

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 6
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

Ford GT Special Edition

2006 New Model Preview Part 2

California Car Cover Holiday Gift Guide

AutoPacific Vehicle Satisfaction Ratings

and a whole lot more....

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EQUIPMENT

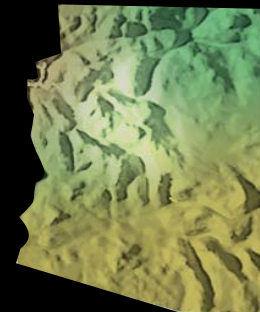
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VEHICLE INTRODUCTION

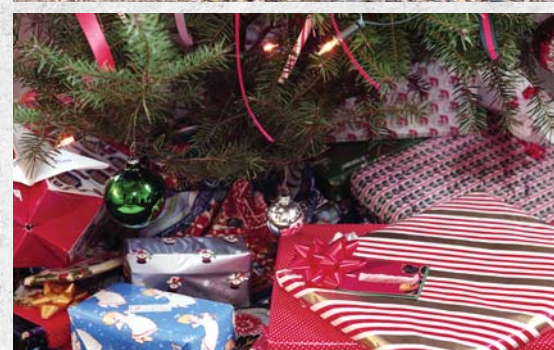
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COVER: Ford GT Special Edition, photo courtesy Ford Motor Company.
RIGHT: Minivan photo courtesy Chrysler Group.



We may not quite have that holiday feeling yet (it's October), but we do have that end-of-year-new-year feeling creeping in, in a big way. It already started with our September-October issue, in which we presented a preview of the 2006 new model year lineup, working alphabetically from Acura to Jeep. We're back this issue with the rest of that, from Kia to Volvo.

You're bound to find something of interest, with a total lineup of 300 vehicles from 49 brands, but if you're still not sure what to buy, check out the AutoPacific Vehicle Satisfaction Ratings, also in this issue. Volume sales often equal volume approval (or volume disapproval), and then there are issues of low or high expectations, but some data can never hurt the equation.

Far be this magazine from a comprehensive holiday shopping source, but we do present a handful of gift ideas from California Car Cover Company, which may inspire you with something that hadn't come to mind on its own.

The car on our cover is bound to get any enthusiast's blood pumping—the Ford GT. This production supercar is based on the concept presented in Ford's Living Legends Tour a few years ago (see *Arizona Driver Magazine*, November-December 2005, or check our archives online at www.azdrivermag.com), which in turn was based on the racing-winning Ford GT40 of the '60s. They're producing a Special Edition model this year, so if you've been on the fence about dropping a chunk of change on this beauty, this limited edition model might be just the inspiration you've been waiting for. Enjoy the drive.



Joe Sage
Publisher/Executive Editor

ARIZONA DRIVER

MAGAZINE

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DESIGN & PRODUCTION: AdZoneAZ

ADVERTISING SALES: 480-948-0200

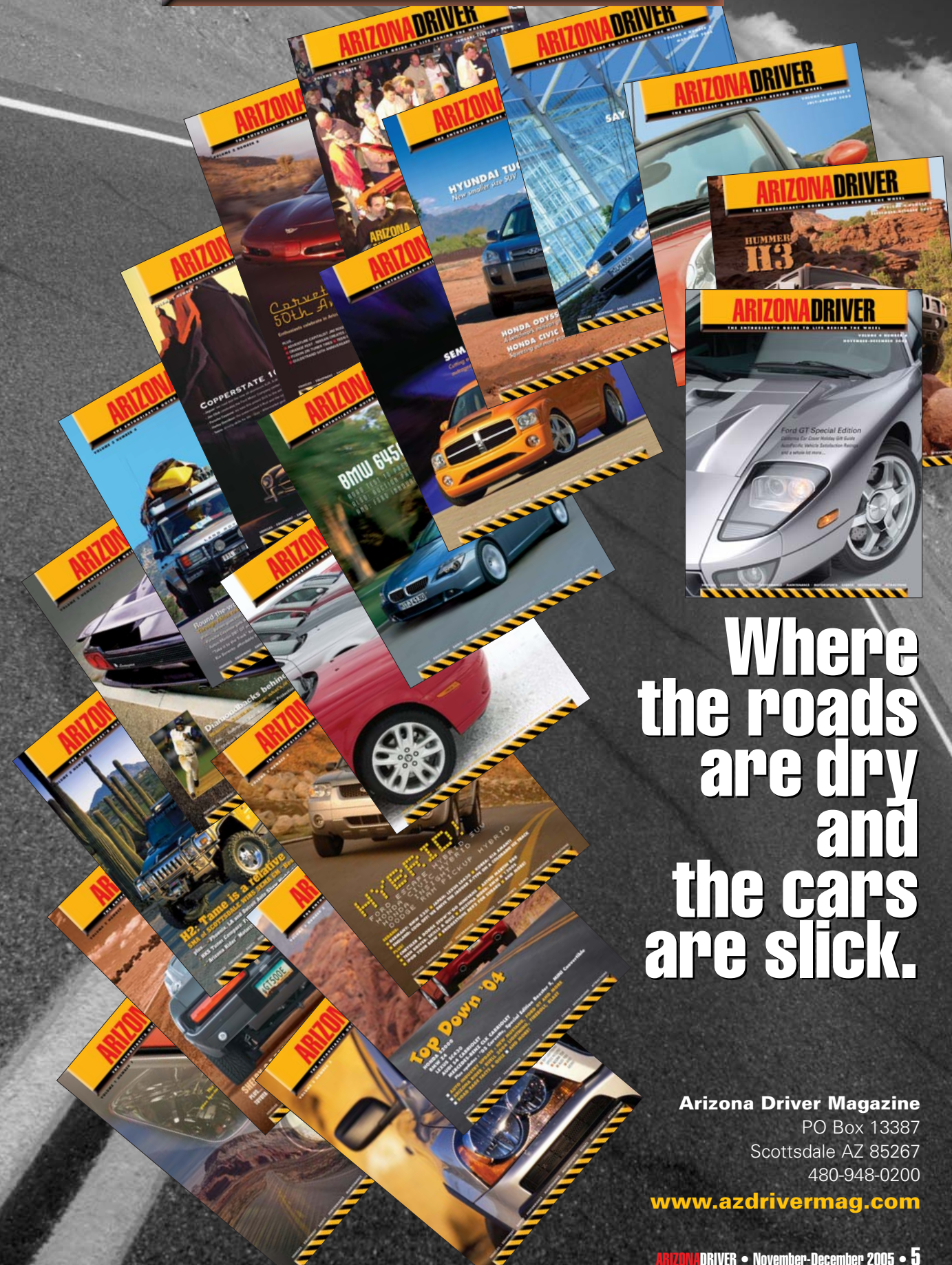
ARIZONA DRIVER MAGAZINE

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY ADZONE ARIZONA LLC
Arizona Driver Magazine
PO Box 13387 - Scottsdale AZ 85267
www.azdrivermag.com

Arizona Driver Magazine and
Arizona Rider Magazine are registered
tradenames of AdZone Arizona LLC.

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are dry
and
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FORD ADDS FUSION MID-SIZE SEDAN

Ford is reentering the mid-size category with a new high-value sedan called the Fusion. With prices starting as low \$17,995 including destination charge for the four-cylinder version, Ford plans to undercut the competition in this tough segment. The entry-level front-wheel drive 'S' model is powered by a 2.3-liter Duratec four-cylinder rated at 160-hp. It has a standard five-speed manual transmission with an optional five-speed automatic. Standard features include four-wheel disc brakes, 16-inch wheels, stereo with CD/MP3 player, keyless entry and power windows. For more performance upper level models come with a new six-speed automatic transmission and 221-hp 3.0-liter Duratec 30 V-6 capable of 0 to 60 mph times of less than 8.5-seconds. Higher level models have a long list of convenience and luxury features along with options like heated leather seating, moon roof and Audiophile audio. In the works are all-wheel drive models and hybrid versions. ▼

Ford Fusion



Porsche 911 Carrera 4S Cabriolet

The Porsche 911 Cabriolet consistently outsells the lighter and faster coupe. AWD adds weight, but also year-round capability to this open-top lineup.

PORSCHE ROLLS OUT AWD 911 CABS

▲ Porsche has rolled out the all-wheel drive versions of the new 911 Carrera 4 and 911 Carrera 4S Cabriolets. Both all-wheel drive models are equipped with electronic soft tops that open or close in only 20 seconds. The tops can even be deployed or retracted with the car moving at speeds up to 30 mph. The convertibles also have Porsche Side Impact Protections Systems with separate head and thorax airbags. Rollover protection includes reinforced A-pillars and safety bars behind the rear seats. The 911 Carrera 4 gets power from a 3.6-liter flat-six capable of 5.1-second 0 to 60 mph runs and a top speed of 174 mph. The 4S has a 355-hp 3.8-liter engine and a 0 to 60 mph time of 4.7 seconds and top speed of 179 mph. Stability management is standard and the new Porsche Active Suspension Management is standard on the S4 and an option on the Carrera 4. The Carrera 4 Cabriolet will be priced at \$87,100 and the 4S Cabriolet will list for \$97,100. Both models will be available in the US in November.

FIRST BLUETOOTH® RADAR DETECTOR

K40 Electronics has introduced the world's first Bluetooth® enabled wireless radar and laser detector system. Unlike

current systems, which are generally attached to the front window of a vehicle, the CALIBRE™ is mounted behind the grille of the vehicle and rear bumper. When a radar beam is detected, the system sends a signal via a verbal warning mode playing through the vehicles audio system telling the driver the direction and band of the radar being used. The system is controlled by a wireless remote control about the size of a remote control key fob. Owners can choose a front and/or rear system with an optional Laser Defuser® to detect police laser guns. A single system sells for \$899.95, while the Dual Remote is \$1699.95. The Laser Defuser adds \$318.95. Custom installations are also available for certain models. K40 believes the system is so good, they will pay for any and all speeding tickets received during the first year. To learn more go to www.K40.com.

VARIABLE COMPRESSION RATIO

A French automotive consultancy specializing in electronic, network and software design has developed a single-cylinder engine that varies the compression ratio while the engine is operating. According to a report in the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) newsletter, the FAAR Industry system adjusts the

compression ratio "on the fly" to optimize performance according to engine speed and load. Infinitely varying the compression ratio also enhances combustion of the fuel mixture for better economy and emissions. The system changes the ratio between 9:1 and 14:1 by changing the stroke of the connecting rod and thus the relationship of the piston at top dead center in the cylinder head.

PORSCHE CONFIRMS SPORT SEDAN

Finally the rumored fourth Porsche model is out of the bag and the speculation that it will be a four-door is finally confirmed. Look for Porsche's version of the "four-door coupe", the Panamera, to take the German sports car king into a new realm of high performance sport sedans where it will compete with cars like the Bentley Flying Spur and Mercedes-Benz CLS. (Other automakers like Jaguar and BMW are also considering vehicles in this segment.) The Panamera will have all the typical characteristics of a genuine sports car but with a comfortable space for four passengers. Power will be developed from a new direct-injection version of the 4.5-liter V-8 engine currently being used in Cayenne SUVs. It will likely be offered

KEEP RIGHT >>

JAGUAR REVEALS 2007 XK COUPE

Jaguar has revealed the all-new XK 2+2 sports car at the September Frankfurt auto show in Germany. Building on the beautiful lines of previous generations the new XK now rides on an aerospace-style aluminum chassis with a light-weight all-aluminum body. The result is net weight loss of 397 pounds and along with a 31 percent stiffer body. The latest generation 4.2-liter 300-hp Jaguar V-8 engine powers the elegant coupe through a new sequential shift 6-speed automatic transmission. Wheel-mounted paddle shifters will replace the traditional 'J' gate shifter. The XK has an all new braking system with an ABS system that can vary the brake pressure at each wheel. Zero to 60 acceleration times are listed at 5.9 seconds, which is only one-half second slower than the previous supercharged model. The new XJ coupe will go on sale in spring 2006. Convertible and supercharged versions will follow. ▼



Jaguar XK Coupe



Volkswagen Concept R

The Volkswagen Concept R show car, which has graced our pages in the past, is likely the basis for an upcoming 2+2 hardtop convertible from VW.

