

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 1
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2026

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THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

news & features

January-February 2026

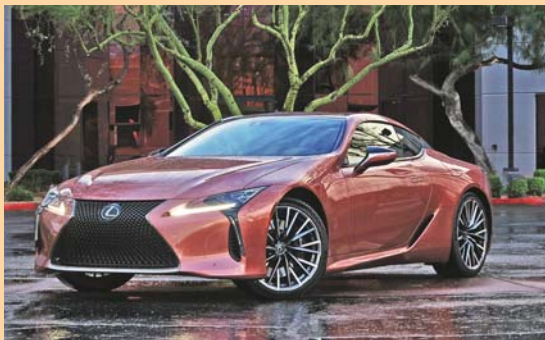
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COVER: 1913 Ford Model T Speedster at Bonhams: Cars, a rare and desirable early Model T with 177 cu.in OHV inline-4, single Holley carb, 22.5 bhp, 2-speed epicyclic transmission, 4-wheel transverse leaf spring suspension, and rear-wheel mechanical brakes. A period hot rod fitted with Rajo OHV head, the car was offered at No Reserve and sold within its estimated range of \$20,000-25,000, at \$20,720. PHOTO: JOE SAGE



START YOUR ENGINES : FROM THE PUBLISHER

You may notice our identifying bar at the top of a vehicle drive feature generally says “A week with.” They didn’t always, as we are often reminded in casual conversation, as someone may ask us, oh, are you reviewing this?

When we were starting out, someone from the old guard made a point of telling us that these are not “test drives.” Those are fully-instrumented affairs on closed circuits with endless data recorded and proper engineers on hand or in the loop, and so on. Okay.

So, then, “vehicle review”? We used that for awhile, but it seems so dry, as well as sort of over-promising. Or would that be threatening? After all, a corporate employee’s annual review is seldom any fun—a random attaboy might be better for all parties.

That old guard thought the solution should be “vehicle impression,” which we used for awhile. But we never much liked. Vague. And everyone can have them. Hmm.

So we changed to “A week with” and stuck with it. It says what it is and is a key point of interest otherwise never mentioned—a deeper dive, not a drive around the block.

The reason we’re thinking of this is that sometimes we have a vehicle with a problem. Is it representative? Highly random? Inflicted by someone else in ways we’ll never know? Easy or hard to repair? We generally don’t bring it up, not to conceal anything, but because these are not, in fact, engineering test drives. On those, if there is a problem, the manufacturer may bring more samples of the same vehicle, all parties will get into deeper instrumented testing, and if there’s something afoot, reengineer it.

We had a vehicle with a problem in this issue, but, well, all of the above. It’s driveable, it goes for service after our cycle, and we never know. Although we might dig a little.

But our main approach is to inform of product lineups, relativities and positioning, subjective or objective value, and so on, along with highlights and perceptions from our drive time. For reliability reports, for us as for you, there’s always a look at JD Power reliability scores, Consumer Reports testing, user forums online, or even just a good google.

Enjoy the ride! **Joe Sage** • Publisher/ Executive Editor

ARIZONA DRIVER

MAGAZINE



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Sturgis Sturgis Motorcycle Museum & Hall of Fame
USFRA Utah Salt Flats Racing Association
USMA United States Motorsports Association

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AUTOMOTIVE NEWS UPDATE



Bulletproof Automotive
BP25 Honda S2000

▼ Known for bringing Japan’s high end tuner scene to America and beyond in the early 2000s, **Bulletproof Automotive** debuts “BP25,” a new build meshing classic principles of Japanese tuning, brand new parts with top-shelf technology, and a vision to mesh the best of the best into one useable grin-inducing driving experience. Bulletproof leverages parts largely unavailable or unknown outside Japan, such as Top Secret, Amuse, Aragosta, Varis, Mine’s and more. The BP25 S2000—which celebrates 25 years of car building—carries contributions from many of Japan’s biggest names, paired with some of today’s newest high performance technology. In a callback to the builder’s history, the BP25 S2000 is repainted in the same Lamborghini Balloon White, with the same gold graphic accents, as the acclaimed Bulletproof Automotive Concept One that ran Tsukuba Circuit, graced many magazine covers and was shown at the Petersen Museum. The new car’s unique Bulletproof spec 2.0L engine, tuned for high-rpm output, produces over 580 supercharged horsepower at 9300 rpm, to keep the original characteristics of the S2000 driving experience—a power band that builds and builds to encourage the driver to use all those high RPMs whenever possible. Modern tuning is achieved through AEM engine management. The BP25 features the North American debut of a Varis Dark Panther Widebody kit featuring an all new reskinning of the vehicle with improved carbon fiber aerodynamics for higher down-

force and better grip. The vehicle also debuts an all-new Brembo Pista front and rear big brake kit with ultra lightweight fully forged construction, anodized finish and massive stopping power even through the heat of a summer track day. Wheels blend old and new in a 5-axis CNC-machined BP-RW Evolution in 19x11 +27 size, with design inspired by Japanese Tsuchime, a hammered metal technique often found in kitchenware and knives. For a pure ana-



Heidts introduces
Pure Vision Design
1970 Plymouth
Road Runner “Haraka”

log, lightweight, high-revving emotional experience, power flows through a rare vintage Amuse titanium header and Amuse 70mm Euro Dual titanium exhaust. Downforce mates with ultra-sticky 295/30ZR19 Toyo Proxes R888R tires. Suspension and drivetrain modifications include Top Secret/Aragosta Super Dampers, ASM x Drexler LSD and accompanying mods by J’s Racing, Spoon, EVS and others.

▼ High-performance suspension systems builder **Heidts** unveiled Pure Vision Design’s 1970 Plymouth Road Runner “Haraka” at the SEMA Show in Las Vegas—the next evolution of Steve Strope’s legendary craftsmanship, with a first-of-its-kind carbon-fiber exhaust and Heidts’ brand-new Mopar suspension systems. Since founding Pure Vision Design in 1998, Strope has been at the forefront of the Mopar protouring movement, beginning with his 1966 Dodge Charger “Skully.” He raises the bar with Haraka, blending performance with style and luxury. Draped in custom Inkwell Violet paint, mixed in collaboration with PPG and renowned painter Mick Jenkins, the car sits on HRE Frozen Polished Champagne wheels and Michelin tires. Gabe’s Custom Interiors created the cabin, trimmed in Italia Brandy leather inspired by the sophistication of Robert Graham fashion and Christopher Ward timepieces. Comfort joins innovation through Vintage Air climate control, a Kicker audio system and custom Dakota Digital gauges. Under the hood, a 494 cu-in V8 utilizes

components from 440 Source, Billet Specialties, Edelbrock and MSD, paired with a Tremec TKX five-speed manual transmission from American Powertrain. The real engineering breakthrough lies beneath, as Haraka is the first Mopar to feature Heidts’ brand-new IFS and IRS B-body systems. Combined with USCT chassis stiffening and JRI coilover shocks, the setup ensures precision handling and a refined ride, while

Wilwood brakes provide top-tier stopping power. Every element of Haraka reflects Pure Vision’s philosophy of high performance, high impact and high function. Together with Heidts, the team has built a ma-

Dynamic Demonstrator of its first Featherweight Electric Vehicle (FEV), the Speedster—an automotive industry first, embodying its motto “Speed of Lightness” while moving from sketch to road in just

ed timescale to date, the first customer deliveries are on track for this year. All Longbow models will be designed, engineered and hand-built in the UK. The Longbow Speedster aims to provide enthusi-



chine capable of effortless long-distance performance that embodies both beauty and purpose—not just another show car, but a testament to American craftsmanship, collaboration and the enduring spirit of hot rodding.

▼ Greek yogurt maker **FAGE International SA** has a new global partnership with **Ferrari**. Beginning this year, FAGE will join Ferrari Hypercar in the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), which includes the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans. This announcement follows FAGE’s 2025 regional sponsorship of the Ferrari Challenge Trofeo Pirelli single-marque racing series and represents a significant expansion of the relationship between the two brands. Through the partnership, FAGE becomes a voice for the importance of nutrition not only as a foundation for everyday health, but as a driving force behind elite performance. As drivers carefully train for balance, strength and endurance, FAGE embodies the same principles. Ferrari Global Head of Endurance and Corse Clienti Antonello Coletta notes, “We share common values such as passion, excellence and the pursuit of continuous improvement. FAGE’s commitment to quality and authenticity aligns perfectly with the spirit of Ferrari’s Hypercar program, (joining) a select group of partners who contribute to our ongoing drive for innovation and success.”

▼ British electric sportscar builder **Longbow** has unveiled the Aesthetic

six months. Longbow celebrated this milestone with customers (known as “Guild members”), VIPs and select collaborators in London. Designed and built as a driver’s car from a clean sheet, Speedster utilizes lightweight construction and accessible performance to deliver its electrified experience. Speedster also decisively establishes the all-new FEV category via its sub-1000kg weight. The strategy leverages the company’s founders’ 15-plus years in the

asts with more driver-oriented, featherweight, electric sports cars that are also attainable and accessible, offering a spiritual successor to British icons like the Lotus Elise and Jaguar E-Type. An emphasis on “duality” is expressed in a distinctive two-tone paint scheme. While the car’s silhouette echoes the nostalgia and timeless allure of the classics, it signals the modern EV platform upon which Longbow’s first two models will be built. A bespoke alu-



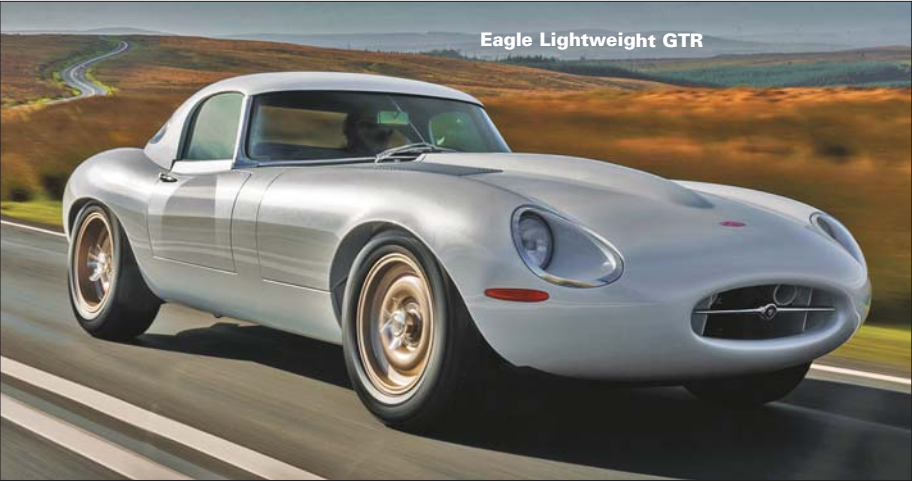
Longbow
Featherweight EV
Speedster demo

electric vehicle industry to overhaul and accelerate the traditional vehicle development cycle. What they say would take most traditional manufacturers around 18 months, the Longbow team has achieved in just a third of the time. Not an exercise in corner-cutting, it was an ambitious project to condense, enhance and accelerate every step of the process. Having achieved all critical milestones within the accelerat-

minum chassis has been engineered for minimal weight and maximum stiffness. Paired with a light, compact electric motor and “module-to-chassis” battery technology, Speedster aims to be the world’s first featherweight all-electric sportscar for the modern enthusiast, sprinting to 62 mph in 3.5 seconds. It has a range of 275 miles

KEEP RIGHT >>

(WLTP) and a starting price of £84,995 (incl VAT). Speedster will be followed by the closed-top Roadster, starting from £64,995 (incl VAT). Reservations for both are open now at longbowmotors.com.



Eagle Lightweight GTR

▼ **Eagle E-Types** from Sussex, England, is globally recognized as a leader in restoration and further development of the Jaguar E-Type via their E-Type Special Editions—Eagle E-Type, Speedster, Spyder GT, Low Drag GT and Lightweight GT. The Eagle Lightweight GTR channels the spirit of Jaguar’s greatest racers, as a road-legal GT capable of crossing continents with speed, comfort and style. The Lightweight E-Type was Jaguar’s intended racing follow-up to the D-Type, with eighteen planned, but just a dozen built in-period. Now, in a client-led commissioning mission to bring the Lightweight GT closer to its racing heritage, Eagle has carefully engineered the car with materials reducing its weight to just 930 kg, without compromising comfort or solidity. Every body line of the original has been re-sculpted for a more purposeful, hunkered stance, and the car features bespoke raked glass and a lowered roofline. Craftsmanship throughout runs from precise panel gaps to hidden weather seals and a flush-bonded rear screen. Distinctive details include painted badges beneath the lacquer, a flush-mounted aluminum fuel cap, and auxiliary switches integrated into the bulkhead. An all-aluminum 4.7-liter straight-six with wide-angle head, titanium connecting rods and triple Weber carburetors develops a power-to-weight ratio in excess of 430 bhp/ton. All transmission casings are magnesium, and the exhaust system is constructed from Inconel and titanium. Independent sus-

pension geometry is revised, hardware including hubs has been remanufactured from titanium, and the dampers are adjustable Öhlins fitted with bespoke-rated springs. Brake discs and pads are carbon-

extraordinary agility. Key decisions on the GTR, including detailing and bespoke features, have been driven by the client. This ability to define core features as part of the specification and build is what defines each Eagle—and what makes this Lightweight GTR truly a “One of One.”

▼ The original **Renault** Twingo radically transformed the A segment with its bold new vision of the city car. Cheerful, colorful and modular, Twingo invited customers to “invent the life to go with it”. At the time, the market offered a wide range of city cars, with more arriving every year. Today, this segment accounts for under five percent of the European market. Renault says, however, that the current volume of the A segment is not a reflection of low demand, certain that motorists across Europe are still looking for compact, affordable vehicles aimed at urban living or for use as a second car. The challenge lies in the size of the supply. Faced with reconciling competitive edge, compliance with standards, and modern customer expectations, most manufacturers simply pulled out of this segment. Building on its history and expertise in small cars, Renault decided to take up the challenge, and to view it as a major growth opportunity. As a result, a new-generation Twingo is part of



New-generation Renault Twingo E-Tech EV

itary switches with mother of pearl inlays, along with a magnetic phone dock. Heated glass, air conditioning and carefully-considered acoustic and temperature insulation ensure long-distance comfort. The car’s curb weight of just 975 kg with fluids is over 30 percent lighter than a standard E-Type Roadster, a combination of power delivery and extreme lightness the promises thrilling performance and

a sweeping transformation, both internally (with the passion of their workforce generating an accelerated pace of development) and at market level, as a modern electric city car delivering high value at an affordable price. The spirit of the instantly recognizable original Twingo is given a contemporary feel—exceptionally spacious



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and modular, with five doors and two independent sliding rear seats standard on all versions, featuring driving aids usually found further upmarket, and available with the OpenR Link multimedia system with



Google built in, a first in this segment. The new Twingo's "ideally sized" LFP battery is combined with a lightweight 60 kW motor for up to 163 miles of range (WLTP), perfect for driving in and around cities, where its One Pedal function also makes light work of day-to-day traffic jams. Finally, with competitive pricing a priority, the Twingo E-Tech electric intends to launch from below £20,000, with even top-spec versions attractively priced. Built at the Novo Mesto plant in Slovenia, Twingo E-Tech electric will launch in 2027.

