

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 4

JULY-AUGUST 2010

THE 20TH ANNUAL COPPERSTATE 1000

EVENTS/TRAVEL

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MONTEREY PREVIEW
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RALLIES AND DERBIES

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COVER: A beautiful 1959 Jaguar XK 150S roadster belonging to Budd and Laurie Florkiewicz of Scottsdale reflects the green grass during the Field of Dreams preview at Tempe Diablo Stadium, the launch event for the 2010 Copperstate 1000 road rally. Purchased by the Florkiewiczzes in 2009, the Jaguar has had a frame-off restoration. Originally a numbers-matching 3.4 roadster, it was properly converted to 3.85 specs and is now one mighty fast XK 150S.

Photo: Randall Bohl - www.randallbohl.com



2011 Shelby GT350

The stuff legends are made of

Carroll Shelby, along with his band of hot rodders, built a car 45 years ago that has become a legend - the GT350. Today, he and his team at Shelby American have resurrected that legend - the 45th Anniversary 2011 Shelby GT350. Built by performance enthusiasts, for performance enthusiasts, the Shelby American team is proud to have the 2011 Shelby GT350 as part of your NASCAR heritage as the Official Pace Car of the Shelby American Sprint Cup race. Visit GT350.ShelbyAmerican.com to find out how you can get behind the wheel of this must-have 2011 Shelby GT350.



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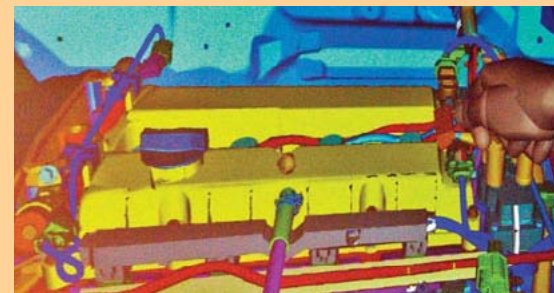


Photo: Randall Bohl

We've had a very mobile couple of months, gathering information for your entertainment and education this issue. If anyone asked why we have out-of-state events in a magazine named *Arizona Driver*, we'd point out that we're all about Arizona, sure, but we're foremost about Arizona's cadre of enthusiast drivers, collectors and fans. It's also not hard to figure how this automotive publishing biz takes us to Detroit from time to time. But the industry has also grown significantly through the southeast US, along the I-65 corridor ("Auto Alley") from Gary, Indiana to Mobile, Alabama, and from Michigan south along the I-75 corridor (Detroit-to-Miami), where the "imports" in particular have an increasing manufacturing presence. As such, we've recently found ourselves in Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, Michigan and New York. **Mercedes-Benz** launched their new E-Class Cabriolet in the Great Smoky Mountains, **Infiniti** launched the completely new QX56 in the bluegrass hills of Kentucky, **smart** flew their fortwo electric drive microcars to New York City for a pre-launch drive, **Goodyear** rightly figured California's Highway One was perfect for trying out a new flagship tire, and **Ford** sent us to Dearborn for an insider's look at the Virtual Reality Labs that underpin great advances in vehicle design, assembly... and driving. No matter how you slice it, even the vehicles introduced far and wide are exactly the ones we would all like to drive right here.

Closer to home, **Larry Edsall** takes us along on the 20th run of Arizona's famed Copperstate 1000 road rally, with photography by both Edsall and **Randall Bohl**. The Audi Club of Arizona beats the onslaught of summer heat with their annual Quattro de



Mayo event. And we bring you information on Tucson's 235th birthday, as well as a look at all Monterey has to offer when Arizona's Russo and Steele joins others during the fun-and-event-filled week that has grown around the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

Enjoy the ride.

Joe Sage - Publisher/ Executive Editor

ARIZONA DRIVER

MAGAZINE

PUBLISHER / EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Joe Sage
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Nick Calderone, HR Driver, Larry Edsall, Gary Goldzweig, JP Molnar, John Priddy, Barbara and Bill Schaffer, Jan Wagner, Kevin A Wilson

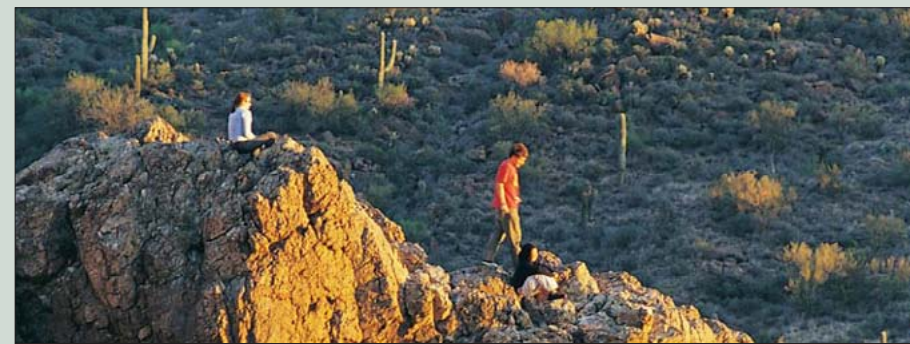
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS: Randall Bohl, Christina Lawrie, Brenda Priddy, Jan Wagner

DESIGN & PRODUCTION: AdZone Arizona
ADVERTISING SALES: 480-948-0200

ARIZONA DRIVER MAGAZINE
 PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY ADZONE ARIZONA LLC
 Arizona Driver Magazine
 PO Box 13387 - Scottsdale AZ 85267
www.arizonadrivermagazine.com
letters@arizonadrivermagazine.com

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TUCSON: A LIVELY 235 YEARS OLD THIS SUMMER



PLAY FOR NEXT TO NOTHING. Tucson visitors can find a host of fun and educational activities related to everything from art and history to science and outdoor adventure at Tucson's website for budget-savvy consumers, TucsonontheCheap.com.

SUPER HOT SUMMER DEALS. This summer the deals in Tucson are hotter than the desert sun. Every week, Tucson CVB is posting "Tucson Will Surprise You Hot Deals" for accommodations, attractions and restaurants on the www.facebook.com/TucsonWillSurpriseYou



neys related to Southern Arizona's American Indian culture at www.visittucson.org.

INDOORS: FAMILY MUSEUMS. The fun and educational activities at these kid-approved museums are sure to keep kids interested until the school bell rings. Tucson Children's Museum helps kids learn about nature, science, and safety while having fun at 10 galleries of hands-on exhibits, including Dinosaur World and the Fire Station. The Mini-Time Machine Museum of Miniatures displays an array of antique and contem-

porary miniatures and enchanting artifacts; self-guided tours travel through diverse lands and times, both real and imagined. International Wildlife Museum displays dioramas depicting wild animals in their natural settings, videos, interactive computers, and hands-on exhibits that promote wildlife appreciation and conservation. Discover more at the websites of the Tucson Children's Museum, the Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures, and the International Wildlife Museum.

SACRED SAGUARO FRUIT HARVEST. Taste flavors of the Sonoran Desert at the Ha:sa:n Bak Saguaro Harvest Celebration at Colossal Cave Mountain Park in Tucson, July 10. Visitors can sample jams and syrups made from ruby-red saguaro fruit and discover the saguaro's value to the Tohono O'odham ("People of the Desert"). Dishes prepared with cactus products and other desert-harvested foods are served Monday-Friday at the Desert Rain Café in Sells, 60 miles west of Tucson. Visitors can explore the Tohono O'odham Cultural Center and Museum in Topawa, 68 miles southwest of Tucson. In Tucson, Etherton Gallery hosts an exhibition of saguaro photographs at the Tucson Botanical Gardens, June 4-August 29. Find other jour-

neys related to Southern Arizona's American Indian culture at www.visittucson.org.

PICK YOUR OWN SUMMER PRODUCE. A summer treat is picking your own fresh produce at Apple Annie's orchard and farm in Willcox, east of Tucson. Apple Annie's opens in July for the summer harvest of sweet corn, melons, green beans, squash, tomatoes, chiles, peppers, and more. Produce is available already picked, or you can pick your own right from the vine. Upcoming special events include the Sweet Corn Extravaganza, July 10-11 and July 17-18; and the Peach Mania Festival on weekends between mid-July and mid-August. For more details, call the Crop Hotline at (520) 384-2084, or visit AppleAnnies.com. A list of u-

pick-it farms south of Tucson is available from the Willcox Chamber of Commerce.

BMX RIDERS HIT TUCSON ARENA. A sport created by kids for kids in the 1970s will be showcased in Tucson at the ABA-BMX Southwest Nationals, August 6-8. The American Bicycle Association (ABA) will bring an estimated 1,000 amateur bicycle motocross (BMX) riders to the Tucson Convention Center for an air-conditioned national competition. BMX riders will perform jumps, flips, and tricks on a massive, ABA regulation dirt track. Riders ages 5 to 60 will compete in pre-race events on Friday, Aug. 6; the National Race will occur on Saturday, Aug. 7; and the final race happens Sunday, Aug. 8. The entire ABA-BMX 2010 Southwest Nationals race event is free and open to spectators. More information is on ababmx.com.

CITYWIDE BIRTHDAY BASH: TUCSON TURNS 235 THIS SUMMER. A ceremony at the Presidio San Agustín del Tucson will feature the five flags that have flown over the city of Tucson since its founding in 1775. The ceremony will take place on the city's 235th birthday, August 20, 2010. Cake will be served throughout the city; public events will celebrate the contributions of Tucson's many cultures and interests as well as the environmental features and institutions that have made it a unique community. DeGrazia Gallery in the Sun, Fox Tucson Theatre, The Loft Cinema, and Arizona Historical Society are among the organizations planning free and family-friendly events. For more details on Tucson's birthday celebrations, call (520) 327-7544, or visit TucsonBirthday.org.

OLD TUCSON STUDIOS LANDS ON MONOPOLY. The new John Wayne Collector's Edition Monopoly set features a Tucson attraction once frequented by the famed Western movie star. Old Tucson Studios, also known as "Hollywood in the Desert," is an official property on the new version of the popular board game, which features locations and properties significant to Wayne's professional and personal life. John Wayne starred in four movies at Old Tucson Studios: Rio Bravo (1959); McLintock! (1963); El Dorado (1967); and Rio Lobo (1970).

RENOWNED ARTIST RETURNS HOME. Tucson artist Daniel Martin Diaz has shown his work, featuring mystical imagery and surreal religious themes, all over the world; he is represented by galleries in New York and London. Yet, the renowned artist has said the more he travels, "the more he loves Tucson." So Diaz and his wife opened Sacred Machine, a gallery-museum-curiosity shop in downtown Tucson. Here, not far from Etherton Gallery and Tucson Museum of Art where the artist's early pieces were first shown, Diaz displays his latest work along with an eclectic mix of art, t-shirts, posters, books, and painted skateboards and guitars. The gallery is open from noon to 9 pm, Wednesday through Saturday, and by appointment on Sunday. For info, visit SacredMachine.com or email paula@mysticpublishing.com. ■

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PORSCHE 918 SPYDER

Arguably, the top concept at the recent Geneva Motor Show, the Porsche 918 Spyder takes the plug-in hybrid idea to new heights. With styling evolving from the Carrera GT, the 3,300-pound carbon-fiber body Spyder is powered by a mid-mounted 500-hp, gas V8 engine and a pair of electric motors adding an additional 218 hp. The all-wheel-drive two-seater accelerates from 0 to 62 mph in just 3.2 seconds and has a top speed of 198 mph. Porsche chairman Michael Macht answered questions about possible production by saying that Porsche has never shown a concept car that didn't eventually get put into production. ▼

Porsche 918 Spyder concept



2010 Infiniti G37 Anniversary Edition

INFINITI HITS 20 YEARS: 6 EDITIONS

▲ Infiniti is celebrating 20 years in the US with four limited-production 2010 G Anniversary models including a G37 sedan, G37 AWD sedan, G37 coupe and G37 convertible. "These unique and very limited editions represent what Infiniti is all about—Inspired Performance," said Ben Poore, vice president, Infiniti Business Unit. "Building on the popularity of the Monaco Red Leather and special Red-toned Maple interior that helped launch the G Convertible, the Anniversary Editions add a number of new styling touches that will make them instantly recognizable on the showroom floor and on the road." Prices for the special models range from \$43,350 for the sedan to \$54,900 for the convertible. Each Anniversary Edition comes in a new Graphite Shadow exterior color with Monaco Red leather. The Coupe and Convertible interiors are accented with special Red-toned Maple and the two sedans have the new Shodo-finish aluminum trim. Other Anniversary Edition equipment includes special aluminum-alloy wheels, W-rated summer performance tires, Midnight Black grille, unique front chin spoiler or front fascia, sport side sills (Coupe and Convertible) and rear spoiler (except Convertible). The Coupe also receives an updated rear fascia.

AUDI PLANS HYBRIDS AND ELECTRICS

Audi has announced plans for a rapid implementation of a hybrid and electric program as their part of the Volkswagen group strategy to dominate the alternative-powertrain market. The Q5 crossover will be the first hybrid followed soon by the new A8 sedan and next generation A6 sedan by the end of 2012. Audi expects to expand hybrid capabilities across the lineup by the 2020. Plans also call for improving internal combustion engine efficiency by 30 percent. Michael Dick, Audi board member for technical development, said the e-tron electric vehicle name, introduced last September in Frankfurt, will eventually make up to five-percent of the Audi products lineup and that the e-tron name will become as important for Audi as the quattro all-wheel drive brand.

NISSAN ADDS A COMMERCIAL VAN

The culmination of 75 years of commercial vehicle building experience and months of customer research are all coming together later this year as Nissan rolls out its all-new commercial van. The first production models in Nissan's new North American CV lineup are the 2011 Nissan NV1500, NV2500 HD and NV3500 HD. They will be available with a choice of 4.0-liter V6 and 5.6-liter V8 engines and in two body styles: Standard Roof (all models) and High

Roof (NV2500 HD and NV3500 HD only)—with High Roof models offering stand-up walkthrough/work cargo area capability. The NV's ample cargo area offers a 120.7-inch cargo floor length and 70.3-inch maximum cargo floor width. NV Standard Roof models offer a maximum 55.4 cargo area height, among the tallest in class. The NV High Roof provides a maximum 76.5-inches of cargo room height—enough for most users to move about the cargo area while standing up straight. The new Nissan NV will be manufactured in Canton, Mississippi and available through a select network of authorized Nissan Commercial Vehicle dealers nationwide.

NEXT-GEN KIA OPTIMA UNWRAPPED

Kia unwrapped the latest iteration of Optima at the New York International Auto Show from a larger box than was used for the previous generation mid-size sedan. The Optima sits on a 110-inch wheelbase, nearly 3 inches greater than the 2010 model. It gained an inch in width and 1.7 inches in overall length. The Optima shares chassis components, drivetrain and a few other components with its slightly older brother the Hyundai Sonata. The Kia has a new body style and interior designed at Kia's studios in Frankfurt and

KEEP RIGHT >>



2011 Lincoln MKZ Hybrid

Irvine, California. A 200-hp 2.4-liter four-cylinder is the engine most shoppers will chose, but rather than a conventional V6 as the upgrade, Optima, like the Sonata, will have a 274-hp, 2.4-liter turbo as an option. Available in three well-appointed trims, LX, EX and SX, the 2011 Optima arrives at Kia dealers in the fall of 2010.

LINCOLN INTRODUCES FIRST HYBRID

▲ With the introduction of the 2011 MKZ Hybrid, Lincoln expects to have the most fuel-efficient luxury sedan in America. Unveiled at the New York Auto Show, Lincoln's first-ever hybrid is expected to deliver at least 41 miles per gallon in the city when it goes on sale this fall. The 2011 Lincoln MKZ Hybrid uses Ford's second-generation hybrid technology – the 2.5-liter Atkinson-cycle I-4 hybrid engine, which was named one of *Ward's* 2010 "10 Best Engines." The combined gasoline engine and electric motor provide 191 net horsepower. Plus, the pure electric mode on the Lincoln MKZ Hybrid extends to 47 mph—compared with the Lexus HS 250h battery-only mode, which reaches just 25 mph. The premium mid-size hybrid uses Ford's interactive SmartGauge with EcoGuide to coach drivers on how to optimize hybrid performance and gives the drivers positive feedback on long-term fuel efficiency.

MERCEDES-BENZ B-CLASS AMG FOR US

The Mercedes-Benz B-Class, a four-door hatchback currently being sold in Europe, is expected to arrive in the US sometime in 2011 as a 2012 model. The premium compact is designed to compete with cars like the Audi A3 and BMW 1-Series, but Mercedes has even more exciting plans in the works. Watch for an AMG version within a year of the initial launch. Presently all AMG models are powered by big, powerful V8 engines, but the B-Class will likely get a modified four-cylinder along with upgraded suspension, brakes and some sporty body work. The B-Class AMG should be a strong competitor for cars like the Volkswagen Golf R32 and Audi S3, which are not presently imported into the US.

NISSAN PRICES THE 2011 GT-R

For its third year of availability in North America, Nissan has simplified the GT-R model lineup by eliminating the base model. In addition to a few cosmetic enhancements, the suspension has been retuned and the rear bushing strengthened to enhance ride comfort while still maintaining the outstanding handling. In addition, auto on/off headlights and speed-sensitive windshield wipers are now standard, along with a USB iPod® interface, Streaming Audio via Bluetooth®

and DVD playback. The navigation system now includes XM NavTraffic® and NavWeather™ capability. The 2011 Nissan GT-R with a 485-horsepower 3.8-liter twin-turbo V6 engine and high-performance, six-speed, dual-clutch transmission is \$84,060.

A PORSCHE PANAMERA CONVERTIBLE?

Porsche may be planning to build a four-door convertible version of the new Panamera sedan, says *AutoWeek*. Despite inside claims that the car had been canceled, the magazine obtained copies of the European and US patent applications filed in February 2010. The drawings show a design without a traditional B-pillar, which means extensive stiffening of the Panamera floorpan and bulkheads to ensure sufficient structural rigidity and the integrity of a convertible. The head of Porsche's new parent company, Volkswagen Chairman of the Board Martin Winterkorn, is said to be a big supporter of the new car, according to the *AutoWeek* report. The patent applications did not indicate a fabric or metal roof, but the short rear end would suggest a traditional fabric top. Other reports posted on the Internet indicate a targa style top is also being considered.

KEEP RIGHT >>



TUCSON WILL SURPRISE YOU!

Follow the clues to see if you can figure out where our Tucson trekkers will be headed this summer. Join in the adventure, sign up for Tucson's best hotel and resort deals, and enter to win a summer full of fun at TUCSONWILLSURPRISEYOU.COM



Photography by Jackie Alpers

Tucson
Real. Natural. Arizona.

Audi R8 GT



AUDI ADDS SUPER FAST R8 GT MODEL

▲ Audi is keeping the R8 sports car fresh and in the limelight by continuing to offer new variations. The latest is the R8 GT, which is more powerful, lighter and therefore, faster. The output of its 5.2-liter V10 has been increased to 560 hp; vehicle weight has been reduced by 221 lbs. so that it now accelerates from zero to 62 mph in 3.6 seconds and reaches a top speed of 198.84 mph. One highlight of the R8 GT is the standard LED headlights, which use light-emitting diodes for all functions. The taillights, which also use LED technology, have dark housings with panes of clear glass. The exclusive series is limited to 333 units and each car has a badge with its production number on the shift lever knob.

FORD POLICE INTERCEPTOR CONCEPT

With the Crown Victoria being phased out in late 2011, Ford does not intend to give up dominance of the police car market, as they illustrated recently with the introduction of the all-new, purpose-build Police Interceptor model. Starting from the Ford Taurus engineers worked with Ford's Police Advisory Board of law enforcement professionals, which provided input on key vehicle attributes such as safety, performance, durability. The Interceptor comes with two powertrain

options, including a 3.5-liter V6 delivering at least 263 horsepower and 3.5-liter EcoBoost™ V6 twin-turbocharged, direct-injection engine with at least 365 horsepower and 350 ft.-lb. of torque. Both engines are attached to a high-capacity six-speed SelectShift Automatic™ transmission. The base engine has front-wheel drive and the EcoBoost is equipped with a sophisticated torque-sensing all-wheel-drive system.

