

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 10 NUMBER 3
MAY-JUNE 2011

EVENTS AND ATTRACTIONS:

OVERLAND EXPO
MOTORING THRU TIME IN HERITAGE SQUARE
GOODGUYS SPRING NATIONALS
LEMAY AMERICA'S CAR MUSEUM CONSTRUCTION TOUR
TOYOTA TRUCKS OFF-ROAD AT PIR

MOTORSPORTS:

PIR NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS

VEHICLE LAUNCHES AND EVENTS:

KIA SX LINEUP
ASTON MARTIN VIRAGE
ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE S

VEHICLE IMPRESSIONS:

NISSAN LEAF
JEEP® GRAND CHEROKEE
KIA SORENTO
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ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

news & features May-June 2011

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COVER: The new Aston Martin V8 Vantage S, which fills a new sweet spot in the already sweet Aston line, as does the also-new V12-powered Virage. We drove them both in one day. Photo courtesy Aston Martin.



Photo: Chris Marzonte



Photo: Randall Bohl



Photo: Larry Edsall



Photo: Randall Bohl



Photo: LeMay Museum



Photo: Joe Sage

News of what's old joins news of what's new in fairly equal measure in this issue. We also stayed closer to home, at least in the sense that a couple of major new vehicle introductions happened to be slated for Arizona, this cycle. Funny thing about that, with the weather so nice right here this time of year.

We did hop on a plane to check out a new project that meshes old and new—LeMay - America's Car Museum—being built in Tacoma, WA. The museum first caught our attention when its board of directors assembled in Scottsdale during auction week in January. Everyone will want to visit this facility of national significance when it's complete.

Some of the same vehicles you may find there, you can often find here. Such is the case with Motoring Thru Time, a downtown Phoenix event covered by **Larry Edsall**. Larry also takes us to the Goodguys Spring Nationals at WestWorld. **Randall Bohl**, meanwhile, followed his nose to the smell of race fuel: first to Phoenix International Raceway's Night of Champions at the Arizona Biltmore Resort, nicely timed (as it turns out) to directly follow Trevor Bayne's unexpected win at Daytona; then to PIR itself, where he took a thrill ride on Toyota's truck and SUV off-road course with NASCAR driver Brian Vickers. Enthusiasts with maximum wanderlust also paradoxically kept us close to home, at the Overland Expo just north of Nogales, covered for us by **David Boldt**.

New product launches included two from Aston Martin—the Virage (a V12) and the V8 Vantage S—and the performance-oriented SX lineup from Kia, which includes their first-ever turbo engines. While in Tacoma, we drove the Jeep Grand Cherokee. Back here, we took a turn in the Mitsubishi Outlander Sport. And the brand new all-electric Nissan Leaf gave us an education—and a lot of fun.

We also joined the Copperstate 1000 road rally on both its first and last days, and we did this in a Porsche Panamera. Both the rally and our vehicle will be covered in the July/August issue.

Enjoy the ride.

Joe Sage - Publisher/ Executive Editor



ARIZONA DRIVER

MAGAZINE

PUBLISHER / EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Joe Sage
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: David Boldt, Nick Calderone, HR Driver, Larry Edsall, JP Molnar, John Priddy, Steve Purdy, Barbara and Bill Schaffer, Tim and Kristin Sharp, Jan Wagner, Kevin A Wilson
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PEBBLE BEACH AUCTIONS

SATURDAY . AUGUST 20

SUNDAY . AUGUST 21

PEBBLE BEACH . CALIFORNIA



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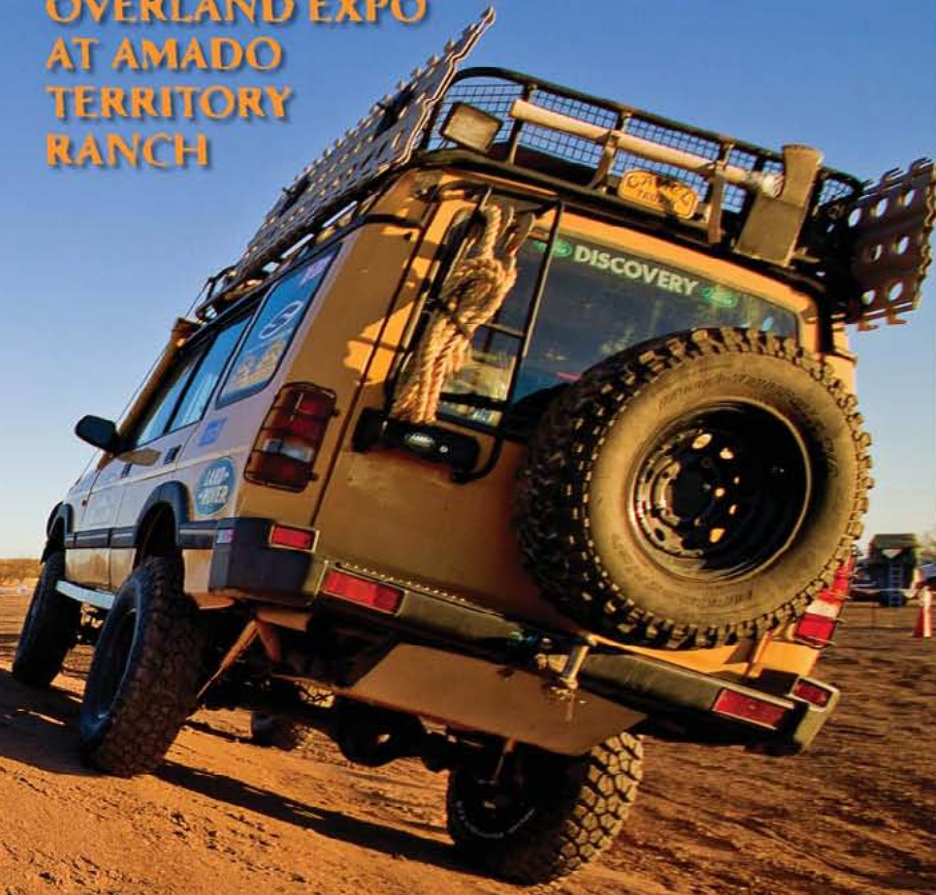


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OVERLANDING... WHERE THE JOURNEY IS THE PURPOSE

OVERLAND EXPO
AT AMADO
TERRITORY
RANCH



BY DAVID BOLDT
PHOTOS BY CHRIS MARZONIE

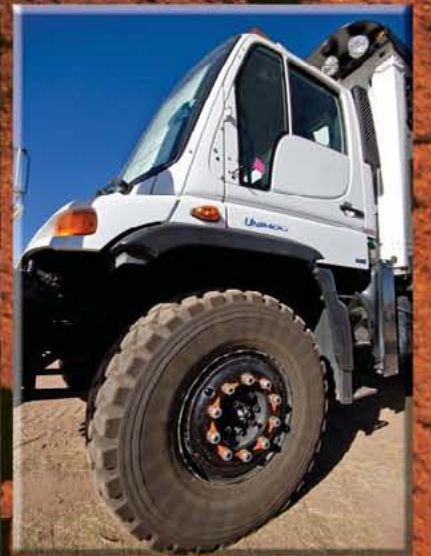
On the first weekend of April (this being the third consecutive year), Roseann and Jonathan Hanson invite all their rowdy friends—and a growing number of off-road vendors—to Overland Expo at the Amado Territory Ranch, between Green Valley and Nogales, south of Tucson. For those attendees coming from the lower 48, Canada and Mexico, the Expo serves as a great way to shake off winter, compare notes on personal adventures planned for the summer and/or those adventures planned for a lifetime.

The Hansons differentiate an expedition—a “journey with a purpose”—from overlanding, which is where the journey *is* the purpose. It is also demonstrably different from rock-crawling and mud-bogging, although all three share a similar enthusiasm for the great outdoors and locking differentials. And like any number of other vehicular pursuits, your commitment—and investment—can be as simple or as extravagant as you’re prepared to make it.