▼ **Talos Vehicles** has introduced the TALOS XXT—limited to a production run of just five customizable units worldwide. With carbon fiber bodywork, a powerful V12 engine and a luxurious interior, the car combines the classic aggression of the Ferrari 599XX race car with the useability of a Grand Tourer road car. Starting life as a donor 599 GTB, the TALOS XXT is available in either left- or right-hand drive, with bespoke options including custom engine upgrades. Drawing on Talos motorsport heritage, the beating heart of the TALOS XXT is its 674-horsepower 6-liter V12. Bespoke options include paint, interior trim, carbon in matte or gloss finish, and manual gearbox. Beyond those basic decisions, optional upgrades include modifications to the engine, drivetrain, exhaust, roll cage and even in-car entertainment, allowing each owner to create an individual statement of exclusivity. TALOS XXT exclusivity is ensured as the carbon fiber panel

molds can only produce five units. For further information about Talos Vehicles and the XXT, visit www.talos-vehicles.com. To inquire about potential ownership, email Talos at info@talos-vehicles.com, or call

them in the UK at 44-01924-460480.

▼ "Supersports" is a modern amalgam of "Super Sports," first applied to a **Bentley** 100 years ago last year. Launched in 1925, the first Super Sports, based on the 3 Litre, had an uprated engine and shorter (therefore lighter) chassis, making it the first Bentley capable of exceeding 100 mph. It also established the second aspect defining the breed—rarity, with only 18 built.



Decades later, the Supersports name, now one word, roared back to life in 2009 as a 204-mph pinnacle model of the first-generation Continental GT. The first two-seat Continental variant, it shaved off 100 kg and was the most driver-focused Bentley of the day. The third Super Sports/Supersports came in 2017, an even faster successor based on the gen-two Continental GT. Like the prior, it was powered by a 6.0-liter

twin-turbo W12, but now making 710 PS, the most powerful Bentley ever. Just 710 cars were produced, to match the power output. Now the nameplate returns for the fourth-ever Supersports in Bentley history. While prior generations had defined an ultimate performance version of respective models, the new Supersports takes a different direction—rather than top speed, its focus is maximum driver engagement, via a combination of weight reduction—a two-seater under two tons, the most extreme weight shaving in Bentley's history—and power. Its pure internal combustion (non-hybrid) powertrain has a new, 666 PS (657 bhp), 800 Nm twin-turbo 4.0-liter V8—with strengthened crankcase, uprated cylinder heads and larger turbos—and a ZF eight-speed double-clutch gearbox. Zero to 62 mph time is 3.7 seconds, top speed about 192 mph (not final). More important than those headline stats will be how the Supersports behaves dynamically, as Bentley chassis engineers have made the new Supersports the first rear-wheel-drive Continental GT—other than the GT3 race cars—in history. Carbon ceramic brakes, new 22-inch lightweight forged wheels developed with Manthey Racing and an Akrapovic full-length titanium exhaust system are standard, while Pirelli Trofeo RS tires are available. A series of body develop-

ments maximize downforce and save weight—from the biggest-ever front splitter on a Bentley road car, feeding cooling air to engine and front brakes, to carbon fiber dive planes, side sills, fender blades, rear diffuser and fixed rear wing (combining for over 300 kg more downforce than a Continental GT Speed), to a carbon fiber roof, also lowering the center of gravity while maintaining structural stiffness. ■

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We had somewhere to be immediately upon delivery of this one, so other than setting seat, mirrors and instrument vitals, off we went—freeway, local, open highway, hills, long stretches, stoplights, rain troughs and speed bumps all in our first run—which could seem like trial by fire. But it was all more familiar than that, as we had just had the Golf R for a week a couple of months prior. It's almost impossible to think of the Golf GTI or Golf R without thinking of the other. Horsepower and price will catch your eye first.

Though both have 2.0-liter four-cylinder inter-cooled turbos, the two engines are built and tuned very differently, for 245 hp in the Golf GTI, 328 hp in the Golf R. Surprisingly, fuel mileage is virtually the same between the two (24/32/27 for Golf GTI vs 22/31/25 for Golf R). The GTI, however, runs on

regular gas, while Golf R is “premium recommended,” for a likely notable difference in fuel cost.

But the apples’n’oranges don’t stop there. Compression ratios are very similar on both (9.6 or 9.3), and, despite the dramatic horsepower difference, torque is pretty close. Rear brakes are the same on both, but front brakes are larger on the Golf R. The physical configurations are ever so slightly different. GTI has a slightly smaller gas tank, although cargo volumes remain the same. The GTI is a fraction of an inch shorter overall, its wheelbase a fraction longer. Turning circles are the same. Ground clearance is a tenth of an inch less on the GTI.

The Golf GTI has four trim levels, ranging from about \$32-41K, meaning the price difference can be significant or less so, versus Golf R, which has just one idealized version, at \$47K (a Black Edition

currently available is basically cosmetic).

An easy choice so far? There is one more significant comparative, though there used to be two.

Some of the dimensional differences can be attributed to a third big difference between the two—Golf R is all-wheel-drive, while GTI is a front-driver. Even this may be as much an engineering mitigation, as anything—as significant a difference as this can be for many, it may be “baked in the cake” overall. Golf R pretty much *has* to be AWD to handle its extra power, avoiding the unloading of front-only drive wheels during acceleration, always a potential FWD paradox. We are reminded of a recent week with the Jetta GLI, a front-driver with power similar to the Golf GTI, which performed admirably without really needing AWD. And not having AWD of course also saves

both weight and complexity—and more fuel.

A fourth big difference would have been the decision point for many—except that this difference no longer exists. Golf GTI, for years, came with a manual transmission, compared with Golf R’s direct-shift gearbox. But not anymore. GTI now has the same DSG as Golf R. And thus the decision is more complicated by that simplification.

VW Golf is, of course, a small car. But its cabin is spacious, and its hatch formula delivers generous cargo volume. We found ourselves parked next to a top-tier European sedan at four to five times the price (an older one, with a lower belt-line) and realized our cabin was just as big, even bigger. The Golf was shorter overall, but it’s a reminder of how form factors have evolved, delivering a lot more car with a lot more interior space than nominal sizes might imply.

Acceleration is ample, able to navigate tight competitive traffic with plenty of power, no not-

able evidence of torque steer, and almost no unloading of the front drive wheels (we noted a little bit on one steeper uphill start from a light, but none while already in motion). Ride is notably firm.

We often skip paddles completely (“good right out of the box” our mantra), but got into them inadvertently due to their steering wheel placement and enjoyed sport for awhile. It’s a subtle difference, great for moments of occasional inspiration.

We seldom hypermile nor reset fuel mileage readouts, but did notice our aggressive driving (averaged with others who drove it before us) was delivering more like 20 mpg against higher ratings.

We had loved our week with the Golf R. And we loved our week with the GTI. How do you choose? It’s tougher than when the Golf GTI had a manual transmission. If you’re looking at both, you’re likely to lie awake running many of the above variables through your head. But one thing remains true: there are no wrong answers. ■

Happy face emoji. Comparison with Golf R is inevitable

BY JOE SAGE

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Wolfsburg, Germany
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	Hungary / Germany
PARTS CONTENT	Germany 33% / Hungary 19% / US/Can 1%
ENGINE	2.0L TSI 16v 4-cyl turbo/intercooled, DOHC, chain-driven, var intake & exhaust, var valve lift; cast iron block, forged steel crank w five main bearings, alum alloy head/crossflow
HP/TORQUE	241 hp / 273 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.6:1
TRANSMISSION	7-spd DSG automatic
DRIVETRAIN	FWD
SUSPENSION	F: strut-type w lower control arms, coils, telescopic dampers, stblzr bar; R: multilink w coils, telescopic dampers, stblzr bar
STEERING	rack & pinion, elec pwr assist
BRAKES	F: 13.4 x 1.2 vented; R: 12.2 x 0.9 vented
WHEELS	18x7.5J alum alloy
TIRES	225/40R18 92H all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	168.9 / 103.6 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	4.7 in
APPR / DEPART / BRKOVER	13.1 / 19.7 / 14.9°
TURNING CIRCLE	38.1 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	38.5 / 38.1 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.2 / 35.0 in
CARGO CAPACITY	19.9 / 34.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3183 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 13.2 gal
MPG	24/32/27 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$37,420
MATS: set of 4 Monster Mats	190
DESTINATION CHARGE	1225
TOTAL	\$38,835

2025 VW GOLF LINEUP

GOLF GTI	241-hp 2.0L turbo/intercooled, 7-spd DSG, FWD
Golf GTI S	\$32,445
Golf GTI SE	▼ 37,420
Golf GTI Autobahn	40,880
GOLF R	328-hp 2.0L turbo/intercooled, 7-spd DSG, AWD
Golf R	\$47,100
Golf R Black Edition	48,415

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Arizona Auction Week 2026

	17 SAT	18 SUN	19 MON	20 TUE	21 WED	22 THU	23 FRI	24 SAT	25 SUN
PREVIEWS									
AUCTIONS									
Barrett-Jackson									
Bonhams: Cars									
RM Sotheby's									



From a high of eight events in January 2020 (before the pandemic changed the game in ways that would ripple forward for years), Arizona's January Auction Week is down to three events in 2026.

(There are now also other auctions here at other times—Mecum in spring, Barrett-Jackson now with a second event in fall. Gone from January are Gooding & Co., Russo and Steele, Worldwide Auctioneers, the once-ever Leake, and now also MAG Auctions).

The January week itself remains a world-famous anchor launching the new auction year. Plus, the Arizona Concours returned in 2023, many other events still dovetail with this week, visitors still descend from all around the globe, and the remaining events draw record crowds filling hotels, restaurants and airports and generating headline-making record sales.

Check event websites for any updates.

Barrett-Jackson

55th Annual Scottsdale Auction
Nine days: Sat Jan 17 - Sun Jan 25, 2026

This comprehensive nine-day event kicks off with Family Day on Saturday, January 17 (kids 12 and under free with a paying adult) with special activities. • 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 18. • The auction blocks fires up on Monday, January 19, for automobiles and collector cars, continuing through Sunday, January 25.

ROCK THE BLOCK CONCERT: Friday January 16: country music superstar Cole Swindell; opening act multi-platinum singer-songwriter Chase Rice.

BARRETT-JACKSON CUP: all week: Fifty professional Resto-Mods and customs are chosen from hundreds of applications to compete for the Ultimate Best in Show and People's Choice. The contenders parade across the block on the first Saturday, January 17 and are on display all week for voting, with a Top Five finalist revealed each day. Awards are, presented on Saturday, January 24.

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

← **HERE'S ONE TO WATCH AT BARRETT-JACKSON:**
1951 Mercury "The Widow" Joe Bailon custom
No Reserve - no estimate given

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Bonhams | Cars

15th Annual Scottsdale Auction

Friday, January 23, 2026 (starts at 10am)

(viewing dates-times t.b.a.)

Bonhams | Cars' top sale at Arizona Auction Week 2025 was the 1956 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing Coupe in DB180 Silver over Navy Blue leather, falling right in its estimated range of \$1,450,000-1,550,000, at \$1,490,000. • Bonhams returns to the Westin Kierland, hot off their London New Bond Street Collectors' Motor Cars and Automobilia, Milton Keynes Motorcycle Online, and Guilford Automobilia Auctions, all in December. • A sampling of Bonhams offerings at Scottsdale includes the 1997 BMW 850Ci 2 Door; the 1957 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz Convertible; the 1932 Chrysler CI-6 Sport Roadster; the 1954 Buick Skylark Convertible; and the 1966 Chevrolet Corvette 427/425HP Roadster; all without Reserve.

• Bonhams | Cars—part of the Bonhams global network of auction houses founded in 1793—offers live, online and private platforms, from Goodwood to Geneva, Monterey to Monaco, and through 13 auctions yearly in prestigious locations, often in conjunction with the world's most important motoring events.

Westin Kierland Resort & Spa
6902 E Greenway Pkwy, Scottsdale AZ 85254
DIRECT TO CARS → www.cars.bonhams.com

← HERE'S ONE TO WATCH AT BONHAMS:

1989 Porsche 930 Turbo Coupe
VIN WtPOJB0937KS050588 - no estimate given

RM Sotheby's

28th Annual Automobiles of Arizona

Friday, January 23, 2026 (auction: 11am)

(preview Thurs 9am-5pm, Fri 9-11am)

RM Sotheby's returns to the Arizona Biltmore after completing 2025 with London, Las Vegas and Abu Dhabi, including the Gordon Murray Special Vehicles S1 LM at \$20,630,000 in Las Vegas. • Last year's one-day Arizona event saw over \$31.6 million in sales and a 95 percent sell-through rate. Top sale was the 1958 Ferrari 250 GT LWB Berlinetta 'Tour de France' by Scaglietti at \$3,772,500. New records included the 1931 Bentley 8-Litre Convertible Victoria by Murphy at \$3,195,000 and the 2015 Ferrari 458 Speciale at \$786,000. • Consignments this year include the 1991 Ferrari F40 (see below; est \$2,800,000-3,200,000; the 1993 Porsche 911 Turbo S Lightweight (est \$2,250,000-2,750,000); the 1957 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Roadster (est \$1,800,000-2,200,000); and the 1929 Duesenberg Model SJ Convertible Sedan by Murphy (est \$1,200,000-1,400,000). Several more have estimates ranging above \$1,000,000. • For over 40 years, RM Sotheby's has sold high-quality collector cars and collections via 80 offices in 40 countries.

Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa
2400 E Missouri Ave, Phoenix AZ 85016
www.rmsothebys.com

← HERE'S ONE TO WATCH AT RM SOTHEBY'S:

1991 Ferrari F40 / engine 25246 / gearbox N574
Estimate: \$2,800,000 - \$3,200,000 ■



Lexus LC is in just its seventh year, though it certainly feels like longer—partly due to six or eight years of gestation, including development of its rare, high-dollar supercar sibling, the LFA, as well as concept cars that foreshadowed both.

The LC has long been available with two body forms (coupe or convertible) and two powertrains (V8 or V6 hybrid). For 2026, however, this is simplified. The big change for 2026 is not directly reflected in our sample—or then again, it is. Though still available as a coupe or convertible, the hybrid version is now discontinued. (Ours driven here is a 2025, a V8 coupe unchanged for 2026, although its glorious Copper Crest paint was for 2025 only.)

The LC 500h hybrid had lower horsepower and torque, but weighed only a bit more, and both had impressive zero-to-60 times. The hybrid did get about 50 percent higher fuel mileage. But the V8 has an almost 22-gallon tank; the price of entry already suggests that few will quibble about the cost

of feeding it; and 24 mpg is still pretty great for a potent V8 on the open road.

.....(discontinued) V6 hybrid	V8
Horsepower.....	295.....471
Torque (lb-ft).....	258.2.....398
Weight (lb).....	4410.....4340
Zero-to-60 mph (sec).....	4.7.....4.4
MPG (city/hwy/comb).....	26/33/29.....16/24/18

We like the decision they made.

You may have noticed that, whereas Toyota-Lexus have long been sweethearts of the fuel-mileage-conscious—thanks to dominance in hybrid powertrains, going way back—and whereas they have also developed a decent stable of EVs, they were receiving pushback in some quarters for not migrating to all-EV as fast as some others. Considering their remarkable hybrids, their remarkably high-mpg internal combustion engines, and their experienced engineering teams already in place, we had thought they were wise to hang on to their strengths and continue to develop those, too.

As the lower-volume LC lineup slimmed down to one powertrain, one might have thought it would be the hybrid that would remain—more in line with EV pressure, rules and regulations on the horizon. But then those largely evaporated or diluted—and in a startlingly short time—late last year. We do not know when the decision was made to change over to just one powertrain, nor when it was decided which, nor whether they had decided to go all-hybrid and then reconsidered. We could ask, but it’s fun to just speculate. Our guess is that they figured if they are still going to produce this much-loved supercar, although a move to hybrid-only might have felt in line with a push toward all-EV, it was in the V8 that the car’s spirit best shined. Enter a rather abrupt major shift in political winds and mandates, to solidify that thinking.

As it turns out, Lexus’s own words support this, saying the V8-only LC represents “No-Compromise Design.” Exactly as the LC should. Genius.

As you might suspect, we had a blast driving this for a week. That’s always the case. Acceleration and handling are powerful and firmly in your control. Drivetrain acoustics are authentic. And its stunning styling turns as many heads as ever.

We often skip drive modes, or use them just in the course of evaluation. Some are so subtle they seem pointless. Others are so dramatic, they raise the question of why the default mode fell so short. A great many have interfaces that are more trouble than they’re worth. None of that is the case here. Lexus LC 500 has the typical variety—up from normal into two levels of sport, or down from normal into comfort or eco. The car is already so sporty, its upper modes are just icing-on-the-cake level, which is perfect. Enjoyable mood-modes more than transformative, all you need from something so great in its basic form. Our favorite detail may be the controller, a tactile cylinder sprouting laterally from the right of the binnacle (see inset)—simple twist up, or up-up, springing back to center, no need to remember where you were, just know where you want to go, and give it a nudge.

Perfect implementation. (We never twisted down, though you might for a higher-mpg highway run.)

While the LC 500 doesn’t have an AWD variant, it does offer Active Rear Steering—which is part of a \$6,400 Dynamic Handling Package (of which the rear steering represents about \$2,000-2,500). Ours did not have this, and one thing we did notice was just the tiniest bit of suspension motion.

This package also includes rear performance damper and Torsen limited-slip rear differential, variable-ratio steering and a speed-activated rear wing, as well as everything from a carbon fiber roof and Alcantara sport seats, to performance brake pads. It’s a generous amount of inclusion for the price and strikes us as a slam-dunk in a car already sitting just north of \$100,000. The ride likely changes from 98 percent perfect to 100 percent. We hope to try them back-to-back.

At any rate, in a car that is already so well executed in any form, it gives you a choice. Maybe “LC” could stand for “loving choices.” Whatever version you can find, once you own one, you will likely keep it for a very long time. ■



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Toyota, Aichi, Japan
BODY / FRAME	unitized steel body w steel front & rear subframes
SEATING CAPACITY	four
ENGINE	5.0L V8, 32v DOHC, dual VVT-i, EFI, D-4S, alum/alum
HP/TORQUE	471 hp / 398 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	12.3:1
DRIVETRAIN	RWD
TRANSMISSION	10-spd Sport Direct Shift automatic w paddles and manual mode
DIFFERENTIAL RATIO	2.337
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	4.4 sec / 168 mph
SUSPENSION	F: dbl-joint multilink; R: multi-link
STEERING	vehicle speed-sensing coaxial rack & pinion, pwr assist
BRAKES	F: 15.7 vented, 6-piston opposed alum calipers, high-friction pads; R: 14.1 vented, 4-piston opposed alum calipers, high-friction pads
WHEELS	opt 21-inch staggered-width split-10-spoke forged alloy w gloss black metallic and machined finish
TIRES	F: 245/40 R21; R: 275/35 R21 ours: Michelin Pilot Sport S 5
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	187.4 / 113.0 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	5.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE	35.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	(CFRP roof) 36.8 / 32.2 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	42.0 / 32.5 in
CARGO CAPACITY	5.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT	4340 lb
WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION (F/R)	54 / 46%
FUEL / CAPACITY	.91 oct / 21.7 gal
MPG	16/24/18 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$99,250
BESPOKE BUILD PKG: "allowing customers to configure their vehicle with a mix of performance and styling components like the wheels, spoiler, roof and exterior/interior trim and colors"	3600
PREMIUM PAINT: Copper Crest	595
DARK CHROME TRIM ACCENTS	650
WHEELS: 21-in forged-split 10-spoke alloy	40
HEADS-UP DISPLAY	900
ALCANTARA-TRIMMED SPORT SEATS	nc
AUDIO: Mark Levinson premium	1220
SPEED-ACTIVATED REAR WING	995
CARBON FIBER ROOF	2400
CARBON FIBER DOOR SCUFF PLATES	600
DESTINATION CHARGE	1350
TOTAL.....	\$111,600
<i>Ours was a 2025 model; see 2026 pricing, below.</i>	

2026 LEXUS LC LINEUP

LC 500	▼ \$101,700
LC 500 Convertible	109,200

Maravilloso, como siempre

Livin' the life

BY JOE SAGE

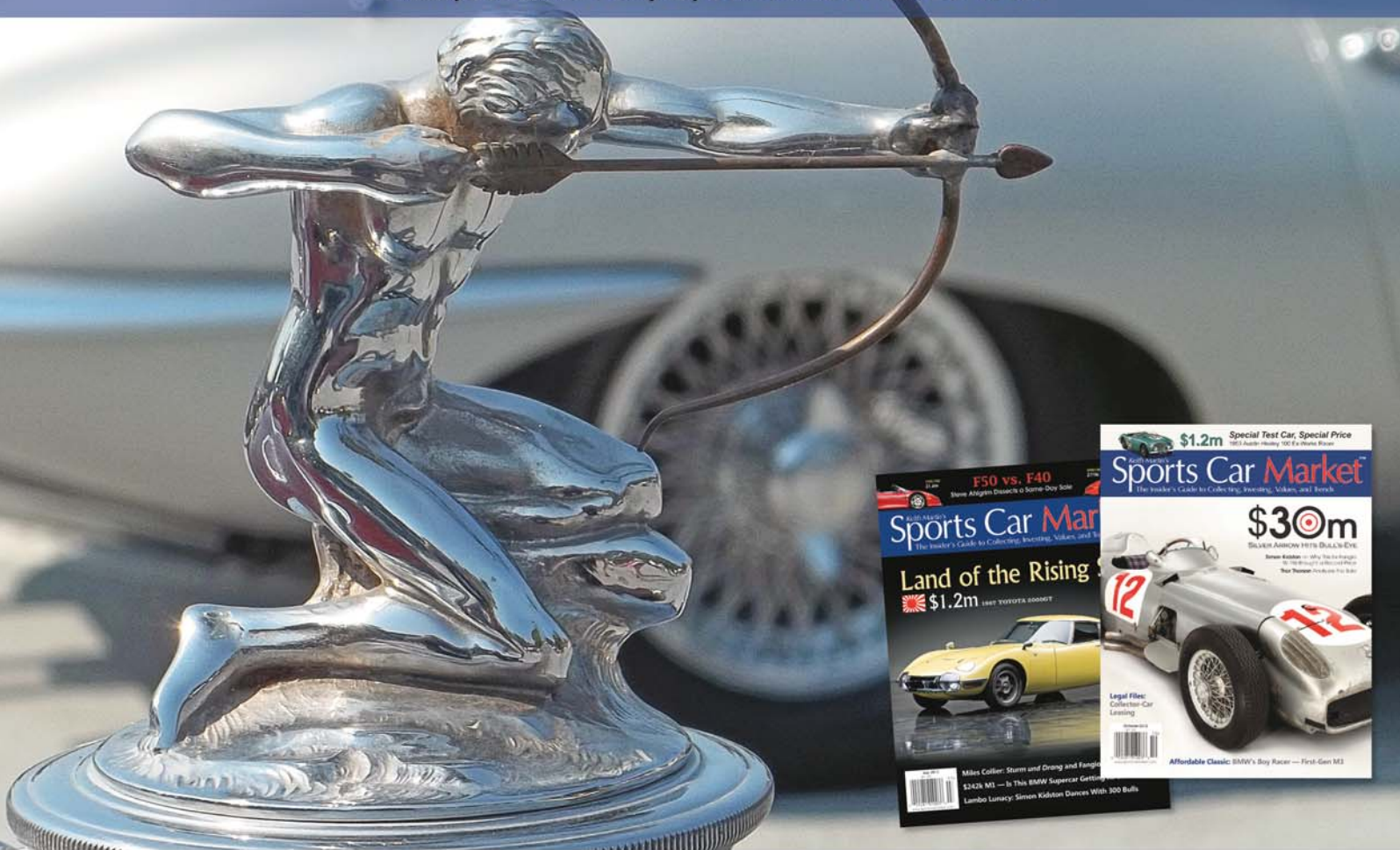


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SPECIAL EVENT : ARIZONA CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE 2026

ARIZONA CONCOURS COLLECTOR CAR LIFESTYLE EVENT SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2026 /SCOTTSDALE

The Arizona Concours d'Elegance takes place Sunday, January 18, 2026 on the grounds of the Scottsdale Civic Center. This is a prestigious, professionally judged and curated lifestyle event, with about 100 valuable dream cars and collector vehicles on display, dating from the dawn of motoring, through the Art Deco era, post-war sports cars, and the most exciting modern hypercars.

THEME: The theme for this 8th edition of the Arizona Concours is "Sculpture in Motion."

CLASSES: Fifteen classes have been designated for the 2026 Concours, with awards 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.

A listing of the 15 featured classes, each with the finest examples of vehicle types, such as those found at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance or Goodwood Festival of Speed events, can be found on the event's website (see below). The 2026

Concours also includes historic motorcycles and such nostalgic or offbeat classes as mid-century station wagons and dune buggies/beach cruisers.

There are also awards for the best-dressed at the Concours, an event that also resembles an exclusive garden party or outdoor art show.

FEATURED MARQUE: The 140th anniversary of Mercedes-Benz, the event's featured marque, will be celebrated with a special class, as 2026 also marks 100 years since the merger of Mercedes and Benz. The 125th anniversary of Indian motorcycles also will have a special class.

"We're excited to be celebrating Mercedes-Benz this year, and we're assembling an exceptional display of vehicles from the very invention of the automobile," said Chuck Stanford, the Concours co-chair and head of the Selection Committee. "We'll have something to fascinate auto lovers at every level."

The Arizona Concours is presented in partner-



ship with Scottsdale Arts, the organization responsible for an array of artistic services in Scottsdale.

Proceeds from the Arizona Concours benefit local artists and art programs, as well as Make-A-Wish® Arizona, the founding chapter of the national organization that grants wishes for children facing life-threatening medical conditions.

The Make-A-Wish kids also get involved in the Concours, including picking their favorite car and presenting it with a unique handmade trophy.

TICKETS & INFO: Tickets for the Arizona Concours d'Elegance at the Scottsdale Civic Center are available online, along with information about event participation and sponsorships:

ArizonaConcours.org ■

1967 Lamborghini Miura gets a final detail before a recent Arizona Concours / Bob Goffen photo



Mainstream achiever

BY JOE SAGE

As GM's volume leader by far, Chevrolet goes well beyond the Goldilocks set of compact, midsize and full-size crossovers and SUVs. There are seven basic sizes (as they split out their EVs). Add Bolt, EV-only, for eight sizes. Add two others available as both ICE and EV, for ten models.

Traverse fills a spot that is easy to understand—the largest one that's smaller than Tahoe and Suburban. (That biggest pair are in a category often called "large," rather than mere full-size, while Traverse is called midsize by GM. And it's a three-row, an advantage when comparing usefulness of a size within officially stated categories.)

All-new in 2024, Traverse remains basically unchanged, other than adding a High Country trim in 2025 (more premium-refined). Driven here is the Traverse Z71, a mid-priced adventure-oriented trim with off-road upgrades, the only Traverse that's AWD-only. (It does have 2WD modes for in-town efficiency, but 2WD-only, as available on all other trims, would go against the Z71's mission.)

The Z71 brings 18-inch wheels, all-terrain tires, wider track, an extra inch of ground clearance, and dampers with hydraulic rebound control. Its own front fascia provides a higher approach, an aluminum skid plate and red tow hooks. It makes for a

handsome face and definitely looks the part. Dedicated terrain modes, hill descent, a twin-clutch AWD system and trailering package are included.

