.)

The 2024 Blazer EV had eAWD versions of a base LT and the RS, or a RWD version of RS. Information variously sourced suggests the 2025 lineup shown in our sidebar—fully six builds across three trim levels, with the base LT available as front- or all-wheel-driven, our RS with an unusual choice of front-, rear- or all-wheel-drive builds, or a top SS as AWD-only—all through different combinations of different electric motors on its adaptable EV platform. All that info, however, never gave power for each, although 2024 info gives intertwined figures—288 hp for eAWD or 340 with RWD, yet inverse-ly 333 lb-ft of torque for eAWD and 325 for RWD. It's frustrating, yes, to not have more complete information, but change is happening fast, and that's where it stands.

If an SS does arrive, that will adjust the game at the top performance end, but with or without that, the RS emphasizes sportiness, not only from

its ample e-horses, but in the bold and nicely bolstered interior, a sexy red on our sample.

It seems like when new ideas in propulsion are implemented, say EVs, there's a compulsion to come up with new ideas in everything else—new ideas in interfaces, new ideas in entry and start—some only a hair's-breadth away from autonomous. The Blazer EV goes out of its way to break new ground, with arguably mixed results.

Basic driving suggests GM has pretty well mastered the art and science of the EV—the magic carpet part. The Blazer EV holds its own against anything else on the road, of which here there is no shortage. The platform provides a notably road-communicating ride, generally a good thing in a driver's car, though in this case extremely firm on some surface details. And you will surely want to make some decisions about its high degree of lane-keeping control and how much you are will-

ing to cede to the machine's logic.

Blazer EV forgoes Apple/Android compatibility, for a Google-based system. Tremendously upsized icons for some functions are intended to make for less distraction, but can require lengthy scrolling at times, which is more distraction.

But one new idea eclipses them all. The EV era often includes any number of "why were we even still doing it that way?" innovations. Among them are firin' it up, via a silent on/off (start/stop) button. We first got in our Blazer EV already running, after swapping vehicles, or so it had seemed. We set up our preferences and went for a spin. But when it came time to shut it down—well, how? Where is that start-stop button? Those can be a treasure hunt in anything, but we were stumped. The best we could find was an ambiguous set of screen icons—variously showing as three, four or five in the same spot. Sure enough, one, when present,

brings a submenu that can turn off the car. That seemed inconvenient (and what if power has run out?), but it gets wilder. It turns out that's just an alternative. The main way to wrap up your drive is to simply stop, remove your seatbelt, lock up and walk away. With interior lights and audio still on, that's a leap of faith, but not uncommon. But come back to start anew? Good luck figuring this out on your own. None of the usual keywords brought us anything in the slim manual. So we researched. Sure enough, you just get in, sit down, belt up, put your foot on the brake, and you're up and running.

Is this a glaring security risk? A carjacking exposure? It's easy to imagine. It may be no moreso than any other with a pushbutton start, although with no button to hunt down and then push, a thief could be gone in a heartbeat. And it does not take long for word to get around about such things, among the dishonorable set. We're curious.

We ran some two-person tests, to see whether someone could slide past you as you enter and be gone. It seemed you need to have brought the key inside, but that doesn't erase the risk scenarios.

(It also gave us visions of an autonomous vehicle perhaps being able to steal itself.)

All of the above is the Magic Eight Ball aspect.

This setup is said to be unique to this vehicle at this point. If it spreads to others, familiarity may solve or improve the user experience. As our week wore on, we easily became used to not pushing a button to start, even enjoying it. But it remained mildly disturbing to just walk away. ■