One of the simpler (or, at least, most minimalistic) methods of overlanding is by motorcycle. And this year, the two-wheeled category enjoyed its own specific area at the Expo for both product placement and adventure training. Given that adventure touring is perhaps the only growth area of the motorcycle business, this increased emphasis by the Expo was almost divinely strategic. Tucson’s Iron Horse BMW is a regular exhibitor, and was supported by the home team, BMW Motorrad USA. Celebrating over 30 years in the marketplace with the BMW G/S, the Bavarian two-wheeler was an early proponent of the on-road/off-road adventure.

At the opposite end of the investment spectrum was Global Expedition Vehicles, whose lineup of adventure vehicles combines survival-type bodywork to chassis supplied by Ford, Freightliner, Mercedes and Unimog. While the sports car enthusiast will find the aero numbers absolutely abysmal (think broad side of a barn), the standard conversion is all you need for a 10,000 mile exploration of the great unknown; failing that, perhaps North Dakota. Global Expedition (www.globalxvehicles.com) can provide the ultimate trade-up for those rolling down I-10 in their gas-powered Winnebagos.

Between these extremes, of course, was exactly what you’d expect. Among OEMs, Jeep—along with partners ARB and AEV—was the most visible. At Montana-based AEV their Hemi-equipped 4-door Wrangler drew appropriate raves, and gets a highway economy number—around 15—not unlike the V6-equipped stocker. And at ARB USA, a division of Australian-based ARB, the display



The whole wide world beat a path to the Overland Expo at Amado AZ this year, with both Germany and Tucson represented by Iron Horse BMW, Australia by its ARB USA division, England by Land Rover, Missouri by Global Expedition Vehicles and Montana by AEV. For them, this journey was on an expedition, with a purpose, but they were well equipped for it.

included a diesel-equipped Euro-spec Cherokee (Liberty in the US), as well as a Wrangler Sahara fitted with ARB’s Old Man Emu suspension (think a moderate lift that an “old man” could climb into...). Land Rover went off-road with its own training curriculum, and was also used as a display platform for any number of adventure-specific accessories. There will, it would seem, always be an England.

And based on the response to this year’s Overland Expo, there will—at least in the foreseeable future—always be an Overland Expo. Beyond the vehicles were a multitude of conveniences and accessories, along with adventure trailers, camper conversions, hiking wear and biking gear. For those trekking beyond water and sewage, Restop offered portable storage of liquid and solid waste, while Hydro Flask provided consistent temperatures for your hot or cold beverages. You want to kayak, but want that kayak conveniently transportable? Pouch America offers both single and tandem folding kayaks—fabricated in Germany—for between \$3,200 and \$3,500.

Mark next year’s event—around the first weekend of April—on your calendars now. That gives you ten months to determine your ideal set of overlanding wheels—and find a banker willing to take your appointment. ■



NEW JAGUAR XKR-S HITS 186 MPH

Jaguar has gained entry into the exclusive “300 kph club” (186 mph) with its new XKR-S sports car. Powered by a reconfigured supercharged 5.0-liter V8 engine, with revised fueling mapping, the engine output is raised to 550 hp and 502 lb-ft of torque. Extensive tuning has ensured that power delivery and performance are seamless, contributing to a 0-60mph time of 4.2 seconds. The performance of the XKR-S is reflected in both its interior and exterior styling and exclusive new paint colors that reflect Jaguar’s racing heritage. In order to balance front and rear lift, the XKR-S features a separate rear wing, a first for the XK range. ▼

Jaguar XKR-S



2012 Chevrolet Camaro ZL1

THE EXTREME CHEVROLET CAMARO ZL1

▲ Chevrolet introduced the most extreme Camaro ever built, at the recent Chicago Auto Show. Wearing a ZL1 badge and powered by a 6.2-liter supercharged V8 engine rated at 550 horsepower, it is said by Chevy officials to be the most technologically advanced Camaro built. In addition to the state-of-the-art engine, the ZL1 gets a highly developed chassis, brakes, exhaust system and a suspension to handle the extreme power. The central goal of the car’s development was to create a Camaro intended to reach optimal lap times on top road-racing circuits and excellent driving dynamics on the street. To achieve that goal, engineers evolved many of the existing Camaro’s systems, as well as incorporated new technologies, such as electric power steering and Magnetic Ride Control—the world’s fastest-reacting suspension system. The ZL1 is planned to launch at the beginning of 2012.

ACURA TL REFINED FOR 2012

Acura gave us a look at the new and improved TL recently at the Chicago Auto Show, and it shows significant refinements to an already impressive mid-level sedan. Changes include new front and rear styling and an important new Sequential SportShift six-speed automatic transmission to replace the dated five-

speed. Changes are responsible for improving fuel economy to 20 mpg city and 29 mpg highway (up from 18/26). The six-speed manual is still offered with the Super Handling All-Wheel-Drive version. Also available is a new Advance Package that incorporates all-new ventilated front seats along with new blind spot information system that alerts the driver of other vehicles that are in close proximity.

NEW C-CLASS AND C63 AMG COUPES

Mercedes-Benz completed another step in its nomenclature restructuring process with the introduction of the 2012 C-Class Coupe in Geneva. From the side, the new coupe is compact with a low silhouette, powerful shoulders and a narrow C-pillar in a classic three-box design. The new coupe shares front end styling with the latest C-Class sedan, yet still has its own personality. It has four sporty, comfortable seats. The gasoline V6 in the C350 features efficient BlueDIRECT injection, delivers 302 hp and accelerates from 0-60 mph in 5.9 seconds. Fuel economy is estimated at 22 mpg combined. The four-cylinder gasoline engine in the C250 also features direct injection and is turbocharged. It accelerates from 0 to 60 mph in 7.1 seconds and has an estimated 24 mpg city and 30 mpg highway fuel economy. The all-new 2012 C63 AMG is

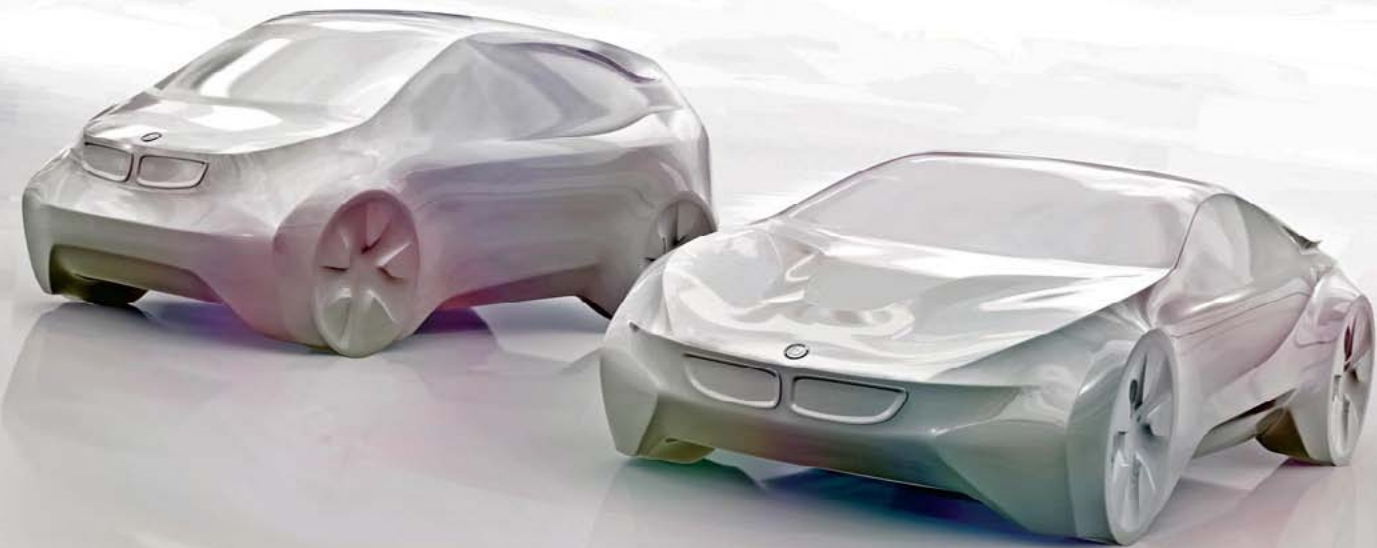
the latest addition to the company’s high performance arsenal. The C63 is powered by a 451-hp 6.3-liter AMG V8 engine, which hits 0-60 mph in 4.4 seconds, with an electronically limited top speed of 155 mph. An optional AMG Development Package boosts the engine to 481 hp with a 0-60 mph time of 4.3 seconds and top speed of 174 mph. The C63 has an arrow-shaped front section with a new AMG front apron housing a high-gloss black horizontal edge, AMG-spec LED daytime running lights and side air outlets. It is fitted with 18-inch 5-twin-spoke AMG light-alloy wheels painted in titanium grey with a high-gloss finish. The C-Class and C63 AMG Coupes arrive in September.