JAPAN: WORLD CHARGING STANDARD?

Japanese automakers have formed a coalition called CHAdeMo, which encompasses auto manufacturers, including Nissan and Toyota, Tokyo Electric Power Co., the Japanese government and 154 other partner companies from around the world with a goal to create a world standard for electric vehicle (EV) charging. With a standard charging technology in place, it will be easier for companies to gain consumer acceptance for electric vehicles. Also by creating a common fast-charge, each manufacturer could cut development costs, while encouraging the use of the EVs.

GM FUEL CELL TESTS: 1.3 MILLION MILES

Over the last 30 months, General Motors has been testing 119 fuel cell electric vehicles as part of the Project Driveway

program. The real-world testing put these advanced fuel cell vehicles in the hands of everyday drivers and since the program started they have logged nearly 1.3 million miles in everyday driving in cities around the world. As a result of that testing and advanced engineering work, GM has been able to reduce the fuel cell system to a size that can be packaged in the same space as a traditional four-cylinder engine, and they say commercial production can be ready by 2015. The most recent iteration is also 220 pounds lighter than the original and it uses about one-third the platinum that was used in the first Chevrolet Equinox Fuel Cell electric vehicles that were used in the Project Driveway.

ELECTRIC NISSAN LEAF AT \$32,780

Nissan is taking an aggressive position on the pricing of its new electric-powered Leaf sedan with prices starting as low as \$32,780 before a \$7,500 federal tax credit for which the Nissan Leaf will be fully eligible. That makes the consumer's after-tax net value of the vehicle \$25,280. Additionally, there is an array of state and local incentives available in some states and localities. The vehicle at the SV trim level is well equipped with a variety of



Russian Roulette.



When is a cell phone a weapon? Whenever you drive a car and use one. It's that simple. And that deadly. Last year, nearly 6,000 fatalities and over half a million injuries were caused by distracted drivers. In fact, texting behind the wheel is so dangerous that it can impair a driver's response time by 18% - or the seconds it takes to miss a stop sign, run an intersection and broadside a family.

Whatever you have to say can wait. Unless it's goodbye.™



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2011 Chevrolet Cruze



standard features, including an advanced navigation system and Internet/smart phone connectivity to the vehicle, enabling pre-heat/pre-cool and charging control. The average cost for the charging dock plus installation will be \$2,200 and is eligible for a 50 percent federal tax credit up to \$2,000. At current rates, it will cost less than \$3 to "fill up" the Leaf. Nissan started taking reservations in April online at NissanUSA.com.

HIGH ECONOMY CRUZE AT DEALERS

▲ Cruzing into dealerships this summer (2010) is Chevrolet's most efficient car ever. Available in four trim levels : RS, LT, LTZ and Eco, the 2011 Chevrolet Cruze is the first in a family of all-new small and compact cars designed to offer excellent fuel economy, high quality and top safety ratings. The 2011 Chevrolet Cruze is powered by a new generation of highly efficient, small-displacement engines, including the Ecotec 1.4L turbo and the Ecotec 1.8L. The Ecotec 1.4L turbo is standard on Eco, LT and LTZ models and helps the Cruze Eco achieve an estimated 40 mpg on the highway (with a standard six-speed manual transmission), which is expected to be the best fuel economy in the compact segment. The axle ratio on the manual-transmission model is also optimized for fuel economy, while helping the car

deliver confident performance. Chevrolet estimates the Cruze Eco will deliver 0-60 mph performance of about 10 seconds with the manual transmission and nine seconds with the six-speed automatic. Chevrolet engineers have logged more than 4 million miles in quality and durability testing worldwide, making Cruze one of the most real world-tested products prior to a US launch.

NEW PLATFORM FOR CAMARO AND CTS

The current generation Chevrolet Camaro could get a bit smaller in 2015 when it is bolted to the same Alpha platform being developed for the smaller Cadillac ATS, according to an industry leak. The new Alpha platform is cheaper to build and lighter weight making it more suitable for the Camaro. The new size would be closer to the size of the Hyundai Genesis Coupe, or about 182-inches long. The Alpha platform size is smaller and more "international". It will become the basis for a full range of smaller ATS models including a sedan, coupe, wagon and convertible. The good news is the Alpha platform will likely find its way under a number of low-volume rear drive General Motors offerings. The leak also says the Cadillac's will use an enlarged version of the Alpha platform. In the process, however, the Cadillac CTS Coupe and Wagon

will both be dropped after the 2013 model year. It is possible the CTS Coupe will return "closer in size and purpose to the BMW 6 Series."

NEW SUBARU WRX STI: TWO BODIES

For the first time, Subaru is offering its famous rally style WRX STi performance car in two body styles, 5-door and 4-door. In addition, the 2011 model features significantly revised suspension tuning and lighter 18-inch wheels for even sharper handling. The 2010 WRX STi Special Edition previewed some of the suspension enhancements, which have now migrated to the 2011 WRX STi. Extensive chassis development, including testing on Germany's famed Nürburgring racetrack, has resulted in the best-handling Impreza WRX STi models Subaru has ever offered. The 2011 WRX STi continues as the ultimate-performance Subaru with its high-boost 305-hp turbocharged/ intercooled 4-cyl. Boxer engine and 6-speed manual transmission. The STi also features Multi-Mode Driver Controlled Center Differential (DCCD) version of Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive with three "Auto" modes, as well as a manual mode with six driver-selectable differential lock settings. ■

Auto News Update is compiled from a variety of industry sources for *Arizona Driver Magazine* by **BILL & BARBARA SCHAFFER** of *Auto Digest*.



Join Us!
1st - 5th September 2010



Following in the footsteps of ten successful European and USA car rallies, The Great American Run is bringing its unique driving experience back to the USA, taking place on September 1st starting in California and finishing with a final night party, where the winner will be awarded with the trophy.

So come and join us for a 1650-mile road trip with stunning scenery, winding mountain roads, wild parties, fantastic track day and plush hotels

- THIS IS THE GREAT AMERICAN RUN -

We even include a rental car for you to compete with if need be*

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www.greatamericanrun.com

* Note: main driver must be over 25 for free rental car. Free rental car subject to availability



MONTEREY PENINSULA AUCTIONS



Gooding & Company Pebble Beach Equestrian Center Saturday-Sunday, August 14-15, 2010

Gooding & Company, the official auction house of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, has consigned three extraordinary collector cars—"from Hollywood to historic race cars"—for its annual Pebble Beach Auctions: a legendary Mercedes-Benz once owned jointly by two of the Marx Brothers, a winning 1956 Maserati 200 SI raced by Sir Stirling Moss and an award-winning 1951 Ferrari 340 America from the estate of devoted enthusiast Mr. Gil Nickel.

Today's Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance continues to attract the best automobiles in the world. In a recent interview, the Pebble Beach Concours Chairman Sandra Button said, "The Pebble Beach Auctions are now viewed as leading indicators for the worldwide collector car and luxury car markets." Gooding & Company's 2010 Pebble Beach Auctions will be held at the Pebble Beach Equestrian Center, adjacent to the grounds of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Preview days begin Wednesday, August 11 and continue through Sunday, August 15. The auctions start at 5:00 pm Saturday and 6:00 pm Sunday. The auction catalog is \$100 and admits two to the viewing and the auction. An individual ticket is \$40. Additional auction information is available at www.goodingco.com, where the auction will also be broadcast live. You can also find information and up-to-the-minute results by following Gooding & Company on Facebook and on Twitter @GoodingCompany.

Mecum Auction Hyatt Regency Resort and Spa on Del Monte Golf Course Friday-Saturday, August 13-14, 2010

Mecum Auction, headquartered in northern Illinois, stopped in Arizona early last year with Championship 1965 Daytona Cobra Coupe CSX 2601. The priceless car was carefully transported to the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving at Firebird International Raceway (see May/June 2009 Arizona Driver), where Bondurant drove it for the first time in 40 years. Next stop? Mecum's inaugural Monterey auction, where the priceless car would learn its price. And that price? \$7.25 million—a new record for an American car sold at auc-

tion. Not a bad start in their new venue.

The Mecum event, though the newest addition to the week, is very convenient to the rest of the events, at the Hyatt Regency Resort and Spa on Del Monte Golf Course, close to downtown Monterey, just off Highway One, and en route to both the Concorso Italiano and the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca.

Mecum at Monterey Muscle Cars & More starts with a preview on the golf course grounds, Thursday from noon to 5:00 pm. The auction itself runs Friday and Saturday (August 13-14) starting at 10:00 am. The auction will broadcast live in HD Theater, a Discovery Network on Friday and Saturday, 1:00-5:00 pm. For complete details, visit www.mecum.com.

RM Auctions Portola Hotel & Spa and Monterey Conference Center Thursday-Saturday, August 12-14, 2010

RM Auctions, celebrating its 25th anniversary, says this will be their most significant auction offering in Monterey history. Extended to three days, the sale will showcase over 200 automobiles, with no fewer than 16 expected to surpass the magic million dollar mark.

RM Auctions at Monterey comprises the following blue-chip categories: Sports and Racing, American Classics, European Elegance and a Thursday evening kickoff dedicated to Fabulous Fords. Taking advantage of RM's global network of clients, investment-quality cars have been sourced from around the world. RM also continues to present important examples from the estate of the late John O'Quinn. Taking center stage in Sports and Racing is the 1958 Ferrari 250 "Pontoon Fender" Testa Rossa, 0738 TR, which they forecast as the most important and valuable car ever to be offered during Monterey's annual auctions. Joining a diverse roster of Ferraris is an authentic and original 1931 Bugatti Type 51, raced extensively in period.

American-built classics include a custom 1933 Packard Twelve Custom Dietrich Coupe, a 1931 Duesenberg Model J Convertible Sedan, a multiple-award-winning 1930 Stutz Model M Supercharged Coupe and a rare 1948 Tucker 48 Sedan, one of only 51 original examples built. European coachbuilt cars include a multiple-award-winning 1938 Delahaye 135

MS Sport Roadster, a supercharged 1936 Mercedes-Benz 540 K Special Cabriolet, an early 1913 Rolls-Royce 40/50-hp Silver Ghost "London to Edinburgh" Torpedo and a 1938 Talbot-Lago T150-C Lago Speciale Teardrop Coupe. Thursday night's Fabulous Fords include one of the earliest surviving Fords in existence, a 1903 Ford Model A Rear Entrance Tonneau.

The auction preview runs Wednesday-Friday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, with Thursday night's auction running 7:00-10:00 pm, and Friday and Saturday's auctions scheduled for 6:00 pm to midnight. For complete information, visit www.rmauctions.com/montereycarlist.

Russo and Steele Monterey Marriott Hotel Thursday-Saturday, August 12-14, 2010

Russo and Steele has added a third sale date to its 10th annual auction event in Monterey this August. (As in Scottsdale, they are officially calling this a 10th Anniversary, though the second year would be the first anniversary, and so on.) The Monterey auction event will present their trademark range of European sports, American muscle, hot rods and customs. The event is again located at the epicenter of historic downtown Monterey, the Monterey Marriott Hotel.

The auction kicks off Thursday, August 12 with a hosted cocktail reception, as usual, but it will start at 3:00 pm, leading into the start of the auction at 5:00 pm.

"(With) a 25% increase in bidder registration already, expanding the show into a three evening program was the natural evolution," explained Drew Alcazar, owner of Russo and Steele. "Our 10th Anniversary has received tremendous amounts of attention and limitless amounts of support from the entire collector automobile industry."

Significant vehicles offered at this event include triple-black 1965 Shelby Cobra CSX2461, restored to a very high standard and equipped with correct knock-off English-style wire wheels, a walnut steering wheel and racing-inspired Weber carburetion, and a 1933 Auburn Salon Boattail Speedster, inspected by the ACD with certification completed in April of 1997, and winner of Best in Show and the Prestigious AB Jenkins Award at the October 2009 West Coast Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg meet in Santa Maria, California.

Check out www.russoandsteele.com for updates and additional information. ■

CONCOURS AND CONCORSO



Photo: Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance

Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance The 18th Fairway at Pebble Beach Sunday, August 15, 2010

Once each year, on the third Sunday in August, 175 of the most prized collector cars and motorcycles in the world roll onto what is often called the best finishing hole in golf—the famed eighteenth fairway at Pebble Beach. Tire meets turf and transformation occurs: the stage is set for one of the most competitive events in the automotive world. The occasion is the prestigious Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

The Concours is not a contest of speed, but of excellence. Automobiles and motorcycles are judged for their historical accuracy, their technical merit and their style. And the best garner reward and recognition.

Thousands of enthusiasts are on hand to celebrate these vehicles and enjoy the company of others who share their passion. The 2010 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, on Sunday, August 15, will feature Alfa Romeo, Pierce-Arrow and Jaguar and will celebrate the designs of Ghia. The event will also welcome Hot Rods back to the show field, particularly lakesters and Bonneville racers, as well as Indy Cars, and its second annual class of motorcycles will focus on classic American bikes built prior to 1960.

This year's event celebrates several anniversaries, starting with the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance and for Jaguar, whose heritage is highly intertwined. The Pebble Beach Concours began in tandem with the first Pebble Beach Road Race in 1950, when new sports cars were the focus of a burgeoning community of car enthusiasts. And Jaguars, which first appeared in 1935, were all the rage. The marque sought to marry grace with pace, just as the twin events did. Almost immediately, Jaguar, Concours and the Road Race were linked.

Flash forward to 2010, when the 60th anniversary of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance will focus on the 75th anniversary of Jaguar. Among the cars expected on the famed eighteenth fairway are the 1935 SS90 that served as the prototype for the first car named Jaguar and early examples of both the SS1 and the SS100. Also on hand will be several remarkable race cars, including the first C-type sent to the US, a Le Mans-winning D-



type, and the prototype XJ13. Key show cars, like the actual E-type that debuted at the New York Auto Show, will also be on display.

In addition to Jaguar, the 60th Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance will feature Alfa Romeo and Pierce-Arrow, showcase Italian designer Ghia.

As the anniversaries continue, one special class will focus on the 50th anniversary of the Ferrari 250 GT SWB Berlinetta, and another on the centennial of the Indianapolis 500. Hot Rod lakesters and Bonneville racers as well as Prewar American Motorcycles also will be featured in special classes at this year Concours.

Although the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance arguably anchors the entire week's existence, the main event itself ultimately takes place just one day, Sunday, August 15. The field opens to entrants at dawn, and judging commences at 9:00 am. The event opens to spectators at 10:30 am, and awards are presented from 1:30-5:30 pm. For more information on the Pebble Beach Concours, visit www.pebblebeachconcours.net.

Concorso Italiano Laguna Seca Golf Ranch Friday, August 13, 2010

On Friday, August 13, Concorso Italiano will feature 800-1000 or more vehicles of Italian origin, in an atmosphere that puts the emphasis upon the vehicles on display, conversations between people who love and appreciate them, and elements of Italian style such as fashion, food, music and art—all on the beautiful grounds of the Laguna Seca Golf Ranch.

The Ranch, crafted by Robert Trent Jones Senior and Junior, is nestled among oak-studded hillsides near Monterey, providing breathtaking views of the gorgeous Central Coast landscape.

Take everything ever made in Italy, from fashion to Ferraris, sprinkle it with some red wine, slather it in sunshine, and top it with elegance and fun, and you have Concorso Italiano.

The event includes categories for Italian vehicles, Italian motorcycles and, well, non-Italian vehicles. Ferrari Club of America Pacific Region judging returns to the Concorso Italiano this year.

Concorso Italiano runs on Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, with plenty of well-organized parking on site. For more information, visit them at www.concorso.com. ■

RACES



Photo: Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca

Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca Friday-Sunday, August 13-15, 2010

The Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion has developed a new logo for the renamed event, celebrating the pedigree, spirit and history of Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca with the track's signature turn, The Corkscrew, the oak tree that drivers drove under before the turn (which is alive and well, but was moved a few feet during track modifications for the Red Bull US Grand Prix), and The Corkscrew's curbing. The oak tree and the curbing are the same landmarks that legends Jimmy Clark, Sir Jackie Stewart, Dan Gurney, Sir Stirling Moss, Phil Hill, Wayne Rainey and Kenny Roberts Sr. have used for racing at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca.

Among the 19 race groups competing at the event, sublime green and red, white and blue American V8s will join Ferrari GTs, Bugatti Type 35s and Lotus 77s in the paddock. There will be a dedicated grid of 40 Bugatti race cars in the Bugatti Grand Prix, plus featured races for Stock Cars with drum brakes, Trans-Am, and Formula 1 race cars that competed between 1966 and 1983. 44 Trans-Am race cars from 1966-1972 include two of the three 1970 Plymouth Barracudas that All American Racers built for the 1970 Trans-Am season.

"The Trans-Am paddock and race is one that the fans gravitate to," explained Gill Campbell, CEO/general manager for Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. "The small-block Chevys and Dodges that Mark Donohue and Dan Gurney drove here are a treat to see powering though The Corkscrew once again."

The Trans-Am Series, created in 1966 by the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA), was best known for competition among American V8 sedans such as the Ford Mustang, Chevrolet Camaro, Plymouth Barracuda, Mercury Cougar, AMC Javelin, Pontiac Firebird and Dodge Challenger. Every "pony car" manufacturer was represented with a factory team and top driving talent.

The Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion is honoring one of the true legends of motorsports: Dan Gurney, the cars he raced and the cars he built.

For Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion tickets and information, and to learn about the Pre-Reunion scheduled August 7 and 8, visit www.MazdaRaceway.com. ■

Open-air cocoon

E-Class blows its top... and Mercedes-Benz hopes you hardly notice

STORY BY JOE SAGE
PHOTOS BY GREG JAREM

When we wrote about the stunning restyling and extensive reengineering of the Mercedes-Benz E-Class at its sedan and coupe launch in 2009 (see July/August 2009 *Arizona Driver*), we compared it to the quiet middle sister who was suddenly all grown up.

There are two ways to look at E-Class evolution, partly consolidation and partly expansion. Mercedes-Benz has long had a wide and deep array of models, but they had developed an increasingly complex alphabet soup to identify them all. C-Class, E-Class, S-Class—that breakdown is

simple enough to comprehend (officially, these are compact, executive and luxury classes.) But CLK, CLS and others required a broader familiarity with the whole lineup, including history, evolution and cross-pollination. This has been begging for simplification. And with a pecking-order-conscious customer base, why risk identifying a model with a lower stratum (e.g. having a midmarket CLK start with “C”)?

At the same time, Mercedes-Benz has been giving the E-Class a lot of attention, in its own right and in terms of its position in the lineup. The result last year was the integration of the former CLK coupe into the E-Class group as an E-Class Coupe, complementing the all-new E-Class Sedan, both of which were introduced last year in both 350 and 550 configurations, followed by AMG models.

This year, the twain meet again, as the CLK Cabriolet is now replaced by the new

E-Class Cabriolet. At the heart of the newly developed E-Class Cabriolet is the E-Class Coupe, which itself is more C-derived than E-derived, with the 108.7-inch wheelbase of the C-Class and a track that almost matches it (within a couple of tenths of an inch, about 2” narrower than the E-Class Sedan). The Cabriolet matches the Coupe in basic model lineup: an E350 with a 24-valve V6 generating 268 hp, and an E550 with a 32-valve V8 generating 382 hp. All feature 7-speed automatics with Touch Shift manual shift control, ESP stability control, advanced suspension front and rear, and speed-sensitive rack-and-pinion power steering. They carry the same dual-circuit four-wheel power brakes with ABS and emergency-sensing Brake Assist, though the Cabriolet is a little heavier thus a touch less quick: 0-to-60 times are 6.2 seconds for the E350 Coupe but 6.7 for the E350

KEEP RIGHT >>

TENN-NC TRAVEL NOTES

With hubs in both Phoenix and Charlotte, US Airways has taken us to North Carolina quite a few times. Sort of. The Mercedes-Benz E-Class Cabriolet launch represented our first actual boots on the ground there. And no Charlotte airport this trip: we flew via Houston eastbound to Knoxville TN (and headed to Detroit after this event).