## SPECIFICATIONS (2024)

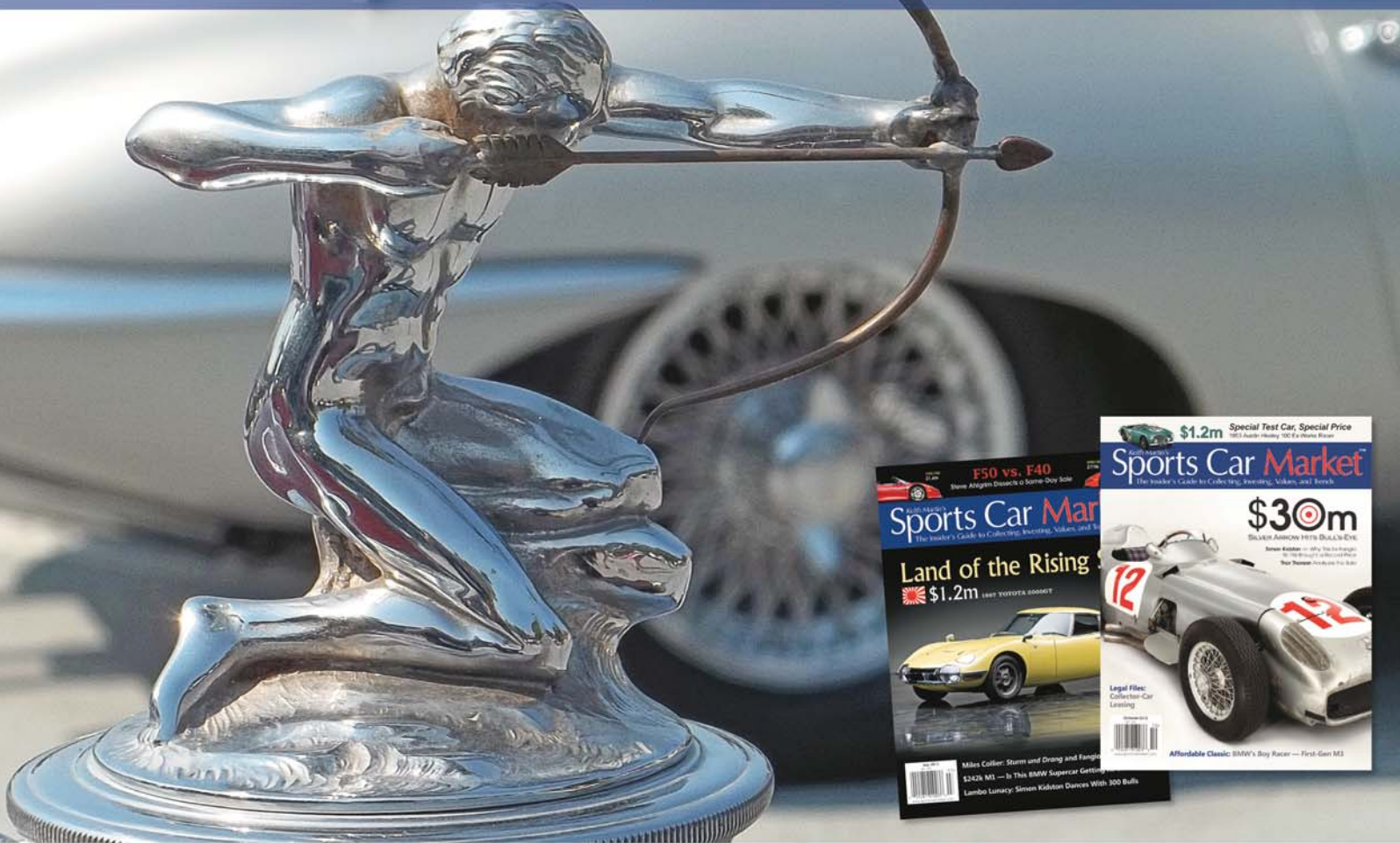
ASSEMBLY	.....Ramos Arizpe, Coahuila, Mexico
MOTOR / TRANS (ELEC DRIVE UNIT) BUILD	.....Mexico / Mexico
PARTS CONTENT	.....Mexico 46% / S Korea 20% / US/Can 12%
MOTORS	.....(AWD) dual motors & gearset: F: perm magnet, bar-wound; R: induction motor w/o magnet
BATTERY	.....Li-ion NCMA cathode, blended graphite anode, 85 kWh (AWD; 102 RWD)
HP/TORQUE	.....(AWD) 288 hp / 333 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	.....AWD
SUSPENSION	.....F/R: 5-link independent
STEERING	.....continuously variable elec pwr
BRAKES	.....F: 12.5; R: 13.6
WHEELS	.....21-in machined-face aluminum w black painted pockets
TIRES	.....275/45R21 self-seal
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....192.2 / 121.8 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....(AWD) 7.9 in
APPR / DEPART	.....(AWD) 19.1 / 23.0°
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.7 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....40.9 / 38.1 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....44.2 / 38.9 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....25.8 / 59.8 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....5591 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....(AWD) 1500 lb (RWD 3500)
AC CHARGING	.....AC 11.5 kW capable
CHARGING TIME:	
120V	.....±4 miles per hr of charge
240V 7.7kW dual-level cord	.....±21 miles " " " "
240V 11.5 kW	.....±31 miles " " " "
DC FAST CHARGE	.....≤ 68 mi range in 10 min
RANGE	.....(RS AWD) 279 miles
	.....(RS RWD 324 miles)
MPGe	.....102/87 (city/hwy)
BASE PRICE	.....(2025) \$52,900
RS CONVENIENCE & DRIVER CONFIDENCE PKG:	
heads-up display, heated wiper park, rear heated seats, rear camera mirror	.....1395
CHARGE CORD: dual level	.....295
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1395
TOTAL	.....\$55,985

## 2025 BLAZER EV LINEUP

	FWD	RWD	AWD
LT	\$44,600		\$47,600
RS	49,900	\$54,200	▼ 52,900
SS			60,600

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## GM EV charging partnerships grow

### GM and EVgo

EVgo Inc. and General Motors recently surpassed 2,000 public fast charging stalls in more than 390 locations in 45 metropolitan markets across 32 states. Their efforts are part of a longstanding collaboration to broaden access to public charging in amenity-rich retail centers and city centers, and through partnerships with retail hosts such as grocery stores, shopping centers and gas stations, as well as via policy leaders and other organizations. Such locations are especially useful for customers such as renters who are unable to charge at home, or those working in multifamily dwellings.