BUICK FUEL-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

Buick is kicking up the fuel economy of the 2012 Regal by 25 percent with the addition of its new eAssist™ fuel saving technology. Regal with eAssist joins the 2012 LaCrosse as the second Buick to feature the efficiency-enhancing configuration. The system uses a state-of-the-art lithium-ion battery system and electric induction motor-generator mated to a 2.4-liter direct injection four-cylinder engine to improve fuel economy to an estimated 26 mpg city and 37 mpg high-

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BMW i3 and BMW i8 concepts



way. The eAssist system uses a six-speed automatic transmission and charges the battery with regenerative braking. The eAssist will be offered as one of three engine options for the Regal, in addition to the base 2.4-liter four-cylinder and turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder variants. Regal with eAssist goes on sale this fall.

CHEVROLET MYLINK INFOTAINMENT

Chevrolet is taking the OnStar communications system to a new level with an in-car infotainment package called MyLink. Starting this year as an addition to OnStar, the new Volt and Equinox models will be available with the MyLink system. It integrates online services like Pandora® internet radio and Stitcher SmartRadio® using hands-free voice and touch-screen controls via Bluetooth device connectivity. MyLink adds stereo audio streaming and wireless control of smartphones to building on the voice-activated Bluetooth hands-free calling capability already offered in most Chevy vehicles. MyLink also includes a seven-inch high-resolution full-color touch-screen display that makes media selection easy to operate.

CADILLAC SHIELD PROGRAM

Cadillac is offering a new Shield warranty program to provide owners a higher level of service. The Cadillac Shield is

designed to heighten the brand's focus on customer service by tying together the wide-ranging benefits and technologies Cadillac provides its owners. The new program includes scheduled maintenance for four years, 100,000-mile powertrain warranty, five years of roadside assistance along with OnStar and smartphone aids. The program is effective on all 2011 models including vehicles purchased before the program was announced. For more information, go to www.cadillac.com/shield.

NEW BMW SUB-BRAND: BMW i

▲ BMW announced the creation of a new sub-brand, BMW i, which is designed to create a sustainable, premium mobility system. The first two models will be launched under the new sub-brand in 2013—the BMW i3 and BMW i8. The BMW i brand comprises vehicles and services developed since 2007 as part of project i, a BMW Group think tank exploring sustainable mobility solutions. It is the BMW Group's response to changing customer needs, including increasing demand for alternative drivetrains, such as electric drive systems and hybrids. Both models are based on a revolutionary construction concept known as LifeDrive architecture. An aluminum chassis houses the powertrain, and the

passenger cell consists of high-strength but extremely lightweight carbon fiber-reinforced plastic (CFRP).

BOOK: LAND SPEED RECORDS

If you think 100 mph is fast, just imagine 601 mph. That's what Craig Breedlove did on November 15, 1965, after a back-and-forth competition with Art Arfons to break the world speed record. Author Sam Hawley has captured the quest to that top speed in his book *Speed Duel: The Inside Story of the Land Speed Record in the Sixties*. Hawley follows the two drivers along individual paths that took them to the Bonneville Salt Flats in their passion for speed. The 360-page paperback is a 6-in. by 9-in. format and includes numerous black and white photos and documentation. It is published by Firefly Books and is available in bookstores.

NEW LINCOLN TOWN CAR

With the existing Lincoln Town car scheduled to be discontinued by the end of 2011, Ford is offering a new Town Car created from the Lincoln MKT crossover. A luxuriously appointed MKT with a Town Car name will be offered in two body styles—Livery and Limousine. The new Lincoln MKT Town Car Livery version uses a stan-

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Volkswagen Bulli microbus concept



...ard MKT chassis and is available in both front-wheel-drive and all-wheel-drive configurations. The heavy-duty Limousine chassis will feature standard all-wheel drive for the stretched wheelbase limousine conversion, which can be expanded by as much as 120 inches (10 feet). The new models offer easier ingress and egress and more space for passengers and cargo. The MKTs also have the SYNC system for safer driver communications, while passengers can stay connected and productive with a USB charging port, a 110-volt power socket and WiFi hotspot capability for mobile tablets, laptops and other devices.

VW MICROBUS IS BACK WITH A TWIST

▲ Whether you called it the VW Microbus, or the Bulli as it was called in Germany, the world's first van returned to the Geneva Auto Show as a concept, but with some surprising changes. Like the original, the concept is roomy and fun, but this time the power is coming from an electric motor instead of a four-cylinder boxer gasoline engine. The new electric Bulli comes with six seats, and the infotainment system is controlled via iPad. Volkswagen claims the Bulli produces zero tailpipe emissions and can go up to 186.4 miles on a single battery charge, which will take less than an hour at an "electric refueling station." Bulli accelerates from 0-

62 mph in 11.5 seconds and has a top speed of 87 mph. The concept can also incorporate Volkswagen's extremely efficient gas and diesel direct-injection engines as alternative drives.

PORSCHE PLANS TO DOUBLE SALES

New Porsche CEO Matthias Mueller has plans to double sales of Porsche performance vehicles to more than 200,000 units by 2018. The company sold 97,000 vehicles worldwide in 2010. The product launch schedule includes the following so far:
2011911, Panamera hybrid and diesel
2012Boxster
2013918 Spyder, Cajun (based on Audi Q5), Cayman, Panamera facelift/long wheelbase/plug-in hybrid
2014550 (small mid-engine roadster), 918 coupe, Cayenne facelift
2015911 facelift, 929 (positioned between 911 GT2 and 918 Spyder)
2016Boxster facelift, Cayman facelift
2017Panamera (2nd Generation)
2018Boxster (new generation)
Other possible additions to the list include a two-door Panamera.

BMW TAKES THE 6 TO NEXT PLATEAU

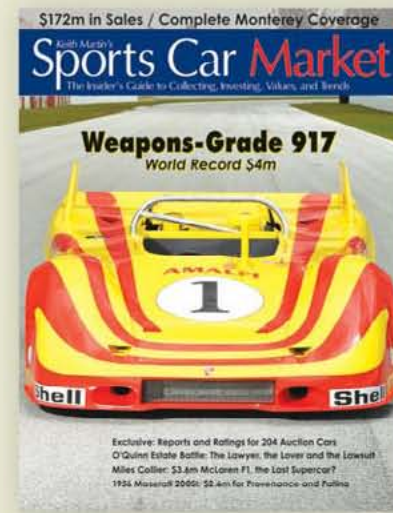
Arriving this fall, BMW's third generation 6 Series elevates the level of 2 + 2 coupes with its long sweeping hood, short front overhang and set-back passenger com-

partment. It's filled with new technology like Adaptive LED Headlights, Surround View, Parking Assistant, Night Vision with pedestrian recognition, Lane Departure and Lane Change Warning Systems, Head-Up-Display in full color, and Bang & Olufsen Surround Sound. Under the hood is a 400-hp 4.4-liter V8 engine with two turbochargers positioned in the V-area between the cylinder banks and BMW's new 8-speed Sport Automatic gearbox or traditional 6-speed manual. The Coupe sprints from 0 to 60 mph in 4.8 seconds with either transmission.