While built with an eye on off-road, Chevy identifies Z71 buyers as "experience-seeking adventurers who are bringing the family and their gear along for the journey." At just under 5,000 lb, fuel mileage is rated at 21 mpg combined, which is not major fuel-sipping, but reasonable for a big three-row with almost 100 cubic feet of cargo volume.

Also of note, the Z71's turning circle is 39.0 feet on its 18-inchers, nimble for a three-row, versus 40.7 feet in fancier models with 22-inch wheels.

Basic driving is mainstream. It's a nice substantial size, smooth and solid passing over boulevard rain troughs at speed. Power, handling and brakes

all get the job done, while you will sometimes be aware of the vehicle's size. The eight-speed automatic is noteworthy for providing a bit of a soundtrack, almost reminiscent of a CVT, which it is not.

Given its positioning statement and moderately engineered mission, we set out to see just how far the off-road bits can take you. We took our Z71 onto mostly well-graded dirt roads, typical of that weekend family camping or fishing trip, with a foray onto an ungraded side road with pronounced ruts, swales, climbs and crests (as pictured). On both surfaces, its other personality kicked in, and the ride becomes a bit harsh, a reminder to stay short of the point of losing adhesion. We wouldn't want to go much rougher; the added ground clearance and twin-clutch abilities on mixed surfaces, as well as towing, are more likely to define the best routes to those adventure weekends.

Modes are geared more toward the dirt than

pavement, in line with the Z71 mission, but we might wish we had a sport or performance option around town. Then again, those aren't much needed for family duty and could ding fuel mileage.

Traverse Z71 is arguably more ruggedized than rugged (along the lines of a vehicle that has more of a sport package than is actually a sports car). It's an appealing special-duty-capable build in Traverse's overall niche, as an ample three-row SUV, slotting in above where many lineups leave off, while providing something short of Tahoe or Suburban (an in-town handful to some buyers). And the tight Z71 turning circle is a big benefit in town.

With solid specifications, good looks in any environment, features and finishes that will more than satisfy most tastes, this special Traverse has multiple jobs to do and does them well, all at a notable value point in its own lineup, as well as in the Chevy crossover/SUV lineup overall. ■

In any trim, you have to buy a \$3,935 package to get Bose audio. The rest of this package, we could (and might even prefer to) live without, other than always useful rear pedestrian alert.



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Lansing, Michigan
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	Mexico / USA
PARTS CONTENT	US/Canada 37% / Mexico 27%
ENGINE	2.5L 4-cyl VVT turbo, DOHC, cont var valve timing, high-pressure injection, electronic throttle control, alum/alum
HP/TORQUE	328 hp / 326 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	na
TRANSMISSION	8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	AWD
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut; R: 5-link indep
STEERING	elec variable-effort power
BRAKES	F: 12.6x1.2; R: 12.4x0.9
WHEELS/TIRES	18-in alum / 265/65R18 A/T
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	204.7 / 121.0 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	na, but +1 inch Z71
TURNING CIRCLE	39.0 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	*42.6 / 40.0 / 38.3 in
	*(specs w/o sunroof, which ours has but no specs provided)
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	44.3 / 41.5 / 32.1 in
CARGO CAPACITY	(max) 98.0 cu.ft
TOW CAPACITY	(standard pkg) 5000 lb
WEIGHT	4793 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / (AWD) 21.7 gal
MPG	20/24/21 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$48,900
ENHANCED DRIVING PKG: Super Cruise™ (with 3-yr OnStar upgrade), enhanced auto park assist, driver attention assist, Bose premium 12-spkr audio	3935
PANO SUNROOF / POWER SUNSHADE	1500
DRIVER CONFIDENCE PKG: HD Surround Vision, 120V pwr outlet, rear ped alert, traffic sign recog, key card, rear camera mirror	1225
DESTINATION CHARGE	1895
TOTAL	\$57,455
Note: our sticker price above; the manufacturer has not provided direct pricing info; consumer website pricing below.	

2026 CHEVY TRAVERSE LINEUP

	(per consumer site) FWD	AWD
LT	\$42,695	\$44,695
Z71		▼ 50,795
High Country	56,995	58,995
RS	57,295	59,295

2026 CHEVY SUVs BY SIZE*

	(per consumer site) from:
Bolt (EV only)	\$28,595
Trax	21,700
Trailblazer	23,300
Equinox	28,800
Equinox EV	34,995
Blazer	35,600
Blazer EV	44,600
Traverse	▼ 40,800
Tahoe	59,500
Suburban	62,000

*Given the variety of sizes, with overlap by government categorization, seat count, powertrain, price and other variables, we might recommend a visit to the website of Mid-State Chevrolet in West Virginia, who offer a detailed explanation from all angles: www.midstatechevy.com (see Nov 3 2025 blog).

THE BUSTED KNUCKLE GARAGE AN AUTOMOTIVE GIFT SHOP



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Miracle Car Repair Shop Stool / SKU: 09-BKG-MCR

Gas, Oil & Toil Shop Stool / SKU: 09-BKG-TOIL

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Shown: Vintage Iron Speed Shop Clock / SKU: 09-BKG-VI

~~Were \$399~~ Now \$349 / Free shipping on this item!

All-Steel Toolboxes

The Greasemonkeys have the feeling their full line of durable all-steel portable toolboxes with lift-out tray and a variety of the most cool car guy graphics (five styles now and more coming!) just may be too good to stash tools in—we may have to call them "deco-boxes"!

- Rugged all steel end cap construction • Powder coated, rust resistant • Heavy-duty stainless steel handle • Nickel-plated steel latch and hinge for added security • Full length lift-out tote tray
- Cool car guy quality color graphics • 6 lbs • 16" x 7" x 7.5"

Wrench-In-Hand Steel Tool Box / SKU: 10-BKG-WCL

Vintage Pickup Truck Steel Tool Box / SKU: 10-BKG-VT

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♥ Not only are your products awesome, but the service and the people are too! I very much intend to pass the word along about how great it is to do business with the Busted Knuckle Garage.
— 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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Concours in the Hills 2026

Premier car show drives big impact
for Phoenix Children's—
Saturday, February 14, 2026
Admission free for spectators

This Valentine's Day, car lovers can celebrate a day of heart and horsepower at Phoenix Children's 12th annual Concours in the Hills, from 10 am to 3 pm at Fountain Park in Fountain Hills. The event will showcase some of the world's most stunning cars, motorcycles, helicopters and military vehicles, all in support of Phoenix Children's Center for

Cancer and Blood Disorders and Cardiothoracic Surgery Fund.

Celebrating automotive passion, family fun and charitable giving, Concours in the Hills provides a unique opportunity to see some of the world's most extraordinary vehicles. The show has sections for Domestics, Imports, Race Cars, Limited-Edition Exotics, Off-Road Vehicles and Motorcycles. Also in display are helicopters ranging from sleek civilian models to the rare Black Hawk military helicopter.

Supported by top car clubs and dealerships, the event features Ferrari, Lamborghini, Porsche, McLaren, Corvette, Viper, Ford GT, Audi, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Mustang, Jaguar, Cadillac, Lotus and more. Attendees will experience vehicles they won't see anywhere else, including some of the rarest and most valuable in the world, collectively worth hundreds of millions of dollars, with several individual cars valued at over \$10 million.

Driven by a lifelong passion for exotic cars and speed, Peter Volny created Concours in the Hills, transforming his love for automo-

biles into a must-see event for car enthusiasts across the Southwest. For Volny, the show is about more than horsepower and luxury. As a childhood cancer survivor, his mission to support Phoenix Children's is a cause that drives every mile of this event.

Concours in the Hills began in 2014 with 220 cars and 3,000 spectators. By 2025, there were some 50,000 spectators, 1,200 vehicles and more than 100 vendor and sponsor booths.

Celebrate Valentine's Day with speed, style and heart, while making a real difference for Phoenix Children's patients. ■

WHEN:

Saturday, February 14, 2026, 10am-3pm

WHERE: Fountain Park, 12925 N Saguro Blvd, Fountain Hills, AZ 85268

FREE ADMISSION: event admission and parking are FREE to spectators.

VEHICLE REGISTRATION: through January 16:

\$95 per vehicle and \$45 per motorcycle

INFO: phoenixchildrensfoundation.org/signature/concours

Photo courtesy of the event.



New I-17 flex lanes open

The I-17 corridor sees more than one million travelers annually, making it one of the most heavily traveled roadways in Arizona. The highway's new flex lanes are now open, as the I-17 Improvement Project has officially reached substantial completion. After moving more than two million cubic yards of rock, dirt and earth, completing 62 controlled rock blasts, and making way for 23 miles of new lanes, the Arizona Department of Transportation has completed all major construction work on this massive project north of the Phoenix metropolitan area.

The first of their kind in Arizona, the flex lanes were constructed through the mountainous area between Black Canyon City and Sunset Point. They can serve as an additional two-lane roadway that carries one direction of traffic at a time, alternating between north- and southbound directions, depending on the greatest need.

Fifteen miles of new third lanes from Anthem Way to Black Canyon City and eight

miles of flex lanes from Black Canyon City to Sunset Point have transformed this busy stretch of highway by adding capacity, reducing congestion and enhancing safety. The flex lanes, built adjacent to the two southbound general purpose lanes, will be typically open to northbound traffic Mondays through Saturdays, then transition to southbound traffic on Sundays. During long holiday weekends, the flex lanes will be open to southbound traffic on both Sundays and Mondays.

The new additional lanes were opened earlier in 2025 to accommodate drivers as construction work continued toward completion. In May, they opened just in time for Memorial Day Weekend, then during the July Fourth holiday to move traffic on weekends. The lanes then opened officially seven days a week in September.

During the three years of construction, nearly all of the material removed from the mountainsides during controlled rock blasting and major earthwork operations

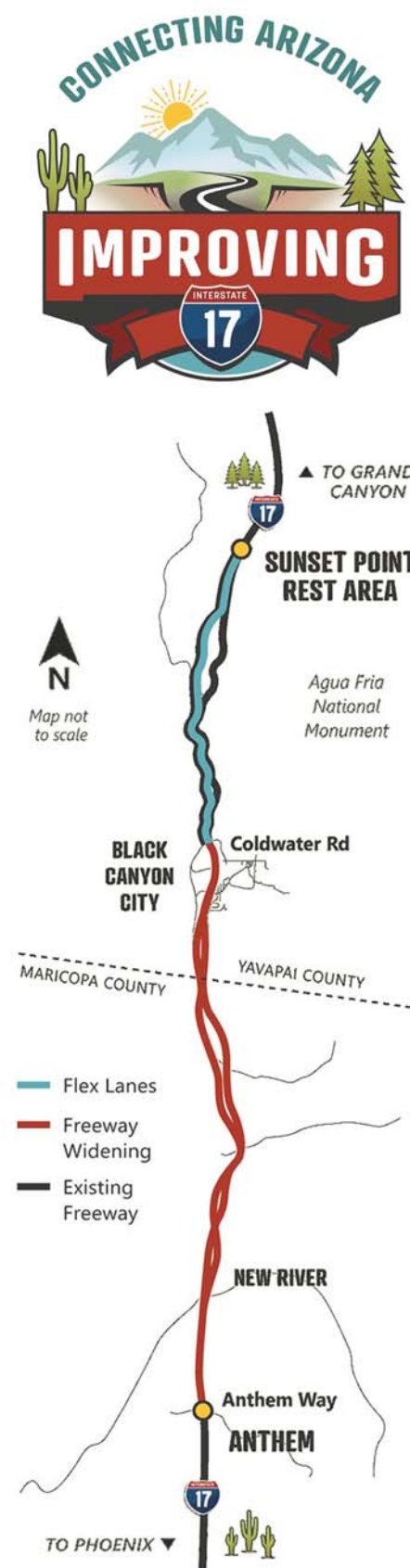
was reused by crews and put back into the project. Rock material was crushed and used for paving the new lanes, as well as for aggregate base, bridge abutment protection, embankment and rock mulch.

Another major component of the I-17 Improvement Project was the significant bridge work. Throughout the 23-mile corridor, 10 bridges were widened, two others completely replaced.

This \$522 million project was funded using federal funds, state highway funds, an Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant and Maricopa Association of Governments funding. Constructed as a Design-Build-Operate-Maintain (DBOM) Public-Private Partnership (P3), the project combined design, construction, operations and maintenance components into a single contract.

Drivers may still see crews working on finishing touches for the project, such as survey work, landscaping work and other miscellaneous work.