Siting a vehicle launch is pretty challenging, when you think about it. The manufacturer needs a locale with an inspired, carefully researched and mapped course, with decent travel access for media people



Joe Sage

from all points, they need to transport significant numbers of vehicles in and out, and they have to pin down lodging and a bite to eat. The Mercedes team pulled it all off, and the lodging and bite to eat were superb.

On 4200 acres near Walland, Tennessee (in turn 18 miles outside Knoxville), Blackberry Farm comprises just 62 units (31 primo duplex cabins) and lots and lots of open space. There are ponds, woods, tennis, and a working farm from which they derive salads, fruits, vegetables, lamb's milk yogurt, and, well, lamb. The farmhouses, restaurants and barns combine modern furnishings with classic country charm. This is a family operation and labor of love; and it doesn't hurt that wine is a particular area of their interest: there are 180,000 bot-



Greg Jarem

tles of wine on premises (or about 3000 bottles per unit). We were told some of our dinner offerings were \$600 bottles.

The road course included challenging top-flight two-lanes, wide-open interstates, cultural highlights (don't miss the casinos and pancake houses of Dollywood's strip), phenomenal Smoky Mountain scenery, lunch at Cucina 24 in lively Asheville NC—and ideal elevation, temperature and speed variations for this vehicle's attributes.

For more information, call 800-648-4252 or visit www.blackberryfarm.com.



Blackberry Farm, near Walland TN, was home base for the E-Class Cabriolet launch. The windshield-topping AIRCAP, rear seat wind block, and AIRSCARF, which feeds a warm breeze to the front occupants' head and neck, are all easily operated from the instrument panel, as are the four windows.



Cabriolet, and 5.0 for the E550 Coupe with a darn close 5.1 for the E550 Cabriolet. (The Cabriolet adds 265 pounds to the vehicle's weight, and the V8 weighs in 100 pounds above the V6. The E550 Cabriolet tops out at 4048 pounds.)

The E-Class Cabriolet has a number of special features that bring a higher-than-ever degree of closed-top comfort to an open car. These include the AIRCAP, new with the introduction of the E-Class Cabriolet, and the AIRSCARF, which we were first exposed to at the launch of the newest SL, two years ago. The AIRCAP controls airflow over the windshield and passenger compartment, and the AIRSCARF provides warming flow around the headrest. We arrived in Tennessee a day after torrential rains (which had given quite a different top-down experience to a previous media group). Our weather was sunny but just a little bit chilly in the morning at higher altitudes: perfect demo weather for this car.

The test route Mercedes-Benz laid out for this launch was ideal for the mission: we started on the Tennessee side and headed through Great Smoky Mountains National Park, achieving a 5048-foot elevation at Newfound Gap on the Tennessee-North Carolina state line. Spring was in the air, and the change from leafy green to not-quite-budding trees as we climbed reflected the change in temperatures. Winding mountain roads were perfect for experiencing the sporting nature of the cars, and the temperature variance was perfect for testing the interior cocoon features.

We drove the V8-powered (and highly

featured) E550 Cabriolet from Tennessee through the Smokies to Asheville NC, then the V6 E350 back to Tennessee, mostly at lower elevations, with some four-lane highways, but still with plenty of enthusiast twists and turns along mountain creeks. As we'd learned last year—driving the E-Class Sedan and E-Class Coupe up into the mountains outside Las Vegas to Spring Mountain Motorsports Ranch—these trim and powerful sport-oriented cars are tops in handling and performance.

The AIRCAP is a clever feature, tackling head-on an issue common to any open car, but which has never been tackled so head-on before. The benefits are especially suited to a four-seater convertible: if you've ever been a rear-seat passenger in an open-top car, you'll know it usually borders on punishment. With the AIRCAP deflectors (and the side windows) raised, the difference in airflow is pronounced, benefiting front-seat driver and passenger quite a bit, but back-seat passengers profoundly.

When there's a chill in the air, the AIRSCARF will spoil you for all time. This generates a warm flow of air from the base of the headrest, around your neck, hardly noticeable in terms of blow and flow but profoundly noticeable in comfort. Heated seats add their usual benefits, too, of course. These features can extend convertible season considerably.

That settles things for cooler times of year, which may be easy for forget about as you read this in Arizona in midsum-

KEEP RIGHT >>

ROLEX MONTEREY MOTORSPORTS REUNION



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AAR ARCHIVES

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Joe Sage

Greg Jarem

Joe Sage

Mercedes-Benz E-Class Cabriolets in both E350 and E550 trim are ready to drop their tops. Green mountain highways and Dolly Parton ruled the day on our superlative test route. When the AIRCAP is deployed, the AIRSCARF is on and the windows are up, convertible comfort reaches a new high.



mer, but what about the hot months? Does the cocoonlike effect, with windows up and AIRCAP deployed, help provide an air-conditioned open cabin with the top down? Do the AIRSCARF and active-ventilated seats cool as well as heat?

We drove from Asheville back to Tennessee in the E350, ready to test out the chill factor. Unfortunately, our E350 was not optioned at the same level as the E550 had been, with among other things no cooled seats. (The seats were also lacking the solid bolstering we'd had in the E550.) So we inquired with one of the Mercedes-Benz engineers on hand.

"Using the active ventilated cooling in the seats, you are pulling cooler air from the bottom of the seat, which actually maintains a really nice, very comfortable level and keeps you dry in the seat," he said. So there's airflow, and if there were indeed cool air down there, that would help. But in an Arizona summer? "We don't use a cold function," he continued, "because it really can be detrimental to your back. You can actually cause overall muscle fatigue by cooling muscle down, so it's something that we're very careful about. Just using a ventilated seat makes a lot more sense, to keep you dry on a really hot day. Think of those days when your shirt's always sticking to the seat and your back is wet; this is something that keeps that from happening. It's really comfortable." Even when it's 117°, we asked. "Even when it's 117," he replied, though his answer faded into a laugh. Apparently there is still no miracle cure for convertible use in a maximum Sonoran

summer. But overall, even here, comfort and usable season are increased.

Some may wonder why Mercedes-Benz didn't opt for a retractable hardtop, especially in light of the other open-top mitigations in the E-Class Cabriolet. Hard tops (and their mechanisms) can add weight, though the E-Class can handle it (with fuel economy also in play). And they add complexity, although Mercedes engineers laugh in the face of such a challenge. (The E-Class is already a technological tour de force that at this stage may even exceed the S-Class.) A retractable hard top also gobbles up considerable trunk space, and that is nearly impossible to mitigate (though the E-Class Cabriolet's trunk loses a fair amount of space to the top, anyway, since it withdraws fully under a flush hard panel). In short, a nice, watertight, sound-proofed soft top wins the day, not only mitigating all of the above, but also remaining consistent with the rest of the lineup—short of the SL and SLK, which have had retractable hard tops for years.

As for driving both the E350 and E550, we had much the same opinions as our co-driver. We were of course spoiled by driving the E550 first. And it was a little unfair that the E350 wasn't as highly optioned. Both of us, for example, struggled for the first 25-30 miles to get our seats really comfortably adjusted in the E350. However, either set of seats can be had in either model, so that's a separate comparison. (Multicontour front seats are part of an Appearance Package, which also adds a 3-spoke sport steering wheel [V8 only], shift paddles [already standard on the V8], Agility Control Sport Suspension [an add-on for the V6], 18" AMG twin 5-spoke alloy wheels, cross-drilled brake rotors [again already on the V8] and rubber-studded pedals. Since what's added from standard varies between the V6 and V8, this package ranges from \$1270 to \$1990; we'd recommend it for either.)

Overall, the yin-yang of the V6 and V8 were a familiar comparison. When we got in the V6, our second car, we were soon on the interstate and found ourselves in a position where we had to punch it on a hill to pass a semi in a pretty tight spot. It responded very well, and we asked ourselves why you would need an 8. However, that was about the last of that thinking. Again, we suffered from the lack of options, which tainted our comparison,



Cockpits of the E550 Cabriolet (top left) and E350 Cabriolet are equally inviting, when similarly equipped. Both the E550's V8 (upper right) and the E350's V6 are strong and capable. The V8 appealed to us more.

yet overall, based on stance, handling and even the finer points of styling detail and prestige, we were surprised to remind ourselves that only 20 percent of sales are the V8. For just a few thousand dollars more, even with the V8's gas guzzler tax (and not much of a fuel mileage deficit, considering), we'd go for the V8 in a heartbeat.

As the E-Class has been broadened and consolidated, there are now 15 models, and prices range from a base of \$48,925 for the E350 Coupe to \$59,675 for the E550 4MATIC (awd) Sport Sedan. There is also an E63 AMG Sedan for \$86,625. (The lineup is also expected to expand a bit more, with a "shooting brake" coupelike wagon likely to follow, based on the Shooting Break [sic] Concept revealed at the recent Beijing auto show.

Note that almost all the 2010 E-Class prices are lower than 2009, as much as 8 percent lower. And note that the Cabriolets are 2011 models. The E-Class Coupe and E-Class Cabriolet replace the CLK, so in their case, prices are either about the same for the E350 (Coupe down \$50, Cabriolet up \$750), about 4 percent lower for the E550 Coupe versus its CLK predecessor, and exactly the same for the E550 Cabriolet compared to the CLK. These prices are achieved despite a fairly staggering increase in technology and creature comforts from 2009 to 2010/11, and the inherent brand value added by moving its designation from CLK to E-Class.

Specifically, the E350 Cabriolet has a

base of \$57,725, while the E550 Cabriolet has a base of \$65,675. In addition to the aforementioned Appearance Package, there is a \$4000 Premium 1 Package that includes the AIRSCARF, heated front seats, and electronics including the Mercedes-Benz COMAND system with hard-drive navigation, rearview camera, Sirius satellite radio, iPod/MP3 interface and a harman/kardon Surround-Sound System. Bump it to \$6450 and you have the Premium 2 Package, upgrading the front seats to heated and active-ventilated, plus adding a bi-xenon lighting package and KEYLESS-GO door and ignition system. To make the most of the E-Class's dazzling new technologies, for \$2650 you can add the DISTRONIC PLUS package, including PRE-SAFE® braking and PARKTRONIC with Parking Guidance. More conventional add-ons include a wood trim package for \$760, and standalones such as rear side airbags, rear spoiler, metallic paint, premium leather, and heated seats for \$750 if you didn't already opt for the Premium Packages.

Despite the gas guzzler threshold being exceeded in the E550 (accordingly taxed), fuel mileage is pretty close: 17/26/20 mpg (city/highway/combined) for the V6 E350 and 15/23/18 mpg for the V8 E550 (EPA estimates). If your budget allows, and if you find the overall math close enough, you may be one of the people who nudges that 20 percent V8 sales figure a bit higher this year. ■

E-CLASS HIGHLIGHTS

SHOOTING BREAK CONCEPT

The Shooting Break [sic] concept, which premiered at Auto China 2010, is evocative of the CLS (and perhaps Dodge Magnum). The concept shows a likely evolution and



merger of the four-door coupe and a sporty Euro-style "shooting brake" into another probable E-Class model—its new wagon or an additional derivative. Wide and flat, the Shooting Break has a roof, high beltline and low windows extending its full length, with a dramatic character line sweeping toward powerful rear wheel arches.

INITIAL QUALITY WINNERS

Mercedes-Benz achieved marked improvement over 2009 in the Initial Quality Study by J.D. Power and Associates for the US market, rising by three places to 3rd place overall. This is their best IQS result since 1990. C-Class took first place in its segment, S-Class took second in its, and the new E-Class secured second place for both the sedan and coupe versions.

OWNER SATISFACTION

Mercedes-Benz took first place among all car brands in a large-scale owner satisfaction survey conducted in Germany by market research institute J.D. Power and Associates. The C-Class and CLK (now part of the E-Class) headed their respective categories. 16,330 respondents had to drive their current model for around two years, covering about 20,000 miles (a cumulative driving experience of over 300 million miles). Assessed were quality, reliability, attractiveness, service and maintenance costs.

HOLLYWOOD

If you saw "Sex and the City 2," you noted that in addition to the Mercedes-Benz S400 HYBRID, Mr. Big was also one of the first to



drive through the streets of New York in the new E-Class Cabriolet. (Samantha also drives the offroad G-Class, while chauffeurs drive luxurious Maybach sedans.)

**AUGUST 21 LONG BEACH
Red Bull Flugtag**



Photo: © Denis Kiero/Red Bull Photoflies

**Four cities including Long Beach
Rainbow Harbor, Long Beach CA, August 21**

We first plugged into the fun and excitement of Red Bull events a few years ago, when an Arizona team led by John Swauger entered the Red Bull Soap Box Derby in Seattle. Swauger had also created clever craft for Tempe Town Lake festivities, from which we quickly discovered the Red Bull Flugtag, which is much along the same lines. While learning more about the Flugtag, we were exposed to the Red Bull Air Race, which we've attended and covered on its San Diego leg the last two years, as Arizona pilot Kirby Chambliss defended his multiple past World Championships. This year, the Red Bull Air Race is not in our area—the US event is in New York City (and there is an event in Windsor, Ontario, sharing its cross-border river course with Detroit).

But have no fear: this year, the Red Bull Flugtag will be nearby, at Rainbow Harbor in Long Beach, a great getaway on a hot August weekend. Fun to enter or fun to watch, you'll want to check this out in detail.

Red Bull Flugtag challenges teams of everyday people to build their cleverest or wildest homemade, human-powered flying machines and pilot them off a 30-foot-high deck in hopes of achieving flight. Or at least on that premise. Flugtag may mean "flying day" in German, but all these craft ultimately splash into the water below. They are judged not only on their flight's distance, but creativity and showmanship as well.

With tongue mostly in cheek, Red Bull sees a clear evolution of humanity to this point, outlining a path from Leonardo da Vinci's drawings in the 1480s, the first real study of flight, through George Cayley's glider designs from 1799 through the 1850s, to German engineer Otto Lilienthal, who survived 2500 early glider flights before succumbing to gravity, on through the Wright Brothers, to jet transport and moon landings... to the first Red Bull Flugtag, held in Vienna in 1991. Since then, over 35 Flugtags have been held around the world, attracting some 300,000 spectators.

The longest flight was 195 feet in 2000; the longest in the US was 155 feet at Nashville in 2007. But go to YouTube, search Red Bull Flugtag, and you'll soon see flight duration is much beside the point. Tons of fun.

For more info, visit www.redbullflugtagusa.com. ■

**SEPTEMBER 1-5
Great American Run**



Photo: Cannonball Run World Events, Ltd.

**Live life to the fullest: one week, no limits
Secret route starts in the Los Angeles area**

There are a number of regional and cross-country road rally events held every year. Vintage events such as Arizona's Copperstate 1000 or the Colorado Grand are one thing. But in 1971, when Brock Yates launched the first Cannonball Run (the inspiration for the *Smokey and the Bandit* films), things got a little wilder. That event lives on with Brock Yates Jr.'s One Lap of America, though the highest speeds are now taken to a series of racetracks.

On a parallel path, Cannonball Run World Events Ltd., based in the UK, runs high-panache multi-day road rallies in the US, Europe, the Middle East and beyond. This September, they bring us The Great American Run.

On September 1, entrants will take their place on the starting line at Laguna Beach CA. Approximately 1850 miles in total, the route will cover scenic but sometimes very challenging driving. The route is chosen and pre-driven by Tim Porter, also chief of UBB Mustang, and will test ability and stamina to the fullest. Broken down into checkpoint stages, the route remains a closely guarded secret and will only be revealed at the opening checkpoint each morning, though we do know that the event will start and finish around the Los Angeles area.

Also avoiding any serious clashes with Smokey, they cleverly base the rally's winner on who can come closest to an average 61 mph speed through the duration of the event. The route navigates through a series of checkpoints, with a target time set for each stage. The victorious team will take the title at the Final Night Gala Dinner on Saturday. Things wrap up with a farewell breakfast the morning of the 5th.

The Great American Run is limited to 50 entries. Entry is \$7995 for one car and two drivers, and includes luxury hotels (twin/double rooms) with a welcome drink at each, secure overnight parking, breakfasts, evening meals, VIP entrance to parties, route maps, official car decals, Final Night Gala and Awards Ceremony at a prestigious venue ... and a shot at the title.

If this event sounds great to you, you probably have a perfect car for it. However, at press time, the eventors were offering a free rental car (e.g. Camaro or others) for early entrants, perfect if flying to participate. For full event details, visit www.thegreatamericanrun.com. ■

**OCTOBER 10-14
Gran Turismo Grand**



Photo: Gran Turismo Grand

**Luxury lifestyle vintage road rally
1000 miles California north coast and wine country**

The Gran Turismo Grand's inaugural road rally will travel nearly 1,000 miles through some of the most spectacular roads and scenery of northern California, the second week of October during the start of fall and wine country's "crush" season.

The Gran Turismo Grand was conceived after its founders had attended numerous road rallies they felt were not only extremely exclusive, but too exclusive. They felt that too many of their fellow collector car enthusiasts may have been unable to participate because their car was a year too old, or because they drove a muscle car instead of a European sports car. Thus, the Gran Turismo Grand was created with wider parameters, so more drivers could enjoy the ride.

A wider variety of automobiles does not mean you will lose on the quality of the rally. The Gran Turismo Grand creates its own air of exclusivity by providing an all-inclusive, luxury-lifestyle adventure, yet to a wider number of enthusiasts looking for that once-in-a-lifetime experience. The inaugural journey will have you driving through breathtaking scenery, overnighting at charming hotels and resorts, dining on gourmet meals accompanied by the finest wines, and also including private tours, racing and more.

An early version of the event's route map online indicates stops from Monterey on the central coast to Mendocino on the northern coast, with highlights also in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Napa-Sonoma wine country.

All roads lead to lifetime experiences with fellow enthusiasts who welcome the opportunity to enjoy their automobiles together on the open road. Entries are limited to 35 teams, with two people per team, driving a combination of European sports cars, race cars, and muscle cars of distinction built prior to 1980.

Although the event is held in northern California, Gran Turismo Grand is a Tempe-based company. To submit your entry for the Gran Turismo Grand you may apply online (with additional documentation to be sent by mail) or fill out a faxable entry application also found online. For full event details and application information, visit www.granturismogrand.com. ■



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1950 John Deere R



1959 Ferrari 250 G1-1DF (S/N 1321)



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Ford's frisky, frugal Fiesta...

not to be confused with the new Ford Focus nor with the old Ford Fiesta

By Barbara Schaffer
Photos by Joe Sage



After years of a philosophy that seemed to advocate bigger is better, Ford is going BIG into small cars for 2011 as it brings the Fiesta to the US market.

As a centerpiece of the Ford lineup in Europe for years, the newest version became the bestselling car in Europe for the first quarter of 2010. Now, Fiesta is ready to move into the US market this summer.

Fans of the European version will be happy to note that the US model is the same as the car sold in Europe, and that means it's going to be fun to drive, as I found out recently at the US introduction.

Small means the Ford Fiesta is about the same size as the Honda Fit and Toyota Yaris. It's available in two very stylish designs: a four-door sedan and a cool-looking five-door hatchback, both available in a multitude of vibrant colors including a Lime Squeeze Metallic that matches my cell phone perfectly. Interestingly, though the sedan is more than a foot longer than the hatchback, they have the same interior room and the hatchback has more cargo space.

The interior is exciting as the exterior, with sculpted surfaces, contrasting colors and a center stack patterned after the keypad on a mobile phone. With front bucket seats and a 60/40 split rear seat, Fiesta is a five-seater, but plan on putting only close friends in the back seat, because it will be tight for three adults. The cloth seat inserts are made from recycled materials and, in a way, the optional leather seats with contrasting color piping are recycled from cows.

A 120-hp 1.6-liter DOHC four-cylinder is under the hood, attached to a standard five-speed manual transmission. There is also a new six-speed double clutch automatic transmission as a \$1,070 option, that gets the same fuel economy as the manual.

The Fiesta's acceleration is strong, going from 0 to 60 mph in 8.7 seconds. With fuel economy at 30 mpg city and 40 mpg highway, the Fiesta is very comparable to the hybrids.