BOOK: ROADSIDE RELICS

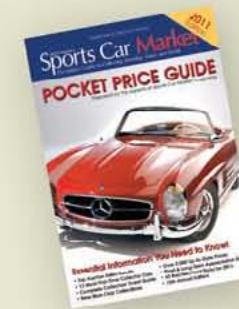
As automotive photographer, Will Shiers traveled American roads for the last 10 years taking photos of the empty shells of the rusted and forgotten vehicles littering fields, roadsides, yards, barns and junk yards. In 250 color photos, Shiers shows the relics of our mobile history from 1910 to the 1970s. Each photo is documented with history, model and location. The 208-page paperback book is a large format (8.25 x 10.625-inches) which allows for large color prints. It's a great book for anyone interested in old cars. *Roadside Relics: America's Abandoned Automobiles* is published by Motorbooks, a division of

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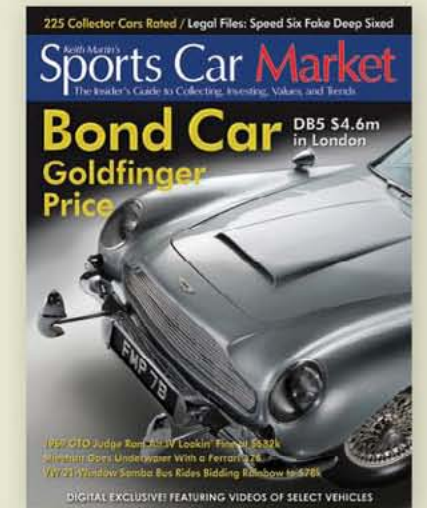
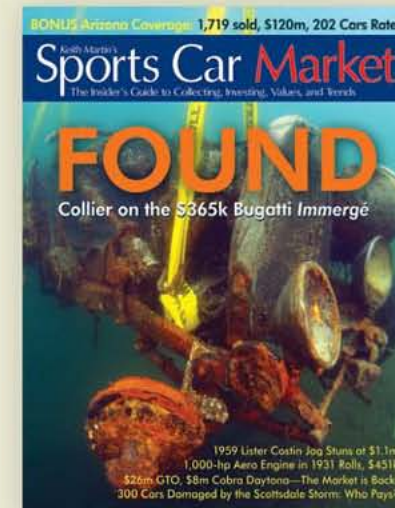
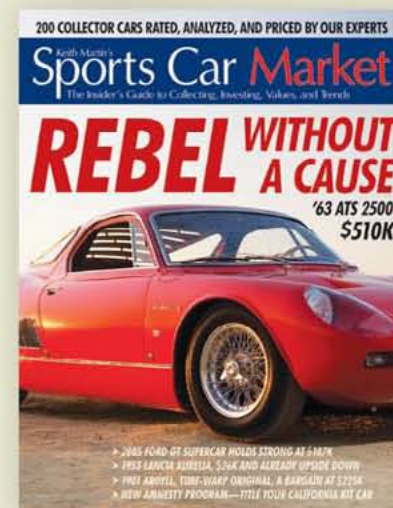


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2012 Hyundai Genesis R-Spec



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HYUNDAI R-SPEC PERFORMANCE

▲ Introduced recently at the Chicago Auto Show is the Hyundai Genesis R-Spec sedan. With its new 5.0-liter 429-hp, Hyundai-developed Tau V8 engine, it should put the Genesis on the performance map, competing with major European performance models. Also new is a Hyundai-built eight-speed transmission with SHIFTRONIC® manual shift capability. This new eight-speed is the first offered by a non-luxury-branded manufacturer. Fuel economy is estimated at 16 mpg city and 25 mpg highway, but performance numbers have not yet been released. The R-Spec goes on sale later in 2011. The 2012 Genesis will also be available with enhanced versions of the previous 3.8-liter V6 and the 4.6-liter V8 engine.

EXTENSIVE HYUNDAI TECHNOLOGY

Hyundai has pulled into the passing lane in automotive styling and quality, and it appears that technology may be their next conquest target. Hyundai's Blue Link® telematics system, which made its world debut at the 2011 Consumer Electronics Show in January, offers consumers seamless connection between the office, home,

smartphone and automobile with fast and reliable IT technology. In addition to turn-by-turn navigation ability, a restaurant finder and more than 30 other features, Blue Link will let Hyundai owners start their car remotely, will call emergency services if the driver cannot, will share vehicle location on social-network sites and will let drivers browse the Web, text and e-mail in a non-distracting manner. Blue Link will even let parents monitor how far and how fast their teens are driving when they borrow the Hyundai. Blue Link will be available in the US starting with the Sonata and Veloster three-door utility coupe later this year.

CANNONBALL RAT RACE IN SEPTEMBER

The Cannonball Run Rat Race sounds like a remake of the 1963 movie *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, but with fast cars and participants paying a big entry fee. Cannonball World Events announced The Cannonball Run Rat Race begins September 3 in New York City and concludes on September 9 in Laguna Beach, California. Along the way, participants will collect five numeric codes which will match up to a zip code. The sixth clue will release the actual address of a hidden locker containing a cash prize. The rally is limited to 60 teams of two or three people competing against one another to crack the code

given out at each morning's check point. Entry fee is \$8,995 and includes accommodations, breakfasts, evening meals, route packs and race track fees. For more information or to register for the event, go to www.cannonballworld.com.

CHEVY CAPTIVATES THE FLEET MARKET

Chevrolet has a compact crossover that is currently sold in 50 markets across Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, the Middle East and South America, but you can't get it in the US—until later this year, and then only in fleets. The five-seat Captiva crossover will give fleet customers a contemporary five-seat crossover with a comprehensive range of features and amenities, plus will also address their need for roominess, utility and fuel efficiency. The Captiva Sport features either an Ecotec 2.4L direct-injected four-cylinder or 3.0-liter direct-injected V6 engine, each matched with a fuel-saving six-speed automatic transmission. The Captiva Sport will be offered in LS and LT models, with four trim packages, including an all-wheel-drive model (LTZ). The Captiva Sport will be available for delivery to fleet customers in the fourth quarter of 2011, as a 2012 model. ■

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



Arizona-Sonora
Desert Museum

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Stars light up the night

Out on the town with Darrell Waltrip, Lyn St James, Trevor Bayne and Danica Patrick



Trevor Bayne is urged to show off his brand new Daytona 500 championship ring. Danica Patrick meets the media. Darrell Waltrip and Lyn St. James share a hearty laugh. And Waltrip leads Bayne, Patrick and St. James in a Q&A session with the fans.



Phoenix International Raceway revved up the 2011 NASCAR season with their annual Night of Champions charity event on February 24. There was a twist of mystery in the runup to the event, as the winner of the Daytona 500™ would be crowned just four days prior. That winner would join NASCAR Nationwide Series driver and Valley local Danica Patrick, three-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Series champion Darrell Waltrip, former IndyCar driver Lyn St. James and PIR President Bryan R. Sperber to help celebrate the start of the 2011 NASCAR season and the SUBWAY Fresh Fit 500™ event weekend at PIR on February 25-27.

And that winner? Trevor Bayne won the 53rd Daytona 500 just one day after his 20th birthday, thus tapping him to head the star-studded cast at Night of Champions. Bayne became the youngest driver to ever win the Daytona 500 and the second youngest to win a NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race.

The event was held at Frank and Albert's, in the legendary Arizona Biltmore Resort, on a beautiful February evening in the desert. Waltrip, who retired from racing in 2000 and is now a lead analyst for NASCAR on FOX, hosted the night. The charity event benefitted and raised awareness for research at the Arizona State University College of Nursing & Healthcare Innovation, and for Lyn St. James' Women in the Winner's Circle Foundation.