>> AUTO NEWS UPDATE - cont'd

with a naturally aspired 340-hp version, a 450-hp turbocharged variant and the possibility of a 500-hp V-10 coming from the Carrera GT. There's even a rumor about a hybrid version of the Panamera. Pricing is expected to range from \$125,000 to \$175,000 when the model debuts in 2008 as a 2009 model.

VW TO ENTER FOUR NEW SEGMENTS

▲ In an effort to rebuild the Volkswagen brand in the US, plans have been unveiled to add four new models by the end of 2007. Wolfgang Bernhard, head of the global VW brand in Wolfsburg, Germany, the four models include: a 2+2 convertible with electric foldaway roof, small SUV to compete with Jeep Liberty and Honda CR-V, seven-seat minivan and four-door "coupe similar to the Mercedes-Benz CLS that would be placed above the Passat. The convertible debuted as "Concept C" at the Geneva auto show in 2004, and will be named at the Frankfurt auto show in September.

NO PORSCHE CARRERA GT FOR 2006

Porsche is further limiting production of its 205 mph Carrera GT supercar by cutting off US sales after the 2005 model

year. The two-seater will not meet the new Highway Traffic Safety Administration requirement to have smart airbags in all 2006 model year cars, and it refuses to give Porsche a waiver. To meet the requirement, Porsche would have to make the change, then submit the \$440,000 car to crash testing again. Porsche said it didn't make economic sense because there were only about 200 plus vehicles planned for the US in 2006. The change will limit production of the GT to about 1,250 units in total.

NISSAN STILL PONDERING THE CUBE?

Evidently it's still possible that Nissan may bring the Cube or slightly larger Cube Cubic to the US to compete with the Scion xB. The Nissan version is also very square (which now appears to be cool) but with a unique asymmetrical wraparound rear window treatment. It also has a front bench seat. The Japanese version come with either a 1.4-liter 97-hp four-cylinder or the 1.5-liter 109 hp four and an optional e-4wd system that activates two rear-wheel electric motors when slippage is detected. Prices in Japan range from \$12,400 to a fully loaded \$16,300. Nissan has not officially confirmed the Cube, but the possibility appears to remain active.

VW BUILDS FROM TOUAREG

Building from the highly successful Touareg SUV, Volkswagen is taking many of the structural elements of the Touareg and shaping them into new products. For example, watch for a crossover-style vehicle to compete with the upcoming BMW X6 and the very cool Infiniti FX45 to reach the market as early as late 2006. There is also a "four-door coupe" like the successful Mercedes CLS being developed to move into VW's top slot by 2007. Also possible is a four door pickup to go up against the Honda Ridgeline. (The success or lack of success by the Ridgeline will definitely influence this decision.)

JEEP ADDS NEW MODELS, NEW PATHS

Chrysler's upcoming five-door Caliber, which replaces the Dodge Neon next year, will become the basis for two new Jeep models. The Jeep Compass will take the guise of a rally-crossover with a sportier look including large low-profile tires. The Jeep Patriot will take a traditional Jeep-look more like a smaller version of the rugged-looking new Commander. Both models will be powered by a new family of four-cylinder engines being developed in a joint

KEEP RIGHT >>

BENTLEY ANNOUNCES NEXT GENERATION AZURE

Bentley's upcoming four-seat convertible will get the Azure name. Shown originally at the Los Angeles Auto Show in January 2005 with a Drophead Coupe moniker, the Azure will become the flagship for the luxury brand. Power will come from a 6.75-liter, 450-hp twin-turbo V-8 when it goes on sale in the spring of 2006. "We have been inundated with demand for a new Azure virtually from the moment the original model ceased production," says Adrian Hallmark, member of the board, sales and marketing. "The exclusivity, style, luxury and performance of the new Bentley convertible flagship evoke the Riviera lifestyle like no other, fully justifying the revival of the Azure name." ▼



Bentley Azure

Audi Q7



Audi purposefully ignored the SUV craze for years (relying on their ground-hugging quattro models and cargo-bearing Avants). Now, a tour de force.

>> AUTO NEWS UPDATE - cont'd

venture with Hyundai and Mitsubishi. The new, more fuel efficient engines will include a 1.8-liter 140-hp, 2.0-liter 150-hp and 2.4-liter 170-hp. A 2.0-liter 130-hp turbo-diesel is being developed with Volkswagen, but that is likely to be only for Europe initially. The new models will debut at the Frankfurt auto show and are expected to carry sub-\$20,000 initial price tags.

VOLKSWAGEN 'MOONRAKER' MISSION

Volkswagen has invaded the US with a team of marketing and sales specialists in an effort to better understand what US car buyers want. For the past 4 months the group of 22 German marketing specialists (and one American) has been working out of an office near Malibu, California. They are here on a 13-month mission to interview dealers, consumers and representatives from other successful companies about trends and consumer tastes. 'Moonraker' is a pet project of VW Chairman Bernd Pischetsrieder, who has called VW's \$1.29 billion loss in North America last year unacceptable and plans to make sure it doesn't happen again. Team members have already discovered that the VW brand doesn't have the

appeal in America that it does in Europe, and that they plan to get ahead of the curve by better understanding the market and tastes of American consumers.

AUDI Q7: ANY ROAD, ALL CONDITIONS

▲ It's taken Audi a long time to get into the SUV business, but with the introduction of the Q7 they have created a premium SUV that combines luxury features with sports car handling and performance along with a new level of off-road ability. Developed from the same platform as the Volkswagen Touareg and Porsche Cayenne, the Q7 goes several steps further. It has seven-passenger seating in three rows of with segment leading legroom in the second row along with the ability to change the seating/cargo capacities to 28 different configurations. Engines include a 350-hp 4.2-liter direct-injection gasoline V-8 or a 233-hp, 3.0 TDI diesel; both engines use a six-speed automatic transmission. It has full-time quattro four-wheel drive with a Torsen center differential. An adaptive air suspension is available with an electronically controlled dampening system and standard dynamic roll stabilization system to control body roll. The Q7 has radar technology for lane-changing maneuvers, advanced optical/

acoustic guidance and rear-view cameras. Pricing is expected to be around \$60,000 when it reaches dealers in the first quarter of 2006.

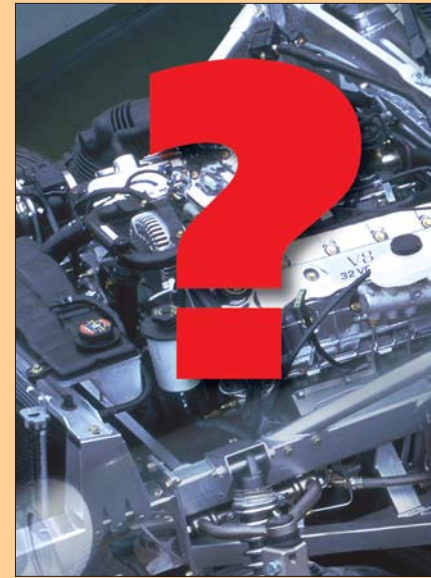
FUJI HEAVY HAS 15-YEAR BATTERY

Subaru parent company Fuji Heavy Industries has developed a manganese lithium ion battery for hybrids that is expected to last 15 years or 150,000 miles. The current nickel-metal hybrid battery used in the Toyota Prius is only covered by a warranty of eight years or 100,000 miles. Fuji has been talking to several US, European and Japanese automakers about using the new long-life batteries, because they know it's not economical to use the battery only in Subaru cars. Subaru is working on a hybrid powertrain for the Legacy using the new battery and a turbocharged engine. They expect to test a limited number of the cars in Japan in 2007.

CANNONS FOR HAIL PROTECTION

Nissan has installed hail cannons to protect new vehicles in lots outside their Canton, Mississippi, manufacturing facility. The custom-made cannons, which cost \$40,000 to \$50,000 each, use acety-

KEEP RIGHT >>



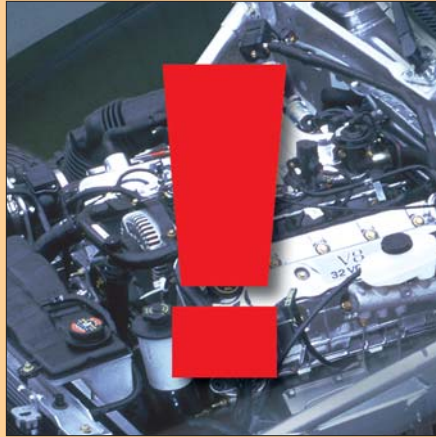
1. What percentage of new car buyers left the dealership feeling satisfied with their experience in 2004?
 - a. 41 percent
 - b. 62 percent
 - c. 75 percent
 - d. 91 percent
2. What car will Ford use to replace the Taurus for the NASCAR Nextel Cup races?
 - a. Fusion
 - b. Five Hundred
 - c. Fairlane
 - d. Mustang
3. How many auto assembly plants are there in Mexico?
 - a. 4 plants
 - b. 9 plants
 - c. 14 plants
 - d. 19 plants
4. Which age group had the lowest percentage of drivers who said they had driven under the influence of alcohol or drugs?
 - a. 21 to 25
 - b. 26 to 34
 - c. 35 to 49
 - d. 50 to 64
 - e. over 65 year olds
5. What engine powered the first Nissan 240Z sports car when it debuted in 1970?
 - a. 2.4-liter V-6
 - b. 2.4-liter 4-cyl
 - c. 2.4-liter inline 6
 - d. 2.4-liter V-4
6. The recently passed energy bill provides for new tax credits for advanced technology vehicles. Which of the following qualifies for the highest tax credit?
 - a. Ford Escape Hybrid
 - b. Lexus RX 400h (hybrid)
 - c. Toyota Prius (hybrid)
 - d. Toyota Highland Hybrid
7. What percentage of survey respondents (aged 18 to 24) watching recent Chrysler ads featuring Lee Iacocca knew who he was?
 - a. 36 percent
 - b. 54 percent
 - c. 67 percent
 - d. 83 percent

8. What vehicle did Honda introduce in July in Oshkosh, Wisconsin?
 - a. A heavy duty version of the Ridgeline
 - b. A six-passenger business jet
 - c. A hybrid scooter
 - d. A convertible version of the Accord
9. Big 3 auto sales accounted for what percentage of the total US sales in 2004?
 - a. 38.6 percent
 - b. 45.6 percent
 - c. 53.6 percent
 - d. 59.6 percent
10. Which auto maker was the first to offer seat belt reminder systems in its vehicles?
 - a. Ford
 - b. BMW
 - c. Toyota
 - d. Saab
11. What is considered to be a top time around the 14.2 mile Nürburgring Nordschliefe circuit race track in Germany?
 - a. 6 to 7 minutes
 - b. 7 to 8 minutes
 - c. 8 to 9 minutes
 - d. 9 to 10 minutes
12. Which geographic group of automakers sold the largest percentage of light vehicles in California in 2004?
 - a. US automakers
 - b. Asian automakers
 - c. European automakers
13. Which of these had the largest percentage of 16 to 25-year old drivers saying that was the vehicle they wanted to drive?
 - a. 2001 Ford Mustang
 - b. 2000 Jeep Wrangler
 - c. 2000 Honda Civic
 - d. 2000 Volkswagen Jetta
14. What company recently had its first quarterly profit in 91 years of production?
 - a. Aston Martin
 - b. Bentley
 - c. Saab
 - d. Kia
15. How much do GM and its local dealers spend annually advertising in the LA Times?
 - a. \$15 million
 - b. \$36 million
 - c. \$61 million
 - d. \$80 million
16. How many hardtop convertibles are currently sold in the US?
 - a. 2 hardtop convertibles
 - b. 4 hardtop convertibles
 - c. 6 hardtop convertibles
 - d. 8 hardtop convertibles
17. Auto sales in July were the highest in the 109-year history of the US automotive industry when sales reached what level?
 - a. 907,982 sold
 - b. 1,307,982 sold
 - c. 1,607,982 sold
 - d. 1,807,982 sold