Engineers didn't pull a bunch of outdated equipment out of the old parts bin to build this lowest priced Ford. Fiesta is loaded with new things like a driver-side knee airbag, integrated blind spot mirrors, capless fuel filler, push-button start and ambient lighting, along with many other cool features. I especially like the SYNC communication and entertainment system and the four-inch multifunction display mounted in the top of the center stack.

For better driver control, Fiesta has a new Electric Power Assist Steering that includes a Pull-Drift Compensation system to keep the car on track in high wind conditions or when the road is not flat. It also has an Advance-Trac® electronic stability control system, the

FORD SELECTS TWO ARIZONANS FOR FIESTA MOVEMENT

Two Valley residents were among the first to drive the Ford Fiesta as part of the Fiesta Movement Chapter 2, a social media initiative designed by Ford to create excitement and buzz around the compact car. Dubbed Fiesta Agents, Austin Baker, 28, of Mesa and Sunny Thaper, 26, of Phoenix formed one of 20 two-person teams selected out of more than 1,000 applicants nationwide to compete to win their own Fiestas.

Baker and Thaper completed a series of competitive missions over three months to leverage their communities, ranging from throwing a free concert featuring a popular local band to producing their own short film.

After completing each challenge, agents produced and placed creative content online at www.fiestamovement.com. Although they didn't win the Fiestas in the end, Team Phoenix did get to cruise around town in a Fiesta for a few months and even created a custom design for the car. Can't beat a free ride—especially one as fun as a Fiesta.

Photo courtesy Ford Motor Company



Arizona residents Austin Miles, left, and Sunny Thaper were among the first in the country to drive the new Ford Fiesta, as part of Fiesta Movement Chapter 2.

steering wheel has tilt and telescoping adjustments, and the automatic transmission has hill start assist.

The Fiesta sedan comes in three trim levels—S, SE and SEL—with prices ranging from \$13,995 for the S to \$16,995 for the SEL (including destination charge). The hatchback is available as a SE and SEL, with the SE priced at \$15,795 and the SEL at \$17,795. Ordering a loaded SEL hatchback with sunroof, leather and all the extras will run the price to around \$22,000.

The Ford Fiesta was a much better car and better value than I expected at this price point. It's very fun to drive, quiet and quite comfortable for a small car, and the styling is distinctive. I think it's going to be another big winner for Ford. ■



FIESTA SEL LOGBOOK

- Keyless entry was our first surprise, very welcome, with an airport pickup and hands full. We put the suitcase in the trunk and there was our second surprise: it is REALLY big (and as Barbara notes, the hatchback holds even more). Third surprise: leather.
- We received a pre-release Fiesta, nicely equipped with a comfort upgrade package, heated seats, keyless entry/start, perimeter alarm and trim. Pricing was still t.b.d.
- Really nice control layout. Nifty blind spot mirrors in the corner of both side mirrors. Liking the setup. 101° on the readout; air is not automatic, so we have it on max, and turning the fan up, now we'll cool off.
- The seat forward-and-back is manual, surprisingly, with all the other tricks.
- We feel our front-drive nemesis straight away, a little torquey on steering, and that's while going straight, from the first red light.
- Has a light automatic shift, sometimes but not always with a little hesitation. The power curve seems to have a lack of torque or a weird shift pattern. We'd like to try the manual (even with its lower fuel economy).
- It holds its own once it's in traffic, though from a red light, it's a little short on power for the mean streets of Phoenix. A colleague inquired whether this car has grunt, because the Euro-spec Fiesta he drove at Dearborn didn't. This should be the same. Driving around, we're thinking grunt? No. But *pep*, it has plenty of pep.
- Over-the-shoulder 3/4 rear visibility inside is really good, lots of glass.
- Even in default settings on FM, this is one rockin' audio system... great sound, great pulse in the knees and seat. It may be the car your friends want to take when tunes matter.
- Cabin size is great, easy to enter. At 6'2", we start to duck but don't need to.
- Every time we get in, we wish we had a center armrest to lean on, and a console would be even better, though there are several cupholders and a decent glovebox.
- The center stack's night display at top is red, imparting a fighter jet feeling, with green icons to the left. The cupholders have purple lighting. Pretty sure this has a neat touch interface to rotate some colors.
- The diamond-shaped keypad is a little difficult to operate without looking... or with.
- Maybe it could use a few more horses, but it's peppy, and we wouldn't want to lose that magic "40" on the fuel mileage number. It could use a little bit larger wheels, mostly for style, but it handles okay. It has plenty of space inside, plenty more in the trunk, great audio, certainly has a great price.
- Ford has found another recipe for hotcakes—expect to see a lot of these on the road very soon. —Joe Sage

Q: Are customers still lining up for big SUVs? A: QX.

With the introduction of the all-new second generation QX, Infiniti demonstrates their belief that there is still a market for full-size luxury SUVs. The 2011 QX56 can still carry eight adults and their belongings in luxurious space and (when equipped) can tow up to 8,500 pounds.

But is there still a market for such a luxury behemoth? We headed to its launch in Louisville, Kentucky, to find out. The first information we received concerned sales. Everyone knows 2009 was a dismal benchmark for the entire industry, but Infiniti did post 2010 sales up 14.4% for the first quarter, up 46.2% in April year-over-year, and

in March had their best sales month since August 2009. Figures specific to the QX were far more dramatic: first-quarter sales were up a whopping 216% year-over-year, with March alone representing 40% more sold than in the entire three-month first quarter of 2009. This gave the Infiniti QX record market share of about 9.6%—at the end of an old model's cycle. The buying public is clearly finding much to like in the QX, and dealers are reportedly excited—and surprised—at the interest level in the QX (having anticipated more buzz for the new 2011 Infiniti M). In fact, during Infiniti's sponsorship of the NCAA Final Four, their presence on Facebook skyrocketed from 17,000 to 65,000—overnight.

The big question would be how to improve on such success. For an

answer, Infiniti asked owners for comments and ratings of the QX—unfiltered—and set up a team to respond to their interests and remedy any concerns.

The company had debated whether there should even be another QX in this day and age, given its large size and relative fuel consumption. What they learned is that the needs and desires of the marketplace remain much the same: the QX appeals to young buyers with the highest income and with children (future drivers). This core constituency uses the vehicle as intended—for kids, groups, distance and comfort. And most have another car: for 55% of current owners, another vehicle in the household is also a luxury vehicle. The segment is not large, but it is very appealing—and growing. So a new QX was enthusiastically put into development.

The 2011 QX56 is lower, wider and



longer, but also lighter. A new roof rack structure inspired a 3-inch drop in roof height, to accommodate parking structures and garage doors. The big SUV moves to 20-inch (or optional 22-inch) wheels and a wider track.

Inside, great attention has been given to finishes, materials, appointments and controls, which they say are modeled after those found in an executive jet, creating a high-level personal environment for any driver or passenger. The second row is particularly spacious and well appointed. (At one stop, they made sure we compared the back-seat experience of the QX to that in a Cadillac Escalade.) The third row benefits from a power reclining and folding feature (with a manual return), and, unique to the segment, it reclines up to 20 degrees (again reminiscent of executive aircraft). Three rows of passengers are kept comfortable with a tri-zone climate control system.

Other interior features include standard hard drive navigation, an Around View™ monitor, Bose 13-speaker premium audio, available perforated semi-aniline leather seating and an available Tri-Zone Entertainment System that allows

different sources to be played at the same time. The kids will have no complaints.

The second-generation Infiniti QX has been totally redesigned from the body-on-frame platform up. New technology includes a Hydraulic Body Motion Control system as part of the Deluxe Touring Package. Its new high-stiffness frame structure enhances ride comfort while reducing noise, vibration and harshness. A new 400-hp, 5.6-liter V8 engine with Variable Valve Event & Lift, Direct Injection gasoline feed and 7-speed automatic transmission gets about 10 percent better fuel economy than its predecessor (EPA estimates are 14/20/16 for city/highway/combined, in either two- or four-wheel drive).

Upon entering, the QX seemed spacious but not wide inside. It's clearly long, clearly roomy, but seems pleasingly compact. To us, this reinforced the executive jet claim. It's definitely wide on the outside, though, giving us a couple of tight fits along rural guardrails. Our Kentucky drive gave the new QX a thorough workout. We had horrendous weather and lots of rain. The automatic

KENTUCKY TRAVEL NOTES

• The I-65 corridor, from Gary IN to Mobile AL, is a prime artery of the automotive industry in the eastern US. I-65 passes through Franklin TN, just south of Nashville and home to Nissan North America, Inc., parent company to Infiniti in the US, and through Louisville KY to the north. The folks from Nissan—still dealing with the aftermath of devastating May floods in the Nashville area—put together a great drive route for the new Infiniti QX56 from Louisville to Versailles KY (forget your European history and say “ver-sales”), just shy of Lexington.

Nonstop flights to Louisville (SDF) are hard to come by (apparently with just one a



day on Southwest). We flew east on United via Chicago, with a two-and-a-half-hour delay in departure made up for by a 7-minute dash a considerable distance through O'Hare. We returned on US Air via Charlotte.

Louisville from the air looked as though little had changed in quite some time, which was actually kind of pleasant—the buildings appeared to be ones that may have defined the skyline four or five decades ago. Once on the ground, however, you find a lively city with a newly expanded exposition and convention center, lots of historic renovation, and the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory (where you can buy a variety of souvenir



bats, large and small, but careful—you can't bring them on the plane). Louisville still has plenty of classic Southern border state charm. The Ohio River was running very high and muddy, a real taste of the Midwest in spring.

Lodging for one night in Louisville was at a most unusual spot: the 21c Hotel and Museum, a couple of blocks uphill from the river in the heart of the historic West Main District, merging multiple beautifully reno-



Joe Sage (2)

KEEP RIGHT >>

Logbook (cont'd) >>



braking is effective: we never put it to the ultimate test, but it applied itself in traffic and seemed it would stop us completely. (It's a little disquieting to think that's how kids may learn to drive, though). We tried hard cornering once the rain let up a little bit, and it holds the road effectively. We felt noticeable tugs in the steering at times, but basically it held its track and took the corners very strongly. We had two drivers per QX, and interestingly each of us felt more secure with the other one driving, opposite what we'd expect. While holding the wheel, we had some feeling of losing adhesion; granted the roads were very wet. We agreed the seats do impart the luxury jet feeling; aside from that it looks and feels like a nice luxury SUV interior, which is what it is. We wished for a larger rear wiper. We turned all the automated warnings and interventions on and off in stages, and all worked as planned.

The previous-generation QX was built in the US, but the 2011 model is built in Japan, at the Nissan Patrol factory. (However, there will no new Nissan Armada.)

Two models, the QX56 2WD and QX56 4WD, go on sale this summer. There also are expected to be two lineup extensions announced at Pebble Beach in August. MSRP is \$56,700 for 2WD and \$59,800 for 4WD, the same as the previous generation QX, despite significant added content and features. ■

vated historic buildings. The hotel has 90 rooms, 5000 square feet of meeting and event space, a restaurant and a civic center. But its unique nature springs from the museum, dedicated to the best work of living artists of the 21st century (hence 21c).

For hotel and museum information, visit 21cmuseumhotel.com or the museum's site at 21cmuseum.org, or call 877-217-6400.

Our test drive ran through the heart of Bluegrass Country. The first half of our driving day had weather for the record books. Torrential rains with twilight darkness at midmorning, repeated extreme flood warnings on the radio (our course ran along the Ohio River for awhile), and lightning that rivaled Arizona's August monsoon storms, though you couldn't always see these com-



Joe Sage (2)

ing—sometimes three or four lightning strikes seemed to surround us at any one time. Great test weather, when you come right down to it, for the vehicle at hand.

As the weather let up and the countryside revealed itself more clearly, we particularly liked the barns closer to Lexington and Versailles, generally nicely-proportioned single-gable style, finished in a near-black pitch with bright silver roofs on most of them. Fences were classic horse-country white in some cases, but matching dark pitch in others. Very striking.

Between Louisville and Knoxville, we stopped for pecan pie, homemade chocolates and pop at a well-stocked classic



Indian curio and souvenir roadside attraction (where you can also pick up your favorite Confederate paraphernalia).

We had a homemade Kentucky country lunch at the 125-acre Ardmore Farm near Versailles, a picture-perfect spot in the rolling Kentucky hills (perfect for towing horse trailers with the QX56).

For more information on this whole neck of the woods, visit kentuckytourism.com, gotolouisville.com or the Versailles area at woodfordcountyinfo.com. —Joe Sage

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20,000 MILES AND COUNTING

BY LARRY EDSALL • PHOTOS BY RANDALL BOHL AND LARRY EDSALL

TWO DECADES AND 20,000 MILES LATER, NO ONE STILL DOUBTS THE WISDOM OF LOUIS LAFLIN'S IDEA.

BUT WHEN LAFLIN SUGGESTED THAT THE MEN'S ARTS COUNCIL COULD DO A LOT MORE THAN WORK ON THE ANNUAL COWBOY ARTISTS SHOW AND PROVIDE VOLUNTEER BARTENDERS FOR FUNCTIONS AT THE PHOENIX ART MUSEUM, SOME WITHIN THE COUNCIL WERE SKEPTICAL, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY LEARNED THAT LAFLIN'S IDEA WAS TO STAGE A 1000-MILE ROAD RALLY FOR VINTAGE SPORTS CARS AND THEIR OWNERS.



Terry and Noel Hefty head out of the Valley in their 1959 Aston Martin DB4 GT, followed by Andy Manganaro in his 1966 Ferrari 275 GTS and Dic Downs and Cathy Lewis in their 1969 427 Corvette. Photo by Randall Bohl.

The Field of Dreams preview at Tempe Diablo Stadium provided participants and the general public a chance to peek inside the cockpit of Sam and Emily Mann's 1937 Bugatti Type 57SC and under the hood of David and Marianne Duthu's 1952 Jaguar XK 120 M race car. Arizona DPS motorcycle officers provide safety and security for the enthusiasts and their treasures on the road. Photos: Bohl (2), Edsall (1), Bohl (1).



Laflin expressed his idea in 1990, in the midst of the demise of the US Grand Prix auto race that for three miserable years was held on the streets of downtown Phoenix. The world's top auto racing teams and drivers came to Phoenix in 1989, 1990 and 1991—and the event was such a failure that the Grand Prix circuit didn't come back to race again in any location in the United States until the turn of the century.

As if anything related to fast cars wasn't enough of a pariah, consider that if not enough people showed up to participate in the drive, the Men's Arts Council (MAC) could be stuck not only with a lot of wasted effort, but with a lot of bills—for hotel rooms and catering and such, and that was money the council's modest treasury couldn't really afford.

But Laflin and others within the men's auxiliary who were enthusiasts not only for art but for automobiles persisted, rallying together to buy what they called MACBonds, making \$100 deposits against any potential loss the council might incur.

To help stage the rally, Laflin called on friends from inside and outside the MAC, from an editor at a national automotive magazine to racer-turned-driving instructor Bob Bondurant, who offered to let participants in the road rally take some laps around his school's private racetrack. Through his connections back in the Midwest, he got former Chicago Bears all-pro running back and sometime professional sports car racer Walter Payton to come to Phoenix to serve as grand marshal for the inaugural event.

Arrangements were made for Payton to drive a Shelby Cobra on the rally, but the car's owner became angered when his name was absent from the event program, so he took his car and went home.

But fate smiled on Laflin and the rally, which staged from the Chrysler Proving Grounds northwest of Phoenix. It turned out that a local man had driven out in his own Shelby Cobra to see the cars participating in the rally. He was asked if he'd like to go along—his expenses paid—but, well, there was this one catch: he had to let Walter Payton drive his car.

From that somewhat frantic start, the Copperstate 1000 vintage sports car rally has grown into one of the most significant annual fund-raisers for the Phoenix Art Museum. Among such automotive events it has grown exponentially in stature as well, drawing significant cars and their owners from coast to coast and from around the globe.

Such was interest in the event's 20th anniversary running that organizers found a way to expand participation from the usual 65-70 vehicles and welcomed almost 100 cars and their driving tandems.

Those participants departed Sunday morning, April 11, from Tempe Diablo Stadium, spring training home to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim and—one Sunday each year—to the Field of Dreams car show that arrays the Copperstate cars around the baseball field and fills a stadium parking lot with dozens and dozens of other classic vehicles representing various Phoenix area car clubs and private owners. Accompanying the Copperstate entrants were an entourage consisting of a couple dozen support vehicles carrying everything from the participants' luggage—ever try to fit a suitcase into the "boot" of a British sports car?—to spare parts for the cars and mechanics who know the nuances of vehicles decades out of production.

KEEP RIGHT >>

The route for the opening day of the anniversary event mimicked that of the first day of Copperstate history, leading up the Yarnell Grade to lunch near Prescott, and then on up past the Granite Dells to Ash Fork and Williams, where the cars turned north to their first overnight stop—on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

Perhaps the most visually stunning car making that drive is Michael Hammer's 1963 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III drop-head coupe, which is the British automotive term for "convertible." The car is big, long and boldly bright in white paint and red interior—quite the contrast from the typically sedate, dark-colored Rolls one might expect.

The car is one of only 27 such 1963 Silver Cloud convertibles produced by Rolls-Royce, and was purchased new by Hammer's grandfather, Dr. Armand Hammer, a flamboyant, philanthropic and often controversial tycoon whose businesses included Occidental Petroleum.

Michael explains that his grandfather prepared well for his business meetings, and when he discovered that a French businessman was a car connoisseur, he wanted to make a proper impression as he drove up to the man's estate outside Paris. Hammer decided he could make such an impression in a Silver Cloud convertible, only to be told that Rolls-Royce was producing only 27 such cars that year and they all already had been promised.

But Hammer hadn't become a successful businessman without being persuasive. "Grandfather loved a challenge," Michael recalls, adding that his grandfather convinced the chairman of Rolls-Royce to sell him one of the cars. "Whoever the car was supposed to be for never got it and never was told why,"

Michael says.

Rolls-Royce delivered the car to Paris, where Armand Hammer and his chauffeur picked it up. They drove to the estate, made the proper impression and Hammer not only clinched the deal, but became lifelong friends with the French businessman.

After the business was transacted, Hammer and his chauffeur drove the car on a European tour to Genoa, Italy, where the car was put on a boat and shipped to New York, then sent by train to the

**THE COPPERSTATE 1000
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EXPONENTIALLY IN
STATURE, AS WELL. THE
20TH ANNIVERSARY RUN
WELCOMED SOME 100 CARS.**

Hammer home in Beverly Hills, California.

Michael remembers visiting his grandfather on Sundays, and that his parents eventually would find him in his grandfather's garage, sitting in the Rolls and pretending he was driving it across the countryside. He also remembers that on some Sundays, his grandfather's friend, actor Gregory Peck, would stop by in his 1961 Bentley Flying Spur.

"I wanted a car like that," Michael remembers.

And now, Michael Hammer not only has inherited his grandfather's Rolls,

but has discovered that an unrestored '61 Bentley Flying Spur offered for sale was, indeed, the one Gregory Peck used to own, and he's bought it and is restoring it to the way he remembers it was when Peck visited his grandfather. He plans to park the cars next to each other in his garage.

From the Grand Canyon, Hammer's Rolls and the other Copperstate cars headed east along the South Rim and then on to Cameron, where they turned north and eventually climbed through the narrow V-shaped Antelope Pass as they made their way to lunch on the shores of Lake Powell. After lunch, they turned south toward the Painted Desert and into strong, sandblasting winds that tried to strip the paint from their cars while providing a no-cost dermabrasion to those riding in topless roadsters.

Among those in such a car are Tom and Sharon Malloy.

Tom Malloy grew up around exotic and fast cars; his father, Emmett, owned Carrell Speedway in Gardena, California, and racecars driven by the likes of Troy Ruttman and Bill Vukovich. Tom liked his father's cars, but saw the cost his father paid, both financially and emotionally.

Tom put off his own interest in such things "until I got to a stage where I thought I could do it without hurting anyone or my business," he explains.