The purpose of St. James' Women in the Winner's Circle Foundation is to provide "opportunity for women's growth in the

automotive and competitive motorsports fields." One element of the Foundation is the Complete Driver Academy, of which Danica Patrick is a graduate. Patrick recalled to St. James that she "took it when it was in Indianapolis and cold". The Academy is now held here in metro Phoenix at the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving.

Patrick also shared some differences between driving at IndyCar and in the Nationwide car during her rookie year, the joke being on herself. In IndyCar, most of the controls are on the steering wheel, and engine information is transmitted to the crew chief by radio each lap. In NASCAR, the crew chief is asking you to read the gauges, and "I don't like looking down in traffic," Danica says. "During practice, the crew chief asks for the oil pressure and I can't find it. All the gauges are labeled at the bottom but I can't find oil, lap after lap. I finally had to pull into the pits exclaiming, 'I don't think there is one,' when crewman leans in, pointing to a gauge in the middle that says only says 'spec,' and it's labeled on the top!"

Patrick went on to say this year's car is fitted to her perfectly—and she knows where the gauges are. She was ready to race. And that she did, taking 17th place in Saturday's Bashas' Supermarkets 200, followed a week later in Las Vegas with a 4th place finish, making history (once again) as the highest placing female driver in a Nationwide Series race. It's a safe bet she's planning on being the first female driver to win a Nationwide Series race.

Trevor Bayne had been on the ride of his life, not just at Daytona, but for the four days from his historic win to the Biltmore event. He had driven his own Ford F-150 from Charlotte to Daytona with a friend, anticipating the same road trip home after the race. Instead, it was private jets and four days of interviews and national television appearances before we met him at the Biltmore. Is he as nice a "kid" as everyone says? Simply, yes. He had his huge Daytona 500 winner's ring on his right hand and was still determining how to show it to people. "Open hand seems kind of effeminate, so I kind of try to make a fist," he explained to a female television reporter. We asked what he did Sunday night to celebrate his win, and he said "I had to do laundry, since I wasn't going back home!" He later relived a bit of the last laps of Daytona for the guests on hand, saying he had asked his spotter if he should let Tony Stewart past and push him? The answer was, "NO—JUST GO!"

Unfortunately, Bayne had a rough weekend in Phoenix, placing 31st in the Nationwide Series race, after scrubbing the wall, and 40th in Sunday's NASCAR Subway Fresh Fit 500, again meeting that darned wall. But he handled it with aplomb, heading on to Las Vegas where he finished 5th behind guess who? Danica Patrick in the Sam's Town 300. And he finished 20th in the Kobalt Tools 400, with no more walls getting in the way. He is on his way to a solid race season, driving for both the Woods Brothers and Jack Roush.

As the evening wound down, we couldn't resist taking advantage of the food being served by Frank & Albert's. A bit of prime rib and a great big prawn seemed like just the ticket. Darrell Waltrip sat down at the table next to us, and being a three time NASCAR Cup Champion himself, and Fox broadcaster, he is quite the ambassador for the sport, signing autographs and answering questions even while attempting dinner. One particular fan question we caught was "why are you and the other drivers so willing to sign autographs for free, when football and baseball players often charge for autographs?" His answer: "Because we work more directly for the fans; our sponsors pay us to bring fans. And I'd guess there are maybe ten drivers out around this town appearing at other charitable functions tonight." Signing autographs, raising money for good causes and making new fans.

We hope he had some nice quiet room service later. ■



Story and photos by Randall Bohl



STRAIGHTFORWARD FLAT-OUT GREAT DEAL

How many new ways can we say "bang for the buck"?

By Joe Sage



The Kia Sorento falls in the powerfully important midsize crossover category. If you compare it by size and purpose, the list of competitors is a mile long. If you compare it just within its price range—well, that's actually where much of the magic is. The Sorento punches way about its weight. We've driven many a \$40-50,000 crossover and thought, you could buy two Kia Sorentos for the same price. And let's not forget Kia's 10-year/100,000-mile warranty and 5-year/60,000-mile roadside assistance, introduced years back to build comfort with new Korean brands and still in play today. No wonder Sorentos have been multiplying rapidly all around us.

Our test Sorento was a front-driver. Full-time all-wheel drive is available, but with stability control, traction control, hill descent and downhill brake features, plus decent ground clearance, even this one is ready for moderately challenging terrain and weather conditions.

Our Sorento was well-appointed: keyless entry, full electric seat adjustments, including base angle. Controls overall are straightforward and clear. The center stack

touchscreen (with backup camera) is smaller than many, but so simple and informative, we wonder why others are often so big. Tuning the radio requires looking, and looking requires tipping down any polarized sunglasses. There is a good balance between manual controls, analog gauges and electronics. Climate is automatic with an LED screen, but very simple to reach over and adjust by hand. Instruments front and center are supremely legible analogs: tach, speedo, temp and fuel.

In its first mile, we find the Sorento "pretty peppy, could be a little moreso, handles great, snaking through traffic circles and onto the main road; smooth, flat tracking, no wallowing. As expected, a lot for the money."

Just as we were feeling great about it, we pulled up between a Porsche Cayenne and a new Grand Cherokee. Hmm. Well, ego and id may factor in your decision, but the Sorento actually has a neat, stylish, trim look of its own. And wisdom can trump bravado.

We noted that the automatic transmission was very smooth, with all the shift points just where you want

OUR TEST KIA SORENTO EX FWD

ENGINE.....2.4L 16v DOHC CVT 4-cyl, 175hp, 169 lb.-ft.
TRANSMISSION.....6-speed auto w/ Sportmatic
DRIVE.....Front-wheel drive
FUEL MILEAGE (EPA EST.).....21 city / 29 highway
ADDTL TECH AND SAFETY: Independent front/rear suspension; hydraulic rack-and-pinion power steering; disc brakes front/rear; front, front/rear side, side curtain airbags; ABS; ESC; traction control; tire pressure monitor; downhill brake control; hill assist; smart key, push-button start; cruise; Ecominder; backup warning.

INTERIOR: Dual-zone automatic climate; PW/PL/mirrors; AM/FM/Sirius/CD/MP3; USB, aux, Bluetooth; multi-adjustable driver's seat w/lumbar support; 60/40 split/reclining rear seat; leather-wrapped steering wheel/shifter; auto lights; tilt/tele steering column, overhead console; illuminated vanity mirrors; rear armrests.

EXTERIOR: Chrome grille and door handles; rear privacy glass; mirror turn signal indicators; fog lights; rear spoiler.

Base price.....\$24,795

LIMITED PACKAGE: Nav w/traffic data and camera display; Infinity 10-speaker audio; 18" mirror-finish alloy wheels; interior accent illumination2,000

PREMIUM PACKAGE: Leather seat trim, front/rear; heated front seats; auto-dim mirror w/camera display.....1,500

EC MIRROR w/compass and Homelink.....250

Destination charge.....795

TOTAL.....\$29,340

them, though some downshifts triggered a pause and surge, and we noted some other exceptions at times.

If we put it in park and stepped out, say to grab our mail, the Sorento protested with a shrill beep that could wake a neighborhood. We'd hope that can be overridden.

This was the 4-cylinder EX. The base model is the LX, which comes only in two-wheel drive and only with a manual transmission. When we drove this EX, it was the top trim, but now that the SX lineup has come along (see page 34), EX is in the middle. But you can get the SX's 276-hp V6 in an EX now, so the whole range is expanded. The 4-cylinder isn't bad at all: on a complex frontage road, with a merge in a turn, we let 'er rip, driving close to the pole like a high-performance sedan. The Sorento beat everybody easily, while handling just great.