18. What percentage of new-vehicle shoppers say they prefer a single, set price?
 - a. 28 percent
 - b. 47 percent
 - c. 62 percent
 - d. 83 percent
19. How much did automakers spend on online advertising last year?
 - a. \$400 million
 - b. \$600 million
 - c. \$850 million
 - d. \$1.2 billion
20. What dealership did Roger Penske and casino owner Steve Winn recently open outside the new Wynn Las Vegas casino?
 - a. Bentley
 - b. Porsche-Audi
 - c. Mercedes-Benz
 - d. Ferrari-Maserati
21. What is the government deadline for diesel engines on heavy duty trucks to run as cleanly as gasoline engines?
 - a. 2007
 - b. 2009
 - c. 2011
 - d. 2013
22. How many car dealerships suffered damage during Hurricane Katrina?
 - a. 110 dealerships
 - b. 210 dealerships
 - c. 310 dealerships
 - d. 410 dealerships
23. Which of the following cars has the shortest overall length?
 - a. Pontiac Solstice
 - b. Mazda Miata
 - c. Lotus Elise
 - d. Mini Cooper
24. What characteristic made the Honda 1.7-liter four-cylinder engine unique?
 - a. the pistons are not round
 - b. the cylinders are not in a straight line
 - c. the engine runs counter-clockwise
 - d. it has electronic valves
25. Which letter of the alphabet has the largest number of car brands (not models) sold in the US starting with it?
 - a. H
 - b. L
 - c. M
 - d. S
26. When was the first gasoline pump built?
 - a. 1885
 - b. 1905
 - c. 1915
 - d. 1925
27. What percentage of new car trade-ins in 2004 had the owners owing more than the car was worth?
 - a. 10 percent
 - b. 25 percent
 - c. 40 percent
 - d. 55 percent
28. How much does an extra 100 pounds of cargo in a vehicle reduce the fuel economy?
 - a. 1 percent
 - b. 2 percent
 - c. 3 percent
 - d. 4 percent

ANSWERS ON PAGE 8 >>

>> ANSWERS (quiz on page 7) >>



1. Answer: d. According to a survey by Automotive Retailing Today, 91 percent of the new car buyers left the dealership feeling satisfied with their experience.
2. Answer: a. Ford's latest entry into the NASCAR races is the new Ford Fusion. The first race will be Daytona in February 2006.
3. Answer: c. According to the 2005 Automotive News Market Data Book, there are 14 automobile assembly plants in Mexico. They include plants owned by DaimlerChrysler, Ford, GM, Honda, Nissan, Renault, Toyota and Volkswagen.
4. Answer: e. According to a study done by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration only 3.4 percent of the drivers 65 years and older had driven

under the influence of alcohol or drugs. 50-64 years old 10 percent. 35 to 49 years old 18.5 percent. 26 to 34 years old 24.3 percent. 21 to 25 years old 33.8 percent.

5. Answer: c. The first Nissan 240Z was powered by a 2.4-liter in-line 6-cylinder engine producing 151 hp.
6. Answer: c. According to estimates by the American Council of Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) of the provisions of the recently passed energy bill the Toyota Prius qualifies for the largest tax credit: \$3,150. Ford Escape Hybrid and Toyota Highlander Hybrid \$2,600 each. Lexus RX 400h \$2,200.
7. Answer: a. According to a recent online survey by Advertising Age, only 36 percent of the 18 to 24 year olds watching recent Chrysler commercials featuring former Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca, knew who he was.
8. Answer: b. Honda has been working on an airplane for 19 years, and finally introduced the six-passenger business jet at the annual Oshkosh, Wis. Experimental Aircraft Fly-in. The small passenger jet is powered by two Honda built jet engines. Honda says they have no plans to produce the jet, yet.
9. Answer: c. Big 3 auto sales in the US amounted to 53.6 percent of the 2004 total.
10. Answer: a. Ford Motor Company was the first automaker to offer seat belt-reminder technology called BeltMinder^o in 1999.
11. Answer: c. The very fastest cars built by Porsche, Lamborghini and Corvette turn the 14.2 mile Nürburgring Nordschliefe circuit race track in Germany in 7 to 8 minutes.
12. Answer: b. According to R.L. Polk and Co. the Asian automakers sold 50.6 percent of the light vehicles in California in 2004. Big 3 US automakers — 36.6 percent. Europeans ñ 12.8 percent.

13. Answer: a. According to a Kelley Blue Book (kbb.com) survey of 16 to 25-year old drivers, 27 percent said they would prefer to drive the 2001 Ford Mustang. Kelley based their model decisions on affordable vehicles priced around \$10,000. Jeep ñ 16 percent. Honda Civic 12 percent. Volkswagen Jetta 12 percent.

14. Answer: a. Aston Martin, which was purchased by Ford (75 percent) in 1987, turned its first ever recorded profits during the first two quarters of 2005.

15. Answer: c. General Motors normally spends \$21 million annually with the Times and its dealers add another \$40 million according to an article in Automotive News announcing that General Motors had resumed advertising in the LA Times after a four-month boycott because of an article the Times ran.

16. Answer: b. For the 2005 model year there are four hardtop convertibles sold in the US: Cadillac XLR, Mercedes-Benz SL, Mercedes-Benz SLK and Lexus SC 430. Look for at least four other convertibles to start using folding hardtops on new models during 2006.

17. Answer: d. US auto sales in July 2005 reached a record level for any month in the 109-year history of the industry with a total 1,807,982 sold. The high sales are attributed to the Employee Discount programs offered to all buyers by the Big 3 automakers.

18. Answer: c. According to a recent study done by KBB.com (Kelley Blue Book) 62 percent of the new vehicle shoppers say they prefer to have a single, set price as opposed to engaging in negotiations.

19. Answer: d. According to Borrell Associates, a media research company in Portsmouth, Va., automakers spent \$1.2 billion on online advertising in 2004.

20. Answer: d. Penske and Wynn recently opened a Ferrari-Maserati dealership just across the driveway from the entrance to the new Wynn Las Vegas casino. The store attracts up to 2,000 visitors daily to its show room and gift shop.

21. Answer: b. The government is requiring all new diesel-powered heavy duty trucks to run as cleanly as gasoline engines by 2009.

22. Answer: b. According to Automotive News there were 210 car dealerships damaged during Hurricane Katrina.

23. Answer: d. The Min Cooper is the shortest measuring only 143.1 inches long. Lotus — 149 in. Solstice ñ 157.2 in. Miata ñ 157.3 in.

24. Answer: c. Unlike other four-cylinder engines, the 1.7-liter four-cylinder runs counter-clockwise. The new 1.8-liter replacement engine runs in the traditional clockwise direction so that it can now be sold to other manufacturers. The counter-clockwise direction required a special Honda transmission to operate.

25. Answer: c. There are more car brands starting with the letter "M" than the others. The seven "M" cars are Maserati, Maybach, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Mercury, Mini and Mitsubishi. Six cars start with "S," five start with "L" and three start with A,B,C,H, and P.

26. Answer: a. The first gasoline pump was built in 1885 by Sylvanus Bowser of Fort Wayne, Indiana and delivered to Jake Gumper, also of Fort Wayne. The pump had marble valves, wooden plungers and a capacity of one barrel.

27. Answer: c. J.D. Power and Associates says nearly 4 of 10 (40 percent) of the vehicles traded in were worth less than was owed on them in 2004.

28. Answer: b. According to Mother Earth News an extra 100 pounds of cargo typically will reduce the fuel economy of a car by two percent. So to save gas they recommend not storing heavy objects in a car.

The Car Smarts quiz includes news and trivia from industry sources, trade journals and consumer magazines compiled for *Arizona Driver* by **BILL & BARBARA SCHAFFER** of *Auto Digest*.



Lexus LS 430



Jaguar XJ8



Mazda6



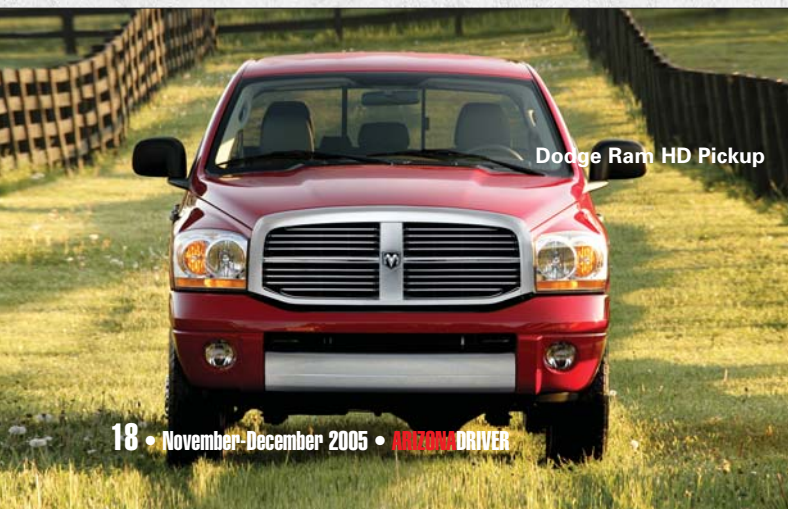
Scion xB



Porsche 911



Pontiac GTO



Dodge Ram HD Pickup



Hyundai Tucson

AutoPacific Announces 2005 Vehicle Satisfaction Awards

Lexus Top Brand, Maxima Top Car, Titan Top Truck

Results of a study released today by noted automotive consulting firm AutoPacific, Inc. reveal high owner satisfaction with new 2005 model year cars and light trucks. AutoPacific's VSA (Vehicle Satisfaction Award) study is an industry benchmark for objectively measuring owner satisfaction with their new vehicles.

Lexus is the highest-rated brand for 2005, winning by a nose in a photo finish with Cadillac. These brands along with Lincoln have owned AutoPacific's Vehicle Satisfaction Awards since 2001. Cadillac won in 2001, shared top honors with Lexus in 2002 and won outright again in 2003. Lincoln won in 2004 and Lexus moves again into top spot for 2005.

The vehicle registering highest overall satisfaction in 2005 is the Nissan Titan Full Size Pickup Truck. This is the first time that a pickup has won it all. The highest rated car is the Nissan Maxima, its affordable luxury mid-size entry.

Nissan North America has seven winners this year, tops among the various corporations. Nissan sweeps the pickup categories with wins in both segments. The Nissan Titan takes the Full Size Pickup category and is the top-rated vehicle overall. Completing the pickup sweep is a win by the Frontier in the Compact Pickup category. Nissan Maxima is at the top of the Entry Luxury Car category and also the top-rated car, the Nissan Armada takes the Large SUV category for the second year in a row, Nissan Altima is the winner of the Premium Mid-Size Car category (tied with the new Buick LaCrosse), the Nissan Murano wins the Premium Mid-Size SUV category. The Nissan Quest is in a 3-way tie as the most satisfying Minivan.