For more information about the project, visit improvingi17.com. ■



ADOT

ARIZONA DRIVER

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Manufacturers with two brand lines (Japan has multiple examples) are readily able to distinguish between their mainstream brand and an upper tier often termed premium-luxury, with the two terms used interchangeably, or blended. It's much clearer for a company with three brand lines, splitting out luxury and premium (top and near-top). But the products have to back this up. GM used to be far more complex—Cadillac as the top ticket, Chevrolet as mainstream, but in between, they've had to position Buick, Pontiac and Oldsmobile; Saturn and Geo; and original Hummer, along with easily distinguished GMC. Many simply fell into "if you know, you know" spots. Since they thinned out the stables, some 15 to 20 or more years ago, Buick has had the middle

level to itself, for a more easily prescribed identity as GM's premium brand, between Chevy and Cadillac. And in their current generation of vehicles, it is clear that they have filled their promise. What may be even more impressive is that they are able to do so at the less impressive end, as it were. Driven here is the premium brand—Buick—but in its entry level model—Envista—but in its top trim—Avenir. The entire Buick Envista lineup starts below \$25k and caps out below \$30k. The short version is that Envista replaces the tiny Buick Encore in the lineup, while the next-up Encore GX remains. A puzzle comes from Envista's specs and price being so close to the Encore GX. They are distinguished largely by body form—the Envista a lower coupelike crossover, Encore GX a taller more traditional shape. (Encore GX also has two engine options and two drivetrain options, though while one matches Envista's power and

FWD, it has a different transmission—see chart.) As for form, Envista's roofline easily blends into a row of sedans, while it does have a liftback, like any crossover. You could consider it sort of a four-door fastback liftback, categories aside. Most likely, it's the result of global shifts—the tiny Encore was Opel-based, but GM spun off that ownership. The new Envista has a percentage of Chinese blood, where GM has shifted some sourcing and inspiration. It was able to fit the slot. The newest generation of Buick styling is striking overall—clean, premium and immediately recognizable, a plus as brand presence quickly grows. Beyond its looks, we were in for a big surprise. We had seen the specs—three cylinders? 137 hp? super simple suspension and brakes? It sounded like an econocar flashback. But from a brand so successfully tackling the premium level? But then we drove it, and wow! In a ranch cor-

ral, some horses are stronger than others, though that's not how machine horses are measured. But it is as though the horses in this Buick were well-bred and well chosen. (And its three cylinders are, by the way, turbocharged.) From our very first run—a fairly long and complex one involving local streets, freeways, hills, rain troughs, the works—we noted the Envista is lively, responsive, quick and accurate. It nailed everything. Our expectations based on stated power simply baselined the impressive actual reality. The transmission difference from same-power-train Encore GX's CVT might be invisible to many, but this six-speed absolutely optimizes how those 137 horses hit the road. Although we would gravitate to AWD when available, we used the Envista basically just in town and on the freeways—not in snow or off-road—though during extremely in-

tense, record-breaking, newsmaking rains. And we never even thought about the lack of AWD. Instruments include a winning combination of artful digital expressions of analog styles, notably a contextual sweeping speedometer. Buick has been launching some impressive vehicles, putting premium foreign brands on notice. And most likely with friendlier domestic parts and service costs. Ours being the top-trim Avenir underscores the opportunity that is afoot here, from base trim to top. The whole lineup is clearly something to look at. We were repeatedly stunned by how much more powerful the Envista felt than its numbers would have suggested. So, while apples and oranges are confoundingly close between this and Encore GX, it may all come down to style and form. And you can't lose—every version is a premium vehicle in an entry-level price range. ■

COMPARE:	(discontinued) Encore	Envista	Encore GX
HP/torque	138/148	137/162	137/162 or 155/174
Drivetrain	FWD/AWD	FWD only	FWD/AWD
Transmission	6-auto	6-auto	CVT / 6-auto
Length / wheelbase	168.4 / 100.6	182.6 / 106.3	171.1 / 102.2
Cargo	18.8 / 48.4	20.7 / 42.0	23.5 / 50.2
Starting price	(2022) \$24,600	\$26,200	\$26,595
	(2026 approx) \$27,300		

MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

And a solid formula to begin with

BY JOE SAGE



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Bupyeong Gu, S Korea
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	Mexico / Mexico
PARTS CONTENT	S Korea 53% / China 20% / US/Canada 3%
ENGINE	1.2L 3-cyl turbo, DOHC, dir inj, alum die cast block, alum SPM cast head
HP/TORQUE	137 hp / 162 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	na
TRANSMISSION	6-speed auto
DRIVETRAIN	(only) FWD
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut; R: compound crank, Watts link
STEERING	elec pwr assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	16-inch
WHEELS	19x8.0 pearl nickel aluminum
TIRES	245/45R19 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	182.6 / 106.3 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	na
TURNING CIRCLE	(19-in wheels) 38.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	w/o moonr* 39.4 / 37.3 in
	* (our has moonroof but no spec provided)
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.9 / 38.7 in
CARGO CAPACITY	20.7 / 42.0 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3115 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 13.2 gal
MPG	28/32/30 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$29,400
PAINT: White Frost Tricoat	600
MOONROOF: power tilt-slide	795
AVENIR ADVANCED SAFETY PKG: rear cross traffic alert, heated/pwr/auto-dim side mirrors, lane change w side blind zone alert, adaptive cruise, intermittent wipers	795
DESTINATION CHARGE	1395
TOTAL	\$32,985

2026 BUICK ENVISTA LINEUP

	FWD only
Preferred	\$24,600
Sport Touring	26,100
Avenir	▼ 29,400

Note: per manufacturer press materials.

2026 BUICK CROSSOVER LINEUP

	FWD	AWD
Envista	▼ \$26,200	---
Encore GX	26,595	28,595
Envision	---	41,000
Enclave	46,400	48,400

Note: per consumer website.

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1966
My Dream Chevrolet Impala—a mix of excitement, pride, and anticipation. It wasn't in perfect shape, but that only made the journey more rewarding. Every dent and faded detail held a story, and I was ready to bring it back to life. Countless weekends were spent sourcing parts, getting my hands dirty, and learning the ins and outs of restoration. Slowly, it transformed from a worn-out relic into the car I always imagined. Now, every time I drive it, I'm reminded of the hard work, patience, and passion it took to make that dream real.

Notable History:
"My 427 Chevrolet motor is a true powerhouse, built for performance. Upgraded with high-flow dual carburetors, a performance camshaft, forged pistons, and a custom intake system, this big-block delivers serious horsepower and torque. Tuned for track and street, it's a perfect blend of classic muscle and modern performance engineering."

KEY FEATURES:

- Chevrolet Impala 427 cubic inch engine
- L36 with 390 horsepower and 460 lb-ft of torque.
- Holley four-barrel carburetor
- Four-bolt main
- Solid-lifter cam
- 11.0:1 compression ratio
- the three-speed Turbo Hydramatic

Ford Mustang
1967

ORIGINAL FEATURES:

- Engine: 428-cubic-inch V8 (355 hp, 420 lb-ft torque)
- Transmission: 4-speed manual or optional 3-speed automatic
- Suspension: Stiffer front springs, upgraded anti-roll bar, and Gabriel shock absorbers
- Brakes: Front disc brakes standard
- Fog Lamps
- Performance: 0-60 mph in 6.5 seconds, quarter-mile in 15 seconds at 95 mph
- Body: Initially only available as a fastback coupe, convertible added in 1968

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NASCAR/INDYCAR SPRING WEEKEND: TWO SERIES, ONE TRACK: THURSDAY-SUNDAY MARCH 5-8, 2026

Tickets are available now for a historic NASCAR/INDYCAR Spring Weekend at Phoenix Raceway, March 5-8. Action begins Thursday with the ARCA Menards Series and continues Friday with NASCAR O'Reilly Auto Parts Series and NTT INDYCAR SERIES practice and qualifying. That leads to an action-packed Saturday, which includes an INDYCAR/NASCAR doubleheader beginning with the Good Ranchers 250 and concluding with the NASCAR O'Reilly Auto Parts Series' GOVX 200. Then on Sunday, stars of the NASCAR Cup Series take center stage with the Straight Talk Wireless 500.

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You can also buy and resell tickets at SeatGeek.com

- Thursday, March 5, 2026: 4:00 pm**
SPRING ARCA MENARDS RACE
Start your race weekend as the stars of tomorrow fight it out for the top spot!
- Saturday, March 7, 2026: 1:00 pm**
NTT INDYCAR GOOD RANCHERS 250
The NTT INDYCAR Series is making its long-awaited return to Phoenix!
- Saturday, March 7, 2026: 5:00 pm**
NASCAR GOVX 200
Rising stars of the NASCAR O'Reilly Auto Parts Series take on the track!
- Sunday, March 8, 2026: 12:30 pm**
NASCAR STRAIGHT TALK WIRELESS 500
Witness the power, the speed, and the moments that make champions as you watch the sport's biggest names battle it out in person.
- ALSO: Monday, March 9, 2026: NASCAR RACING EXPERIENCE**
Drive a real NASCAR Race Car yourself! After training and instruction, you can get behind the wheel and drive for up to 48 minutes on Phoenix Raceway! ■



A hybrid powertrain in a hybrid body type

BY JOE SAGE

Hybrid powertrain aside—something at which Toyota is a longstanding master—the clever Toyota Crown could be considered a “hybrid” in another sense, combining the best of a more traditional sedan format with the stance and attributes of a crossover or SUV. It’s a great formula, and it creates one of our favorite vehicles.

Ours is in Nightshade trim, (priced in the upper \$40s, third up of four trims from the lower \$40s to mid-\$50s, an easy range to navigate). The specs are great. As a hybrid, Crown is rated at more than 40 mpg. And it has a 14.5-gallon tank, meaning for anyone, notably in lingo suited to those who have

looked into EVs, this will achieve about 600 miles of “range” from a simple five-minute refill.

A super neat and rare factoid: ours had zero options, not a one. Yet it is very complete as is. And though built in Japan, its destination and delivery charge was just \$1135, while others have climbed considerably this year. Great! We’ll take it!

A sedan with crossover bones, or a crossover in a sedan suit, the Crown is spacious and comfortable. Instruments and controls are intuitive, many cleverly rethought by Toyota in an era where this is most welcome. The cabin has great attention to detail, such as a supremely clever and clean con-

sole bin lid, double-hinged so you can open it and pass cables through from either side, contextually and intuitively. (A fantastic piece of engineering, it reminds us of a genius child’s educational toy.)

Power is plenty for its efficient weight, applied via the engineered wisdom of a state-of-the-art hybrid powertrain. A great example would be our having to use a boulevard U-turn, somehow engineered into a fairly blind spot just short of the top of a hill. You’ll likely need a burst of power, precision steering and acceleration on tap, and it had it.

A moderately severe pair of raintroughs on a high-speed road in our normal routine—a test more comprehensive than obvious, challenging various surface responses as well as rebound rates, with two in a row—always separates the wheat from the chaff. This nimble but substantial

crossover-combo did exceptionally well. Ground clearance, 5.7 inches, is not that much for an SUV, but it’s a good example of how Crown’s stance and relative ruggedness conquer typical daily use.

As noted by the complete lack of options on our sample, this vehicle is engineered pretty much perfectly straight out of the box. If some might want more power, for that there is the Hybrid MAX, with 340 net combined horsepower and 400.4 lb-ft of torque (changing zero-to-60 time from 7.6 to 5.7 seconds), and it’s not even that much more expensive. The MAX also uses a six-speed automatic, versus an eCVT in the others. However, while some people love to hate any CVT, this one is completely transparent and smoother than most automatics, which in fact was part of the original philosophical and engineering intent of a CVT.

There is another variant as well—the Crown Signia (available with the standard powertrain only, not the MAX). This is a long-roof version, which

anyone might call a wagon, if everybody didn’t refuse to use that term these days. The body form on the Crown Signia largely closes the “hybrid” gap, bearing more crossover-like attributes inside and out, which adds utility but reduces that idea.

Some have tried to say that the sedan is dead. That does seem to be Detroit’s current approach, seen by many as not so much customer-driven, but largely, rather, for profit-per-unit reasons. But it’s not a very convincing platitude, as so many brands still clearly think otherwise. Toyota Crown—with its handsome sedan profile, crossover bones and high degree of utility all in one package—turns that whole debate on its head.

Sometimes when something tries to be multiple things—powerful while economical, different vehicle types all in one—it can end up missing them all. That’s not the case with Toyota Crown, which hits the bullseye for the full range of goals. This vehicle is a total win-win. ■

We had ours for a stretch of particularly wild weather—in which our Storm Cloud paint job was especially striking, and the cabin’s well-appointed cocoon effect was in full play. We quickly reconfirmed our past times with the Crown—there is plenty to love.

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Toyota, Aichi, Japan
ENGINE	2.5L Dynamic Force 4-cyl, 16v DOHC, VVT-iE and VVT-i
HP/TORQUE	184 hp / 163 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	14.0:1
ELEC MOTOR	perm magnet synchr
TORQUE	(F/R): 149 / 89 lb-ft
BATTERY	NiMH 230.4V / 5.0 Ah
HORSEPOWER (NET COMBINED)	236 hp
TRANSMISSION	eCVT
DRIVETRAIN	electronic on-demand AWD
0-TO-60 MPH	7.6 sec
SUSPENSION	F: indep MacPherson strut w 26.5mm hollow stblzr bar; R: multi-link w 21.0mm hollow stblzr bar
STEERING	rack parallel-type elec pwr steer
BRAKES	F: 12.9 in vented; R: 12.5 in solid
WHEELS	21-in 10-spoke alloy, matte-black
TIRES	225/45/R21
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	196.1 in / 112.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	5.8 in
APPROACH/DEPART	13.9 / 19.3°
TURNING CIRCLE	38 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	38.2 / 37.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	42.1 / 38.9 in
WEIGHT	4013 lb
CARGO CAPACITY	(seats up) 15.2 cu.ft
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 14.5 gal
MPG	42/41/41 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$48,765
DESTINATION CHARGE	1135
TOTAL	\$49,900

2026 TOYOTA CROWN LINEUP

Crown XLE Hybrid AWD	\$41,440
Crown Limited Hybrid AWD	45,950
Crown Nightshade Hybrid AWD	48,765
Crown Platinum Hybrid MAX AWD	54,990

2026 CROWN SIGNIA LINEUP

Crown Signia XLE Hybrid AWD	\$44,390
Crown Signia Limited Hybrid AWD	48,790

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Porsche Junior and Female Driver programs to continue in North America

- PMNA offers financial, developmental incentives to junior and female racers
- Female Driver Development program enters fourth year
- PMNA Junior program drivers have found success around the world

The popular Porsche Driver Development programs provided by Porsche Motorsport North America (PMNA)—which include their Junior and Female Driver programs—will continue in 2026. Each program offers participants in Porsche customer racing financial and developmental tools to grow their motorsport careers.

The programs provide support to eligible drivers in Porsche Carrera Cup North America, Porsche Sprint Challenge North America, and Porsche Sprint Challenge USA West. Drivers competing in a Porsche—who meet eligibility criteria and are participating in open-competition championships in IMSA and SRO—may also realize support from these programs.

The PMNA-supported Porsche Junior program officially began in 2021 with the launch of Porsche Carrera Cup North America, but has its roots in the Porsche Young Driver Academy dating back to 2012, while the Female Driver Program took shape in 2022. From the start, the programs have grown the careers of prominent drivers as they progressed through the Porsche Motorsport Pyramid

North America. Many—including Loek Hartog, Eliott Skeer, Seb Priaulx, Parker Thompson and Kay Van Berlo—have had success on the world stage.

Each program focuses on driver development, including performance-based incentives in the form of tires and entry fee support. Seminars during Porsche Carrera Cup North America race weekends cover topics ranging from performance thinking to car setup, to communications between drivers and engineers, with access to Porsche racing legends Richard Westbrook and Patrick Long.

A two-day seminar with in-depth sessions covering sponsorship activation, social media, physical fitness and mental exercises, and media training will take place for the third year in a row at the Porsche Penske Motorsport shop in Mooresville, North Carolina.

In addition to the driver training, both programs include financial assistance.

