



# MADE FOR THE OPEN ROAD

BY JOE SAGE

LEFT TO RIGHT, ABOVE

CHEVROLET CORVETTE Z06 CENTENNIAL EDITION

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF R

NISSAN GT-R BLACK EDITION

MERCEDES-BENZ S63 AMG

ENGINE.....HP.....TRANS.....DRIVE.....WEIGHT.....0-60 MPH.....MPG.....BASE

7.0L V8 .....505 hp .....6-spd manual .....RWD .....3175 lb .....3.7 sec .....15/24 .....\$75,600

2.0L I-4 .....256 hp .....6-spd manual .....AWD .....3286 lb .....5.6 sec .....19/27 .....\$33,990

3.6L V6 .....545 hp .....6-spd dual-clutch.....AWD .....4669 lb .....2.9 sec .....16/23 .....\$106,320

5.5L biturbo V8 .....536 hp .....7-spd auto.....RWD .....4916 lb .....4.3 sec .....15/23 .....\$140,000



Other vehicles in the group that day included the new Volkswagen Beetle, Jaguar XJ, Chevrolet Malibu and Hyundai Genesis Coupe (which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue).

The Bell Lexus Copperstate 1000 Road Rally (see next feature) is an opportunity for some of the rarest and most powerful vintage road machinery to come to life on the highways of Arizona. This year, we also brought some of the rarest and most powerful new road machinery to life during the Copperstate, as we rotated turns driving the following four vehicles from Fountain Hills up the Beeline Highway (AZ 87), down AZ 188 to the event's lunch stop at Roosevelt Lake, and back.

**Chevrolet Corvette Z06 Centennial Edition:** This was our first drive of the day, for 50 miles up the Beeline to the AZ 188 cutoff. Distinguished by its 7-liter V8, the Z06 has an aluminum frame, balsa wood/carbon fiber floorpan and other weight-saving features. This Centennial Edition has Carbon Flash black paint, special black/red 20-inch wheels and a Louis Chevrolet 100th logo. A manual coupe only, the Z06 gives you a lot of what you'd get in a ZR1, but for \$36k less and with a bit more daily driver comfort. It's joined in 2013 by a Corvette 427 convertible with, of course, the same 7-liter (427) V8.

**Volkswagen Golf R:** Our drive for 40 miles on wide open two-lane AZ 188 to lunch, the Golf R is basically the much-wished-for return of the VW R32, with a potent engine, all-wheel drive, and this time a manual transmission. Recognizable by its large air intakes, widened wheel arches, aero door sills and dual exhaust, it has a turbocharged 4-cylinder engine that makes it the fastest production VW in the US. We had a blast driving this car, not even counting its great price comparative. But the price? This VW outperforms many cars of twice its price and gave us as much fun as any. We'd buy one.

**Nissan GT-R Black Edition:** Reviewed more extensively elsewhere in this issue, the GT-R far exceeds high expectations, a buttoned-down performer which amazes on so many levels. Its reputation precedes it—for one thing, holding the Guinness World Record for fastest 0-to-60 production four-seater—and it has earned that honor, no question. Whoa.

**Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG:** After the other three highly sporting smaller and lighter machines, the big Benz might sound like a living room experience, but this is the AMG. (Mercedes-Benz also makes an S65 AMG with a 625-hp V12 at a base price of \$212,000, but the S63 is plenty potent.) For the last 50 miles down the Beeline and into town, this was a great way—powerful, comfortable, commanding—to wrap it up. ■