- ▼ **Jaguar XJ has the highest rating in the Luxury Car category nosing out the Lexus LS 430.**
- ▼ **The Lincoln Town Car wins the Luxury/Large Car category.**
- ▼ **The top-rated Standard Mid-Size Car is the Mazda6 for the third year in a row.**
- ▼ **Scion, with its first win ever, has xB at the top of the Compact Car category.**
- ▼ **The Porsche 911 is the top rated Sports Car.**
- ▼ **The Pontiac GTO is the top rated Sporty Car.**
- ▼ **The top rated Heavy Duty Pickup is the Dodge Ram HD Pickup.**
- ▼ **The Hyundai Santa Fe and the all-new Chevrolet Equinox are tied as the top rated Standard Mid-Size SUV.**
- ▼ **Owners of the Honda Element and the all-new Hyundai Tucson tie in rating their vehicles top in the Compact SUV class.**
- ▼ **In the first 3-way tie in the history of AutoPacific's VSA, Honda Odyssey, Nissan Quest and Toyota Sienna tie for top honors in the Minivan category.**

Top performers are:

BRAND

Top Make Overall.....Lexus

PASSENGER CARS

Premium Luxury CarJaguar XJ
 Entry Luxury CarNissan Maxima
 Luxury/Large CarLincoln Town Car
 Premium Mid-Size CarNissan Altima/Buick LaCrosse
 Standard Mid-Size CarMazda6
 Compact CarScion xB
 Sports CarPorsche 911
 Sporty CarPontiac GTO

LIGHT TRUCKS

Large Light-Duty PickupNissan Titan
 Large Heavy-Duty PickupDodge Ram HD
 Compact PickupNissan Frontier
 Luxury Sport UtilityVolvo XC90
 Large Sport UtilityNissan Armada
 Premium Mid-Size Sport UtilityNissan Maxima
 Standard Mid-Size Sport UtilityChevrolet Equinox/Hyundai Santa Fe
 Compact Sport UtilityHyundai Tucson/Honda Element
 MinivanToyota Sienna/Honda Odyssey/Nissan Quest

In addition to identifying segment winners, VSA also establishes numerical satisfaction ratings for virtually every passenger car and light truck in the North American market. This results from calculating owner satisfaction across 45 specific areas related to a vehicle's operation, comfort, safety and the overall purchase/lease experience. The 2005 ratings reflect input from buyers and lessees of new vehicles acquired September 2004 through January 2005.

AutoPacific releases VSA results yearly as a consumer and industry service. AutoPacific also offers a Satisfaction Benchmark Study (SBS) that analyzes, on a feature-by-feature basis, cars and trucks in the North American market. This study allows manufacturers and key suppliers to assess and compare their vehicles on a feature level with the best in the business. "We feel SBS is the best and most economical way for manufacturers and suppliers to rate their own performance, and find out who is setting the standard for satisfaction. It then takes the analysis to the discrete level, from cupholders to the dealership experience," says Peterson.

AutoPacific is a future-oriented automotive marketing and product consulting firm. Every year it publishes a wide variety of syndicated studies on the automotive industry. The firm also conducts extensive proprietary research and consulting for auto manufacturers, distributors, marketers and suppliers worldwide. Company headquarters are in Tustin, California, with an affiliate office in the Detroit area. ■



2006 NEW MODEL YEAR PREVIEW PART 2

by Barbara and Bill Schaffer

SEE PART 1: September/October issue

We've gathered basic information on 49 brands and about 300 models of the new 2006 vehicles. Brands from Acura to Jeep were featured in the September/October 2005 issue of Arizona Driver Magazine. Now we present the rest of the alphabet: Kia through Volvo. The prices listed are base prices to give you an idea of the manufacturers' suggested retail prices (MSRP) before options.

Lexus LF-C Concept

**CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE-
SEE SEPT/OCT 2006 AZDRIVER
FOR ACURA THROUGH JAGUAR**

KIA

Amanti – The Kia flagship is large enough to garner an EPA large sedan rating so it compares with biggies like the Ford Crown Victoria. Standard equipment on the 2006 model includes heated leather seats, auto dimming mirror and sunroof. Like all Kias, it comes with the industry best 10-year, 100,000 limited powertrain warranty.\$26,500 (est.)

Optima – The 2006 model Optima will be short-lived when the 2007 model debuts in the spring of 2006. Designed to compete with cars like the Honda Accord and Toyota Camry, the Optima is a value oriented. It's powered by a four-cylinder or V-6 engine.\$17,000 to \$20,500 (est.)

Rio – New car buyers looking for a low price and high value would be wise to check out the new Kia Rio sedan and Rio 5 five-door hatchback. The spacious subcompact interior is larger than the previous generation and offers a class-leading six standard airbags and a powerful 110-hp four-cylinder engine with Continuously Variable Valve Timing.\$10,570 to \$12,445

Sedona – The all-new 2006 Sedona minivan is aimed right at the Japanese minivans. It will be powered by a new 3.8-liter V-6 engine with a five-speed automatic. Kia says it will be 15 percent larger inside and will have a third row seating that folds flat into the floor.t.b.d.

Sorento – No significant changes.\$19,000 to \$26,500 (est.)

Spectra – A step up from the Rio, the Spectra sedan and Spectra 5 hatchback were new in 2005 and unchanged for 2006.\$14,000 to \$16,500 (est.)

Sportage – New last year, the Sportage is unchanged.\$16,200 to \$22,000 (est.)

LAMBORGHINI

Gallardo – The entry-level Lamborghini (owned by Audi) with its 500-hp V-10 engine, all-wheel drive and aluminum space frame is mostly unchanged. There is a convertible model expected to be introduced in 2006.\$175,000 to \$195,000 (est.)

Murcielago – The 200-mpg Murcielago V-12 engine is increased from 6.2- to 6.5-liters and to 650 horsepower. It also gets minor styling changes for 2006.\$290,000 to \$350,000 (est.)

LAND ROVER

Freelander – There will be no 2006 version of the baby Land Rover, but an all-new 2007 model will debut in 2006.t.b.d.

LR3 – New last year the mid-range LR3 off-roader gets no significant changes for 2006.\$38,950 to \$53,450

Range Rover – Land Rover's sister company Jaguar is now supplying the V-8 engines for the Range Rover. Power comes from a 4.4-liter 300-hp or a 4.2-liter 400-hp supercharged version. There is rumor of a future V-12 engine.\$73,085 to \$89,285

Range Rover Sport – No, it's not simply a different version of the RR; it's an entirely new smaller product slotted between the RR and the new LR3. Most mechanicals are from the LR3, with the choice of a 4.4-liter 300-hp naturally aspirated V-8 or the 390-hp 4.2-liter supercharged version. It also has the new Terrain Response off-road control system, pioneered on the LR3.\$56,750 to \$69,750

LEXUS

ES 330 – The front-wheel drive, entry-level Lexus is mostly unchanged.\$32,175 to \$32,300

IS 250 and IS 350 – Lexus may finally have an equal to legendary BMW 3 series in the IS 350. The IS 350 is fast (0 to 60 mph in 5.1 seconds), remarkably agile and more spacious than the previous generation. Rear-wheel drive power comes from a 2.5- or 3.5-liter V-6 engine with a choice of new six-speed manual or new sequential-shift six-speed automatic with wheel-mounted paddle shifters. An all-wheel drive version of the IS-250 is also available.\$29,500 to \$40,000 (est.)

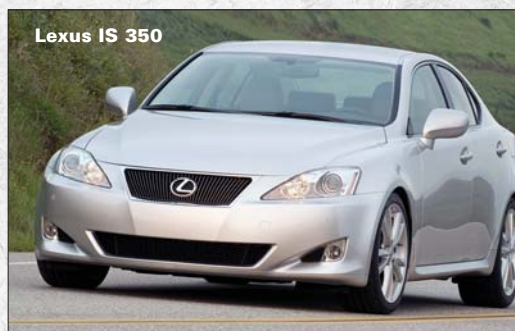
GS 300 and GS 430 – The middle Lexus sedan kicked off the 2006 model year in February 2005 with a totally redesigned car. With available features like adaptive suspension, all-wheel drive and Mark Levinson premium audio the GS is one of the top rear-drive sedans in the competitive mid-luxury category. The next hybrid out of the Lexus gate is the GS 450h luxury sedan with 0 to 60 mph acceleration times of less than six seconds and fuel economy in the 30 to 40 mpg range.\$38,875 to \$51,375

GX 470 – The middle Lexus SUV is unchanged.\$46,225 to \$46,535

LS 430 – The Lexus flagship sedan is unchanged for 2006, but is due for a complete makeover for 2007. The Toyota brands are all expected to get hybrid versions and the top of the line is likely to be the LS 600h which will offer V-12 performance with V-6 fuel economy.\$57,175

LX 470 – The LX 470 SUV gets a 40 horsepower increase for the 4.7-liter V-8. Safety enhancements include a new direct-type tire pressure monitoring system. The LX 470 is one of the few vehicles available today with the advanced optional Night View System, which uses near-infrared technology to enhance nighttime driving visibility.\$65,225 to \$66,995

KEEP RIGHT >>



RX 330 and RX 400h – The smaller cross-over style Lexus SUV got off to an early 2006 start with the spring introduction of the RX 400h hybrid. The luxurious hybrid produces significant increases in fuel economy and it's faster and cleaner than the gas only models. The 330 is unchanged.
\$36,025 to \$48,410

SC 430 – The hardtop/roadster is unchanged.
\$64,550

LINCOLN

Aviator – The midsize SUV was dropped for 2006 and will reappear in 2007 as a sport wagon based on the Mazda6 platform. It will be more like the Lexus RX330.

LS - Unchanged for 2006 and will be dropped after this model year.\$32,640 to \$43,590

Mark LT – The LT went on sale early in 2005 making it the first 2006 model for the brand. Based on the Ford F-series pickup the LT is one of the plushest trucks on the market, while retaining the ability to carry and pull large loads.\$39,200 to \$42,700

Navigator – The original big luxury SUV gets cosmetic upgrades along with optional THX II sound system and navigation system.
\$49,325 to \$56,975

Town Car – The car whose name describes its biggest market gets minor cosmetic changes.\$42,055 to \$50,525

Zephyr – As an entirely new midsize sedan for 2006, the Lincoln Zephyr is a restyled version of the Ford Fusion and Mercury Milan. The Zephyr takes the highroad with more elegant styling and appointments. It is the first car to offer a THX II audio system along with a new navigation system. A Ford 3.0-liter Duratec 30 (221-hp) engine and a new six-speed automatic transmission powers the front wheels.\$28,995

LOTUS

Elise – New last year, the exciting two-seater now offers optional traction control, a Torsen-style limited-slip differential and lighter weight wheels.\$43,860

Exige Coupe – With the same mechanicals as the Elise including the 190-hp Toyota-based four-cylinder engine, the Exige is designed for buyers more interested in racing. The body, except for the doors, is new. It's capable of 0 to 60 mph times of 4.7 seconds and a top speed of 147 mph.\$50,000 (est.)

MASERATI

GT coupe/Spyder/GranSport – Maserati's entry level trio are all powered by the same 4.2-liter V-8. They remain mostly unchanged for 2006.\$91,000 to \$103,500 (est.)

Quattroporte – The big four-door luxury sedan was new last year and is unchanged.
\$101,000 (est.)