This milestone doubled the two companies' collaborative EV charging footprint in just over a year, having celebrated their 1,000th such stall in August 2023, in greater Chicago. They aim to have a total of 2,850 DC fast charging stalls nationwide, including 400 public stalls in major metropolitan areas of Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, New York and Texas.

Services include EVgo Optima, EVgo Inside, EVgo Rewards and Autocharge+.

More info (EVgo) ...[evgo.com](http://evgo.com)

More info (GM) .....[gm.com/public-charging](http://gm.com/public-charging)

### GM and ChargePoint

ChargePoint and General Motors are also collaborating to install up to 500 EV fast charging ports at strategic locations across the US, featuring the latest innovations in EV charging to improve access to chargers and charging turnaround time, aiming for these locations to be open and available to the public before the end of 2025. Chargers are promising class-leading charging speeds.

Branded as GM Energy, many of these locations will be equipped with ChargePoint's Omni Port connector system, aiming for compatibility with both current and future EVs. Omni Port allows seamless connectivity for vehicles with CCS or NACS charging ports at any charger, without the need to carry an adapter, or the site needing to dedicate a parking space to a particular connector type.

Many of the planned charging stations will feature ultra-fast charging through ChargePoint's Express Plus platform, capable of charging speeds up to 500kW.

ChargePoint and GM are accelerating deployment through an incentive program designed to make it easier for third-party charge point operators (CPOs) to own and operate EV charging infrastructure.

More info (ChargePoint) ..[chargepoint.com](http://chargepoint.com)

More info (GM) .....[gmenergy.gm.com](http://gmenergy.gm.com)

### Know before you go

As with any routes or services you may be tackling, and especially with these programs under ongoing development and installation, check various providers' most current maps to see what's handy for where you live or for trips you may take.

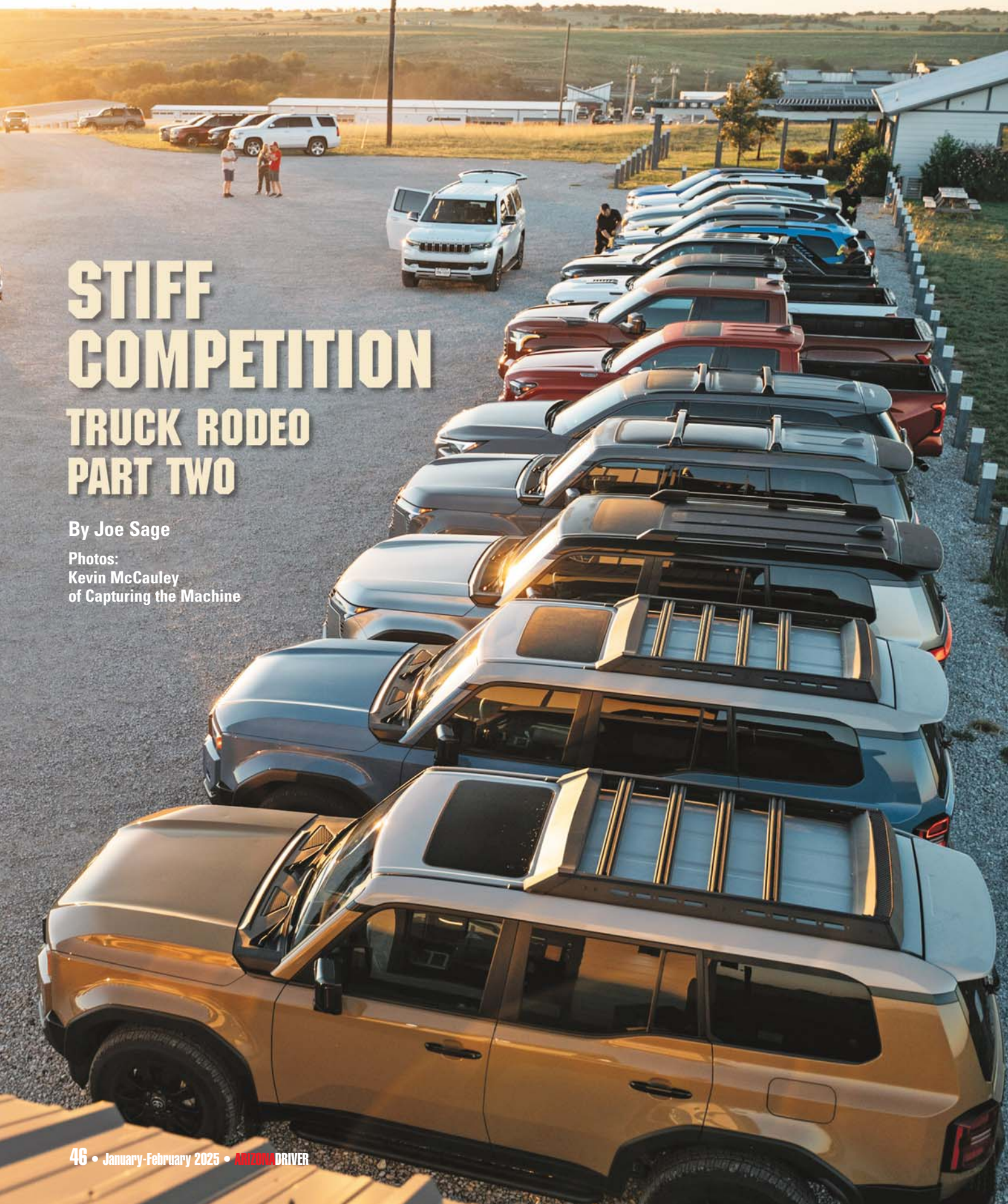
And stop by, if you can, to see if everything's working and how long the lines may typically be. ■