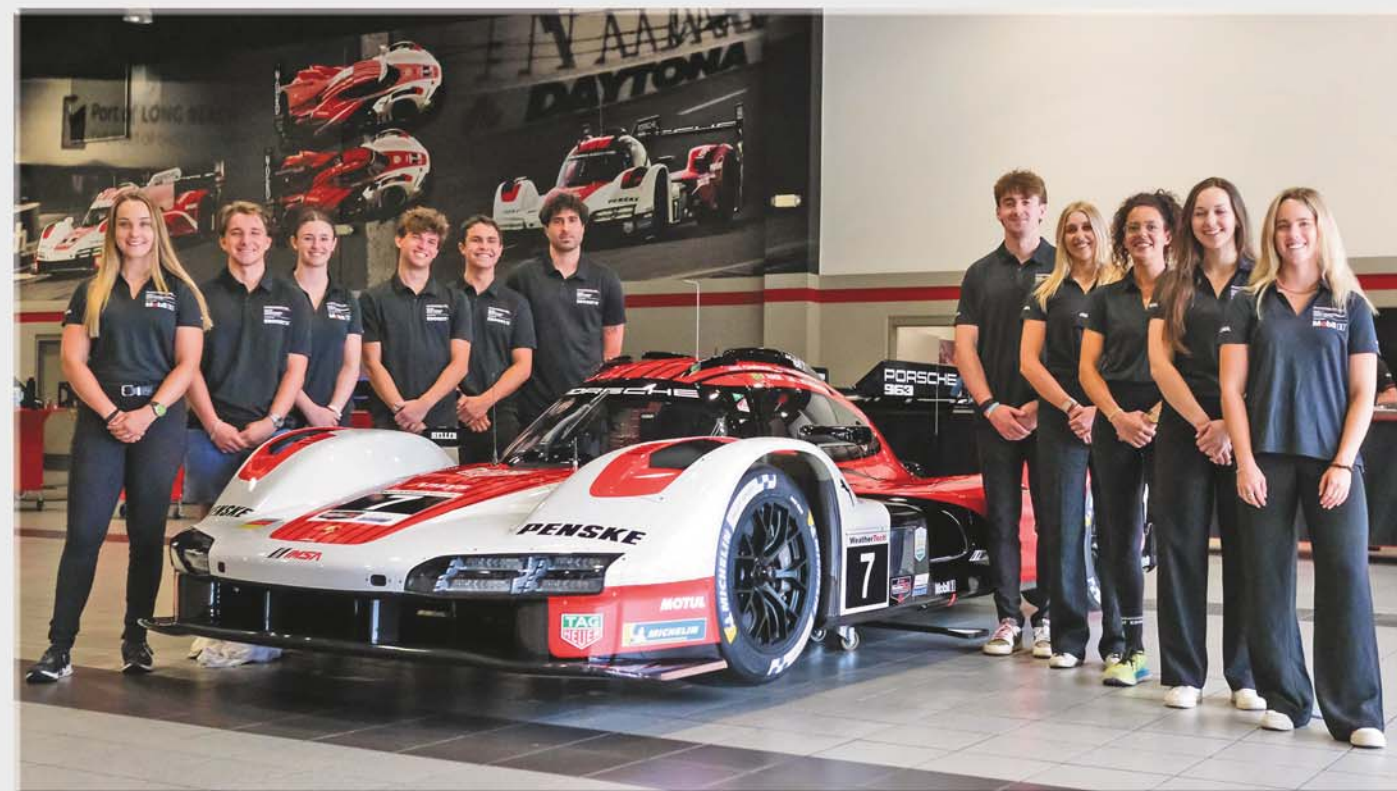
FEMALE DRIVER PROGRAM PERKS: Each driver in the Porsche Female Driver program will have 50 percent of entry fees in Porsche single-make races covered by Porsche Motorsport North America.

The top female driver in each Porsche Carrera Cup North America race will receive a free set of tires during the next race weekend, with an additional set awarded to the top point scorer throughout the weekend. The top scoring Sprint Challenge North America and Sprint Challenge USA West drivers each doubleheader weekend will receive a free set of race tires at the next race weekend.

JUNIOR DRIVER PROGRAM PERKS: Likewise, participants in the Junior Program may also earn race tires based on performance in each championship race weekend and entry fees in Porsche Carrera Cup North America. The highest finishing drivers in each Porsche Sprint Challenge category can earn their 2027 entry fees to advance through the Porsche Motorsports Pyramid North America.

Each of last year's Porsche Motorsport North America Selected Drivers came through the Junior Program. PMNA Selected Drivers Riley Dickinson and Loek Hartog used the awarded parts credit from PMNA to compete in GT4 America in Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport machinery. Tom Sargent competed with Wright Motorsports at the Michelin Endurance Championship rounds in the IMSA WeatherTech Championship with help from the same award, as selected prior to the season.

SEE: X @porsche; **INSTAGRAM** @porscheusa, @pecatl, @pecla; **FACEBOOK** @PorscheUSAOfficial, @PECAtlanta, @pecla; and others. ■



ROAD TRIP WARRIOR

(for us, just almost)

BY JOE SAGE

We most often seem to see the Toyota 4Runner in its more dramatic-duty forms—Off-Road, Trailhunter, TRD Pro and so on—both in person around town and in our own pages. Here we have one with the same unmistakable style and stance, but dressed instead for somewhat tamer duty. Or perhaps for a good road trip. In fact, that’s what we were set to do in this one.

The ever-popular 4Runner was all new for 2025—generation six—and carries forward for 2026. Its closest sibling is, of course, the Toyota Tacoma, which entered gen-four the prior year. (This is the

same new generation as 4Runner, but with a different number because 4Runner’s pickup relatives had other names and evolutions before Tacoma.)

Last summer, we drove the new 2025 “ultimate overlanding” Trailhunter (which adds even more off-road tech for ‘26). This time, it’s the more town and highway oriented 4Runner Limited, a next-to-top premium grade (with heated, vented, leather, power and tech upgrades, including JBL premium audio). Also available with an i-FORCE MAX turbo hybrid powertrain, ours was the i-FORCE, also a turbo, but non-hybrid. The 4Runner Limited with standard powertrain is also the top trim available as a rear-driver, for anyone interested (see chart at right), though ours had always-welcome 4WD.

We had mapped out about an 1,800-mile drive to Northwest Colorado and back—a glorious route we’ve driven often, through Flagstaff, Monument Valley, Moab, on into the Rockies.

The theoretical best vehicle for that trip would get 40-50 mpg for the long stretch from Phoenix through Utah and into western Colorado, about 80 percent of the distance, then be highly capable in deep snows, with proper tires, ground clearance and gearing for the final 20 percent. This vehicle falls somewhere in the middle on that impossible combination. You of course could change tires, but 4Runner gearing is a factor in fuel mileage (4Runner and Tacoma used to have pretty different gearing, but are now virtually the same, slightly different for the manual-shift Tacoma.)

But that trip was not to be. Instead, we had a



great week with it around town, closer to home.

We generally neither hypermile nor log our fuel mileage, with few exceptions. For this one per its specifications, fuel mileage numbers seemed relatively low, real world mixed duty around 20 mpg. But our actual results seemed higher. We have sometimes had some vehicle that was rated high, but the tank seemed to drop fast. The 4Runner seemed the better opposite—official numbers not so high, but the gas gauge seemed generous.



The Limited trim level will gain many fans via relativities. For someone who perhaps is eyeing a Highlander or Land Cruiser, but wants something a little smaller, but bigger than the RAV4, here y’go. And for someone who loves the 4Runner, but has found the tough-duty trims too gnarly, put the same basic vehicle in more citified clothing, and suddenly its competitive set multiplies mightily. As with any 4Runner, the Limited will of course also please plenty of people on its own merits. ■



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Toyota Tahara, Aichi, Japan
SEATING	opt 3rd row: seven
ENGINE	i-FORCE 2.4L 4-cyl turbo, DOHC 16v, D-4ST fuel inj
HP/TORQUE	278 hp / 317 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	11:1
TRANSMISSION	8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	full-time 4WD w adaptive variable suspension
SUSPENSION	F: indep dbl wishbone w stblzr bar, twin-tube shocks; R: multi-link w coils, outboard-mounted twin-tube shocks
STEERING	EPS: pwr-asst rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 13.4 vented; R: 13.2 vented
WHEELS	20-in machine-finish alloys
TIRES	265/55R20
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	194.9 / 112.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	(Limited) 8.8 in
APPR/DEP/BRKOVER	(Limited) 18 / 22 / 24°
TURNING CIRCLE	39.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	39.7 / 37.8 / 35.3 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	41.8 / 34.8 / 31.8 in
CARGO CAPACITY	12.1 / 44.8 / 84.1 cu.ft
WEIGHT	(Limited i-Force 4WD) 4970 lb
GWW	(") 6395 lb
TOW CAPACITY	6000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 19 gal
MPG	20/24/21 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$57,400
THIRD ROW SEATING	1330
AUTOMATIC RUNNING BOARDS	1005
ROOF RAIL CROSS BARS: gloss black	420
TOW TECH PKG: w trailer reverse assist control, digital display rear mirror	400
TOWING: ball mount	65
TAILGATE LED LIGHT	200
WHEEL LOCKS: bright chrome	90
CARGO COVER: retractable black	135
CARGO MAT: carpet “4Runner”	130
DESTINATION CHARGE	1450

TOTAL \$62,625

Note: 2025 sample; see 2026 pricing below.

2026 TOYOTA 4RUNNER LINEUP

i-FORCE (286-hp turbo)	4x2	4x4
SR5	\$41,570	\$43,570
TRD Sport	48,050	50,050
TRD Sport Premium	53,410	55,410
Limited	56,200	58,200
TRD Off-Road		49,990
TRD Off-Road Premium		55,770
i-FORCE MAX (326-hp hybrid turbo)		4x4
TRD Off-Road i-FORCE MAX		\$52,790
TRD Off-Road Premium i-FORCE MAX		58,570
Limited i-FORCE MAX		61,000
Platinum i-FORCE MAX		63,660
Trailhunter i-FORCE MAX		67,700
TRD Pro i-FORCE MAX		67,900

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ATTRACTIONS : LEMAY—AMERICA'S CAR MUSEUM ROUTE 66 EXHIBIT

ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL

America's Automotive Trust and LeMay—America's Car Museum celebrate with The Drive Home this year from Santa Monica to Chicago, then on to Detroit

America's Automotive Trust has opened a refreshed Route 66 exhibition at LeMay—America's Car Museum, in Tacoma, Washington—with Centennial-themed additions that pay homage to the Mother Road's 100th birthday—celebrated in anticipation of their early January drive over the highway's full length.

Historically, The Drive Home was created as a partnership between America's Automotive Trust (AAT) and the Detroit Auto Show to celebrate driving and keeping cars on the road, each time making the drive "home" to America's automotive capital—Detroit, Michigan.

This year's seventh rendition of the event, "The Drive Home VII—Route 66 A Century of Adventure" kicked off in Santa Monica on Saturday, January 3, 2026. In honor of the centennial, The Drive Home, AAT and the Detroit Auto Show—in partnership with the Route 66 Centennial Commission—would make the journey across Route 66 in its entirety. Nine vehicles would make the journey,

accompanied by nearly two dozen "privateers," following The Drive Home convoy in their own vehicles as they make their way across America.

Four of the nine vehicles departed from ACM in Tacoma via transport, heading to Santa Monica to officially kick off the drive at the legendary Mel's Diner. From there, the route would run along the historic Route 66 corridor—inviting enthusiasts, supporters and fellow travelers to join the adventure and experience the open road together.

The refreshed exhibition at LeMay—America's Car Museum (ACM)—a longstanding favorite of Museum visitors, received centennial-themed additions and vehicles paying particular homage to America's most famous highway.

Throughout 2026, the Route 66 exhibition will feature films and artifacts from the Route 66 Drive Home. Museum visitors will be able to see these artifacts on display and get a feel for what it was like to be part of the drive. Find more online at: americasautomotivetrust.org/thedrivehome ■



Capability to the hilt

WITH A DOSE OF SCREEN DEPENDENCY by Joe Sage

Even in the face of its notably high presence on our roads in Arizona, Land Rover in the US is a lower-volume brand. What it has to offset this is an enormous global footprint. As such, this boutiquey luxury brand has fully nine different basic models available here.

Four under the Range Rover name (while also bearing the Land Rover badge) include the Range Rover itself, a smaller Range Rover Sport, then also Range Rover Velar and Range Rover Evoque.

Then under the freestanding Land Rover name are Land Rover Defender (three models by length, the 90, 110 and 130) and Land Rover Discovery (as with Range Rover, two—a basic and a Sport).

While these nine are easily regrouped down to

five (via shared names but varying lengths), they are also expanded to many more by trim level (see three Range Rover and six Range Rover Sport variants in chart). And then there are powertrains.

Introduced in 2022 as a 2023 model, the gen-five Range Rover came with a plan to add alternative powertrains, with an increasing emphasis on mild hybrids (MHEVs) and PHEVs (plug-in hybrids), then a full EV version originally expected in 2024.

We had the larger Range Rover in these pages just over two years ago, base SE trim but with the new PHEV powertrain. And at that time in 2023, all 2024 PHEVs for the US had already been reserved.

Yet more change is always afoot. An Autobiography trim, also due in 2024, would newly popu-

late the wide space between SE and SV. That's the one we have here, as a PHEV. The mission is fundamentally on track, as this definitely fills a price gap, even when massively optioned-up, as ours is.

When we lived in a cowboy mountain resort town in Colorado, home mostly to heavy duty 4WD pickups suited to ranching, construction and mining (or just for that style) or less expensive AWD crossovers suited to ski racks, mountain bikes and tents (or again, just for their style), we tended to think the handful of people buying Range Rovers were mostly just showing off. And they may have been, to a point.

But we promptly and dramatically learned better, in this gig, as a Land Rover rep accompanying us at one of our first regional off-road comparo events made sure we experienced the extensive knobs, levers and controls for its heroic features.

Indeed, the vehicle's capabilities proved to be off the charts, ready for more things than anyone knew they needed to be ready for. This meant a lot of knobs and switches, hence the informative rep.

Today's version—like so many things, but arguably to a higher degree—is heavily screen-dependent. Advantages or disadvantages of knobs and switches versus screen dives for vital functions (often deep, multilevel) are a somewhat universal debate. But it's still complex, and adjustments can be distracting enough, via a screen, to need to be set aside for some other time. (We might have wished we had a rep with us this time, too, to quickly achieve a couple of things right when needed.) Of course, ongoing ownership will breed familiarity.