MAYBACH

57/57S/62 – The ultra luxury Mercedes-Benz-owned company has added a new model for 2006, the 57S. It's basically like and AMG version of the 57 with a V-12 engine producing 604-hp (up from the base 543-hp). The 57S gets a special grille and other cosmetic alterations. All models get a new Parking Assistance System which uses a rear camera to guide the driver when backing.
\$327,250 to 377,750

MAZDA

B-Series – The Ford Ranger-based pickup is unchanged.\$15,500 to \$26,800 (est.)

Mazda3 – Available in four- and five-door models the popular small car gets minor changes for 2006.\$13,680 to \$19,165

Mazda5 – Introduced in mid-2005, the Mazda5 is designed to drive like a sports car while carrying six-passengers in three flexible rows. The multi-activity vehicle is powered by the efficient 2.3-liter four-cylinder engine used in the Mazda3. Transmissions for the front-wheel drive include a five-speed manual or four-speed automatic.\$17,435 to \$18,950

Mazda6 – It's a sedan, five-door, sport wagon and hot rod. The newest and fastest Mazda sport sedan ever is the Mazdaspeed6 powered by a 274-hp turbocharged and intercooled four-cylinder engine. Designed to compete with cars like the Subaru WRX, it has a new Active Torque-Split all-wheel drive system. It's loaded with new features like an advanced keyless entry and start system. The other models get mostly cosmetic upgrades.
\$19,300 to \$29,925

Miata MX-5 – The Miata, which Mazda wants us to call the MX-5, got its first total redesign since it was launched in 1989. It's a little larger with more interior space. The engine is a new 2.0-liter 170-hp four-cylinder driving through a five- or six-speed manual transmission or optional six-speed automatic.
\$20,435 to \$26,700

RX-8 – The rotary-powered RX-8 is the only sports car with seating for four adults. It has unique rear-opening doors allowing easier access to the rear seats.
\$25,500 to \$32,700 (est.)

MPV – Unchanged.\$22,105 to \$28,515.

Tribute – The small SUV derived from the Ford Escape is mostly unchanged.
\$19,765 to \$24,700

MERCEDES-BENZ

C-Class – With no more coupe or wagon in the class the C-Class is now all sedans. V-6 engines choices include 201-hp 2.5-liter, 228-hp 3.0-liter and 268-hp 3.5-liter.
\$30,025 to \$38,125
\$30,025 to \$54,675 for V-8 C55 AMG



CL-Class – The big Mercedes coupes get AMG sport packages as standard equipment. The CL600 standard equipment now includes Keyless Go, heated steering wheel and electronic truck closer.\$96,275 to \$129,775
AMG CL55 \$152,775
AMG CL65 \$179,875

CLK-Class – The sleek coupes and cabriolets get a new grille and redesigned taillights and active front head restraints that are now standard on all the new Mercedes models. The 3.2-liter V-6 is increased to 3.5-liters producing 268-hp through the industry's only seven-speed automatic transmission.
\$46,775 to \$62,975
AMG models from \$70,675 to \$82,775

CLS-Class – As the first ever four-door coupe, the CLS was new and has to be one of the best looking four-door vehicles on the market. A CLS55 AMG model will be available at a price yet to be determined.\$65,675

E-Class – The only significant change for these sedans and wagons is the V-6 engine which was increased from 3.2 to 3.5-liters.
\$51,125 to \$62,175
E55 AMG \$81,575 to 83,375

G-Class – The big, square Mercedes-Benz off-roader will be replaced by an entirely new version in 2006 for the 2007 model year. Based on the ML-Class and R-class mechanicals, it will be produced at the Daimler-Chrysler plant in Alabama. There will be four engines choices: a 231-hp V-6 diesel, 300-hp V-8 diesel, 326-hp V-8 gas and 408-hp gas. There's also a rumor of a 460-hp AMG version.
\$79,675 to \$102,175

ML-Class – Also new this year as a 2006 model, the original Mercedes-Benz SUV gets a total remake. With a stiff new unit body construction, car-like ride and handling it's one of the better SUVs on the market. It's available in V-6 and V-8 versions.\$40,525 to \$49,275

R-Class – New in the summer of 2005 as a 2006 model the R-Class enters the German automaker into a new category of three-row luxury vehicles. With three rows of two bucket seats, all-wheel drive and sport sedan-like handling the R-Class offers buyers a new versatile luxury vehicle.\$48,775 to \$56,275

S-Class – The largest Mercedes sedan gets a new AMG version called the S65 with a 604-hp V-12 engine making it the quickest four-door sedan in the world (0 to 60 mph in just 4.2 seconds).\$65,675 to \$125,525
AMG \$112,675 to \$169,775

SL-Class – The classic SL roadster which, like the SLK, has a hardtop that folds into the trunk, is unchanged for 2006. It comes in four power levels: SL500 (302-hp V-8), SL600 (493-hp twin turbo V-12), SL55 AMG (493-hp supercharged V-8) and SL65 AMG (604-hp twin turbo V-12).\$92,075 to \$130,175
AMG \$124,075 to \$182,875

SLK-Class – The smaller two-seat hardtop/roadster gets a new SLK280 model with a 228-hp 3.0-liter V-6. It joins the SLK350 and SLK55 AMG.
\$42,900 to \$47,025
AMG \$61,275.

MERCURY

Grand Marquis – The six-passenger sedan gets a revised front fascia.
\$24,585 to \$31,135

Mariner – The Mariner gets a hybrid version for 2006. The rebadged Ford Escape gas/electric hybrid has an EPA fuel economy rating of 33/29 mpg (city/highway).
\$21,380 to \$29,225

Milan – The new upscale midsize sedan shares its mechanicals and design elements with the new Ford Fusion. Aimed at attracting younger buyers to the Mercury brand, the Milan has a standard four-cylinder engine with five-speed manual or optional five-speed automatic. The optional 221-hp V-6 comes with a six-speed automatic.
\$18,345 to \$22,845

Montego – The large sedan is derived from the Ford Five Hundred. It's a front-wheel drive in standard trim but is available with all-wheel drive with a continuously variable transmission. New in 2005, the Montego gets new colors along with an optional navigation and DVD rear entertainment system for 2006.
\$24,365 to \$28,730

Monterey – The Mercury minivan is unchanged.\$28,595 to \$34,955

Mountaineer – The middle SUV gets a major revision with an all-new frame with new four-wheel independent suspension along with restyled body and new interior. A new 292-hp 4.6-liter V-8 with a six-speed automatic transmission provides power.
\$29,150 to \$38,980

Sable – Discontinued.

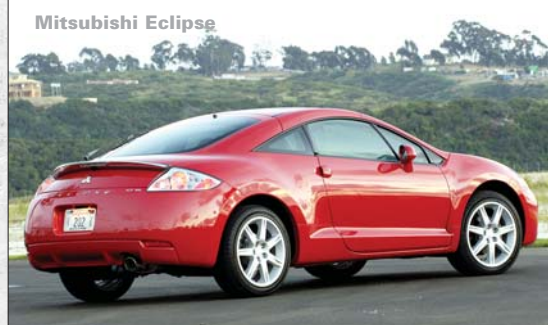
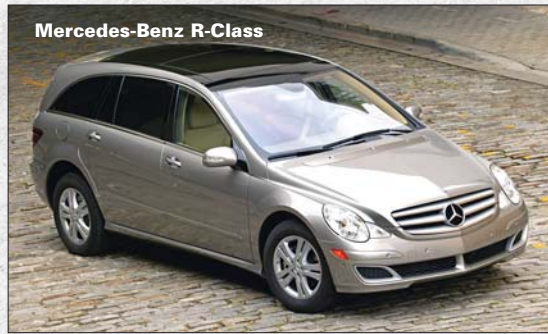
MINI

MINI Cooper – There are no significant changes for the small coupe and convertible for 2006. A new model is expected late in 2006.\$16,950 to \$24,900

MITSUBISHI

Eclipse – Starting the 2006 model year off early, Mitsubishi introduced the new generation Eclipse early in 2005 to rave reviews. With its dramatic new shape, the coupe comes with a standard 162-hp four-cylinder with an optional 260-hp V-6. The V-6 powered GT gets a six-speed manual or five-speed automatic.\$19,399 to \$26,099

Endeavor – The Mitsubishi crossover combines the styling of an SUV and driving performance and handling of a car. For the



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new model year it gets an enhanced LS and a value-oriented Limited.\$25,699 to \$33,499
Galant – Unchanged.\$18,999 to \$26,999
Lancer – The Lancer gets new grille options to distinguish the personalities of the different models. Not for the faint at heart, the Evolution IX rally car version, which comes in Evo IX, RS and MR trim levels, gets minor enhancements, including a horsepower boost from 276 to 286 horsepower.\$14,299 to \$19,899
Evo IX models start at \$27,000 (est.)
Montero – Unchanged.\$36,000.
There is a rumor that the Montero may be discontinued next year.

Outlander – The middle Mitsubishi SUV gets more standard safety equipment, cosmetic changes and a new “special Edition” value trim. It’s due to be redesigned in 2007 and is expected to have a seven-passenger version built on the redesigned Lancer platform.\$18,499 to \$25,949
Raider – Mitsubishi is back in the pickup truck business for 2006 with a nicely rebadged version for of the Dodge Dakota pickup. Available in three trim levels, with a V-6 or V-8 engine and in extended and double cab models. *Prices will start at under \$20,000 when the final prices are announced in the fourth quarter.*

NISSAN

Altima – All new in 2005 the Altima gets four new trim packages for 2006 along with available factory installed satellite radio. The SE-R model has been tuned for higher performance as has the suspension. It’s scheduled for a total remodeling for 2007 including a hybrid which will use control components licensed from Toyota.\$17,450 to \$29,550
Armada – The full-size SUV gets minor changes for next year.\$34,500 to \$42,800
Frontier – The midsize Frontier pickup gets package and cosmetic upgrades.

.....\$15,900 to \$27,100 (est.)
Maxima – Nissan’s flagship sedan has minor changes including factory installed satellite radio.\$27,750 to \$30,000
Murano – The stylish and spirited crossover SUV gets new wheels, restyled front grille and interior appointments. The Murano is unique because it’s only available with the 245-hp, 3.5-liter V-6 engine with Xtronic™ continuously variable transmission.
\$27,500 to \$31,600 (est.)
Pathfinder – New in 2005, the Pathfinder is unchanged.\$25,200 to \$35,300 (est.)
Quest – The unique minivan adds a 3.5S Special Edition trim, which includes a power right-hand door, power liftgate, power third row vent windows and in-dash CD changer.
\$24,000 to \$33,500
Sentra – Unchanged for 2006. An entirely new version is due out the second half of

2006. Nissan is also working on a car one size smaller than the Sentra to compete with other automakers like Scion.\$13,100 to \$18,000
Titan – Unchanged.\$26,450 to \$37,750
Xterra – All new in February 2005, the Xterra is unchanged for the 2006.
\$20,800 to \$25,300
350Z – The legendary Nissan coupe and roadster sports cars get many exterior, interior and mechanical changes for 2006 including an increase in horsepower to 300 for six-speed manual transmission version.
\$27,100 to \$39,600

PANOZ

Esperante – The Panoz sports car, built in Georgia, made significant improvements to the high performance Esperante coupes and convertibles last year and is unchanged for 2006.\$94,000 to \$130,000 (est.)