# STIFF COMPETITION TRUCK RODEO PART TWO

By Joe Sage

Photos:  
Kevin McCauley  
of Capturing the Machine



SUV Category Winners at right (top to bottom): Nissan Kicks SR (Subcompact), Genesis GV80 (Luxury), Lexus GX (Midsize), INEOS Grenadier (Off-Road).

In late September, we joined the Texas Auto Writers' Association (TAWA, of which we are a member) for their annual Texas Truck Rodeo, long one of our don't-miss-it comparo events. A total of 41 drivers got behind the wheel of 29 vehicles in 11 categories (14 SUVs and eight pickups by brand and model, with multiple variants of several). We're including our earlier commentary ("original analysis") with each group as reference. Refer to our November-December 2024 issue for a complete event overview and details of each vehicle.

There are winners in each category and two grand trophies for SUV of Texas and Truck of Texas. But rather than announcing upon completion, as they did for years and as other groups' similar events do, they have decided to string it out for months, with awards in phases. We now have the category winners, presented here with a recap of the entries and our pre-announcement commentary at that time. Grand trophies will be announced later still.

## SUVS

	hp	comb mpg	prices as tested
<b>Subcompact SUV</b> .....	141	31	\$31k

**Nissan Kicks** managed to have this hot-selling category all to itself.  
**WINNER: Nissan Kicks SR (uncontested) ..... 141 ..... 31 ..... \$30,705**

<b>Midsize SUV</b> .....	240-409	14-38	\$43-88k
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**Genesis GV80, Honda Pilot TrailSport, Honda Prologue Elite, Hyundai Santa Fe, INEOS Grenadier Trialmaster, Kia EV9, Kia Sorento, Lexus GX (2 versions), Lexus TX, Toyota Crown Signia and Toyota Land Cruiser (2 versions).**

**ORIGINAL ANALYSIS:** Several brands appear to be competing against themselves here—two Hondas, multiple Toyotas and Lexuses, multiple Kias as well as cousins Hyundai and Genesis. But one Honda and one Kia are EVs and also entered in the separate Electric SUV category. Toyota-Lexus, having almost half the vehicles in this category, may appear to dominate it, but actually are splitting their votes—Land Cruiser goes against close cousin Lexus GX, while two GX trims are voted as one model, but go up against their TX.  
**WINNER: Lexus GX 550 ..... 349 ..... 17 ..... \$72,85k**

<b>Luxury SUV</b> .....	282-375	14-27	\$79-85k
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**Genesis GV80, INEOS Grenadier Trialmaster, Lexus GX, Lexus TX.**

**ORIGINAL ANALYSIS:** Three in this category are also entered in the Midsize SUV category, and the fourth (Genesis) has its Coupe sibling in that group, making this whole category basically a subset, but its winner will still be meaningful.  
**WINNER: Genesis GV80 ..... 375 ..... 19 ..... \$82,150**

<b>Off-Road SUV</b> .....	277-470	14-23	\$43-108k
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**Honda Pilot TrailSport, Hyundai Santa Fe XRT, INEOS Grenadier Trialmaster, Jeep Wrangler Rubicon 392, Kia Sorento X-PRO, Lexus GX 550 Overtrail, Toyota Land Cruiser (2 versions).**