His business was successful enough that Tom Malloy could make up for lost time by buying vehicles such as a Ford GT40 Mark IV, a Lister-Jaguar Knobby, a 1953 Curtis 500S and some three dozen other classics. Still, he realized, something was missing; Malloy realized that all of his friends' car collections that he really envied had something in common—each included a "real" Shelby Cobra. He

decided that if he were going to be satisfied with his own fleet, he needed his own Cobra.

He not only found one, a real one, but one with some real interesting history.

Malloy's 1964 Shelby 289 Cobra carries the identification tag of CSX 2512. It was shipped from Shelby American to Hi-Performance Motors of Los Angeles in the summer of 1964. In the late 1960s, the Cobra's owner faced felony charges and fled in the Shelby. He made it across the California/Nevada state line before being apprehended. While he went to prison, the car went to police impound, where it was parked beneath a tarpaulin and pretty much forgotten for more than a decade.

Even then, when the car was found and scheduled for a police auction, it was listed not as an original Shelby 289 Cobra but simply as a 1964 Ford convertible.

A speed shop owner who had heard stories about an impounded Cobra went to the auction and reportedly was delighted to be the only bidder on the "Ford convertible." The car went through a couple of owners before West Coast collector and vintage racer Don Orosco got it and had it mechanically restored; he was delighted to discover that the aluminum body was perfect; nary a serious scratch from the road or impound yard.

Now the car, sans perhaps some sandblasted paint, is Malloy's, and thus made its way from Lake Powell down to Flagstaff and then the descent through Oak Creek Canyon to the red rock of Sedona, where the Copperstate contingent spent two nights.

Tuesday morning, the cars did a drive from "red rocks to the green zone," from Sedona down through Page Springs, then south on I-17 and west through Prescott

Valley and on to lunch at Bagdad. After lunch, the route returned, but this time through Skull Valley and then up 89A over the evergreen Mingus Mountain into Jerome, then across the Verde Valley and back to Sedona.

Each year on the Copperstate 1000, funds not only are raised for the Phoenix Art Museum but also to benefit families of fallen state police personnel. Eight "motors" accompany the rally, and from time to time, and when the lack of traffic allows, the officers don't seem to mind when the sports cars are driven as they were intended to be driven.

Each year, the "motors" even present an award to one of the Copperstate participants, "for reasons the rest of us don't want to know," it says in the route book. That award is one of several given each year at the end of the rally. Among the others are the Louis E. Laffin III Spirit Award, the Directors Award—given by the Phoenix Art Museum to the automobile making a unique stylistic and artistic statement—an award to those who traveled farthest from home to participate, a Condolence Award—given to the car that needed the most attention from the mechanics—and the Participants' Choice Award, in which those on the rally pick the car they'd most like to add to their own collections.

This year, the Participants' Choice was Bill and Linda Pope's 1952 Fiat 8V Zagato Elaborata, one of only five such cars with double-bubble Zagato bodywork.

The car was gorgeous and immaculate and would be welcome in any collection. But beauty, as they say, is in the eye of the beholder, and to my eyes, the lust car of Copperstate 2010 was Terry O'Reilly's 1954 Bentley Special, the so-called Gooda Bentley.

Bentleys, of course, are luxury cars, but while this one retains its fine wood dashboard, it was specially built not for the road but for the racetrack. Robert "Bob" Gooda considered the standard Bentley R-type coupe body to be, well, as O'Reilly puts it, "profoundly ugly," so he commissioned coachbuilder Robert Peel to create an aerodynamic body that tapered back into a cropped "kamm" tail.

Though a two-door, the Bentley R-type is a large car: its 120-inch wheelbase is nearly half a foot longer than the modern Cadillac Escalade sport utility vehicle, but with its racy bodywork, the Bentley looks sleek and fast to the point of being well proportioned.

Gooda raced the car with its 5.0-liter Bentley straight six engine at Silverstone, Goodwood and other British racing tracks and on the European continent. O'Reilly first saw the car at The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering on the Monterey Peninsula. The Bentley was parked next to O'Reilly's vintage Lincoln racer, a car he believes to be the last surviving American vehicle that competed in the original Carrera Panamericana, the great Mexican road race in the early 1950s.

O'Reilly wanted the Bentley and finally negotiated the price down to what he considered to be reasonable, just four months before the Copperstate rally.

Like the Bentley, O'Reilly was born in the UK. He holds an Irish passport. His family immigrated to the United States in 1960. He works as a trail lawyer, specializing in aviation issues, though he says he's "deep into this Toyota thing" on behalf of plaintiffs he represents.

He said he's drawn to what he calls "weird" cars and owns a dozen or so.



Michael Hammer's 1963 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III Drophead Coupe overtakes the author in the high country. Bill and Linda Pope's 1952 Fiat 8V Zagato Elaborata took the Participants' Choice Award this year. At the first overnight stop, the South Rim of the Grand Canyon competes with all this fine machinery for beauty and sheer grandeur. Terry O'Reilly's 1954 Bentley Special was built race-track-ready, rebodied as a two-seater fastback. Photos: Edsall, Bohl, Edsall, Bohl.





some typical collectibles and some, like the Bentley, rather special.

The 20th anniversary Copperstate 1000 ended on Wednesday, when the cars made their way back to Phoenix, crossing the Verde Valley and then climbing to the Mogollon Rim and driving through Payson on the way to lunch at Saguaro Lake, and from there down the Beeline to dinner at the Camelback Inn.

Among the 90-some cars participating in the rally are more than a dozen each Jaguars and Ferraris, half a dozen Mercedes—including a pair of Gullwings—assorted Chevrolet Corvettes and Shelys—both Cobras and Mustangs—a passel of Porsches, several Aston Martins and Alfa Romeos, a couple each of Austin-Healeys, Packards and Pontiacs, a Hudson Hornet, a Siata, and even a Toyota.

A Toyota? Toyota made a car that's now considered a classic?

Indeed. In 1967, Toyota produced the 2000GT, the first Japanese supercar. Of 337 cars, fewer than 65 were shipped to the United States and only 36-38 of them are known to survive. A Toyota dealer in Florida collects them; he and his father and brother have 15. Half a dozen are in museums. Toyota's American headquarters has three. Another half dozen are in various states of restoration at Maine Line Exotics, which is where Brown and Sara Maloney found theirs. They are only the car's third owners.

Brown Maloney says he's been fascinated by cars ever since his parents bought a 1956 Ford Thunderbird—a car he still owns, along with some 20 others, including the Toyota.

The 2000GT not only has a long, low, muscularly exotic and aerodynamic body with pop-up headlamps and a wrap-around windshield, but a 2.0-liter, inline

six-cylinder engine built for Toyota by Yamaha and tuned to spin to more than 6000 rpm and propel the car to a succession of international speed records, including one 72-hour stint in the mid-'60s during which the Toyota supercar averaged nearly 130 miles per hour.

In the decades since Louis Laflin first suggested an automobile rally, the Copperstate 1000 has done much more than raise money for the Phoenix Art Museum. It has led the Phoenix art community to see the automobile as a form of artistic expression.

"Having the Copperstate led us to have the Curves of Steel," said Phoenix Art Museum director James Ballinger said, referring to the 2007 exhibit of classic and especially streamlined automotive design from the 1930s (see *Arizona Driver*, May/June 2007, online). Ballinger called Curves of Steel a "groundbreaking exhibit" that brought people to the art museum who never before had entered the building. Several of the cars on exhibit, he noted, came from the collections of Copperstate participants.

The museum is working to offer an exhibit of automotive art from the first half of the 20th century, and there's talk of staging another Curves of Steel-type exhibit of vehicles, this time perhaps featuring something as elegantly exotic as Bugattis or as modernly artistic as hot rods. ■

After working as a sports editor for daily newspapers in Michigan, **LARRY EDSALL** was on staff for 12 years at *AutoWeek*, most of it as managing editor. He has driven more than half a million miles testing cars on four continents. He helped launch www.izoom.com and also helped found PAPA, the Phoenix Automotive Press Association. His books include *Masters of Car Design (Genius)*, *Miata 20 Years* and his eleventh, *Camaro: A Legend Reborn*, all available at amazon.com.

Copperstate 1000 rally cars head up Antelope Pass, a steep climb leading to Page and Lake Powell. Photo by Larry Edsall.

Tom and Sharon Malloy's 1964 Shelby 289 Cobra, identification tag CSX 2512, is well suited for the open road, with a history as an actual getaway car. Brown and Sara Maloney are the third owners of this red 1967 Toyota 2000 GT. After lunch on Monday, the cars find a massive, Interstate-closing dust storm awaiting them around the turn. Budd and Laurie Florikiewicz pilot their 1959 Jaguar XK 150S roadster. Photos: Edsall (3), Bohl (1).



smart plugs in

america's only microcar adds electric drive

Smart introduced its fortwo microcar in Europe in 1998, the result of a joint effort conceived by Swatch watch in the late '80s and cemented with Daimler in the early '90s (with "smart" reportedly standing for "Swatch Mercedes Art").

Much has happened in the ensuing years, and smart is now available in 41 markets worldwide, including the US, where it is marketed by Penske Automotive Group.

We recently joined smart USA in New York City, as they introduced the latest and coolest iteration: the smart fortwo electric drive (they continue their preference for lower-case letters throughout). Rolling off the production line since late 2009, the first were delivered in

Europe last December, in Germany and to the mayor of Rome (Italy being their second largest market). Due to huge demand, initial production was increased from 1000 to 1500, and output ramps up further for 2012. It's been so popular, in fact, that now that it's coming to the US, you'll have trouble getting one right away, but sign up and be patient.

Electric drives have been in smart's plans from the start. The smart fortwo electric drive loses nothing in safety, agility, comfort or space. The battery is underfloor between the axles where the fuel tank is located in a gasoline smart, leaving just as much interior and luggage compartment space.

A 30 kW magneto-electric motor with an

amazing 885 lb-ft of torque reacts without delay, for surprising acceleration: 0-36 mph (60 km/h) in 6.5 seconds. A participant in a large London trial said, "You can beat anything at the lights." Maximum speed is limited to about 60 mph (100 km/h), suitable for city driving.

Smart USA chose New York City to launch its new smart fortwo electric drive because of the obvious suitability of a small, clean, fuel-efficient car for a large, crowded, parking-deficient city. But it's as symbolic as it is practical. Not only was our water taxi ride down the Hudson River, past the Statue of Liberty and up the East River to the Brooklyn Bridge evocative of the original US introduction of the smart from across the great pond two years ago. But, point out, New York had 50% electric cars 100 years ago. So in that sense, smart is using the latest technology to take the city back to a simpler time. And New York is pioneering alternative power trains already, with all taxis hybrids since 2009, and 1675 Daimler Orion diesel-electric hybrid buses in service.

The microcar is a great concept. So why smart? Jill Lajdziak, smart USA president, points out at our meeting that smart is first in the microcar segment, and it's the *only* microcar in the US. Add the confidence of 13 years' experience in the rest of the world, and round it out with a well-acknowledged cool factor.

When the gasoline smart arrived in the US in 2008, sales were strong. Gasoline had suddenly shot to \$4.50 a gallon, the economy was still pretending to be intact, and there was great pent-up demand from all its media attention and hype. The result: 24,000 sold in the first year.

Gasoline prices have subsided a bit, the economy is—well, you know. The company knows a smart is usually bought as a second, third, even fourth vehicle, so borders on discretionary spending. And many buyers, with gas down a little, are going for a last hurrah with big guzzlers. But the writing is on the wall. Manufacturers, governments, engineers, utilities and sanctioning bodies everywhere are hard at work on an electric future (not to discount parallel efforts at futures involving hybrids, natural gas, hydrogen and other technologies).

And smart is riding the crest of this wave. There are now 77 smart dealerships in the US, with the newest ones in Puerto Rico and Hawaii (this one focused on electric).

Lajdziak acknowledges the most common questions about the smart fortwo: is it safe? will I fit in it? will it hold my stuff?

Derek Kaufman, VP for business development, says that while physics can't be ignored, "small can be safe." The car has been out long enough to verify this. Its tridion safety cell and sandwich construction are

highly innovative. For more information and, most importantly, owners' stories, we encourage you to visit www.safeandsmart.com.

As with safety, the company is getting direct information on owners' power usage. The cars themselves provide information for analysis, and owners are happy to provide it. As Kaufman says, when presented with this opportunity, "owners get real interested, real fast." Owners also have a personal website to track and compare their details.

The electric smart can be charged at any normal household socket, either 110 or 220v. The cars will have a J1772 standard EV connection (though our test cars flown in from Germany did not, prompting the company to also fly in prior European charging stations). A consortium of Clean Cities Coalition, ECOTality and others is currently hard at work securing sites for these recharge points in Arizona.

The smart fortwo electric drive can be recharged from about 20 to 80% in 3.5 hours. A full charge from zero to 100% takes 8 hours. A fully charged battery has sufficient juice to cover about 83 miles, which, along with zero local emissions, is ideal for urban use. 87% of potential buyers express "range anxiety," unsure whether this is enough. With a typical commute at about 30-40 miles (or 4-5 hours), it should be plenty. This is borne out by the fact that after two years of actual ownership, the anxiety number drops to just 17%.

The electrification of the smart fortwo is paradoxically called [a] a real milestone and [b] just another evolutionary step. We agree on both, and we know we'll see a lot more of this. Ultimately, the change to electric powertrains can have massive environmental and resource benefits, making it, as smart says, "a geopolitical game-changer." There are other electric cars in the works, but with new infrastructure coming online and range still relatively limited, the smart already fills the most appropriate niche for the first wave of commuter electrics.

Another huge benefit of electric? Gone is the one and only deficit of the original gasoline version. We had driven the original gasoline smart fortwo before the LA Auto Show in 2007, just prior to its US launch. Despite going in with great optimism, we found the shifting so awkward it was downright disturbing. The folks at smart know this, but they like to say the US market doesn't understand a "manual automatic" and expected it to work like an automatic; now they call it a "manual with self-shifting" or "smart-shift." We had found a transmission, call it what you may, that halted noticeably between shifts, even in the thick of traffic. A better solution? In the smart fortwo electric drive, there are no gear changes. Et voilà. The car is now flawless in this category.

The smart system preconditions the bat-

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Systems can also be set or checked from your iPhone, using a slick new app. Presented to us by Chris Cardé, senior systems engineer for R&D, this app (\$10) is a stunner: it controls radio presets, maps (including POI search on-board or off-board with Bing), works with or without a signal and is so fully integrated at the original equipment (OE) level, it can for example mute the internet radio for navigation. (A fuller navigation feature will be rolled out later this year for an upgrade fee.) If you have worked with typical head-unit connections to iPhone, iPod or MP3, you'll appreciate the level of integration built into this app.

As for our test drive in the mean streets of Brooklyn—for size, maneuverability, parking, convenience, as you would expect, there is nothing like the smart. As far as respect from our fellow travelers? Fuggedaboutit. We encountered flocks of aggressive schoolbuses, fleets of fire trucks suddenly filling both lanes head-on, multiple large panel delivery trucks ditto, and opportunists of every stripe thinking they could pass, park or back up whenever and wherever they wanted, in the face of our minuscule presence. Again, no big surprise.

Derek Kaufman points out that the smart concept started out as a congestion and parking solution, but also represents mastery of "material conservation." Use of electricity is one thing, but this minimalist package has benefits from birth to disposal. And since 70 to 80% of drivers travel solo in their vehicle, small is just appropriate. We'll watch to see whether Arizona expands its original very limited HOV program in this direction.

Initial rollout is in five areas: Portland, Silicon Valley, Orlando, the Boston-Washington I-95 corridor, and Indianapolis. Smart considers Indy a key prototype, with two ring roads, two utilities inside and outside those, both of which they are working closely with. With a giant Penske presence in Arizona, we anticipate cars here as soon as feasible. Pricing so far is a carefully guarded unknown. ■



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MACHO MINI

("it's adorable," she said)

Story and photos: Joe Sage



The MINI has near-singlehandedly made small cars not only acceptable but desirable over the past few years. It's relatively affordable, fuel-efficient, has style and is a blast to drive.

A standard 2010 MINI Cooper hardtop has a base price of \$18,800. Its 118-horsepower 1.6-liter four-cylinder engine runs its 2546 unladen pounds from 0-to-60 in 8.5 seconds with a top speed of 126 mph. The MINI Cooper S, with a base price of \$22,300, and about 90 pounds heavier, turbocharges the same 1.6-liter four up to 172hp and knocks out 0-to-60 in 6.7 seconds, with a top speed of 139 mph. The Cooper S also adds a sport suspension, though this can be added to the base model. (A 6-speed automatic adds about 90 pounds to the Cooper or 55 to the Cooper S.) You can add thousands more to the price of either, in options. EPA fuel mileage estimates below are with a 6-speed manual; the automatic drops these by about 2-4 mpg.

The Cooper or Cooper S convertible gains almost 200 pounds, reducing 0-to-60 time by about 0.3-0.5 seconds but dropping its fuel ratings by nothing or almost nothing.

	ENGINE	HP	EPA	\$ BASE
Cooper	1.6L I4	118	28/37	\$18,800
Cooper S	turbo	172	26/34	\$22,300
Cooper Conv	1.6L I4	118	28/36	\$24,250
Cooper S Conv	turbo	172	26/34	\$27,150

Cool as the MINI is, and as great a performer as the Cooper S is, to some it could use just a bit more testosterone. Enter the MINI John Cooper Works. The JCW comes with a number of upgrades, at its core taking the same 1.6-liter four-cylinder and adding a twin-scroll turbocharger and direct fuel injection. An incredibly wide power curve delivers 208 horses from 1,850-5,600 rpm, with peak torque of 192 lb-ft increasing briefly in the Overboost mode to 207 lb-ft. This is based on the engine raced for the first time in the 2008 MINI John Cooper Works CHALLENGE.

	ENGINE	HP	EPA	\$ BASE
JCW	TST DOHC	208	26/34	\$28,800
JCW Conv	TST DOHC	208	26/34	\$34,000

Other elements of the JCW are also derived directly from motorsport, including extra-light alloy wheels, extremely powerful brakes, a new exhaust system and a modified six-speed manual gearbox. The JCW has an aluminum cylinder block and bearing case, 16 valves and double overhead cams, roller-type drag arms optimized for minimum friction and hydraulic valve play compensation elements. Sodium-filled exhaust valves meet the greater cooling requirements of a turbo. All intake and exhaust components have been streamlined, which not only optimize flow conditions, but give the engine its special sound. The JCW hardtop weighs in at

2701 pounds (manual only), just 33 pounds more than the Cooper S hardtop. With a whopping (for its size) 208 hp, the John Cooper Works' 0-to-60 time is knocked down to 6.2 seconds, and its top speed is 147 mph.

The JCW Convertible is still quick, at 6.5 seconds 0-to-60, and it still achieves the same estimated 26/34/29 mpg as a Cooper S hardtop. Base price for a JCW hardtop is \$28,800, and for the convertible \$34,000.

The comparables and variables overall are quite close, although it wasn't hard to watch the base Cooper's price almost double by the time we get to the JCW Convertible, or more than double in our tricked-out test car. But if you're going for the gusto, and perhaps for its beefier style points, you'll likely head to the John Cooper Works straight away. Drive it, price it, and if need be, back off from there.

The JCW still has front-wheel drive, which we don't favor for a performance-oriented car (it shifts weight *away* from the drive wheels during acceleration), but the MINI's light weight negates this. Front-drive also introduces torque steer, which needs extra engineering to mitigate. (For all-wheel drive, there is a MINI John Cooper Works Clubman.)

In our driving, the car is definitely peppy and didn't leave us lacking in tight multi-lane traffic. Zip-zip. The suspension does well on drainage troughs or speed bumps, with front-wheel-drive issues well addressed. But in cornering, it was still apparent. A micro-slalom through a small traffic circle revealed torque steer in both twists, and in accelerating turns, it delivered a dart to the left every time in first gear, as it also did when shifting down from 4th to 3rd in an aggressive right turn. Not a lot, but you'll want to hang onto the wheel. It feels somewhat like driving a 60-year-old Mini at Monaco, so there's a thrill.