PONTIAC

Aztek –Discontinued.
Bonneville –Discontinued
Grand Am –Discontinued
G6 – As a new car in 2005, the G6 sedan is unchanged for 2006, however there will be two new exciting body styles later in the model year. Watch for a GT and GTP convertible with a retractable hardtop and seating for four along with a sleek new coupe.\$17,365 to \$24,210
Grand Prix – V-8 power was introduced to the mid size GXP version in mid-2005. The 303-hp engine has new Displacement on Demand technology that increases fuel economy by up to 12 percent during light load conditions.\$22,435 to \$29,335
GTO – The 400-hp Pontiac coupe gets minor cosmetic changes for 2006.\$32,295
Montana SV6 – Pontiac’s SUV-styled van gets some safety upgrades and a new available 3.9-liter V-6 engine later in the model year.
\$24,520 to \$30,210

Solstice – Pontiac’s exciting new roadster is now at dealers and is getting rave reviews from auto writers. The great looking two-seater is powered by a new Ecotec 2.5-liter four-cylinder 177-hp engine.\$19,420
Sunfire –Discontinued
Torrent – Pontiac’s interpretation of the popular Chevrolet Equinox and Saturn Vue SUVs debuts later this year. It comes in front- or all-wheel drive with a 185-hp 3.4-liter V-6 engine and five-speed automatic transmission.
\$22,400 to \$24,300
Vibe – Unchanged.\$16,430 to \$20,455

PORSCHE

Boxster – The second generation roadster debuted in 2005 and will get only minor changes for 2006.\$43,800 to \$54,700
911 Carrera – Porsche has been revamping

Mitsubishi Raider



Nissan Murano



Nissan 350Z



Pontiac Solstice



Pontiac Torrent



Porsche 911 Carrera Cabriolet



its entire lineup during the last year so there are few changes for 2006. It’s available in a coupe or convertible with two engine choices and available all-wheel drive.
\$69,300 to \$144,000 (est.)

Carrera GT – The \$440,000 V-10 powered super car will not be imported to the US for 2006 because it will not meet 2006 safety standards. Porsche does not want to spend the extra money required for the crash testing to sell a couple of hundred cars.
Cayenne – The popular SUV gets safety enhancements for 2006.\$41,100 to \$90,200
Cayman – All new for 2006, the Cayman is essentially a hardtop coupe version with most of the same mechanicals as the Boxster.
\$58,900 (est.)

Panamera – Porsche has confirmed it will build the “four-door coupe” styled sport sedan for the 2009 model year. It will share many of the mechanicals currently being used by the Cayenne SUV. Prices are expected to compete with cars like the Bentley Flying Spur Mercedes-Benz CLS.
\$125,000 to \$175,000 (est.)

ROLLS-ROYCE

Phantom – BMW-owned Rolls-Royce produces only the Phantom for the US market. The mostly hand-built V-12 powered sedan with rear-opening rear doors is basically unchanged. There is a long-wheelbase version and a convertible in the works.\$328,750

SAAB

9-2X – The Saab version of the Subaru WRX is unchanged for 2006.\$22,990 to \$26,950
9-3 – Arriving at dealerships in late this year, the new 9-3 SportCombi is Saab’s entry into the midsize wagon category. Like previous five-door Saabs it has classic Saab styling and features. The 9-3 line includes the sport sedan and convertible which go into the new year with an all-new turbocharged 250-hp V-6 engine and a choice of six-speed manual or automatic transmission.\$25,900 to \$42,600
9-5 – The flagship Saab mid-cycle gets a new hood, fascias, front and rear lamps, front fenders, tail gate and trunk lid. Inside it gets a cosmetic makeover. The 9-5 is powered by a 260-hp turbocharged 2.3-liter four-cylinder engine.\$32,800 to \$40,950 (est.)
9-7X – Saab’s first SUV is a unique adaptation of the Chevrolet Trailblazer. It has classic Saab styling and the interior is distinctively Saab, right down to the center console mounted ignition key.\$38,270 to \$40,270

SALEEN

S281 Mustang – The highly modified Mustang comes in three performance levels ranging from naturally aspired to supercharged.\$42,500 to \$54,500

S7 – Ranked as one of the world’s best supercars, the very limited edition S7 two-seater has a 750-hp twin-turbo 7.0-liter V-8.
\$555,000 to \$600,000

SATURN

Ion – The compact Ion gets an optional performance package with a new 170-hp engine and other cosmetic and mechanical enhancements. It’s available in a four-door sedan or four-door coupe version with rear doors that open toward the rear of the car. It also comes in a high performance Red Line edition.\$11,430 – to \$20,885
L300 – The midsize L300 will be discontinued in 2006 and will be replaced in 2007 by the new Aura, which should arrive next year. It is built on the same Epsilon platform used by the Chevrolet Malibu and Pontiac G6. Power comes from a 250-hp 3.6-liter DOHC V-6.Base \$25,000 (est.)
Outlook – Saturn has a midsize crossover vehicle planned for the 2007 model year. It is based on the Lambda platform, which will be used for the Buick Rendezvous replacement.
Relay – Saturn’s crossover sport van has distinctive SUV-like styling with all the features we’ve come to expect in a minivan. It gets additional safety enhancements for 2006 including first- and second-row seat-mounted side air bags. It also gets an available 3.9-liter, 235-hp V-6 engine. The amazing Mobile Digital Media system which can store thousands of songs and dozens of movies is a new option.
\$22,850 to \$29,855

Sky – Early in 2006 Saturn will launch the Sky, which is closely adapted from the Pontiac Solstice roadster.
\$21,000 to 25,000 (est.)
Vue – Saturn’s stylish small SUV gets new front and rear fascias, grille and headlights. The interior has been significantly redesigned. The optional V-6 3.5-liter 250-hp V-6 engine, built by Honda, is the most powerful in this segment.\$17,055 to \$24,315

SCION

tC – The slick little Scion coupe gets some cosmetic and entertainment system enhancements along with a long list of aftermarket upgrades.\$16,000 to \$17,000
xA – The youth oriented entry-level xA gets significant cosmetic upgrades. It’s due for a complete redesign in 2007.\$12,530 to \$13,530
xB – The little box on wheels gets cosmetic upgrades.\$13,730 to \$14,680

SUBARU

B9 Tribeca – All new as a 2006 model earlier this year, the B9 Tribeca is Subaru’s new definition of a sport utility. With excellent road manners and good off road performance in

KEEP RIGHT >>

Porsche Cayman



Saab 9-3 Sport Combi



Saleen S7



Saturn Ion Red Line



Saturn Relay



Scion xB



addition seven-passenger seating, the B9 Tribeca adds a new dimension to the Subaru lineup.\$31,320 to \$34,520

Baja – Subaru’s four-door truck based on the Outback in unchanged for 2006.

.....Base \$22,345 to \$27,495

Forester – Restyled with a more rugged exterior the compact Forester models are realigned for 2006. Horsepower is increased for the naturally aspired models from 165 to 173, while the turbo goes from 210 to 230 horses.\$21,445 to \$28,695

Impreza — Available in a wide variety of all-wheel drive sedans and wagons in basic versions, Outbacks and high performance WRX models, the Impreza gets the new Subaru signature front-end design with smoke-tinted headlights, mesh-type grill, fenders and new hood. There are also several new models and expanded equipment levels.\$18,245 to \$32,995.

Legacy/Outback – Entering its second year after a total remodel in 2005, the Legacy and Outback get model realignments and an optional navigation system. The base four-cylinder engine is also more powerful.\$21,445 to \$35,695

SUZUKI

Aerio – The small Aerio, which is also available in all-wheel drive, adds an upgraded audio system and standard anti-lock brakes with electronic brake-force distribution.\$14,579 to \$17,579

Forenza — Suzuki Forenza sedan and wagon get a styling update and simplified model strategy.\$14,279 to \$17,779

Grand Vitara – All new for 2006 the sleek Grand Vitara is larger and more powerful. It has six standard air bags, Electronic Stability Program and standard 185-hp 2.7-liter V-6 engine with five-speed manual transmission or optional five-speed automatic. The Grand Vitara has a very high level of features including an available SmartPass™ keyless entry and start system.\$19,594 to \$24,994

Reno – Suzuki’s entry-level five-door gets more features and a lower price.\$13,779 to \$16,779

Verona — The European-designed midsize Verona sedan gets more features and other minor changes. Like all the Suzuki models, the Verona has a fully transferable, zero-dollar deductible 100,000-mile/7-year powertrain limited warranty.\$18,879 to \$21,379

XL-7 – Suzuki’s seven-passenger XL-7 SUV receives several minor modifications.\$22,594 to \$27,294

TOYOTA

Avalon – All new in 2005, the Avalon is a major leap forward for the Toyota full-size

sedan. It’s stylish, powerful and loaded with great features. The 2006 model is a carryover.\$27,165 to \$35,355

Camry – Toyota’s best selling sedan is unchanged.\$18,985 to \$26,345

Celica -Discontinued

Corolla – Unchanged.\$14,545 to \$16,555

Echo – The entry-level Echo will be replaced next spring by an all-new sedan and sport wagon developed from the Japanese Vitz and European Yaris. Still unnamed, it will be larger and more dramatically styled than the Echo and will have better driving characteristics. It will include an idle-stop system to improve fuel economy.\$12,000 to \$14,000 (est.)

FJ Cruiser – Deigned to deliver true off-road ruggedness, image and performance at a very low price, the FJ Cruiser has gone from concept in 2003 to show rooms in early 2006. With its somewhat retro styling from the legendary FJ 40, the Cruiser will be powered by 245-hp 4.0-liter V-6 engine with five-speed automatic or six-speed manual transmission. It will be equipped with Toyota’s new Star Safety System which includes stability and traction control along with anti-lock brakes and electronic brake-force distribution. A price range is yet to be announced.

Highlander – Toyota’s midsize SUV is basically unchanged for 2006. A hybrid version was added mid-2005 as a 2006 model. The hybrid develops an impressive 270 horsepower while delivering an EPA estimated fuel economy of 32 mpg city/ 27 mpg highway. The hybrid components are warranted for eight-years or 100,000 miles.gas models \$25,070 to \$32,400

..... hybrid \$33,570 to \$39,830

Land Cruiser – Toyota’s big traditional SUV gets enhanced performance with the addition of variable valve timing with intelligence and electronic throttle control to the 4.7-liter V-8 engine. The changes increase the horsepower by 40 to 275. It also gets freshened front and rear styling, and new suspension control options.\$56,655

Matrix – Unchanged. \$15,650 to \$19,640

MR2 -Discontinued

Prius – The car that has set the standard for hybrids in the country, the Prius, is redesigned in the front and rear lamps, plus it gets more luxury options, like a leather interior and rearview camera.\$20,975

RAV4 – Toyota’s compact SUV is unchanged for 2006 but is scheduled for a major redesign later this year. The 2007 version will be larger, with a four-wheel independent suspension and an optional 3.5-liter V-6 engine producing 268 hp. *Prices were unavailable at deadline.*

Sequoia – The full-size Sequoia is mostly unchanged.\$33,385 to \$45,875

Sienna – Toyota’s top-rated minivan gets a

Subaru B9 Tribeca



Subaru Impreza WRX



Suzuki Grand Vitara



Suzuki Verona



Toyota Avalon



Toyota FJ Cruiser



restyled front fascia including an updated grille, headlamps and foglamps. With a model for all price ranges and optional all-wheel drive most models get more standard equipment.\$24,190 to \$38,645

Solara – The coupe and convertible versions of the Camry receive minor upgrades for 2006.\$20,070 to \$30,750

Tacoma – New in 2005, and the winner of the coveted *Motor Trend* Truck of the Year award, the midsize pickup is unchanged for 2006.\$14,345 to \$25,680

Tundra – With the Tacoma getting nearer in size to the full-size Tacoma last year and the Tundra nearing the end of its model run, we’re likely to see a larger Tundra in 2007 when it’s remodeled. It will also be built in their new Texas factory, and we know everything in Texas is larger. No changes are expected for 2006.\$16,720 to \$34,140