While the manufacturer has a couple of photos of the Range Rover Sport busting deep dirt and sand, perhaps in the Sahara, the 23-inch wheels on our Autobiography PHEV suggest tamer duty, which is where the majority of usage will likely lie, anyway. All versions include all-wheel drive, all-

2025-26 RANGE ROVER LINEUP

Range Rover Evoque	\$49,900
Range Rover Velar	61,600
Range Rover	113,300

2025-26 RANGE ROVER SPORT LINEUP

Range Rover Sport SE	\$83,700
Range Rover Sport Dynamic SE	90,800
Range Rover Sport Autobiography	118,700
Range Rover Sport SV	152,000
Range Rover Sport SV Black	161,600
Range Rover Sport SV Carbon	169,500

Note: Pricing here is from the consumer site and does not specify model year. Visit dealer to clarify the latest info.

wheel steering and electronic air suspension.

Our closing thought from 2023 still holds true: if this is what you've had your heart set on, you will surely be quite satisfied. If it's more of a random what-if, there is a lot you can look at for this kind of money (or less). But that would miss the basic pride of brand and ownership you get with an aspirational vehicle such as this one surely is. ■

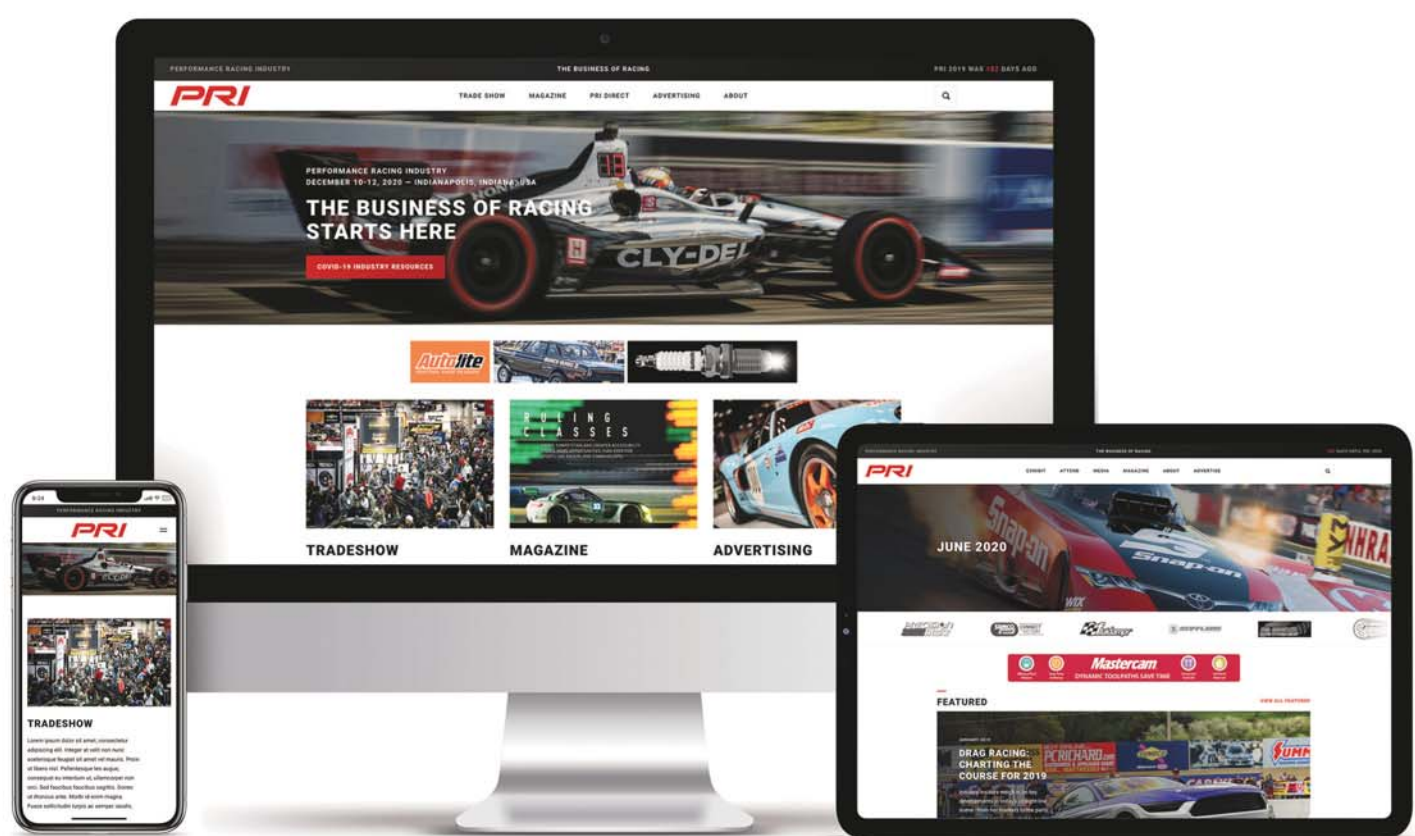
SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Solihull, UK
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	UK / Germany
PARTS CONTENT	UK 54% / Germany 15% / US/Canada 5%
ENGINE	P550e 3.0L i-6 plug-in hybrid
HP/TORQUE	542 hp / 590 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.5:1
BATTERY (USABLE)	38.2 kWh
TRANSMISSION	8-spd automatic
DRIVETRAIN	AWD
TRANSFER CASE	twin-speed
MODES	Terrain Response 2 w selectable driving & off-road modes; low traction launch, hill descent control
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	4.7 sec / 150 mph
SUSPENSION	Dynamic Air Suspension w Dynamic Response Pro
BRAKES	F: 400mm vented; R: 370mm vented
WHEELS	(OPT) 23-in Style 5135, gloss black (standard 22-in)
TIRES	(OPT) HL 285/40 R23 115Y M+S ours: Pirelli Scorpion MS
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	194.7 in / 118.0 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	(PHEV std) 8.23 in (PHEV off-road) 10.75 in
DEPART/RAMP/APPROACH:	
	(PHEV std) 24.9 / 19.1 / 22.5°
	(PHEV off-road) 30.0 / 24.5 / 29.7°
WADING DEPTH	35.43 in
TURNING CIRCLE	37.47 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	39.29 / 38.66 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	40.31 / 37.83 in
WEIGHT	6030 lb
GVW	7606 lb
MAX ROOF LOAD	220 lb
TOW CAPACITY	(unbraked) 1653 lb (max) 6614 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	prem rec'md / 18.89 gal
CHARGING TIMES:	
Domestic plug 2.3kW	15 hrs to 100%
Home / wall box 7kW	5 hrs to 100%
Rapid DC 50kW	40 min to 80%
MPG	MPGe 53 (comb) / MPG 21 (comb)
BASE PRICE	\$118,700
PAINT: Carpathian Grey	1750
UPHOLSTERY: Caraway/Ebony perforated semi-aniline leather	nc
DEPLOYABLE SIDE STEPS	5200
MERIDIAN SIGNATURE SOUND SYSTEM	4500
SV BESPOKE SATIN FORGED CARBON FINISHER	1550
WHEELS: 23-IN STYLE 5135, GLOSS BLACK	1100
PREMIUM INTERIOR PROTECTION & STORAGE PACK	740
LAMINATED FRONT & REAR SIDE GLASS	450
COLD CLIMATE PACK: heated windshield, heated washer jets	450
BASIC REAR SEAT CONVENIENCE PACK	265
WHEEL PROTECTION PACK	225
RED BRAKE CALIPERS	185
EMERGENCY PACK	75
RANGE ROVER HANDOVER PACK	65
DESTINATION CHARGE	1625
TOTAL	\$136,880



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INDUSTRY NEWS : FORD TAKES HUGE LOSS, PIVOTS ON EV PLANS

Lightning unplugged

Ford rebalances EV plans, takes \$19.5 billion hit, shifts back toward gasoline and hybrids plus extended range

Equal parts huge sea change or return to status quo, Ford is responding comprehensively to the abrupt drop in consumer interest in EVs.

Ford is shifting to higher-return business, leveraging its US manufacturing footprint to add trucks and vans to the lineup, while no longer producing select larger electric vehicles where the business case has eroded due to lower-than-expected demand, high costs and regulatory changes.

The plan prioritizes affordability and choice for customers, profits for the company. Expanded powertrain choices will have a range of hybrids and extended-range electric vehicles (EREVs, which are recharged by their own on-board gasoline engine, which does not directly drive the vehicle).

To sharpen the Ford+ plan, redeploy capital, meet customer demand and drive profit growth, Ford has dropped a planned new EV commercial van for Europe, but will continue to maintain its full lineup of electrified vans in that market. ("Electrified," in industry parlance, covers gasoline-powered hybrids and extended range electrics.)

Ford also plans to replace a planned electric commercial van for North America with a new, affordable commercial van (gas or hybrid), to be produced at Ohio Assembly Plant. New pickups will

be assembled at BlueOval City in Tennessee.

Ford will concentrate its remaining North American full-electric vehicle development on its new, low-cost, flexible Universal EV Platform. This next-generation architecture is engineered to underpin a high-volume family of smaller, highly efficient and affordable electric vehicles designed to be accessible to millions of customers. The first vehicle on the Universal EV Platform will be a fully connected midsize pickup truck assembled at Louisville Assembly Plant starting in 2027.

Ford plans to expand hybrids with a range of executions based on customer needs and duty cycle—including economical, performance hybrids and hybrids with exportable power.

Ford's strategy for larger trucks and SUVs aims to better align with customer demand for capability, towing and range—which includes adding extended-range electric options to its lineup.

As part of this plan, the next-generation F-150 Lightning will shift from pure EV—its original raison d'être—to extended-range electric vehicle (EREV) architecture. Production of the current generation F-150 Lightning EV has concluded. Ford is redeploying employees to Dearborn Truck Plant to support a third crew for F-150 gas and hybrid truck

production (as a result of the Novelis fires), while the revised F-150 Lightning, now as an extended-range truck, will be assembled at the Rouge Electric Vehicle Center in Dearborn.

By 2030, about 50 percent of Ford's global volume is expected to comprise hybrid, extended-range and full-electric vehicles, an increase from 17 percent today, though with the mix evolving.

Ford is also launching a new, high-growth battery energy storage business, leveraging wholly owned plants in Kentucky and Michigan and leading LFP technology to provide solutions for energy infrastructure and growing data center demand. Ford plans to begin shipping BESS systems in 2027 with 20 GWh of annual capacity.

These actions provide a path aiming for profitability in the Model e research and development division by 2029. Ford has improved profit plans for Model e, as well as Ford Blue and Ford Pro over time, targeting first signs of benefits in 2026.

In the course of these comprehensive recalibrations, Ford expects to have about \$19.5 billion of loss (recorded as special items), logged from late 2025 into 2027. The company expects about \$5.5 billion in related cash effects, the majority paid in 2026 and the remainder in 2027.

To support these actions, Ford and its subsidiaries plan to hire thousands of employees in the US over next few years, reinforcing the company's reputation as the top employer of US hourly autoworkers. ■



Light utility

BY JOE SAGE

The Mazda CX-30 appeared notably small to us in its photos prior to arrival. Curiosity led us to compare it to the diminutive MX-5 Miata sports car, and a range of results from googling suggested we were not the first. (The CX-30 is a bit longer and wider than Miata, seats four, has 1.6 inches more ground clearance, and is exclusively AWD.)

Actually related is the entry-level Mazda3 compact (sedan or hatchback, with the hatch seeming especially comparable to the CX). That is indeed small. Which is fine. It's why things come in sizes. Plus everybody everywhere always loves the Miata, and we've also always enjoyed the Mazda3.

We often doublecheck positioning of an incom-

ing Mazda, still absorbing their change to (mostly) double-digits for their crossovers—moving from CX-5, CX-7, CX-9 to CX-50, CX-70 and so on—with some just renumbered, but others new products. (The CX-5 was always so popular, it has remained, with some size and positioning overlap.) All that said, there's no question the CX-30 is small. Yet with all that as our starting point, it then seemed notably larger when it showed up in person.

Our CX-30 is in the 2.5 S group, with a standard 186-hp powertrain. The S lineup has six trims, ours a new midrange Aire Edition. There is also a CX-30 2.5 Turbo group, at 250 hp, in two more trims, with pricing starting just above where 2.5 S leaves off. The base engine gets 31 mpg hwy, the turbo 30 mpg, and both use regular fuel. All have the same 6-speed automatic and AWD, as well as the same

simple suspension setup. All are built in Mexico.

With Mazda now positioning itself as a premium brand, this smallest crossover has high value from the lower end on up. In the upper end, the power spec favors bumping to the 2.5 Turbo if you can, but it's a close-to-5-grand bump—still an apparent value, though, for a top-top version.

Interior style and finishes are simple and nice, with sort of a premium-economy leatherette feel. Instruments and controls are all familiar and effective. Size can be a factor in here, but you do adjust.

As it turns out, we used the CX-30 for a mission more typical of a bigger SUV or crossover, loading it up for a weekend flea market in the high country. (This event allows you to sleep in the vehicle, too, but just a load *or* just a nap would be pushing its small size. Both? Not a chance.) Rear cargo vol-

ume is limited, and optimizing it can push the first row forward a bit. But with our best Tetris skills, we did pack in quite a bit, including in the front passenger seat, but it probably took an hour and a half to make it work, instead of maybe 15 minutes.

On the plus side, as with the little Miata, the team at Mazda has again proven capable of some really clever and complete packaging, providing full fun and function in any given volume of space.

The CX-30 can clearly step up to the plate for a decent load, within its limits. We were comfortable over a few hundred miles of driving, and we seemed to roughly achieve our fuel mileage. We did perceive a difference in power at 5,000 or so feet altitude, perhaps another vote for the Turbo. It's possible this can handle 80-90 percent of your needs, and for its price and daily convenience, that may suit you. It just depends whether you have predictable specific duties beyond that or might choose more space, or power, just in case. ■



A hat tip for the paint on ours. It alway seemed that nothing touches the deep lustrous feel of famous Mazda Soul Red—until maybe this—Deep Crystal Blue Mica—a knockout as soon as we saw it, so deep it's almost black in some light (and quite distinctive among a currently wide range of blue paints industrywide).