RPMs stay economically low through quite a range: at 62 mph, we took it up to 6th gear and were at just 2500 RPM. Shifting down to 5th gear raised it to 3000 and 4th gear just 3600 or so. As noted, it maintains its power band over a wide RPM range, so you will have plenty of power in reserve.

Our test car, though delivered in 2010, was a 2009 model, yet it had a base of \$34,300. After adding a cold weather package (\$500), a Premium Package (\$1250 for multi-function steering wheel, alarm, some chrome bits and vital-for-Arizona automatic a/c), various trim, xenon headlamps, white turn-signal lights, Bluetooth™/iPod upgrades, plus \$650 destination, it stickered at \$38,050. You can, of course, build your own at the latest prices by visiting www.miniusa.com.

Aside from wishing for less torque steer, we found the car a lot of fun. It corners, it's peppy, the top goes down, and we'd find the power and features of the JCW version just about impossible to resist, budget willing. ■



MINI JCW LOGBOOK

- Of course the car is small. It arrived with the seat far forward, but we slid it back, and for a 6-plus-footer it was plenty adequate.
- For two pairs of glasses and a wallet, you run out of space fast. There are three cup-holders, the phone plug-in is in with two of those, but the shifter conflicts at times.
- Putting the top down is a two-stage operation, going halfway back first in about 5 seconds, leaving a solid rail from the A-pillar to the B. When you put the top all the way down, that unclips and retracts, about 11.5 seconds to top-down but 14.5 by the time the windows are back up, which is when the job is done. It takes about 14 seconds to raise the top, which doesn't stop at midpoint. In the up cycle, there is a disturbing whining ratchet from the back.
- The 4-window switch is not a one-touch: we hold it, get the back windows up, then it stops. Let go and hold it again for the fronts.
- With top up and driver's window open, there is considerable wind buffeting noise.
- The windshield-frame-mounted antenna brings you a smile from the car's personality, seen from inside when the top is down.
- The throaty exhaust note is less rice-rocket, more like half a V8 in volume and depth. Driving in a neighborhood, we figured we sounded like a 17-year-old with a modified Subaru. But most of the time, the exhaust noise was great as background.
- The top, when down, is higher than the hips behind the seats, restricting rear vision, though largely unavoidably.
- The steering wheel blocks the tach from 2200-5800 RPM or so. If you raise the wheel, it all moves together, so it's always blocked.
- It looks keyless but it's not... you stick the "UFO" in the hole, and then hit a way-smaller-than-average stop/start button. You have to get the key angled just right (we used our hand), and then a stalk is in the way.
- From the key, to levers that look like buttons, to audio controls, we are reminded that style is a theme of this car, but function can suffer. We try checking the manual for help with the audio, and find nine manuals.
- Boopity-boop sound during start-up shows a fine line between quirky and goofy.
- 82 degrees, the roof is not hot, but it is stuffy inside. We set the HVAC at 66° on auto, and it's not cooling, so we put the fan up to a noisy maximum to start cooling off.
- Cockpit temp goes up 2 degrees at a time, which makes a lot of sense, though you may set things oddly till you realize it.
- We like the simple center mechanical handbrake lever, very traditional.
- One of our favorite details was the fuel gauge, a dial of lighted clock points that runs down to light up a pump at the end.



¡olé!

BY JOE SAGE WITH BRIAN MCCAULEY - PHOTOS BY JOE SAGE

Audi enthusiasts in Arizona who wanted a club experience were able, until two years ago, to join Audi Club of North America's Southern California Chapter. Nothing wrong with that, really. But Brian McCauley, an Audi Brand Specialist at Penske Automotive Group's Audi North Scottsdale, hears from a lot of local Audi people. And he figured it was high time Arizona had its own chapter. He was able to stoke the fire under enough people to qualify, and two years ago—July 2008—the Arizona Chapter was born.

This has given Audi owners and fans new opportunities to get together for track events and road rallies, to qualify for specialty equipment, and to show off their cars and check out the latest new models at special events. What better time to gather the troops than Cinco de Mayo: the weather is great, everyone's feeling festive, and the quattro-cinco tie-in is the icing on the empanada.

And what better place to gather than GoodSpeed Performance, in the Scottsdale Airpark. GoodSpeed's 4,600-square-foot shop sports the sophisticated MAHA LPS-3000 AWD dynamometer. Six work bays include one for ECU reprogramming and other electrical and ECM tasks, plus two Snap-on two-post lifts and a Snap-on four-post lift with alignment capabilities. Low-slung arms accommodate even the lowest vehicles with "zero chance" of rocker panel or other damage. There is a dedicated flash lab and clean room for ECU bench-flashing and other sensitive electronics work. GoodSpeed's fabrication lab is equipped with high-quality Miller TIG, MIG and plasma cutting equipment, plus Jet press, sheer, brake, bead roller, band saws and drilling equipment. GoodSpeed Performance was joined in sponsoring the event by Audi North Scottsdale.

Avoiding the combined jam of actual Cindo de Mayo, or Mother's Day the following weekend, the 2nd Annual Quattro de Mayo was held on Saturday, May 15, 2010. Audi drivers traveled from throughout the Phoenix area, plus from Tucson and even New Mexico to attend this show'n'shine event. GoodSpeed provided the facility, the grill, their shop and dyno, while Audi North Scottsdale provided the food and impressive raffle prizes, and displayed a 2010 Audi A4 equipped with one of their StaSIS Engineering Touring packages. Other generous raffle contributors included B&B Exhaust, ACNA, STaSIS Engineering, Motul and APR. Lucky members walked away with some high-ticket items and gift certificates. Additionally, ACNA headquarters provided free one-year memberships to anyone attending who had never been a member before; this gained the Arizona Chapter 32 new members.

A raffle, a BBQ, tech tidbits by the gang at GoodSpeed ... that's enough right there, but the day also included a demonstration of GoodSpeed's MAHA dynamometer on an R8 V8. The chapter also unveiled its new club logo on a first run of official club t-shirts. About 60 cars showed up, surpassing the 47 the inaugural event drew last year. A good time was had by all, even as mid-May temps reached 96 degrees. The club is tentatively planning a new fall event.

For club info, visit www.audiclubaz.org or contact Brian McCauley at bmccauley@penskeautomotive.com.

For more info on GoodSpeed Performance, visit www.goodspeed-performance.com or call 480-747-6150. ■



Flyer and logo design: Martin Isenberg



Ford virtual reality shapes your reality

Story and photos by Joe Sage

Ford gets technology—witness their presence the past couple of years not only at the big auto shows, but also at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, where they've shown off SYNC® and other tech systems. On-board gadgets, though, are really just the icing on the cake. Ford's Virtual Reality Lab program at the Product Development Center in Dearborn starts well before and goes well beyond consumer electronics. The incredible processing power that now lies beneath the entire design, engineering, planning and development process merges what you'd expect to find at Boeing's human factors engineering department with both craft development and pre-flight training at NASA.

In fact, the work is so advanced that Elizabeth Baron, who runs Ford's Immersive Virtual Environment (iVE) lab, received a call from NASA's visualization lab asking for a tour of the Ford facility. After NASA's visit to Baron's iVE lab at Ford, she was invited to Kennedy Space Center to see their virtual technology. "We found out what we shared in common and what we could learn from each other," said Baron. While Baron was at Cape Canaveral, she had an opportunity to see the space shuttle Discovery preparing for launch. "I even had a chance to take a peek inside the shuttle," said Baron. "It was just phenomenal."

The programs generate enthusiasm and support within the company, from the assembly line to top management. Although these implementations predate his arrival, it surely doesn't hurt that president and CEO Alan Mulally came to Ford from Boeing.

We're told very few people outside the design and engineering group at Ford ever get to experience all this. Though we don't have as much to offer in reciprocation as NASA did, we nonetheless were recently invited to tour the same facilities.



Photo: Ford Motor Company

Elizabeth Baron, Technical Specialist for Virtual Reality and Advanced Visualization, runs Ford's Immersive Virtual Environment (iVE) lab, a facility she helped create. The iVE uses state-of-the-art virtual reality technology—such as the PVM (Programmable Vehicle Module), above—so designers can fully experience a vehicle before it is ever built. The lab's work is so renowned that NASA requested a tour.

The virtual reality program addresses design and engineering of new vehicles from the standpoint of not only the people who will drive and ride in them, but also the people who will work the line to build them. If you can't get your hands around the concept—literally—there is more work to be done, and these are the tools that identify and define what's needed. From the days of drawing board, clay model and tape measure, things have come a long way through computerization. The Ford virtual reality program takes the process to a level of such detail and realism that designers and engineers can immerse themselves in a new vehicle before the first prototype is ever built, so it can be optimized and put into production—consumer-tested, yet—on a shorter timeline and at lower cost.

The virtual reality program comprises multiple resources: the Immersive Virtual Environment (iVE), CAVE, PVM, Powerwall, VIRTTEX and Virtual Manufacturing. We saw—and tried—all of it, guided by the key engineers who make it happen. Strap on your goggles, and let's step inside.

Immersive Virtual Evaluation (iVE)

Designers and engineers use the iVE to evaluate early vehicle designs against a backdrop of virtual conditions and literally experience a vehicle from someone else's vantage point before it is built. Anthropometric data gathered here—from the obvious such as visibility, reach, roominess, ingress, and egress, to examining door-handle location—is studied to ensure vehicle designs can accommodate the broadest range of customers.

The iVE lab comprises 3 virtual reality sta-

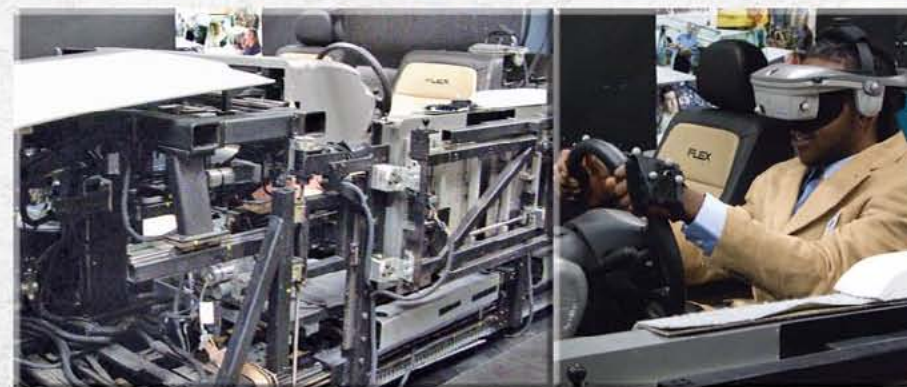
tions: the Cave Automated Virtual Environment (CAVE), a Programmable Vehicle Model (PVM) and an Open-Volume Immersive Station. As program chief Elizabeth Baron points out, these three stations each have a strength and a weakness, for example field of view versus body relationship. "Together," she says, "they are not missing much."

The CAVE uses advanced motion-tracking hardware and software to create virtual vehicle interiors and exteriors at actual scale, reducing the need to build physical prototypes.

Here, CAD designs are translated into digital renderings of cars to evaluate ergonomics of the interior, exterior craftsmanship and the extent of views. Virtually anything you can see on a vehicle can be duplicated, from the A-pillar to the underbody. The CAVE offers a wide field of view with peripheral vision, so an evaluator can, for example, look over his or her shoulder to judge whether a second-row headrest may obscure a driver's view or to determine if the base of the rear window is too high.

We sit in a bare-bones vehicle interior—with the front seats, steering wheel, driver-side door and blank dash physically in place—put on sensors and special glasses with screens inside and you see what it would look like to be inside that car. We don 3-D glasses and suddenly experience the controls inside the car, surroundings outside, and have the ability to reach out and use our hand to try the features in the digital overlay. Data is gathered on whether controls are within reach and whether we can see things outside the vehicle well enough, such as the small child in the crosswalk in front of us.

The CAVE process has reduced the num-



The CAVE (Cave Automated Virtual Environment) lets a driver experience a vehicle's simulated instrument panel and views, providing a chance to identify preferred layouts and ideal interfaces early in the process. The Open Volume Station puts a headset-wearing driver into a full-size virtual vehicle to measure feedback.

ber of clays and prototypes made and cut six months out of the production cycle. The program has run full-bore for about 2-3 years, so the results are just now beginning to appear in production Ford cars and trucks.

Ford is the first in the industry to mesh a Programmable Vehicle Model (PVM) with complex motion-capture technology to create a realistic virtual vehicle and driving experience with passing cars and pedestrians.

Before the digital revolution, a design team would build a stationary three-dimensional physical buck to evaluate an interior under development. This accommodated one design iteration—so each round of design revisions required modifications to the existing buck or the construction of a new one, adding time and cost to a product's development.

Ford's PVM is an adjustable computer-controlled physical device that can instantly take on dimensions of any full-size interior, so engineers can evaluate multiple design options against a number of criteria, such as reach, blind spots, reflections, headroom and steering wheel angle. An evaluator can for example enter a Ford Flex-dimensioned PVM, wearing headset and gloves, and become immersed in driving a digital Flex. They interact with the Flex's steering wheel, center-stack controls and instrument cluster while

moving through a virtual town. With their physical touch-points recorded in the PVM, Ford engineers can effectively simulate the comfort of the beltline, the ease of reach for the shifter and other key areas.

Original PVM simulations on the Flex led to several important design changes: the seats were moved closer to the door openings for smoother entry and exit, and the rocker panels were concealed, a unique Flex feature intended to provide an unexpected "surprise-and-delight benefit." Hiding the sill removed the need to lift your legs over a possibly muddy surface, reducing the odds of rubbing dirt onto your pants or dress.

In the Open-Volume Station, a driver is immediately immersed in a computer-generated virtual vehicle interior or exterior environment—complete with accurate depth perception—and asked to perform specific tasks such as closing a liftgate or decklid. This was set up as a Flex for us, and our actions were captured by sophisticated cameras that track the movement of sensors on our headset and gloves, which were loaded into a computer program for further studies. Information from the headset lets engineers can play the session back to see what we noticed most. The open-volume

KEEP RIGHT >>

DEARBORN TRAVEL NOTES

We had been to Ford World Headquarters in Dearborn a few times, but though we'd heard about Greenfield Village and The Henry Ford Museum for years, and they're just a few blocks (and a century or two) apart, last year was our first visit to those. We were so impressed, we'd not only go again, we'd like to move in. Greenfield Village includes living, working examples of America's earlier history, conceived by Henry Ford out of personal motivation, and as significant a national treasure as the Smithsonian.

Across the street, Ford's Dearborn Dev-



Photo: Ford Motor Company

elopment Center test track, technical labs, wind tunnel and other engineering facilities share a high-security campus.

We were booked at a Marriott near the test track for one night, and we visualized the ordinary. Not so. We should have seen it coming. The Dearborn Inn, operated by Marriott, is another Henry Ford historic

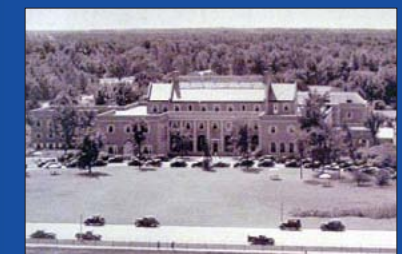


Photo: Marriott

treasure, reminiscent of Independence Hall or Monticello. The hotel ties in to the history of the test track, as well. Henry Ford developed aircraft, too, significantly the famous Ford Tri-Motor. With booming business interests in Dearborn, he built the Ford Airport to accommodate his visitors. The Dearborn Inn was the world's first airport hotel. No, this is not your typical roadside Marriott, but Marriott is to be commended for the fine job they've done preserving the property in its original glory, while operating a high-caliber hotel there today.

For more information, visit marriott.com.



An evaluator dons an array of “cloud markers” (far left) to test reach, sequence and accessibility issues in the Virtual Manufacturing and Assembly stage. VIRTTEX, a huge carbon-fiber-and-nomex dome (near left), puts a driver behind the wheel of a simulated vehicle moving within a 12-by-12-by-6-foot range, an indispensable tool for testing control options against human reflexes. Mike Blommer and media spectators were privy to the challenges being run, via a bank of monitors, while one journalist at a time ran the drill and generated data. Track time included a wide range of vehicles on slow and fast courses, plus a demo of Active Park Assist in the Escape.

data also allows engineers to adapt results to people of different statures. Results can be quickly scaled to another person's stature, performing the same tasks. A 4'9" woman can become a 6'3" man or vice versa.

Virtual Manufacturing/Assembly

Next stop: Ford's Advanced Engineering & Technology department, where Allison Stephens, Ford technical specialist in assembly ergonomics, demonstrates how advanced motion capture technology and human modeling software—similar to that used in major Hollywood animation or in top-flight digital games—can ensure manufacturing feasibility, while predicting and eliminating on-the-job fatigue and injuries, part by part.

Glenn Harrington, technical expert in assembly ergonomics, is suited up and running an assembly process on the 2012 Ford Fiesta, virtually, with ergonomic simulation specialist Jim Chiang at the controls. “You see this vehicle in front of you in 3D,” says Stephens. “How would you reach in? What postures would you use? While you're doing those postures, I can capture the motion and get a data model, and can then analyze it.”

The suit uses “cloud markers” to record a worker's motions and transfer them to digital avatars. “Basically, the markers are the same highly reflective material you have on athletic equipment,” says Stephens, “and they're put on joint centers so we can identify for example elbow and knee joints, and cameras are capturing the markers.” When our live cloud markers move, the digital models move on-screen. This is essentially the same technology the motion picture industry used to bring us Avatar, with live actors generating movements that were transferred to synthesized extraterrestrials. Ford takes this process farther than Hollywood, transferring to fully digital human models with bone, muscles, complete data about compressive forces, joint torques and so on.

There are cameras all around. The high

cameras are probably best at capturing, although in the midzone if something is blocked by movement, as long as three cameras capture a motion, they achieve the tracking. So whatever is tried in the suit is transferred to avatars Jack and Jill, the department's “digital employees.” In the past, they would have to get a tall and a small operator and set up a mock vehicle several times, but this system has the capability to scale everything, once motion is captured.

The mechanical set can become any vehicle, by loading product data and hard points; when immersed, key points of the car will anchor your position for the rest. They also load key points from every station in the assembly plant, as posture is also influenced by those. We suit up and walk toward a virtual Ford Fiesta. As instructed, we reach toward the car and feel the fender.

From our simple exercise to touch a virtual hose, they can learn whether the part is reachable during assembly, whether that puts a particular strain on a worker, whether in fact other parts (e.g. the space-consuming front fascia) should be assembled in a different sequence that allows access to deeper parts, earlier in the process, and so on.

Ford set up their first lab in 2001, a magnetic system, but issues inherent in mixing magnets and steel yielded only a few studies. In 2005, they switched over to the digital camera system, at the time working on vehicles for 2008. From studies done in 2005 and forward, they now have three good years of products—2008, 2009, 2010—on which they've done complete studies of the process.

Results are impressive. There has been an 80% improvement in assembly line injuries over the past 10 years, which is huge, though they know they can't claim all of it. But for example, studying data specific to hoses, they saw a 35% reduction in injuries based on recommendations from this system.

Most impressive of all: in 2005-2008, they would see about 300 issues on a build (parts

that are hard to install, not enough hand clearance, and so on). With the virtual program in operation, this is down to just 30 issues, a massive 90% reduction.

Nobody likes to find a problem, says Harrington, but if you're going to find a problem, you want to find it early. In prior methods, finding a problem 14 months before production would create a panic; now the details should be squared away in a process that starts three years before build, with parts manufacturing starting 18 months out. Locating problems during digital preassembly can save time from concept to production, yet provide more time for problem-solving.

“For example,” Harrington tells us, “we're looking at the new Ford Fiesta. It's a 2011 model year that's sold in calendar year 2010, but we studied it back in '07. Next week, we're studying the '13, so the process has moved very far upstream.”

Success has been so good so far, in fact, that the team notes they've caught most of the low-hanging fruit by now. Their success has been so high that now, if anything, expectations for perfection may be the biggest issue at this point. “You had all this, yet you missed something....?”

As Harrington says, “When we get to the physical build with physical parts and we have an 80-90% reduction in issues, we're not finding nearly the late stuff we used to. And this is not just in ergonomics. Manufacturing, design, crash, emissions—all the parties have benefited from up-front analysis.