4Runner – The rugged midsize SUV gets cosmetic upgrades inside and out along with a reinforced center pillar to improve rigidity and a thicker windshield and door glass to reduce wind noise.\$28,200 to \$38,950

VOLKSWAGEN

Eos – Two years ago the Eos was a concept at the Frankfurt auto show, this year it is getting ready to go into production. The coupe/cabriolet which is the first four-seat convertible with a five-piece folding hard top is based on the new Passat platform. It’s expected to be available in the US during the first half of 2006. *No pricing is available.*

Golf – The current model Golf is finally going to be redesigned in 2007 model, so it remains unchanged for 2006.\$15,830 to \$20,655

Jetta – The 2006 Jetta sedan and wagon went on sale in the spring of 2005. Like most new cars it’s larger in most dimensions with a more spacious interior. There’s an engine for every need from the standard 150-hp five-cylinder to 200-hp turbocharged four-cylinder or the 100-hp turbo direct injection diesel that should get 40 to 50 mpg. It’s loaded with features like a new four-wheel independent suspension and a manual Direct Sequential Gearbox which has no clutch pedal and shifts by computer controls.\$17,680 to \$25,045

New Beetle – The classically styled New Beetle gets a new 150-hp 2.5-liter engine to replace its original 115-hp model. It comes with a standard five-speed manual or optional six-speed automatic transmission. The exterior is freshened and the interior is updated. Stability control is now standard on both the coupe and convertible.\$16,570 to \$26,525

Passat – The all-new Passat, which debuted in forth quarter of 2005, is also longer, wider

and taller than the current model. The midsize sedan is available with the largest engine ever, a 3.5-liter 280-hp V-6 and a six-speed automatic Tiptronic transmission. The standard drivetrain is a 2.0-liter, 200-hp turbocharged four-cylinder with a standard six-speed manual and optional six-speed automatic transmission. The first models are front-wheel drive, but a 4Motion all-wheel drive option will come later as will the wagon version.\$22,070 to \$33,615

Phaeton – Volkswagen’s impressive big sedan has minor changes, the biggest being the V-12 engine which is increased from 420- to 444-horsepower.\$66,700 to \$101,300

Touareg – The popular SUV has little change for 2006, except for the VR-6 engine, which is increased to 276 hp.\$66,700 to \$101,300

VOLVO

C70 – Volvo’s convertible is back for 2006 sporting a slick retractable hardtop, which looks as good up as it does down. The C70 remains as a front-wheel drive powered by the 2.5-liter light-pressure turbo five-cylinder engine. *Prices have not been announced.*

S40 – Other than some model realignments, the sport entry-level sedan is unchanged.\$24,450 to \$29,085

S60 – The naturally-aspired S60 is dropped for 2006 so all four models are now turbocharged. There’s a new All-Wheel Drive with Instant Traction™ system that instantly delivers up to 50 percent more torque to the rear axle when needed. Option packages are realigned.\$30,965 to \$37,985

S80 – The flagship S80 sedan gets some minor model realignments for 2006. A totally remodeled 2007 version will be introduced during 2006. There is a rumor the new S80 may get the company’s new V-8 engine which debuted in the XC90 last year.\$38,280 to \$40,055

V50 – Volvo’s smaller wagon was new in 2005, so changes are minor.\$26,800 to \$30,310

V70 – Redesigned last year, the V70 wagon gets minor changes for 2006.\$30,140 to \$40,240

XC70 – Probably one of the best overall adventure vehicles in the world, the premium wagon was updated last year, but gets the new All Wheel Drive with Instant Traction system.\$35,385 to \$35,700

XC90 – Volvo’s XC90 has won dozen’s of awards in its three year life. Last year the SUV was outfitted with the most powerful engine in Volvo’s history, a 311-hp Yamaha designed V-8. The engine has the lowest emissions of any V-8 engine on the market.\$36,335 to \$46,535

BARBARA AND BILL SCHAFFER are co-editors of *Auto Digest* reviews, rumors and other features.

Toyota Highlander



Toyota Tacoma Double Cab



Volkswagen Concept R (Eos)



Volkswagen Jetta



Volvo C70 Convertible



Volvo XC90



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Teen Drivers Pose Risk to Child Occupants

Researchers find that children transported by teen drivers are at a much higher risk of injury



Photo courtesy Chrysler Group

A national study of children in car crashes reports that children who were driven by teenagers were three times as likely to have a serious injury as those who were driven by adults. The risk was highest for young teenaged passengers, ages 13 to 15.

According to researchers from Partners for Child Passenger Safety (PCPS), a research partnership of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm®, teen drivers were more likely than adult drivers to be involved in more severe crashes and less likely to have child passengers under age 9 years properly restrained. The researchers propose modifying state licensing laws to provide education and requirements that promote safer driving by teenaged drivers.

The study, published in this month's issue of "Injury Prevention," looked at 19,111 children in 12,163 crashes reported to State Farm. Overall, teenagers drove four percent of these children in crashes. When a child was injured, however, teenagers were much more likely to be driving—12 percent of the injured children had a teen driver. These children were not just their peers: 40 percent of teen-driven child passengers

were younger than 13 suggesting that teens regularly drive younger children.

"The excess risk of injury to children in teen driver crashes can be primarily explained by the more severe crashes those teen drivers incurred," states Flora Winston, MD, Ph.D., principal investigator for Partners for Child Passenger Safety and the scientific director of TraumaLink, a pediatric injury research center at Children's Hospital. "The severity is likely a function of a teen driver's inexperienced driving or risk-taking behavior and immaturity."

Dr. Winston and her colleagues also noted higher likelihood of no restraint use and front row seating for child passengers who were driven by 15- to 17-year-old drivers. Children riding with these novice teen drivers were 3 times as likely to have no restraint at all as those with adult drivers. Also, children under age 13 years riding with novice teen drivers were more likely to sit in the front seat as compared to those with adult drivers.

"Parents need to understand the excess risk of allowing their teens to drive younger siblings," says Dr. Winston. "Parents should reinforce over and over the importance of safe driving habits

among their teens to not only reduce their high crash rates but also to make sure that the teen driver and the passengers are appropriately restrained on every trip."

Enhanced public policy that includes child restraint and rear-seating requirements in state graduated driver's licensing (GDL) programs could provide teens with the necessary motivation to properly restrain all child passengers.

Nearly all states have some form of a GDL law in an attempt to address the persistent public health issue of teen driver crashes. Approximately 26 states have passenger restrictions during the intermediate licensing stage to prevent or limit the number of teenaged passengers - a known risk factor for teen crashes. All current passenger restrictions exempt transporting family members.

"Busy parents have come to rely on their older children helping with shuttling siblings to various commitments," says Dr. Winston. Rather than restrict sibling passengers, Dr. Winston recommends GDL programs provide appropriate education and disincentives, such as postponement of full-driving privileges if all child passengers are not properly restrained. ■

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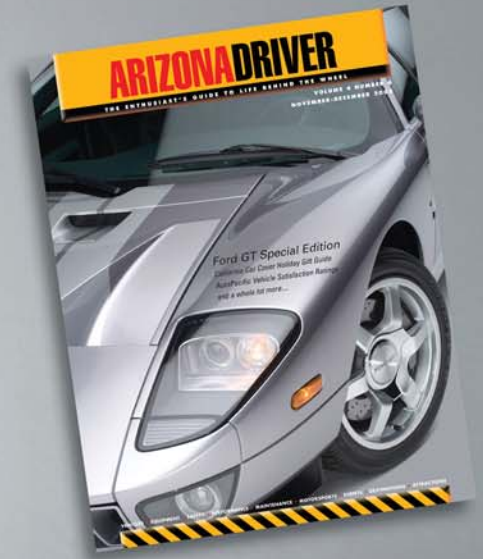
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commemorates
1966 1-2-3 Le Mans victory

The original Ford GT was a pure race car built in the mid-1960s to take on Ferrari in the demanding 24-hour race at Le Mans. The Ford GT race car beat the world's best in endurance racing, placing 1-2-3 at Le Mans in 1966. 2006 marks the 40th anniversary of that historic event, the start of Ford's remarkable four-year winning streak of the world's premier endurance race. A special limited-edition exterior color, Tungsten Grey, is being offered on the 2006 Ford GT to commemorate that sterling victory.





The original Ford GT racers were engineering and design marvels demonstrating Ford's dedication and perseverance. In a few short years, under the direction of Henry Ford II, the company built a program from scratch that reached the pinnacle of international motorsports competition—and stayed there for four racing seasons.

Perhaps the world's most significant—and glamorous—motorsport contest, Le Mans in the early 1960s was showing signs of becoming a Ferrari showcase, because the Italians had become the leaders in a number of endurance classes and events. But the Ford GT race car changed Le Mans forever, and today it signifies a new era for Ford Motor Company.

Carroll Shelby led the Ford GT domination of Le Mans in the Sixties, and served as an advisor during the development of the new, 2005 Ford GT supercar.

Design & Equipment

To commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Ford's first win at Le Mans, the 2006 Ford GT will be offered in a limited-edition Tungsten Grey, which replaces Quick Silver on the Ford GT's color palette. A Quick Silver racing stripe can be added to the Tungsten Grey package.

Tungsten Grey was developed for the 2004 North American International Auto Show Ford "Performance Trilogy" show cars—the Ford GT, the Shelby Cobra roadster concept and the new 2005 Mustang GT. Customer demand was so overwhelming that the color was added to the production palette.

Camilo Pardo, chief designer of the Ford GT, notes that in the design studio, clay models are covered with "Dynoc" material that is a similar hue to Tungsten Grey. The color is specifically designed to enhance the vehicle design details for evaluation.

Unveiled at the 2002 North American International Auto Show, the GT40 concept became an instant sensation. And just 45 days after the vehicle was unveiled, Ford stunned the world again, officially announcing that a production version was in the works. Ford's GT40 concept car was created to celebrate that great era in history and look forward to the great years to come.

Ford GT's advanced aerodynamic, manufacturing, and powertrain technologies showcase the engineering excellence

of Ford Motor Company and Ford Special Vehicle team.

Although the new production car and the original race car both share the mystique of the Ford GT name, they do not share a single dimension. The new car is more than 18 inches longer and stands nearly 4 inches taller. Its new lines draw upon and refine the best features of Ford GT history and express the car's identity through modern proportion and surface development.

The Ford GT production car, like the concept, casts the familiar, sleek look of its namesake; yet every dimension, every curve and every line on the car is a unique reinterpretation of the original. The car features a long front overhang reminiscent of 1960s-era race cars. But its sweeping cowl, subtle accent lines and high-intensity-discharge headlamps strike a distinctly contemporary pose.

The front fenders curve over 18-inch wheels and Goodyear Eagle F1 Supercar tires. In the tradition of original Ford GT racers, the doors cut into the roof. Prominent on the leading edge of the rear quarter panel are functional scoops that channel fresh air to the engine. The rear wheel wells, filled with 19-inch wheels and tires, define the rear of the car, while the accent line from the front cowl rejoins and finishes the car's profile at the integrated "ducktail" spoiler.

The interior design incorporates the novel "ventilated seats" and instrument layout of the original car, with straight-forward analog gauges and a large tachometer. Modern versions of the original car's toggle switches operate key systems.

Looking in through the backlight, one finds the essence of the sports car in a 5.4-liter supercharged version of Ford's MOD V-8 engine. The finishing touches are "Ford Blue" cam covers, each featuring an aluminum coil cover imprinted with the words "Powered by Ford."