**ORIGINAL ANALYSIS:** Jeep is the only one in this category that is not also in one of the size-based categories. Raw capability gets attention on the course, in this group, although cross-referencing prices may or may not also influence votes. As in the Midsize SUV category, Toyota and Lexus are likely to be splitting their votes here between close cousins Land Cruiser and GX.  
**WINNER: INEOS Grenadier Trialmaster ..... 282 ..... 14 ..... \$83,855**

<b>Electric SUV</b> .....	288-379	MPGe 80-92	\$59-78k
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**Honda Prologue, Kia EV9.**

**ORIGINAL ANALYSIS:** Both of these are also entered in the Midsize SUV category, but their more focused presence is here as EVs (other than for any shoppers who may be freely comparing EV and gasoline alternatives). The two have notably different sizes, personalities and prices. Kia EV9 has been around for a couple of years now and is an established multiple trophy winner, but the new Honda Prologue (which we also drove at NWAPA Drive Revolution, along with its Acura cousin) brings an appealing and economical new formula to the table.  
**WINNER: Kia EV9 ..... 379 ..... MPGe 80 ..... \$78,430**

(cont'd)





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— Many thanks! Jackie B.

♥ My husband just loves everything, especially me for getting him such cool stuff. I'd have to say we will be lifetime customers, oh ya!! Thank you, Greasemonkeys.  
— Sincerely, Pam



♥ I just had the most wonderful buying experience! I only hope my father asks for something from The Busted Knuckle Garage for Christmas so I can do business with such a wonderful company once more.  
— Cheers! Michelle

♥ First, let me be the one thanking you! I honestly cannot remember such extraordinary customer service.  
— Thanks again, "JR" Jean

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Pickup Category Winners (top to bottom): Toyota Tacoma (Midsize), Hyundai Santa Cruz (Compact), Ram 1500 (Full-Size), Ram 2500 (HD), INEOS (Luxury).

## PICKUPS

	hp	comb mpg	prices as tested
Compact Pickup	281	21	\$42k

Hyundai Santa Cruz has some commonality with the midsize Honda Ridgeline as a unibody pickup, but had the compact category to itself.

**WINNER: Hyundai Santa Cruz (uncontested).....281.....21.....\$41,605**

Midsize Pickup	280-326	14-23	\$47-68k
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Honda Ridgeline TrailSport, INEOS Grenadier Quartermaster Fieldmaster, Nissan Frontier PRO-4X Crew Cab, Toyota Tacoma (2 versions).

**ORIGINAL ANALYSIS:** The midsize pickup category, long a second fiddle to full-size, has expanded mightily in recent years. Though not all possible pickups participated, there is considerable variety here—one completely new truck, one unibody and three conventional veterans from two brands. We watch this category with great interest.

**WINNER: Toyota Tacoma (2 variants).....326.....23-24.....\$56-68k**

Full-Size Pickup	420-540	19/tba	\$74-91k
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Ram 1500 (3 versions), Toyota Tundra.

**ORIGINAL ANALYSIS:** Even moreso than the midsize pickup category, there are notable brands that did not participate. Three Rams with a range of attributes were entered as one contender against Toyota.

**WINNER: Ram 1500 (3 variants).....420/540.....tba.....\$82-91k**

Heavy Duty Pickup	370	na (HD)	\$93k
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2024 Ram 2500 Rebel (6.7L Cummins TD).

**ORIGINAL ANALYSIS:** Another category of one, its winner a foregone conclusion—but a worthy contender it is, especially considering how well the Ram 1500 Rebel has always done. (And not charted here, it has 850 lb-ft of torque.)

**WINNER: Ram 2500 Rebel (uncontested).....370.....na (HD).....\$92,900**

Luxury Pickup	282-540	15-24/tba	\$56-91k
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INEOS Grenadier Quartermaster Fieldmaster, Ram 1500, Toyota Tacoma.

**ORIGINAL ANALYSIS:** As seen with several SUVs, these vehicles are all also entered in other categories. Regrouped here, the three deliver their luxury quotient via very different size, style and personality—a wild card trophy group.

**WINNER: Ram 1500 Tungsten.....540.....tba.....\$91,085**

Off-Road Pickup	280-437	15-23	\$46-82k
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Honda Ridgeline TrailSport, INEOS Grenadier Quartermaster Fieldmaster, Nissan Frontier PRO-4X, Ram 1500 Rebel, Toyota Tacoma TRD Pro, Toyota Tundra TRD Pro.