Virtual Powerwall

The Powerwall (Ford's Electronic Design Presentation Room, or EDPR) is a 60-foot-wide HD rear-screen projection using three 20-foot screens simultaneously, with interior and exterior views of a vehicle. Our session has been bumped by a visit from Ford Group VP of Global Design and Chief Creative Officer J Mays. That we can easily understand. We instead are in a room with one screen—no cameras!—and it's

quite impressive in its own right.

The Powerwall replaces the design stage of full-size prints on walls, adding 3D rotations, engineering points, and even the ability to drive the vehicle by keyboard. A polygon wireframe image comes to life, rendering an occlusion (shading) pass, adding high-resolution surfaces, then adding real-world backgrounds shot with their hemispherical environments camera, and changing paints as well as times of day, to see how things come together. With Powerwall studios in seven other locations in Europe, Asia and South America—fully linked for three years now—the design process is easily spread worldwide within the company. Collaboration is complete, immediate and weighs nothing, and research can be completed on multiple continents in one day. And changes that used to take 3-4 weeks now take 3-4 days.

Visuals can be shown on smaller screens, so a focus group can be held in six cities without shipping, say, 18 pickup trucks (including competitors), but just six USB memory sticks. Field experience shows that with distractions minimized, a customer can focus, evaluate and offer opinions better than ever. The 2010 Taurus was the first Ford vehicle program to conduct digital consumer marketing research, helping deliver it 12 months sooner while cutting research costs by nearly 50 percent.

What for decades was a hand-carved clay-model process, then evolving through a “hybrid” stage of math-modeled clay, is now completely digital. The screens display full-scale computer-rendered vehicle designs—again, prior to actual fabrication—for up-front high-fidelity review of options and details. Models are still made, ultimately, but are now considered verification, not iteration.

VIRTTEX

Mike Blommer holds a PhD in Electrical Engineering and is Ford's technical expert in sound quality, psychophysics and sound and motion control for driving simulators. He is

our guide to VIRTTEX—the VIRTual Test Track EXperiment—a full-size driving simulator very much like a flight simulator and incorporating many of the same technologies.

Ford is the only vehicle manufacturer in North America with motion as part of its simulations. In place since 2001, the fundamental motion system hardware is unchanged, though they've followed a continual upgrade path for video and processing power.

Such technologies as lane departure, collision warning, braking assistance, distraction and drowsiness indicators—as well as advances in user controls—have made it more important than ever to determine how drivers react to visual, audio and tactile cues.

VIRTTEX puts you in the driver's seat of a simulated (partial) vehicle, in a dome made of carbon fiber plates with a nomex honeycomb core—light enough for considerable motion, but strong enough to support five hung projection screens. The dome is set atop hydraulics that move the whole apparatus within a 12-foot by 12-foot by 6-foot realm, introducing pitch, yaw and roll, simulating motion within six degrees of freedom.

By watching the driver interact with an environment, Ford is able to compare, for example, handheld versus hands-free controls. Or for such safety add-ons as lane-change or collisions warnings, they can gain valuable data on what's the most effective notification: sound? light? vibration? With VIRTTEX, they can measure reactions to each.

Do virtual drivers think of this as real life, or a game? Blommer says they of course know it's a simulation, but typically within 3-5 minutes they are immersed and react normally.

A typical VIRTTEX session lasts about 20-30 minutes. Several in our group were put in the simulated driver's seat, where we could watch (and we were cued, while they weren't) as they were given an instrument task as a mild distraction, while a semi came up at high speed to pass them, just as something in front of them would stop, perhaps

forcing them into that left lane. And so on. The session ran out of time before we got to sit in that seat, but by then we had a pretty good idea what the tricks might be.

Blommer points out that real motion makes a major difference in analysis, for example revealing motion multipliers in oscillations, that could otherwise go unnoticed. Real motion within a dome, however, cannot replicate everything. 12 feet of lateral motion in the dome is good at replicating lateral motions in the real world. But a 130-foot stop has to happen in no more than 12 feet, and whereas they can multiply and mimic to a point, this has some limits.

As impressive a machine as this is, Blommer points out that it is “one tool in the suite of tools.” Field operations are still important, inherently, and they also help as impressions change over time.

Nonetheless, as with the rest of the virtual reality suite we've seen today, the VIRTTEX device lets engineers test a powertrain before a vehicle is ready, long before they can otherwise take it out in the field for actual testing and calibration. This makes VIRTTEX a valuable manufacturing research device even 5 to 10 years out.

Ford Proving Grounds

There are few things we encountered this day that did seem to have slightly more than one version of a name, and the Dearborn Development Center a.k.a. Ford Proving Grounds a.k.a. test track are one more.

After a morning in the virtual world (and a quick lunch), we headed into the sunshine to see how the rubber meets the road.

As one of the oldest in the industry, Ford's Dearborn test track, at 366 acres, is among the smallest. (Some are tallied in the thousands of acres.) Packed into this space are eight different track facilities, with access granted according to the level of driver.

KEEP RIGHT >>

FORD START CONCEPT: AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE DESIGN PROCESS

On the lawn during dinner our first evening was the Ford Start concept, designed in Ford's southern California design studio and revealed three weeks prior, at the Beijing auto show. Ford designer Jeff



Nield was on hand to share with us the finer points of this small concept car's design.

"There are a lot of design cues to give this the presence of a car twice its size," says Nield, "creating an emotional and beautiful very small city car, cues that we consider 'romantic,' that would be more likely to be found on a luxury vehicle.

"If you look at the beltline, it's in a very horizontal position. It has rake to it, so the car still looks lunging, but it's not overly aggressive; it still looks very relaxed. The second feature you'll notice is the shoulder line; it has reverse rake, higher in the front than in the rear, like you'd see on a Chris-Craft or luxury boat, giving kind of a chariot feel. You'll notice very few surfacing features on the body side, just the shoulder line, and then a line in the rocker. In the industry today, this is a long distance to go without any other 'entertainment,' and that's very intentional. We wanted to communicate with minimum lines, to give the viewer time to relax and breathe. We talked about making music and not noise. If you're making music, the notes are important, but the space is important, too. You don't want to overstimulate the person; a car can become irritating if it's overstyled.

"In the rear, this is an extremely narrow car. So the taillamps wrap much further around the corners than is really necessary. You could stop at the back corner and have it still functional, but by bringing it all the way around, your impression is of more width and more presence. It makes the car look more grown-up. We gave the roof more section, the curve that makes the roof come across as thicker than on a more traditional vehicle. This gives a feeling of more occupant protection. There's glass 360 degrees around the vehicle, with very thin A, B and C pillars; that gives the person on the inside a lot of visibility so they don't feel confined.

"The first thing we did on the interior is make the floor very clear and open. There isn't a parking brake or shift knob. The seats are attached with a

monorail through the center, so you can see more floor, and you feel like you're in a bigger space. It's the same thing you do when you try to furnish a small apartment with

furniture that has legs on it.

"With the gauges we wanted minimum distraction, a back-to-the-basics approach so you can focus on driving, focus on the road. Two main gauges are analog on the outside, digital on the inside. I think a lot of people enjoy the mechanical nature of looking at the car through an analog gauge," says Nield, "so we didn't want to



remove that, but the center is a digital readout. We can send an infinite amount of information to the driver, but through the center of an analog gauge. It blends yesterday and tomorrow.

Make it look wider, stronger, more mature and romantic, and you have a better chance of a customer who wouldn't consider a vehicle this small maybe saying you know what? it has good interior space, I like the styling, it's exciting, and for some reason it doesn't feel that small to me; that's what we tried to do," says Nield.

Nice job.

Employees must go through one program to graduate to higher levels and perform other vehicle testing. Included are a Low Speed Track (giving a driving experience like suburban roads), a High Speed Track (simulating a highway), and what they call World Roads (20 different examples from around the world, including cobblestones and other challenging surfaces). Add a Vehicle Dynamics Area and a Wet Vehicle Dynamics Area (slaloms and such, wet and dry), a Steering and Handling Course (winding and hilly), a Straightway with tight banked turns at each end to build up speed, and Special Test Surfaces (a large hill and various trench and pothole surfaces to navigate, including curbs that test drivers will hit on purpose). You can see they've made the most of their acreage. (And if less acreage inspired the virtual facilities, then that's a compounded benefit.)

We have a couple of hours between lunch and airport departures, and we have a range of new vehicles at our disposal: the 2011 Ford Fiesta, Edge Sport, Mustang, Mustang GT and Transit Connect; and the 2010 Taurus, Fusion Hybrid, Lincoln MKT, Flex, Escape and F-Series Super Duty. Some vehicles are here to demonstrate a range of technologies and user features, from Active Park Assist to SYNC®, Ford Work Solutions and our first peek at Ford's new inflatable seat belts. Others are here to drive, both on the Low Speed and High Speed Track.

"Drive them all the same," we are told. "Compare their DNA." It's a good cross-section for such a short time at such a comprehensive facility. We've driven most before, but not on the track. It's interesting to find slight shifts in our analysis and preferences. For example, we had driven the new Transit Connect van on a coned course at Firebird Raceway in Phoenix, prior to its introduction, and at the time were surprised how well it handled. And it does, but it doesn't seem as striking immediately after, say, a Mustang GT. We also had just driven the all-new 2011 Ford Fiesta for a week in Arizona (see page 24) and were quite impressed. We had also noted that we specifically might want to check the raves we'd heard for its available automatic transmission, as we'd had the manual. Having now driven both, we'd still stick with the manual, but that's us. We benefited from the fact that some of the tech (as opposed to automotive) writers at this event had never driven a stick, and weren't about to start today. So every Mustang GT fell into our hands. The manual transmission and the lightly upgraded rear axle make this a favorite for the day.

Then it's off to the airport, a four-hour flight, a three-hour clock change and Phoenix the same evening. But we make a note to do this all again. ■

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THE SOUL OF A TOP-PERFORMANCE DODGE CHALLENGER IN SOCCER MOMS' CLOTHING

STORY AND PHOTOS: JOE SAGE



It's not hard to grasp the conflict between the soul of a free spirit and the duties of a parent, or between an uncharted highway cruise and a hard day of work with four adults. Vehicles from the SRT performance operation at Chrysler ("Race inspired, street legal"), such as the Dodge Viper SRT10 or Dodge Challenger SRT8 tend toward the uncharted free spirit end of the scale. What's a hard-working family person to do? It turns out the answer may be as simple as this: check out the Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT8.

This vehicle is as practical as a standard Jeep Grand Cherokee in terms of day-to-

day use, with seating for five, easy four-door-plus-liftgate access, lots of cargo space, all-weather four-wheel-drive and 3500-pound towing capacity. Perfect for school and soccer runs or for a weekend towing the boat to the lake.

It is also as much fun to drive as its free-spirited cousins. The difference here is in style more than substance. There's no question a Dodge Challenger gives off a more immediate rebel aura than any SUV ever could. But that's half the magic of the Grand Cherokee SRT8: it's a stealthmobile

to the untrained eye, the perfect generator of a classic "who knew?!"

This vehicle is a confidence builder. It gives you confidence with its power and its driving position, but also gives you confidence that you won't be taken as out of place in a bad economy or fuel-challenged times, because the basic Grand Cherokee format has its same sense of purpose: it's not too big, not overdone, not overly expensive. Add this power package to it, and you can claim very good balance.

The Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT8 is the first

four-wheel-drive SRT, and it's the quickest, most powerful Jeep ever. This Jeep accelerates from 0-to-60 mph in "under 5 seconds" (Challenger states a specific 4.9)—quicker than the Porsche Cayenne Turbo or BMW X5. Beyond the engine, SRT has tuned the Grand Cherokee's ride, handling and brakes, and has added a race-inspired interior and functional, performance-oriented exterior details.

The racy front fascia also provides aerodynamic benefits, while providing sufficient air flow to cool the 6.1-liter HEMI V8 engine and ducted brake-system cooling. The rear fascia accommodates dual 4-inch exhaust tips. Sill extensions help the soccer team in and out, but also create additional downforce.

Is the SUV for you? We were compelled to compare the Jeep with the Dodge and found quite a few surprises:

.....JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE SRT8.....CHALLENGER SRT8.....
ENGINE.....370 cu.in HEMI® V8.....	370 cu.in HEMI® V8
HORSEPOWER/TORQUE.....420/420.....	425/420
ACCELERATION 0-TO-60.....under 5 sec.....	4.9 sec
EPA (AUTO., MAN.).....12/16, na.....	13/19, 14/22
TOWING (LB.).....3500.....	na
LENGTH (IN.).....195.1.....	197.7
WHEELBASE (IN.).....109.5.....	116
TRACK (FRONT/REAR).....63.3/62.1.....	63.0/63.1
DRAG COEFFICIENT.....0.375.....	0.353
SEATING.....2/3.....	2/3
HEADROOM (FRONT/REAR).....39.7/39.3.....	39.3/37.4
WEIGHT DISTRIB. (AUTO.).....56/44.....	54.5/45.5
GRND CLRNCE...chassis/rear ax 8.5/7.0.....	4.8
OVERALL HEIGHT.....66.7.....	57.1
VOLUME - INTERIOR.....108.86.....	91.5
VOLUME - CARGO.....34.5-67.4.....	16.2
DRIVETRAIN.....4WD.....	RWD

We're surprised to see the Jeep is as quick as the Challenger, but it does use more fuel. We're also surprised at the similar drag coefficients and headroom. Wheelbases differ more than length, confirming this Jeep is not designed for off-road clearance angles. But if you need towing or cargo volume, back seat doors or four-wheel drive... advantage: Jeep.

And to drive? No surprises: awesome.

These all-Americans are built as follows: the Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT8 in Detroit (and also in Austria) with its engine assembled in Mexico, and the Dodge Challenger in Ontario. The Grand Cherokee SRT8 starts at \$43,325 (and the Dodge Challenger SRT8 at \$43,680). The solution to your conundrum will surely reveal itself. ■

JEEP SRT8 LOGBOOK

FEATURES & STYLE

- Reactions from bystanders are positive and admiring. Might as well be in a Dodge Challenger. Smooth and sweet. With one window open, enjoying a nice V8 rumble.
- Some bigger SUVs suffer pains to present fuel mileage as being not-as-bad-as-it-looks. This looks (mostly) like a run-of-the-mill Grand Cherokee, so you can get away with quite a bit. A classic sleeper, it mostly hides its speed capability, as well.

- Tracking on a straightaway drifts or pulls a bit. Despite full-time all-wheel drive, this is probably a predictable effect from pushing 420 hp through beefy 255/45/20 front and 285/40/20 rear run-flat performance tires.

- At neighborhood speeds, it upshifts so frequently that you don't really get to play with the power or build up more torque.

- Seems to have a remarkably tight turning circle; actual spec: 37.1 feet.

- Suspension is *very* good around town, just realize while turning through a run-off trough. We didn't have a chance to try it off-road. That's not its prime mission, but... it's a Jeep, so it should qualify. It does rock left-to-right on uneven hard surfaces.

- Tried auto HVAC for awhile, tried compressor on and recirc on, no matter what, since it was getting pretty warm. Still not all that cool, so we studied the manual. Seemed that anything we touched, it would start getting warm, the recirc would go off, so we had to keep turning it back on. Living with this in the summer could take some vigilance. Doesn't seem effective on auto, nor at 69-68 degrees. Put it on LO, make sure to turn the compressor on, turn the recirc on, go back and forth on flow to just our face or face and footwell.

PERFORMANCE

- We had noted that the rear end seemed to do its own thing during cornering, possibly attributable to the wide tires. Later, we found a sizable subwoofer assembly had come disconnected and was thrashing around in the back, so we attributed it to that. but the effect continued, so we wondered whether it might be the other way around: that may be why the speaker is loose. We went over a speed bump and didn't even notice it in the front, but that back axle was just bone-jarring. The rear suspension is a simple live axle, so that could explain things.

- The moonroof's sunshield is a reach-up manual slide. Simple and effective.

- Last day, looking around at controls and realizing it's been a pretty user-friendly week. All straightforward and effective, an invisible interface... like a good waiter.



Big bang for the buck

Story and photos: Joe Sage



We drove the Volvo C70 in 2008 and liked it plenty. Its main trick is that of any retractable hardtop convertible: it's a great closed or open car, with low noise when the top's up and open-air fun when it's down. But beyond that, we loved its powertrain (though we wished it were a rear- or all-wheel driver), it handled well, and the price was right.

At the time, we said, "We admit we weren't expecting to be overwhelmed by this car, but we were quite pleasantly surprised. ... The controls are clear and complete. Driver and passenger comfort are excellent, and even the rear seat is reasonable for this layout... When we learned the Volvo's five-cylinder turbo was putting out 227hp, we realized we had a fairly hot car on our hands—in today's world of cars with over 300, 400, even 500hp, that may not sound like much, but it exactly matches that of the 5-cylinder turbo S-series Audi performance sedans of the 1990s, which were great performers. ... The Volvo's combination of price, performance, features and its very neat two-cars-in-one coupe/convertible trick is hard to beat. We'd buy one."

The C70 was introduced in 1997 as both a coupe and a softtop convertible ("C" for either). In 2006 the retractable hardtop replaced both. For 2011, it has received extensive freshening.

Fenders plus front and rear fascias are updated, headlamps are restyled, it gets LED taillights, and the instrument panel has been redesigned with a new surface texture, panel gauge cluster and watch-dial graphics. The engine and transmission remain the same, and we have no quibbles with that. The inline-5-cylinder offers a great balance of performance and economy: the C70 delivers a respectable 19/28 mpg city/highway, while accelerating 0-to-60 in a decent 7.4 seconds.

MSRP for a 2011 Volvo C70 is \$39,950; an \$850 destination charge pushes it over the 40 mark. New standard equipment this year includes a five-speed Geartronic automatic transmission, 17-inch Sirona diamond-cut alloy wheels, Sovereign Hide leather and Sirius satellite radio. The list of standard technological and comfort features carried over from the prior model is extensive.

A Multimedia Package (\$2600) includes a Dynaudio 12-speaker (plus 2-subwoofer) premium sound system, Dolby ProLogic II Surround Sound, seven 130-watt amplifiers, and Volvo HDD navigation with Real Time Traffic, remote control and Map Care.

Spring for the Dynamic Package (\$1000) and upgrade to 18-inch Midir diamond-cut alloy wheels, dual xenon headlights with Active Bending Light (ABL), a 3-spoke sport steering wheel with aluminum inlays, and headlamp washers. A Climate Package (\$900) adds heated front seats, an Interior Air Quality

System (IAQS), a humidity sensor for the Electronic Climate Control (ECC), headlamp washers and rainsensor windshield wipers.

A new Convenience Package (\$1000) adds keyless drive, Homelink, rear park assist and an integrated compass for the auto-dimming rearview mirror.

Standalone options include cosmetics—paints including Electric Silver Metallic (\$675), new Flamenco Red or Ember Black (\$550) and Celestial Blue (also \$550), a new Cranberry leather available at no cost, and laminated Nordic Light Oak inlays (\$150)—as well as power retractable rearview mirrors with a Blind Spot Information System (\$700).

Our test car had all of the above except for the Convenience Package and oak inlays (our paint was Flamenco Red Metallic, and we did not have the Cranberry leather). Total sticker with destination charge and the first 3 years or 36,000 of factory scheduled maintenance included was \$46,550.

A couple of our colleagues were less impressed with the C70 than we were. One said he liked the '08 but a lot else has come to market since then—true enough. Another thought the instrument panel and interior were too plain, but that's actually something we had counted as a plus: so many vehicles are so tricked out these days, we sometimes long for a steel dash and a keyhole. We'd admit, though, that a passenger might be struck by a lack of features. One oddity, in fact, is that although the instrument panel overall is very plain, the center stack is stuffed with as many teeny buttons as ten smartphones. But it all works just fine.

As proof that this simple instrument panel bears lots of technological goodies, we did have a total failure of the car during our week with it. One morning presented a totally dead vehicle, other than a warning to service the headlight system. The good news is, Volvo's Roadside Assistance sent independent service out promptly, and a jump and recharge had us on our way. So what was the issue? We don't know. It's possible the headlight switch was left in some automatic position that drained the whole car, but it only happened that once. And we'd like to think the car would be smarter than that.