Powertrain & Chassis

The Ford GT team knew this road car would require a stiff structure, much like a race car. As such, they developed an all-aluminum space frame comprising extrusions, castings and several stampings. The hybrid aluminum space frame chassis is based on efficient use of 35 extrusions,





seven complex castings, two semi-solid formed castings and various stamped aluminum panels.

The new Ford GT is intended for the road, unlike the original 1960s race cars that ultimately spawned a limited number of production road cars. However, the new car required unique race-like engineering solutions—like engineering out the aerodynamic “lift” inherent in the original car’s design—for a car that clocks in at more than 205 mph. The new Ford GT includes racing-inspired ground effects ducting under the rear fascia.

The Ford GT features many new and unique technologies, including super-plastic-formed aluminum body panels, roll-bonded floor panels, a friction-stir welded center tunnel, a capless fuel filler system, one-piece door panels and an aluminum engine cover with a one-piece carbon-fiber inner panel.

The chassis features unequal-length control arms and coil-over spring-damper units to allow for its low profile. Braking is handled by four-piston aluminum Brembo monoblock calipers with cross-drilled and vented rotors at all four corners. When the rear canopy is opened, the rear suspension components and engine become the car’s focal point. Aluminum suspension components and 19-inch Goodyear tires—combined with the overwhelming presence of the V-8 engine—create a striking appearance and communicate the performance credentials of the Ford GT.

Under the super-plastic-formed aluminum clam shell resides the Ford GT’s supercharged 5.4-liter, 550-hp V-8.

The Ford GT engine, based on the largest V-8 in Ford’s modular engine family, produces 550 horsepower and 500 pound-feet of torque. Both figures are comparable to those of the 7.0-liter engine that won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1966 and 1967.

The 5.4-liter powerplant is all-aluminum and fed by an Eaton screw-type supercharger. It features four-valve cylinder heads and forged components, including the crankshaft, H-beam connecting rods and aluminum pistons. Power is put to the road through a Ricardo six-speed manual transaxle featuring a helical limited-slip differential.

Major Features & Options

Standard features include: Brembo monoblock brake calipers, BBS™ cast-aluminum wheels with Goodyear Eagle F1 supercar tires, carbon-fiber bucket seats with ventilated leather seating surfaces, 6-speed manual transmission, AM/FM stereo with CD, bi-xenon headlamps, fog lamps, driver and passenger front air bags, ABS, leather-wrapped tilt steering wheel, passive anti-theft system, power exterior mirrors, windows and door locks, air conditioning, remote keyless entry and rear window defroster.

Options include BBS lightweight forged wheels, McIntosh™ sound system, painted brake calipers and racing stripes.

Milestones

1966 - Ford GT40s win 1-2-3 at Le Mans take the “triple crown” of endurance racing with victories at Sebring and Daytona as well

1967 - Ford beats Ferrari by just four laps at Le Mans

1968 - A GT40 in Gulf Oil orange and blue livery takes the checkered flag at Le Mans

1969 - GT40’s final Le Mans win with just two-second margin becomes one of the most exciting moments in the history of endurance racing

2001 - Living Legends studio in Dearborn begins work on GT40 concept

2002 - Bill Ford unveils GT40 concept at North American International Auto Show

2003 - Ford GT production starts to commemorate the Ford Motor Company centennial

2004 - Full-scale production begins

The Video Game

Car enthusiasts everywhere now have the opportunity to experience the thrill of racing the new Ford GT, even if they aren’t one of the lucky few to own Ford’s hot new supercar. Ford has released *Supercar Challenge*, a free, downloadable video game that lets car enthusiasts get behind the wheel of today’s hottest production cars in three rich, virtual racing environments. The new game, available for download at www.fordvehicles.com, offers players the opportunity to race through a progressively difficult challenge structure of time trials, head-to-head competitions and multicar circuit races across nine tracks within three sections of a city in the Ford Focus ST, Mustang and Ford GT. ■



THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS

■ **BMW** is expected to add a third SUV to the X lineup which currently includes the original X5 and smaller X3. The X6 will



be developed from the same architecture as the other X vehicles but will be more road-oriented like the Infiniti FX45 and the Land Rover Range Rover Sport. It will have a more sweeping roofline plus more rear-seat and cargo space. Look for it to go on sale late in 2008.

■ **Mercedes-Benz** revealed that its Vance, Ala. plant will add a three-row full-size SUV to its production schedule. According to Automotive News an official product announcement was not made, but they say the third SUV would be built based on the architecture of the recently redesigned M-Class using a new car like unibody design to compete with products like the BMW X5 and Lexus RX 330. The Vance plant currently builds the M-Class and the new R-Class.

■ Changes in the way the Society of Automotive Engineers establishes horsepower ratings have enhanced the numerical ratings of the upcoming **Cadillac STS-V**. It was expected to have the supercharged Northstar engine with a 440 hp and 430 lb.ft. of torque rating. But with the new system, those numbers are likely to come out at 469-hp and 439 lb.ft. of torque for the 4.4-liter V-8.



■ With **Acura** discontinuing the NSX sports car, they have promised to build a replacement in the next three or four years. In the past Acura's parent company, Honda, has said they didn't want to do a V-8 engine, but has lately been mentioning both V-8 and V-10 engines for the NSX replacement.

■ **Saturn** announced plans to offer hybrid versions of its Saturn Vue sport utility vehicle and another yet to be named vehicle as early as 2007. To correspond with its performance versions, which carry the Red Line label, the hybrids will be get a Green Line moniker. Saturn will also be getting a sports car called the Sky derived from the new Pontiac Solstice.

■ **BMW** will offer a digital radio option on the 7 Series starting in 2006. The high-definition radio (HD) has clearer reception than the existing broadcast system, plus stations can display information like weather, traffic, stocks and sports results. The system allows a station to simulcast multiple programs over the same band and drivers can switch to the other

programs at the touch of a button. Currently about 460 of the largest 13,000 US radio stations have switched to digital.

■ General Motors is going to use its **OnStar** communications system to contact vehicle owners who have not responded to recall notices within 60 days. The contact will be made on the first non-emergency use of the service. GM hopes to increase the effectiveness of its recalls by using the new program. OnStar will be included on all GM vehicles beginning in 2007.

■ **Toyota** is expected to move the next generation Camry introduction forward to debut at the North American International



Auto Show in Detroit in January 2006. The move is being made to allow the Camry to have a hybrid version available to compete with the Honda Accord hybrid which debuted in 2005. Toyota officials decided it would be more efficient to add the hybrid equipment to the new Camry rather than retro-fitting and old model.

■ At least three states have legislation pending to ban "spinner" wheels/hubcaps that keep spinning even when the vehicles are stopped. Legislators say they are disconcerting to other drivers and possibly play a role in causing accidents.

■ **Subaru** plans to add a minivan to its lineup for the 2007 or 2008 model year. The seven-passenger vehicle will be based on the same platform as the Subaru Legacy. Power will come for the traditional Subaru flat horizontally-opposed four-cylinder engine. Like all Subaru products, the minivan will have all-wheel drive.

■ **Chrysler** is expected to get its first SUV called the Aspen next year. According to industry rumors the upscale off-roader will be based on the Dodge Durango and is likely to be powered by the popular Hemi V-8 with a high performance SRT-8 version available not long after it's introduced. Chrysler plans to recycle the Aspen name from the economical Dodge Aspen sedan from the 80s. The Aspen is scheduled to debut at the Detroit auto show in January 2006.

■ **Jaguar** is rumored to be considering a diesel-powered XJ for the US market, possibly as soon as 2008. The engine



would likely be a 2.7-liter 204-hp twin-turbo V-6 that will be used in future European models.

■ **MINI** is showing a four-seat concept called the Traveler. Although it sounds like an oxymoron, the larger MINI concept has special hinged doors that allow them to swivel to the side and forward at the same time allowing easier access. The rear cargo doors are split vertically and the luggage area has an adjustable cargo box. The rear roof also opens to make loading easier or just to vent the vehicle. Production plans have yet to be announced.

■ **Dodge** is adding more luxury items to its pickups including an optional (\$1,500) full-screen Alpine navigation system. Previous systems used abbreviated turn-by-turn instructions without maps. This is a first for a domestic brand pickup and a rarity in the pickup market. With the demand for more car-like features in trucks, the new Dodge mega cab is the only pickup that can be equipped with both a sunroof and roof-mounted DVD entertainment unit.

■ **BMW** will build a coupe version of the Z4 roadster starting in the summer of 2006. BMW officials have indicated they are developing a sleek Z4 coupe to compete against the Porsche 911 and new Porsche Cayman coupe, which goes on sale in January. Basic power will come from a 260-hp 3.0-liter inline six-cylinder engine and plans also call for a 3.2-liter 360-hp inline six-cylinder engine derived from the M3. A concept is expected to show at the Frankfurt auto show in September.



■ **Lotus** is rumored to be working on a midsize, mid-engine coupe to compete with cars like the new Porsche Cayman, according to reports. Slotted between the new Elise and the older Esprit flagship, the new car will be built on the same aluminum chassis used on the Esprit.

■ **Lincoln** will drop the rear-wheel drive LS model at the end of the 2006 model year. It debuted in 1999 to compete with European sport sedans, but sales never reached projected levels. A replacement based on the front-wheel drive Volvo platform, should arrive at dealerships late in 2007 as a 2008 model.



■ **Mercedes-Benz** is expected to offer a coupe version of the SLK hardtop convertible in 2007. With the front end and doors from the SLK, the rear would get a long roof and nearly vertical rear end. Wearing an SLT badge, (T for tourer) the two-seater is designed to compete with the Porsche Cayman and the rumored BMW Z4 coupe. An AMG variant is likely, too.

■ **Bentley** will build a convertible version of the Continental GT. The luxury

2 + 2 will be called the GTC, and will have the same sophisticated all-wheel drive system, W-12 engine and advanced air suspension. The GTC should be capable of a top speed in excess of 190-mph. It will go on sale in late 2006, but a price range has not yet been announced. The current GT has a base price of about \$164,000.

■ **Honda** now offers an accessory called Honda Music link for the new Civic. The \$250 device allows an iPod to be plugged into the Civic audio system through a cable in the glove box. It is then controlled directly through the vehicle audio system, plus the iPod while is charged while it's plugged into the Music Link.

■ Don't wash your new **Corvette** Z06 in car wash that uses a conveyor. A notice included in the owner's manual of the 505-hp sports car says the 13.6-inch wide rear tires will not go through a typical car wash and could result in damage to the car. You're best to use a touchless wash without conveyors.

■ Production has finally started on the **Bugatti** Veyron in France, where original Bugattis were built from 1910 to 1956.

The \$1.24 million supercar has a 1,001-hp W-16 engine and is said to be capable of nearly 250 mph. The Bugatti Company has been owned by Volkswagen since 1998 and they plan to build 300 Veyrons over the next five years.

Briefs & Rumors is a summary of auto news from industry sources, trade journals and consumer magazines compiled for *Arizona Driver Magazine* by **BILL & BARBARA SCHAFFER** of *Auto Digest*.

UPCOMING FEATURES

Mercury Mariner "Hybrid Patrol" Law Enforcement Contest



Ford is letting law enforcement departments across the US vie for a Mercury Mariner Hybrid small SUV as the prize in a fuel economy faceoff. Arizona departments are in the game.

Honda Pilot



When you've produced one of the benchmarks of the SUV market, within the benchmark Honda lineup, shouldn't the results be pretty hard to beat? We'll drive one and find out.

Hyundai Sonata



The Koreans entered the US market intent on taking market share from stalwarts Honda and Toyota. This time around, they just might have the goods to make a serious dent.