**ORIGINAL ANALYSIS:** If any one category represents the traditional heart of the TAWA Texas Truck Rodeo, it is this one. All of these also appear in their size categories, but this feels less like a subset—we're talking prime purpose here. And there's not a bad one in the bunch. Some represent different points in the evolution of the category itself. Group consensus could be interesting.

**WINNER: INEOS Grenadier Quartermaster Fieldmaster.....282.....15.....\$72,409**

## SELF-NOMINATED FEATURE AWARDS

These categories are chosen by the manufacturers. Although others can then join in, to compete in any, this year each had its category to itself.

**BEST TOWING TECHNOLOGY:** Toyota's Wireless Trailer Camera System

**BEST POWERTRAIN:** Ram's 3.0L Hurricane High Output Straight-Six Turbo

**BEST DRIVER ASSIST OR SAFETY FEATURE:** Toyota's Safety Sense 3.0

**AND THE BIG WINNERS?** Although these used to be announced right away, so manufacturers could include a win in e.g. their Super Bowl advertising, TAWA is now saving last fall's highest honors—SUV of Texas and Truck of Texas—to be announced at the Houston Auto Show during January. ■



# THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS



▼ Production of the second-generation **BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé** has been launched at BMW Group Plant Leipzig, where it is exclusively built. It joins the BMW 1 Series, BMW 2 Series Active Tourer and MINI Countryman in the portfolio of models made at the plant, which puts out up to 1,300 vehicles a day. The four models, with three different drive options, by two different brands, are all made on a single production line—a testament to the broad flexibility of production at Leipzig. Five years ago, this four-door Coupé for BMW's compact segment was an all-new product presented as a more luxurious alternative to the classic sedan. Production of the first BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé started in Leipzig on November 1, 2019, with market launch in March 2020. The main markets have been the UK, China and the US. With the production launch of the gen-two BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé, the model family at BMW Group Plant Leipzig is now complete. BMW Group Plant Leipzig has been undergoing comprehensive extension since 2018 and can now manufacture up to 350,000 cars a year, 100,000 more than previously. Since November 2023, its production volumes have increased thanks to the MINI Countryman, making it the only BMW Group plant to manufacture cars by two brands on the same production line. Plant Leipzig can produce up to 500 MINI and about 800 BMW vehicles a day, with increased volumes helping to secure employment and generating as many as 900 new jobs in

vehicle production alone in 2024. Since first opening for business in 2005, Plant Leipzig introduced night shifts in assembly for the first time this past September and now manufactures BMW and MINI vehicles around the clock in three shifts. The BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé is due for market launch in March.

▼ As a company of the FORVIA Group, **FORVIA HELLA** stands for high-perform-



ance lighting technology and vehicle electronics, covering a broad service and product portfolio for the spare parts and workshop business, as well as for manufacturers of special vehicles, via its Lifecycle Solutions business group. With about 37,500 employees currently at over 125 locations, the company is active worldwide and had adjusted sales of 8.1 billion euros in fiscal year 2023. FORVIA combines the comple-

mentary technological and industrial strengths of Faurecia and HELLA. With over 300 industrial sites and 76 R&D centers, 157,000 employees—including more—in over 40 countries, FORVIA comprises six business groups with 24 product lines and a portfolio with over 14,000 patents. German lighting specialist HELLA participated in the SEMA Show to celebrate 125 years of performance and off-road lighting technology, where it was joined by Jimco Racing—itsself celebrating 50 years in the dirt—as the latter debuted their newly developed s1-2/1 600 Class Buggy fitted with the latest HELLA products. As an additional treat, HELLA and Jimco displayed a Spec Trophy Truck, an off-road beast also showcasing the latest HELLA products. And parked alongside the Trophy Truck was the Rotek Racing Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport, which claimed multiple 2024 SRO Pirelli GT4 championships with HELLA illuminating the way. Founded in 1899—and celebrating 125 years while at SEMA—HELLA is one of the oldest automotive accessories suppliers in the world. Known for unrivalled German engineering

and top quality lighting built to OE standards, the company has operated as a brand in North America for more than 40 years. While vehicle original equipment, off-road and performance lighting will always be their focus, HELLA has diversified its portfolio over the decades into additional categories including brakes, sensors, engine management and more—collectively representing safety, visibility and

performance, specifically in the off-road and motorsports markets where the HELLA brand is legendary. HELLA has also increased activity at off-road and motorsports events to leverage its strong brand



equity and introduce new technology. Cutting-edge products highlighted at SEMA included HELLA Blade LED lights, Black Magic light bars, X-Treme LED cube lights and new HELLA Lift Kits.