We were impressed with the C70's handling, especially given that it's a front-driver. Any torque-steer characteristics it may have been born with have been engineered out or are negligible, whether on neighborhood streets, roundabouts, aggressive surface street corners or at speed.

If you want one vehicle that does darn near everything except haul seven people off-road, at a mid-40s price, offering respectable fuel mileage and ULEV II Ultra-Low Emissions certification, the Volvo C70 is definitely worth a test drive. ■

VOLVO C70 LOGBOOK

PERFORMANCE

- Wind buffeting with the top down is minimal at freeway speeds. You get the feeling you could easily drive all the way to LA with the top down and some good tunes.
- Speed is comfortable; you feel you're going your actual speed, usually a plus.
- Suspension notes were mixed. Early on, we noted that in turns, though it didn't have much torque steer, it gave us a feeling of sag in the back. Speed bumps felt okay, but at an oblique angle gave us some rock'n-roll. In all, we noted it felt, well, really ordinary. The front has MacPherson struts with coil-over springs and 23mm stabilizer bar; the rear has multilink independent with coil springs and 22mm stabilizer bar. By the end of the week, though, we noted "we like the suspension on the C70, nice and firm on general road surface and dips and bumps. Has a little bit of side-to-side going through turns, just a fraction of what we get with some. By and large it's a nice ride."

- After 74 miles, we've used 3/8 of a tank of gas according to the needle. This equals 12.4 mpg. Let's hope the gauge is wrong.

FEATURES & STYLE

- Top up: 31.5 seconds including windows. Top down: 30 seconds, but ends with the windows up; longer if you count putting them down. Not bad for a hardtop, but a long time to keep your finger on the button.
- Putting the top up requires your foot on the brake, but it does *not* require you have it in park. By the time the whole top operation is complete, you could actually step out of the car with it still, say, in reverse.

Ask us how we know this.

- Oddly, the front windows go down with a one-touch, but the back ones remain up.
- Audio quality with the \$2600 premium option is quite good, after tweaking settings. The subwoofer is great. Quality is maintained well with the top down.
- Does a Volvo get respect in the Valley? Other vehicles tried to cut us off or deny us freeway merges many times. But it was probably just the Jersey plates. The car had plenty of pep to deal with these situations.
- Despite hostility in traffic, when we stopped anywhere, we had lots of enthusiastic inquiries—and all were surprised to learn it was a convertible, so it has basic appeal which is then multiplied many-fold.
- The instrument panel reminds us of the pilot's definition of flying: hours of sheer boredom punctuated by moments of stark terror; this is an expanse of utter simplicity punctuated by a little pile of complexity.
- Side warning indicator is very sensitive, but works much better than most: a good, clear warning, obvious it's there and why.



ICON BEGETS NEW ICON

AS DRIVER EXPECTATIONS EXTEND TO MORE THAN JUST POINT A TO POINT B, IT'S NO WONDER GOODYEAR INTRODUCED THE NEW COMFORTRED® TOURING TIRE ON HIGHWAY ONE FROM MONTEREY TO BIG SUR, ALSO MORE THAN JUST POINT A TO POINT B.

BY JOE SAGE

Tire selection can be a mind-numbing experience. You know your size, but practical considerations include purpose (performance? comfort? off-road? rain, snow, ice?), the tire's special characteristics and the life of the tire.

Some tires firmly establish their niche right up front. Such is the case with the original Goodyear ComforTred tire, and with the all-new ComforTred® Touring tire—a completely reengineered product that brings a well-known name forward, but widens its scope considerably.

Goodyear's Assurance® lineup includes three tires: ComforTred® Touring, TripleTred™ and Fuel Max®. The original ComforTred was introduced six years ago, and there are nine million of them on the road; "This is Goodyear's number one iconic product," says Michelle Dukeman, Goodyear passenger tire brand manager.

The original ComforTred was geared toward low noise and a comfortable ride, making it a favorite on classic boats like the Ford Crown Victoria or Buick Century. But tastes and sales have shifted, and as the company addressed an improved version, they examined their customers' expectations. The larger cars have mostly given way to a "mid-to-luxury" sedan segment. So meet an entirely new tire,

with many of the same goals, upgraded and enhanced, but for an evolving market.

Premium cars—Audi A6, BMW 3 Series, Cadillac, Lexus EX, Mercedes-Benz E-Class, and such—and even such mainstream cars as Honda Accord and Toyota Camry have gained far better handling and higher performance in the past few years. Buyers still rate smoothness, comfort and a quiet ride very high. But Gary Medalis, general manager, Goodyear consumer tires, says they also now want high performance, all-weather capability and great wear.

Market research was extensive. 25 percent of those surveyed described their driving as touring (a segment that grew from 8% to 25% from 2004 to 2009). A majority of drivers want simple everyday point-A-to-point-B comfort and safety, but they also want performance-enthusiast "me time." And on the same vehicle.

Considering that broad set of requirements, Goodyear's engineers began their modeling process and soon knew they would do best to take a clean-sheet approach. As lead engineer Keith Grabo notes, "we had to." Vehicles, segments and customers had all changed. Two dozen Goodyear engineers worked for two and a half years on a new tire.

Despite a highly evolved marketplace, Goodyear still found extremely high equity

in the ComforTred name. Thus, meet the new ComforTred® Touring tire. Engineering specifics include new treads, new compounds, a new "comfort edge" and a special comfort layer, a proprietary blend providing 20% more cushion.

The original ComforTred fit 71% of the market at the time, but the new one will fit 93% of the market today—a win for consumers, but also a potential win for Goodyear. Their hard work should pay off.

The Goodyear ComforTred Touring tire is constructed with two comfort zones in the tread and sidewall to optimize comfort and handling: an outer Comfort Layer, with an inner handling layer, and the Comfort Edge™ sidewall.

Noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) are transmitted through tires, wheels, chassis, steering column, pedals and more. Tires are the first line of defense. The above hardware can not only transmit but can amplify NVH, so the ComforTred Touring is engineered to reduce it, with its Comfort Layer working much like the gel sole in a shoe to insulate the cabin.

A new high-performance asymmetric tread pattern provides dry-pavement handling plus wet-weather traction, with a pattern of grooves and sipes that works like a geographical watershed system: creeks into streams, streams into rivers, moving the water out. The center is good for all weather, while shoulders and intermediate



ribs are good for wear, noise and handling. And the tread keeps the tire quiet.

Because the sound quality of tires is determined inside the vehicle, Goodyear uses an anechoic chamber, a room—usually quieter than any public library—that suppresses echoes or sound reflections and allows tonal characteristics of noise to be evaluated. The chamber is large enough to drive cars or large trucks into, and a test wheel embedded in the floor can spin the vehicle's tire without its engine running, deleting engine noise interference to pinpoint sounds from the tire under evaluation.

We first hop in a Lexus ES 350

KEEP RIGHT >>





sedan to see how well this all works, heading south from Monterey on California Highway One. By Carmel, we've noted the experience is like Bose Quiet Comfort headphones on a plane: we can hear other cars and outdoor noises, but the consistent noise that might be transmitted by the tires is largely absent. Yet we still feel the handling connectedness of the Lexus ES with the road. A pretty good achievement so far.

As we transition into farm and ranchland, we change the shifter on the Lexus from D to S and find it noticeably better with all its curves and hills on Highway One. We then realize that all we were thinking about was changing the shifter, when it's the tires we're here to evaluate, not the Lexus, because the tires themselves were performing quite well.

Our drive took us over Bixby Bridge, through tall woods and along unmatched cliffhanging switchbacks toward Big Sur. Some patches were foggy, but not particularly wet. The road is ideal for a performance test, and its sublime nature is well-suited to the serenity challenge. An excellent route for the mission at hand.

In about an hour, we've reached our turnaround point, high above the Pacific, where we change to a BMW 3 Series for the drive back north. We found the BMW to have more exciting shift points, even in standard Drive, though its steering felt less assured.

In an hour or so, we were back on four-lane Highway One through Seaside, just north of Monterey, where we encountered one very punishing stretch of concrete freeway with very rough seams. We had a window down, and the road was making quite a racket. But as soon as we rolled up the window, it became unbelievably quiet inside. Our voice memo states that we "couldn't have been more comfortable."

And now that we were so comfortable, it was track time. Goodyear had set up several courses in a large parking lot near Marina, California. Our experiments here were done in the Toyota Camry. They boiled down to rough road mitigation and wet surface handling.

First, we rode along in groups of four with a Goodyear test driver, on a vibration course, a straight stretch bearing the equivalent of demi-railroad ties, right side, left side, staggered. Attached to the steering wheel was an Apple iPhone with an accelerometer-driven app. (We've test-driven several accelerometer-based automotive apps and found the technology to be highly inaccurate in some of them, e.g. for measuring driving speed; we have no specific knowledge about this one, so we take it at face value.) We were all blindfolded, not something that generally induces comfort. "We're taking that sense away from you because I want you to *feel* what's going on," said our driver. "I'm going to hold a consistent 24-25 mph through all of this, so there's a nice comparison for you. Close your eyes... and just relax..."

After our bumpy ride, he solicited opinions, but none of us had any, having no idea what the mission was. He explained, "There are three different sensations that you should have had: one of them is shoulder movement, side-to-side. The next is what you feel in your butts, in the seats. And the final one is what we call head-toss." (The iPhone app is engineered to measure and display these three.)

"Did you experience those three?" Hard to say, meaningfully, after the fact. We figured we might have to go through again.

And that's just what he wanted us to do, to become aware of what we feel in our shoulders, our seat and our head. We ran the course again, eyes open, but wouldn't swear to any epiphanies. No-one ques-

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tioned a generally nice ride. One stated the seat was "about the only thing I did feel," while another said he "didn't feel (his) head rocking that much." Qualified crash test dummies we are not. We didn't cross-compare other tires or different vehicles, and the vehicle itself is very important on such a test. But for such severe bumps, we did quite well, and to the degree the instrument is accurate (or even if not, by straight comparison), there appeared to be a demonstrable reduction in stress—as well as discomfort—to critical body parts.

Next up: wet course, and for this we did our own driving. This was a nicely laid out and challenging course, and its pièce de résistance was the Goodyear water truck and hose personnel, providing a significant wet weather experience—our own little typhoon—for about half the course. Our mission included turning at speed through the heaviest deluge, then executing a couple of additional even tighter turns, some requiring braking, beyond the flood. A front-driver like the Accord would not be our first choice for these conditions, but it's a common real world setup. And the tires did very well,

even when pressed aggressively. We didn't get to try ice and snow, of course, on a spring day in Monterey.

Combine all our objective tested and subjective perceived experiences, and Goodyear has surely done just what it set out to do: created a tire of broad core application, while eliminating most buying tradeoffs (notably the traditional buying decisions between comfort and performance, and/or dry roads versus wet weather). That leaves us with the issue of tread life. Goodyear is so confident in their materials that they are offering an 80,000-mile tread life warranty on T- and H-rated ComforTred Touring tires, and 70,000 on V-rated, described by them as a first-ever breakthrough.

Still not sure? Well, they're backing it all up with their 30-Day Goodyear Pledge, also known as the Love 'Em or Leave 'Em program. Buy yourself a set of Goodyear ComforTred Touring tires, and you'll have a month to decide whether they are keepers. If not, you can exchange them for a different set of Goodyear tires, at no cost to you. You can find complete details at www.goodyear.com. ■



MONTEREY TRAVEL NOTES

Each August, during the convergence of the Pebble Beach Concours, a full range of collector auctions, the long-running historic races at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and the Concorso Italiano, we depart Arizona for a refreshing several days on the Monterey Peninsula. Nice timing. As it turns out, it's a great visit in late spring, too.

During the August events, rooms are expensive and hard to get; we often stay up the coast or inland, driving back and forth, early and quite late every day and night. And whereas we always toy with the idea of driving to Monterey up the full length of Highway One, we seem to end up flying to San Jose (SJC), about a 2-hour flight, and renting a car. On this trip, we were able to knock off about half of Highway One.



Instead of San Jose, we flew directly in to the Monterey Peninsula Airport (MRY). There are nonstop flights on US Air, just under 2 hours, but we were booked on United, via San Francisco upbound and LAX on the return. This is good for about four hours in each direction and includes commuter jet and prop flights, limiting luggage. But fares aren't bad, the convenience of the Monterey airport is tops (especially if you can book nonstop), and if you're staying in the area, you might be able to get by with hotel shuttles and forego the rental car.



We stayed two nights at the Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel and Spa on Del Monte Golf Course (home to the Mecum Auction event in August). The resort is close to downtown Monterey, as well as to the Salinas Highway, a very central location for any trip, especially the big week in August. After our driving events were complete, we had a choice of golf, a tour of Cannery Row and the Monterey Bay Aquarium, or a session at the spa, all fine choices. For more information on the resort, visit monterey.hyatt.com.

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THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS



Mercedes-Benz S400 Hybrid

BlueHYBRID

Mercedes-Benz is considering making its flagship S-Class sedan exclusively a hybrid model. The controversial plan would help the luxury brand meet global fuel-economy and emission standards. It would also mean none of the S-Class models, including the high performance AMG versions, would be only gasoline powered. The Mercedes hybrid system is a full hybrid system using lithium batteries. Full hybrids are capable of driving on electric power only for short distances. If the plan is approved it would take effect for the next generation, which is due in 2013 in Europe and a year later in North America.

Chevrolet upped the ante on the 2011 Silverado 2500HD and 3500HD pickups with a new version of the Duramax turbo-diesel V8 rated at 397 hp and 765 lb.ft. of torque. The engine power is improved by 32 hp and 105 lb.ft of torque from the previous generation, but with an 11 percent increase in fuel economy.

Ford has been seen testing a four-door version of the very popular F-150 SVT Raptor, high performance off-road pickup. Ford claims they have not committed to the second Raptor model yet, but the camouflaged model caught testing would indicate otherwise. The Raptor is expected to come with a new 6.2-liter V8 engine.



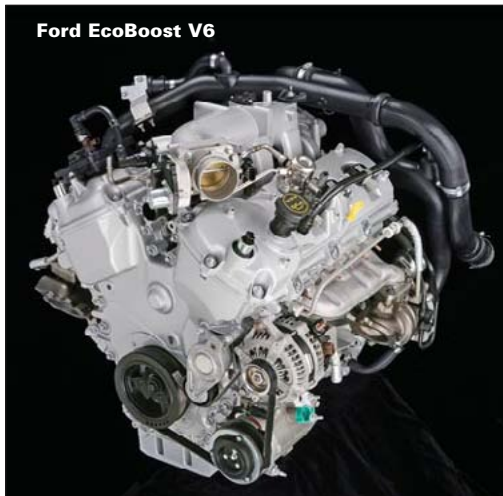
Cadillac CTS-V Sport Wagon

The latest versions of the Ford Voice-Activated SYNC technology helps users navigate through the 2500 miles of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in the US to help make rush hour traffic easier to deal with. The system can be set to seek out or avoid the HOV lanes along other traffic conditions like toll roads, ferries and time-restricted roads. The 2011 SYNC system also includes a Sirius Travel Link portfolio with traffic reports, incident alerts and new route suggestions to avoid congested areas.

Cadillac is adding a "V" to the new CTS Sport Wagon name and that means it also gets a supercharged 6.2-liter, 556-hp V8 under the hood and a suite of technical and performance elements to compliment the powertrain. Buyers can choose from a six-speed manual or six-speed automatic transmission in this latest CTS-V.

BMW says it is working on a new front-wheel- and four-wheel-drive architecture that will be used on a new line of entry-level BMWs along with next generation MINI models. Currently, BMW is an all rear- and all-wheel-drive company, so the departure is a major break in tradition for the German automaker. According to BMW CEO Norbert Reithofer, the new underpinnings will enable BMW to produce vehicles similar in size to Volkswagen's Fox, Polo, Golf and Beetle, or everything from minicars to compacts. Inside sources say up to 20 different MINI and BMW variants are planned.

Ford says the F-150 pickup will be offered with a V6 engine late in 2010. The beefed-up version of the 3.5-liter



Ford EcoBoost V6

EcoBoost will be the first V6 engine ever offered in the F-150. Details about a twin turbo engine have yet to be announced; however, in the Ford Taurus SHO the twin turbo engine produces 365 hp. The current F-150 4.6-liter V8 is rated at 248 hp and the optional three-valve 5.4-liter V8 at 310 hp. The top end of the F-150 powerplants is a 411-hp, 6.2-liter V8 in the Raptor SVT.



Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG

Nissan showed another cutting-edge design at the New York International Auto Show. The Juke sports cross has a bold design inside and out, drawing on a number of active lifestyle influences including motorcycles and rally cars. Juke brings unexpected performance from a 180-hp 1.6-liter Direct Injection Gasoline (DIG™)



Nissan Juke concept

turbo and an advanced torque vectoring all-wheel-drive (AWD) system with performance technology usually reserved for premium vehicles. The interior offers bolstered front seats and a center console inspired by a motorcycle fuel tank. The gearshift sits on top of the console, with a short shifter lever for sporty driving. In the rear, a fold-down 60/40-split bench seat and flat load floor provide passenger and cargo hauling flexibility. Juke goes on sale this fall and will be priced under \$20,000.

3M has created a composite-based wheel weight system, designed to reduce the lead impact on the environment. The system uses a proven 3M™ Automotive Attachment tape to apply the weights insuring a long life on the wheel. The materials are dispensed in a roll so they can be custom cut to the exact weight required for precision balancing. The tape, made from a lead-free composite material, is corrosion resistant so it will not leave rust stains on expensive wheels. For more information about 3M's wheel weight system, visit their website at www.3M.com/wheelweights.

Now that Mercedes-Benz has started selling the new generation gull-wing, the SLS AMG, rumors have them building a smaller version codenamed SLV. The "V" stands for variable body styles, and as such could be configured as a coupe, convertible, roadster or even shooting brake (wagon). The rumor has the SLV powered by a

406-hp twin-turbo, direct-injection V6 with a new nine-speed transmission that uses a wet double-clutch unit instead of the traditional torque converter. As long as we are repeating rumors, they say a 75-hp electric motor could be integrated into the transmission. To control costs, the front of the aluminum spaceframe

SLS and suspension would be used. Nothing was said about gull-wing doors on the SLV, however. If it is all true, we may see the Baby SLS as soon as 2014.

General Motors plans to have an "enhanced smart pedal" on all passenger cars with an automatic transmission and electronic throttle control by the end of 2011 to provide an additional safeguard and to enhance customer confidence. Also known as a brake override, the smart pedal adaptation involves modifying existing electronic controls to reduce power to the engine in cases where the brake and accelerator pedal are being depressed at the same time.

Researchers at General Motors and several universities are working with Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Southern California, as well as other institutions, to create a full windshield head-up system leveraging night vision, navigation and camera-based sensor technologies to improve driver visibility and object detection ability. "Let's say you're driving in fog, we could use the vehicle's infrared cameras to identify where the edge of the road is and the lasers could 'paint' the edge of the road onto the windshield so the driver knows where the edge of the road is," GM says. Some of the technologies could end up in GM vehicles in the near future.

The next generation Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution will be a hybrid according to insiders. The Evo XI is expected to have an electric motor driving the front wheels and a 2.0-liter gas engine driving the rear wheels when needed. It will run in an electric-only mode for short distances to improve fuel economy. The Evo XI will not disappoint performance enthusiasts, as the turbocharged gas engine is expected to put out about 320 hp, with combined power in the 350-hp range for the gas engine and electric motor combined. Insiders say target 0-to-60 mph acceleration is 4.5 seconds. Handling will be enhanced with new Active Steering and Roll Control Suspension. Expect the Evo XI for the 2013 model year.



2010 Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution GSR

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

Studebaker Ranch, Show Low



2011 Mercedes-Benz R-Class launch



RM Auctions San Diego, Barrett-Jackson Orange Co.



2012 Ford Explorer reveal, Dearborn



Shelby GT500



Volkswagen CC Sport and Volkswagen Tiguan S



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