The Kia Sorento is a Kelly Blue Book "Top 10 Family Car of 2011," and Consumer Reports rates it their Top Pick Family SUV. If you have major luxury badge issues, spend some of the savings on therapy: the Kia Sorento is a great vehicle at a more than reasonable price. ■

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Aston Martin Virage



Aston Martin V8 Vantage S

NICHE MANUFACTURER CREATES MORE NICHEs

BY JOE SAGE

ASTON MARTIN EXPANDS V12 AND V8 LINEUPS

Aston Martin is well known as a manufacturer predominantly of high-performing and prestigious hand-built grand tourers. Such cars inherently come in small volumes at high prices. This might seem like a formula for a fairly limited lineup, yet when the company identifies a sweet spot they don't think they've covered adequately, they go to work. And that's exactly what has brought us two new Astons this year: the V12-powered Virage and the V8 Vantage S. We were given a detailed overview of the features and had a chance to take both new models for a drive.

THE DINERO IS IN THE DETAILS

The Virage is aimed at a spot combining grand touring and sport, between the DB9 and DBS.

The V8 Vantage S brings elements of the affordable V8 Vantage up to a sportier level, while incorporating some of the edgier style and performance elements of the more expensive V12 Vantage.

The new cars fall into line with pertinent models in the lineup over the past few years fall as follows, ranked by ascending base price:

MODEL	ENGINE	HP	TORQUE	\$ COUPE(+)
V8 Vantage	V8	380	302	\$113,400
V8 Vantage S	V8	430	361	\$138,000
V12 Vantage	V12	510	420	\$179,995
DB9	V12	470	443	\$187,070
Virage	V12	490	420	\$209,995
DBS	V12	510	420	\$286,500

The Virage Volante convertible has a base price of \$224,995, and the V8 Vantage S Roadster, \$152,000.

There's far more to it all than just these fundamental numbers, though many of the variables are very nuanced. For the two new models, Aston Martin says they have tweaked just about everything. Let's find out what they've tweaked.

TO DIE FOR, "BUT COULD YOU JUST...?"

Aston Martin presents with great fanfare various features that strike us as fairly universal (upgraded navigation, for example). With a small-volume builder, though, we'll grant that their incorporation may be more noteworthy. And their implementations are often exceptional. So is Aston Martin actually adding magic at every turn? Or did the previous offerings fall a little short of the mark in some cases? A few of the features that were presented to us seemed like mitigations, as much as new ideas or evolution. But collectively, they provide new vehicles each with a market-response purpose.

We got a kick out of being told the differences in this new model would be obvious to us and would "go without saying." In actuality, we don't have every detail of every vehicle in the world, past and present, memorized. So, we welcomed an out-loud run-through, highlights of which we'll share here.

ASTON MARTIN VIRAGE

The V12-powered Virage is a 2+2 grand touring car, available as both a coupe and a Virage Volante convertible. Each sheet metal bend and upholstery stitch is explained. Touring the exterior, we're told that everything we can see has been improved for either style or aerodynamics. New bodywork includes a pronounced side sill, a body crease and cutout on the top of the front fenders adding emphasis to the side of the hood, chrome-lined 3D inlets atop the hood, and new headlights that tie together with the fenders, evoking the four-door Rapide.

Lest you miss the idea that each detail matters, we are told that the following is "huge": the side strike (the feature on the front fender, behind the upper wheel cutout, extending onto the door) has been raised to the top of its aperture, which "has never been done before in an Aston Martin." Every Aston Martin from David Brown's DB4 forward has

had an aperture with a center strike (as still seen on the new V8 Vantage S, above right). Till now.

We can easily enough imagine a new Aston owner memorizing these details and their significance for their own show-off sessions.

The brakes are all about performance and technology, yet these too are presented to us first from an aesthetic standpoint. Ten-dual-spoke wheels are crafted for a good look at the carbon ceramic matrix discs and calipers. Worth some \$16,000-18,000, they're worth seeing. Carbon is infused in a ceramic matrix, where ceramic facilitates traction during cold braking. As they get hotter, embedded carbon particles reduce fade. The ceramic for all intents and purposes never wears, like a ceramic knife, very strong and very hard. The carbon burns out of the rotor over time, but Aston Martin says it should last 100,000 miles, over which time the cost benefit per use far exceeds conventional rotor technology. The key to this design is that you would never break the ceramic under any force that would be exerted by braking—not just in normal driving conditions, but in as extreme repetitive braking conditions as you could consider. Track braking is really the only scenario where you even approach the limits of the brakes—the rotors can actually light up red hot and still be functional, as you see on a Le Mans racer at night, with similar ceramic brakes.

POSITIONING THE VIRAGE

Whereas the DB9 is priced close to \$200,000 and appeals to a customer looking for a grand touring car with "a gentleman's characteristics," and the



KEEP RIGHT >>



DBS, closer to \$300,000, is specifically designed to be an exotic grand tourer with exotic materials and a very edgy look, Aston Martin recognized middle ground here. They were sure there was still another customer who was put off by the additional cost of the DBS, but felt the DB9 was too tame.

VIRAGE FEATURES

The Virage starts with the essence of the DB9, adding edgier body details to "sport it up." Suspension is more like the DBS. The DB9 has no option for carbon ceramic matrix brakes, but the Virage has them standard, like the DBS. Power is raised from the DB9's 470 to 490 hp, but the torque stays the same. There's more horsepower in a DBS but more torque in a DB9. Gear ratios are similar to the DB9, moreso than to the DBS, which is geared for a little more power band. Put it all together, and you feel power on the top end more in the DBS, while the DB9 is perhaps better for surface street driving. The Virage "kind of falls right in the middle."

Interior appointments include many detailed elements, including some we might put on that mitigation list, thinking they should have been this way all along, at any Aston price. In Aston's view, for example, we are told, "plastic is failure." Yet we are told there is always going to be something, due to cost and other constraints. The new Virage attacks plastic head-on, though, replacing buttons and knobs that were plastic in the DB9 with sapphire and billet here. Upholstery has new welting specific only to Virage, applied on the doors, seats and elsewhere. The navigation unit has been upgraded to address shortcomings in its predecessor—specifically, opening and closing times (and the ability to change your mind mid-cycle), as well as a higher resolution screen (which is glossy—unfortunately, in our opinion). It does include better-than-average zoom and scroll capabilities.

The Virage comes with a Touchtronic II six-speed "true" automatic transmission (and no option of a manual, though the DB9 can still be had with a stick, and DBS "of course"). As a transaxle installation, it contributes to perfect 50:50 front/rear balance. You can drive in D or use paddle shifters for override. It will hold the gear you select, though, as the engineers considered track driving, it won't allow you to exceed the rev-limiter. A sport button on the Virage changes throttle mapping (another difference from the DB9). We bring the Virage to about 40 mph on a surface street, do not touch the accelerator, hit the sport button, and—balanced throttle feed but different mapping equals instant performance boost (with commensurate V12 sound effects). The goal is overall relatively quiet touring but with a chance to know you're driving a sports car. It feels impressive but a bit odd, and we're not positive it's desirable in heavy traffic.

If you tire of the V12's exhaust "music," the Bang & Olufsen sound system is a point of pride, significantly improved from some prior Aston systems. The development process for a new Aston has in the past sometimes forced even the best audio manufacturers, such as Scotland's Linn Audio, to create a system in parallel with a new model's development, in other words driving blind. Aston learned the hard way to take the approach of most other contemporary high-enders, providing B&O with a finished car, so they could tear it apart and engineer their system, fully optimized. This has led to such details as a completely new dash structure, with drop-down 180-degree focal imaging tweeters. Sound is top-notch.

Engine note or music: you can rock and roll.

ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE S

The two-seat V8 Vantage S is designed to blend the V8 Vantage with the V12 Vantage. The car is available as both a coupe and a V8 Vantage S Roadster convertible. The hood, headlights and fenders are the same as the existing V8 and V12. Side sheet metal is basically the same, though

KEEP RIGHT >>

Aston Martin Virage



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with increased aerodynamic value to the side skirt, and a carbon fiber side strike optional on the S. From the V12 Vantage comes the carbon splitter under the nose. On this, Aston Martin is quite proud to have made two angled meshes line up dead in the middle, which from a production standpoint increases the cost exponentially, they say, but in an automotive world full of carbon fiber, brings something distinctively Aston.



POSITIONING THE V8 VANTAGE S

The V8 Vantage entered the market as the "affordable" Aston Martin. Developing the V8 Vantage S has brought the base price up by just under \$25,000. The stated goal of the S is a more dynamic driver experience, plus a higher level of style and content, with a nod in the direction of the more expensive V12 Vantage. On the overall price continuum, the V8 Vantage S is shy of the halfway point, closer to the base V8 Vantage (about a 20 percent difference between the lower two, versus

about a 30 percent difference between the upper two). Suspension is upgraded. The interior is heavily revised and comes with a range of options. Aston is particularly proud of a three-line pattern found as a style theme throughout, incorporated into doors, seats, the sides of the center console, and into extruded aluminum machine work, which echoes the style of extruded chassis members (including their increased strength).

Hand-finished seats feature heavy stitching for more of a sports car nature and sportier look, with the same technique reflected in floor materials. A full-blackout center runner is picked up from the DBS. And the V8 Vantage S is the only Aston with piano-black anodized aluminum door pulls.

These details are all part of the upgrade from V8 Vantage to V8 Vantage S, but there are significant performance improvements, as well.

V8 VANTAGE S FEATURES

Front brakes are increased from a 4-piston caliper and single-piece cast iron fixed Brembo disc setup in the standard V8 Vantage, to a 6-piston caliper and two-piece floating discs of larger diameter in the V8 Vantage S.

Forged wheels, special to this car, have a diamond finish: the edge of the wheel is lathed with a diamond bit, which gives the alloy metal a distinctive lustre underneath its clear coat.

On the V8 Vantage S Roadster, the rear deck lip is unchanged from the V8 Vantage, but on the coupe, it's larger. There's a carbon fiber splitter in the lower rear fascia very similar to that on the V12, with the addition of winglets for increased aerodynamic downforce.

The 4.7-liter V8 of the V8 Vantage has been tweaked considerably, raising output from 380 horsepower in the standard to 430 in the S, and torque from 302 lb-ft to 361 in the S. When you look under the hood, you'll find a black powder-coated manifold specific to this engine. The engine is also announced to the world by a specifically retuned exhaust note. The V8 Vantage S paddle-shifts through a 7-speed Sportshift II manual transaxle and delivers through a 4.11 rear end. In all, increased power comes from more horses, shorter shifts, and that higher torque, all in combination. The base model's crawl feature has been removed from this transmission. The predecessor would creep up to 4 mph on its own once you took your foot off the brake, but not this: the S stands still, increasing the smoothness of takeoff. Along with this comes a provision to hold the brakes for 2 seconds on inclines of up to 4 degrees.

FILLING NICHES? OR CREATING THEM?

Truly, a buyer could be motivated to shop Aston Martin even if they had three models, featuring nothing more than a keyhole, steering wheel and seat. But the lineup grows and grows. Does Aston Martin really need to manufacture every one of these, to make a sale? Evidently so. Or at least they relish the prospect of satisfying every potential buyer if they can. ■

Aston Martin V8 Vantage S



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EVIL MACHINES FROM NEAR AND FAR

Story and photos by Larry Edsall



The 70,000-member Goodguys Rod & Custom Association opened its 2011 season with its second annual Spring Nationals, an event that attracted more than 2000 cars and their owners, parts vendors and a multitude of spectators to the WestWorld equestrian complex in north Scottsdale.

Among those owners were Greg Selvidge, a native and resident of Washington State who also has a winter home (and sizable garage) here in Arizona, and Jack and Tammie Nelson of Farmington, New Mexico.

1964 CITROËN : GREG SELVIDGE FROM FRANCE VIA WASHINGTON

Selvidge brought one of the most unusual of the vehicles on display—a 1964 Citroën built over a NASCAR racing chassis and powered by a 610-horsepower LS7 Corvette V8.

Selvidge had also displayed a car at the first-ever Goodguys event, held way back in 1983 in northern California. A native of the Seattle area, Selvidge is an entrepreneur and inventor. He owned the Craig Craft boat company. His creativity includes products such as the California Car Duster (subsequently and to this day found in seemingly every car enthusiast's trunk).

"I've been in this business a long time, and everything I do is different," Selvidge said of his car-customizing tastes. He listed projects such as a series of 1940 and '41 Graham Hollywoods, one of which was purchased by comedian Eddie Murphy. He also removed the wood from a 1951 Ford woody wagon, replaced the wood with metal, but then airbrushed woodgrain into the metal. The car won at the 1991 Grand National Roadster Show and was purchased by comedian Tim Allen.

But Selvidge admits the Citroën, which looks stock until you notice the size and style of the wheels, the internal roll cage, or open the hood and see the big racing V8, may be his weirdest and most complicated project—so far. (You might want to check back with him when the Goodguys return to WestWorld at the end of the year.)

1970 MUSTANG : JACK AND TAMMIE NELSON FROM FOUR CORNERS IN NEW MEXICO

Meanwhile, the 1970 Ford Mustang convertible the Nelsons brought from New Mexico to the Goodguys event wasn't nearly as radical as Selvidge's French custom, though at least two aspects of the car caught your eye: its 482-cubic-inch Ford V8 engine and the hand controls Jack Nelson uses when he drives, as he did during the autocross competition that was part of the Spring Nationals.

Thirty-five years ago, when Nelson was a teenager, his car was struck by another. Nelson got out to get information from the other driver. The other driver bolted the scene, leaving Nelson standing between his car and one that had stopped to help, when yet another car slammed into them. The impact severed Nelson's legs.

Nelson, who works for his family-owned business that transports oil-drilling rigs and other equipment around the Four Corners area, owns, he thinks, "17 or 18" vehicles, including an RV that he drives with hand controls for road trips such as the visit to Scottsdale. All of those "17 of 18" vehicles are Fords, with one exception: Nelson recently traded a drag-prepped Fairlane for a 1971 Plymouth Scamp.

While he loves his Fords, which include seven Mustangs, Nelson said he's always wanted to see what it was like to experience some Mopar muscle on the street, and now he can. ■



Would you lend your truck to a NASCAR racer?



Brian Vickers takes Toyota fans for a spin, off-road

Story and photos by Randall Bohl

The Toyota Drive Center—a ride-and-drive off-road course where race fans could drive Toyota trucks and SUVs—was created at Phoenix International Raceway during the Subway Fresh Fit 500 NASCAR race. That already had our interest, but they sweetened the deal by saying, “we can get a NASCAR driver to take you for a ride.” Brian Vickers—who drives the #83 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Red Bull Toyota Camry—would take us for a ride in the 2011 Tundra, on Saturday at high noon.

This was one of two major Toyota presences at PIR that weekend. The other was a fan interactive display called PitPass, which they set up at key NASCAR, NHRA and Off-

Road races. This huge display, on the midway inside the track, included a simulator, vehicles, driver appearances and fan photo ops. Toyota race cars included Joey Logano’s #20 Home Depot NASCAR and Cruz Pedregon’s NHRA Fuel Funny Car. After a quick walk-through, we headed to the off-road course.

The Toyota Drive Center featured a custom-built off-road course, built off-track, where potential customers could view and drive the full lineup of Toyota trucks and SUVs: the Toyota Tundra, Tacoma, Sequoia, 4Runner and FJ Cruiser. The course included a hill climb, a couple of banked inside turns, wicked washboards and an off-camber circular hillside (this pile of dirt probably provided

the most entertainment value for Brian).

When Vickers arrived, there was a brief introduction to the public, then we quickly headed for the truck. We were ushered to the back seat, as a Toyota Drive Center employee was to ride shotgun.