▼ **Maserati MSG Racing** continues its presence in the FIA Formula E World Championship, unveiling its Season 11 competitor: the new Maserati Tipo Folgore for the GEN3 Evo era. The electric single-seater

dent's full-electric range, symbolizing a bridge between the past, present and future. The livery, in iconic Maserati Blue, has Rose Gold accents in the rear, symbolizing innovation and electrification. The

fusion of the two body colors forms lettering that recalls Maserati's sporting heritage. On the sides in the interior, an interlocking of names and dates shows significant details of victories Maserati has collected over the years around the world. The Maserati Tipo Folgore is equipped with the very latest GEN3 Evo package for Formula E, making it the fastest and most efficient car that has ever taken part in the world's fastest growing motorsport, going



took to the track for pre-season testing in November, at the Circuito de Jarama in Madrid, Spain, where it was relocated due to devastating floods in the Valencia region. Maserati's updated race car features a refreshed design, more aerodynamic bodywork and a new aesthetic that tells the story of 110 years of Maserati victories and successes on track. The Maserati Tipo Folgore name pays homage to the Tri-

from 0 to 60 mph in 1.82 seconds and, thanks to regenerative braking capacity of 600 kW, sourcing 50 percent of energy used during a race from regeneration.

▼ Britain's most affordable compact electric van, the all-new **Dacia Spring Cargo** is priced at just £14,995 (about \$19,000) excluding VAT, also qualifying for a UK Plug in Van Grant of £2,500 (±\$3200). Its com-

compact dimensions (12.14 feet long, with a 30.5-foot turning circle), practical payload (±816 lb), generous cargo volume (38.3 cu.ft) and 65-hp electric motor make the Spring Cargo ideal for deliveries. The 26.8 kWh battery offers a range of up to 186 miles (WLTP urban cycle), with fast charging from 20-80 percent in 45 minutes.

▼ **Chevrolet BrightDrop 400** electric vans are hitting the road in major US markets for Walmart's InHome delivery service. InHome associates, trained to deliver groceries directly into customers' homes, participated in a pilot with GM to assess overall performance of the vans in live operation scenarios, including city driving and customer deliveries, where they commended the 360-degree HD Surround Vision camera, blindzone steering assist, battery range and reliability, and maneuverability. Key takeaways InHome associates shared from their pilot program included easy navigation on congested roads and in dense neighborhoods; automation features such as auto-closing doors boosting efficiency and improving their experience; and the low-step ergonomic design allowing easy entrance and exit of the vehicles, aiding swift and efficient deliveries. Expanding its InHome delivery program to 62 million households



nationwide, Walmart was on track to roll out the BrightDrop 400 vans in Austin, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, northwest Arkansas, Orlando and the San Francisco Bay area by year-end. Produced at the CAMI Assembly plant in Ontario, Canada, the vans have advanced safety features for driver alertness and safety, and large info-



tainment screens for a tech-enabled driving experience.

▼ Developed by **Mobilize** for Renault Group, to address the challenges of mov-



ing people and goods in and around cities in the UK, Duo is a two-seat electric quadricycle, while Bento is its utility version, with an adaptable 649-liter (22.92 cu.ft) cargo box. Their central driving position and compact dimensions make them easy to maneuver in city traffic and simple to park. They feature a driver's airbag—a first in the quadricycle segment—as well as force limiter seatbelts. Both are designed with a simplified production process that includes over 40 percent recycled materials, and they are at least 95 percent recyclable at the end of their life. Natively connected, they have their own MyDuo app, which can generate up to six digital keys—a first for Renault Group—and allow users to be given permission to open the vehicle remotely, making processes such as car-sharing much simpler. The Duo quadricycle has a small footprint (just under 8 feet long and about 4.27 feet wide), yet is fun to drive, with a turning circle of just 22.3 feet, and their cabin includes air conditioning, heated driver's seat, heated windshield, USB-C port and keyless entry. Their 10.3kWh NMC single-module battery borrowed from the Renault 5 E-Tech EV, with their 48-volt electric motor sources from the Renault Austral's mild-hybrid system, together promising strong acceleration for urban environments. Designed with a limited parts count in mind, front and rear bumpers are identical and rocker panels are interchangeable—overall, it uses five times fewer parts than a conventional car.

Unpainted black plastic bodywork with grained finish hides the minor knocks of everyday life. TEP fabric can be easily washed or even hosed out, with a drain plug under the pedals. Gullwing doors

allow occupants to easily exit to either left or right. The basic Duo 80 Evo has a top speed of 80 kph (±50 mph) and a range of 100 miles. Duo 80 Pro is upgraded for business users and shared mobility operators, with easy fleet integration options including smart sharing, geofencing and battery charge inhibition. The cargo-boxed Bento 80 functions as a highly adaptable and customizable urban microvan. Orders in the UK are estimated to open in early



spring, with sales beginning by summer, through select Renault outlets. Prices will be confirmed then, but are expected to run about £9300-9999 (±\$11,800-12,700).