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Salamanca, Mexico
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD	Mexico / Thailand
PARTS CONTENT	Mexico 65% / Japan 15% / US/Canada 10%
ENGINE	SKYACTIV-G 2.5L 16v 4-cyl DOHC, var valve timing, alum alloy
HP/TORQUE	186 hp / 186 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	13.0:1
TRANSMISSION	SKYACTIV-DRIVE 6-spd electronically controlled sport automatic
DRIVETRAIN	i-ACTIV AWD
TOP SPEED	127 mph (lim)
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut w stblzr bar; R: torsion beam
STEERING	pwr assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 11.6 vented; R: 11.9 solid
WHEELS	18x7J aluminum alloy, black metallic finish
TIRES	215/55R18 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	173.0 / 104.4 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.0 in
TURNING CIRCLE	37.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	37.8 / 38.3 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.7 / 36.3 in
CARGO CAPACITY	20.2 / 45.2 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3395 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 12.7 gal
MPG	24/31/27 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$29,850
AIRE EDITION	exterior: black side mirrors, black roof rails, black signature wing, black badges; interior: white leatherette seats w gray cloth inserts, synthetic suede IP middle pad, light gray stitching.....incl
CARGO COVER	165
ILLUMINATED DOOR SILL PLATES	575
MAZDA NAVIGATION SYSTEM	450
DESTINATION CHARGE	1495
TOTAL	\$32,535

2026 MAZDA CX-30 LINEUP

CX-30 2.5 S	186-hp 2.5L SKYACTIV-G, 6-spd auto, AWD
2.5 S	\$25,975
2.5 S Select Sport	27,660
2.5 S Preferred	29,290
2.5 S Aire Edition	▼ 29,850
2.5 S Carbon Edition	31,030
2.5 S Premium	33,240
CX-30 2.5 Turbo	250-hp 2.5L SKYACTIV-G Turbo, 6-spd auto, AWD
2.5 Turbo Aire Edition	34,410
2.5 Turbo Premium Plus	37,900

THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS



▼ **Bentley Motors** has a series of updates to its forward-thinking Beyond100+ strategy, reflecting current market and customer perspectives. In a press conference streamed live from Bentley's home in Crewe—and the future assembly line of Bentley's first fully electric car—chairman and CEO Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser outlined a revised product cadence that includes extending internal combustion-engined as well as offering plug-in hybrid models. Creating an entirely new segment with “the world's first true Luxury Urban SUV,” an all-new Bentley—designed, developed and produced in Crewe—is on track to launch in late 2026, with deliveries in 2027. The as-yet-unnamed EV model will be incremental to Bentley's current offering, less than five meters in length, with an industry-leading capability of charging from zero to 100 miles in under seven minutes. Development of the vehicle continues at pace with pre-series (prototype) vehicles embarking on a global performance program. Further, hybridized Bentley models, today offered in both High and Ultra-Performance engines in the Continental GT coupe, convertible and Flying Spur, would be available until at least 2035—meaning Bentley's previous target of being exclusively electric by that time could be extended. An internal combustion Bentayga Speed was added to the range earlier in 2025, and in the same conference, Bentley announced that a new non-hybridized, limited production performance model would be announced by the end of 2025

(as it was; see the Bentley Continental GT Supersports on page 10). They also didn't rule out further similarly-engined cars to follow, as they continue to maintain powertrain flexibility in line with customer demand globally. Beyond100+ also includes a fundamental reinvention of the Crewe manufacturing infrastructure, helping to secure Bentley's future at Crewe for the next generation of products and colleagues. The company has already made enormous



strides in reinventing the historic Crewe site, creating an industry-leading certified carbon neutral facility. And as the oldest building, named A1, prepares to assemble Bentley's first electric car, the Dream Factory is closer to nearing completion. The largest self-funded site investment program in Bentley's history continues with a new state-of-the-art Paint Shop due to open this year. This follows a new Design Cen-

ter and Integrated Logistics Center, both opened earlier last year, transforming an 87-year-old site for a new age of electrification, and a new benchmark in next generation, digital, flexible and high-value manufacturing operations.

▼ At the Olympic Winter Games 2022, Team Germany celebrated twelve gold, ten silver, and five bronze medals, in Beijing. The German Bobsleigh, Luge and Skeleton Federation (BSD) contributed the majority—nine golds, six silvers and one bronze. It was an outstanding result the squads are eager to repeat at the next Olympic Winter Games in Italy, February 6–22. Pursuing this requires hard work and a constant pursuit of optimization in every area. To this end, the BSD has a technology partnership with **BMW Group**, established in 2010. Drawing on BMW's expertise, technological capabilities and innovative strengths from automotive engineering and motorsport, two projects have been advanced for the 2026 Olympics—both designed to deliver those decisive fractions of a second in the ice track: the BMW Data Coach in luge

and customized spike plates for bobsled and skeleton shoes, for greater push-off performance. As start times in bobsled and skeleton are crucial, determining the speed athletes carry into the run—there's no “gas pedal” after that—athletes depend on the right footwear. With BMW's help, the force from foot to ice is transmitted through spike plates on the forefoot, with more than 250 small, sharp spikes per shoe grip-

ping the ice and converting energy into motion. Surprisingly, standard shoes are typically used in bobsleigh and skeleton—without considering athletes' individual preferences or anatomical differences. The



BMW Group identified optimization potential and, together with the BSD, began developing custom spike plate prototypes ahead of the 2022 Winter Olympics, which could be mounted onto any preferred track-and-field shoe using existing spike threads for secure fastening. Created at the BMW Group Additive Manufacturing Campus in Munich, the spike plates are produced via 3D printing—a process BMW has been employing since 1991 across the entire vehicle lifecycle, from concept to production and spare parts. Tune in to the Games, and let's see how they do!

▼ **Verge Motorcycles** unveiled the next evolution of the Verge TS Pro electric motorcycle, their most popular model, which began series production in 2023, at the international EICMA motorcycle show in Milan, Italy. The new version offers increased rider comfort, and upgraded hardware enables enhanced performance all around. At the heart of the revamped bike is the eye-catching patented Donut Motor 2.0, which has also undergone a comprehensive update. The second-generation motor delivers the same impressive power and torque as its predecessor (1,000 Nm) but is 50 percent lighter than the previous version, making the entire bike lighter (total weight of 507 lbs), in turn allowing for significantly improved efficiency, stability and control. The bike accelerates from 0 to 60 mph in just 3.5 seconds. An upgrade, powerful 20.2 kWh battery provides up to 217 miles of range and fast

charging in less than 35 minutes. In practical terms, a 15-minute coffee break can add around 60 miles of range. Enhanced control technology also improves thermal and energy management. CCS charging is

supported in Europe, NACS in the US. The updated Verge TS Pro fully complies with US Department of Transportation regulations, with required larger turn signals and lights, as well as a foot brake. The company provides much detail about the bike's computer interfaces, but we will have to wait for more details on the donut motor.

▼ Established in 2019, **Green NCAP** is an independent non-profit organization promot-



ing development of more sustainable cars and trucks. The introduction of whole-life assessment of new vehicles compares true environmental impact of vehicles throughout their lifecycle—real-world efficiency, range and charging. Top concerns on EVs include range anxiety, charging times and using the heater in cold weather. Beyond environmental impact scores, Green NCAP highlights how three small European EVs

—Dacia Spring, Hyundai Inster and Volkswagen ID.4 perform in the real world, in freezing temperatures, motorway driving and rapid charging needs. Using the SEAT Ibiza as a conventional car benchmark, results reveal significant differences in driver experience, particularly in cold weather. Green NCAP's Cold Winter Performance tests are conducted at 19°F. During testing, the Dacia Spring and Hyundai Inster showed contrasting real-world range capabilities. Findings show that with its small battery (usable capacity of 27.6 kWh in a car weighing 979 kg), the Spring is best suited to local trips. Drivers undertaking a long journey in the Spring would need to plan charging stops carefully. In warm weather mixed driving, its range is estimated at 180 km; however, in cold winter weather, the mixed-trip range falls to just 133 km. Meanwhile, the motorway is clearly not its natural habitat, where its estimated range drops to 119 km in cold conditions. Overall, the Spring's range is rated as Poor. By contrast, the Inster has a usable battery capacity of 49.0 kWh and curb weight of 1412 kg, for a fundamental range advantage over the Spring, making it a more versatile small EV. Its warm weather mixed-trip range is estimated at 322 km and rated as Adequate. Its cold winter mixed range remains a usable 219 km. However, like the

KEEP RIGHT >>

less than the lighter Inster. The cold weather mixed-trip range drops to 196 km, and 193 km on the motorway, a significant percentage drop, but still a practical distance for daily use. Overall, the estimated



real-world consumption values of the ID.4 are rated as Adequate in the Consumption and Range section, while the smaller and lighter Inster achieved the Good label. One of the most energy-intensive activities for an EV is heating or cooling the cabin. In cold weather, an EV cannot rely on waste heat from an engine—a reason it is beneficial to pre-warm an EV while charging at home: by using energy from the grid to warm the car, you don't drain the car's battery trying to warm it when starting from cold. The Dacia Spring uses a simple PTC heater, a type of self-regulating electric heater that uses ceramic heating elements. While it can achieve a cabin temperature of 16°C in the front and rear head area relatively quickly, both the front and the rear footwell failed to reach the target altogether during the test. Critically, its small battery means the range benefit from pre-warming while plugged in is minimal. In contrast, the Inster features a more complex setup, including a PTC heater and heat pump. While its cabin warm-up was slow in the front, it offers features like remotely activated heating for the front seats and steering wheel, which deliver comfort without drawing excessive power from the main battery. The ID.4 heated the entire cabin quickly. Its driving range benefitted from pre-warming with an extra 46 km added to a mixed trip in cold weather, and 79 km in urban driving, helping offset range

loss. For all three EVs, fast charging capability is rated Adequate, with a functional but not class-leading ability to regain range quickly. While the focus of Green NCAP's Driver Experience assessment concerns ev-

eryday practicalities of living with an EV, they also score each car's lifetime environmental impact. A clear picture emerges here, where the efficiency and low production impact of small EVs improve their overall Sustainability Rating. For full results, visit www.greenncap.com27T.



▼ **Bestop**, a manufacturer of premium Jeep and Bronco soft tops and accessories, takes open-air freedom to the next level with the debut of the first-ever Bronco 2-Door eTop, shown at SEMA. Following success of the 4-Door eTop for Bronco, as well as 4- and 2-door options for Jeep Wrangler, this new configuration delivers the same effortless, powered convertible soft top experience to 2-Door Bronco owners

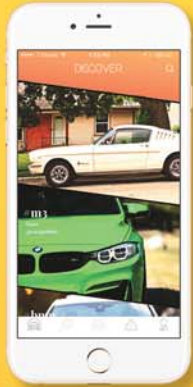
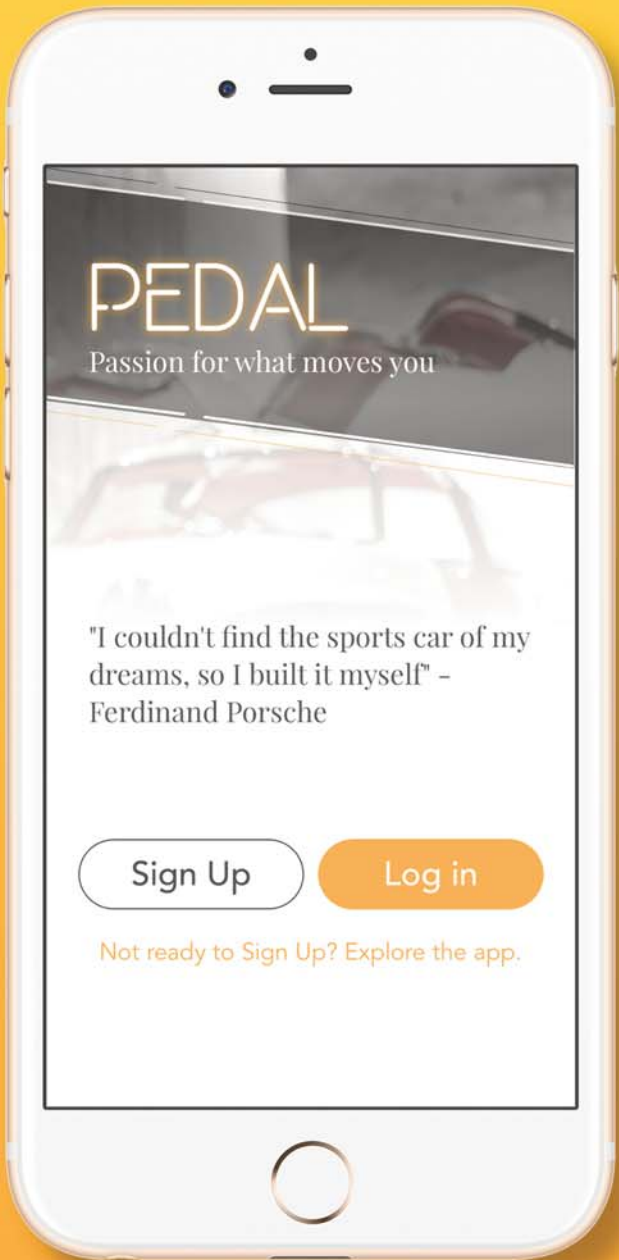
—a first for the market—in seconds, at the press of a button. Features include precision laser-cut steel framing, Bosch-powered motors, a nine-layer fabric with triple-layer insulation, and convertible-grade 30 percent-tinted windows to reduce glare. While the windows are removable, fresh air can be enjoyed without ever taking them off, as they neatly stack with the top when open and automatically return when closed. The standard black 2-Door Bronco eTop, for model years 2021 to current, has an MSRP of \$4,995. Other colors are available at \$5,395.

▼ Swedish performance EV brand **Polestar** is set to become the first automotive OEM to integrate Google Maps' new live lane guidance into the driver display in one of its vehicles. The innovation is intended to help drivers stay on course with ease while navigating complex highways and intense rush hour traffic. In line with a driver-centric UX strategy, this will bring a new navigation experience to the 10.2-inch driver display in Polestar 4. The feature detects which lane the car is in by using Google's advanced AI in the vehicle to analyze elements on the road, like lane markings and road signs, captured by one of the forward-facing cameras in Polestar 4. Combined with its navigation capabilities, the

system delivers visual and audio reminders for drivers to change lanes in time, as a new visualization highlights all possible lanes for the chosen route. The feature is part of a Polestar promise to continuously upgrade vehicles through over-the-air updates as features become available. Rolling out in the coming months, it will initially be available for Polestar 4 vehicles in the US and Sweden. ■



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Courtesy Sally McNulty

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Doug Berger (DBPics.com) for NWAPA

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