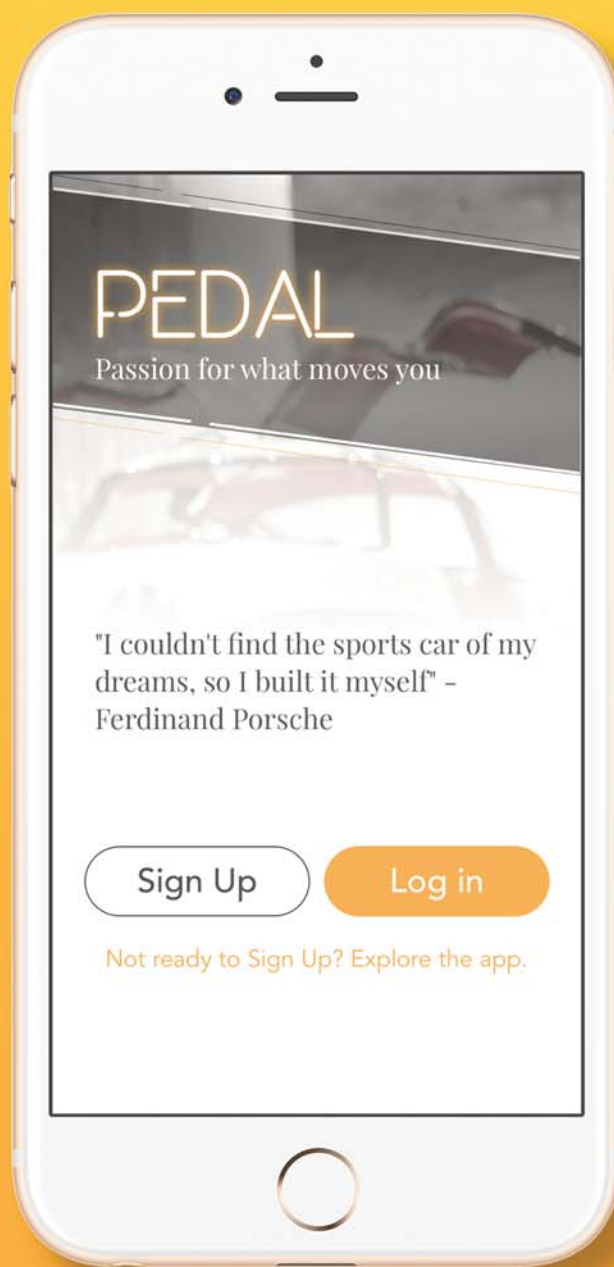
▼ **Unplugged Performance** debuted the nation's first **Tesla** Model S Plaid police vehicle at the SEMA Show. Specifically designed for law enforcement applications, the UP.FIT Tesla Model S Plaid

Pursuit is Unplugged Performance's latest in a lineup of specialized vehicles tailored to meet the high-performance needs of first responders. Built on the powerful Tesla Model S Plaid platform, the UP.FIT Plaid Pursuit incorporates a suite of modifications and advanced technologies to enhance high-speed pursuit and traffic patrol capabilities. The SEMA debut vehicle was to be delivered to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Motorsports community outreach program, a pivotal step in the adoption of EVs for public service roles. The UP.FIT division transforms the standard Tesla Model S Plaid—already with over 1,000 horsepower and a zero-to-60 mpg time of just 1.99 seconds—into a vehicle equipped for the rigors of law enforcement. Key features include a proprietary electrical wiring harness to integrate custom forward- and rear-facing warning lights, which are integrated into the front and rear glass to improve aerodynamics compared to rooftop light bars. Also included is side skirt lighting, while a push-bumper features additional warning lights, integrated high- and low-frequency emergency sirens and public alert systems, all making the vehicle fully Title 13 compliant in California. Performance upgrades include enhanced braking components and UP Forged lightweight wheels, for higher

durability and superior handling in pursuit situations. With a range of 345 miles, the UP.FIT Plaid Pursuit provides law enforcement agencies a sustainable option for efficient, powerful patrol and pursuit. CEO Ben Schaffer of Unplugged Performance notes, "This platform offers law enforcement the latest tools to enhance their mission while saving taxpayers' money and promoting a cleaner future." ■



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# UPCOMING FEATURES

Mazda CX-90 S Premium Plus



Arizona Auction Week 2025 results



Subaru WRX ts



Sally McNulty - Arizona racer and race car builder



Courtesy Sally McNulty

Volkswagen ID. Buzz Pro S Plus



NWAPA Drive Revolution comparo



Chevrolet Equinox ACTIV



TAWA Texas Truck Rodeo comparo



Eric O'Hara / Kelby McGaughey / 10ff Prod.

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