This turns out to temper Brian’s driving experience. It seems that when Joey Logano took a little media drive like this on the same course, he had to be, in racing parlance, “black flagged.” Vickers got a kick out of hearing this, of course, and wondered aloud whether he could achieve the same.

Vickers had a two-item pilot’s checklist: [A] seatbelt, [B] traction control OFF. Then right foot down, and up the hill we went, the 5.7L

iForce V8 throwing dirt and dust.

Ripping down the other side of the hill and into a 180-degree banked left turn felt good to us, and our chaperone was happy. On to the off-camber round. Now this is where only a high school student—or race car driver—would think, “gee, let’s get the truck leaning way out, turn into the hillside, stand on the throttle and see what happens!” What happens is tire spin. The truck slides downhill until Vickers feathers the throttle, re-connects with earth and climbs back up. This maneuver was repeated until the chaperone suggested that Vickers not do things that the waiting public might wish to emulate when it’s their turn to drive. Read: you’re being a bad influence on your fans, our customers.

In fact, had Toyota’s Star Safety System been engaged, the truck would have stuck to this hillside, tight. Our personal note while sideways: we wouldn’t try this in a 1970s-era Jeep Golden Eagle.

The modern Toyota system includes Vehicle Stability Control, Traction Control, 4-Wheel ABS, Electronic Brake-Force Distribution and Brake Assist. Normal people will rely on and appreciate these features.

After a quick run through another high banked turn, we charge across the washboards to the start/finish line, where Brian caps things off with a nice smoky burnout. No doubt he had read Toyota’s literature: “To handle the massive torque loads of Tundra’s available 5.7L V8, our engineers matched it to a massive ring gear: 10.5 inches.” Yes, that was the point he was trying to make, we are certain.

Vickers then took time to sign autographs for people waiting their turn to drive. Fan questions mostly concerned his recovery from heart surgery he underwent last July to repair a hole between the right and left atriums. While signing hats, T-shirts and one young boy’s forehead, he said “the surgery went good, the doctor said I’m good, but it’s been a long year. I’m totally ready to be back in the car, very excited to be back in the car.”

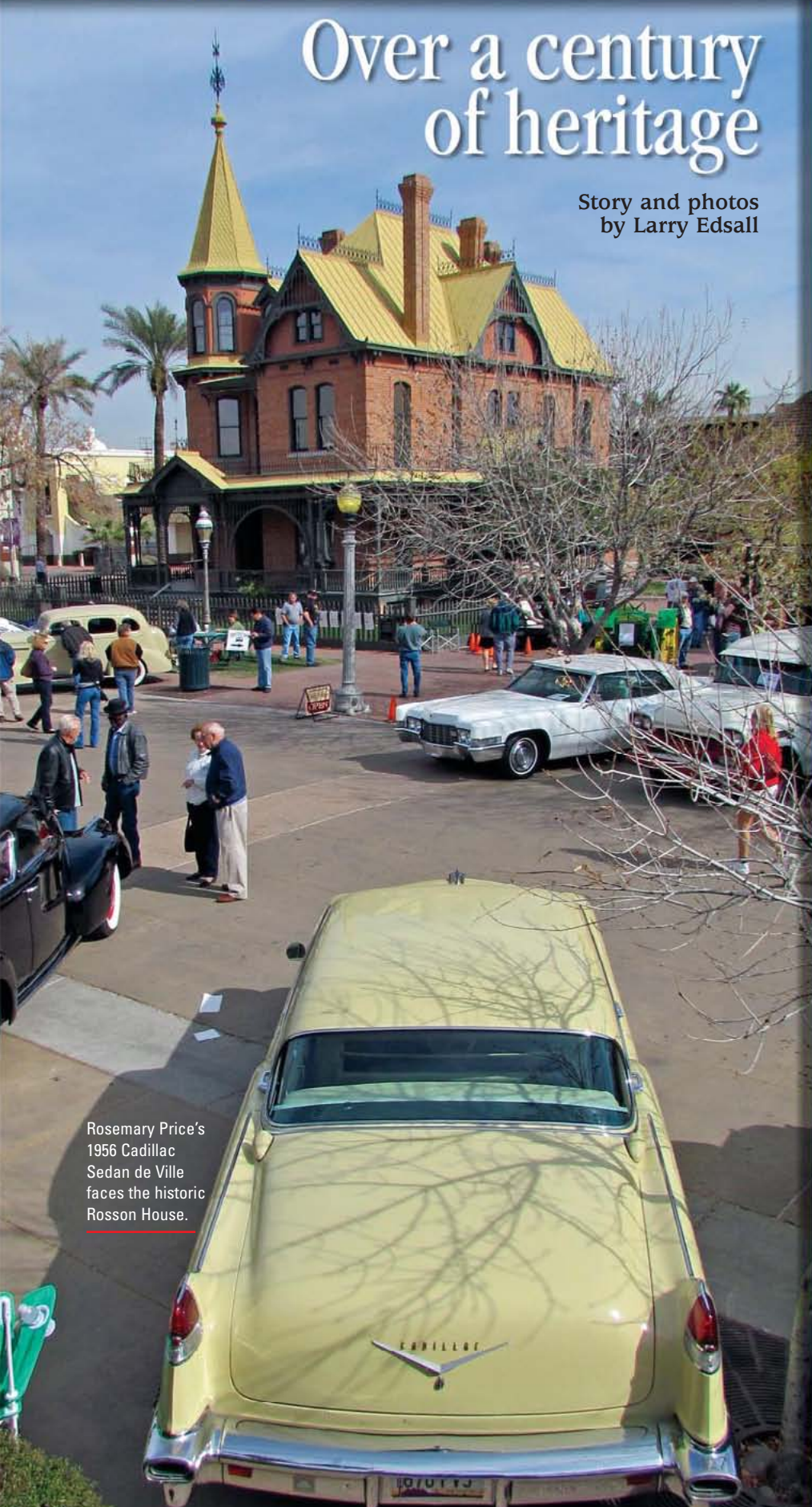
We asked our favorite question: what’s your daily driver? “The Lexus GS450 Hybrid. You know, it’s funny, I’m not a...” he pauses and continues, “everybody expects race car drivers to have a fancy sports car. I love cars, I like older cars moreso than new”. But, of course, Toyota prefers him in their new vehicles these days.

As a Red Bull racing driver, also, we ask whether he’s had the opportunity to go to the Red Bull Air Races. “Yeah, and I’ve ridden in the planes! I was at the show in Detroit and the show in New York. The show in New York was excellent!” He was obviously excited about flying, so who knows: maybe next time we meet, he’ll be our pilot. ■



Over a century of heritage

Story and photos by Larry Edsall



Rosemary Price's 1956 Cadillac Sedan de Ville faces the historic Rosson House.

Ford Model AA truck does not run with the herd

Robin and Scott Evans grew up on opposite sides of the street. Each of their fathers owned auto shops and restored old cars for fun and profit. Robin and Scott also owned Ford Mustangs. His was a 1969. Hers was a '64 built on just the second day of the pony car's production.

"He and his dad would come over and watch me work on my car," Robin recalled at the fourth annual Motoring Thru Time car show, staged by the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department in Heritage Square, downtown. After watching her work awhile, "they'd tell me I'd done it wrong and then they'd go home."

But one evening, Scott lingered after his dad walked back across the street. With his dad out of earshot, he asked Robin out on a date. One date led to another and dating led to an engagement and the Evanses now have been married for 18 years. Robin still has that '64 Mustang, but now it's just one of a dozen vehicles in a collection that includes five Mustangs—including a 1969 428 Cobra Jet drag racer with 30,000 miles on its odometer—two Edsels, a pair of Triumph motorcycles, a 1953 Willys military Jeep and a 1931 Ford Model AA truck.

The Evanses' '31 Ford truck was among the vehicles that drew the largest crowds at the Motoring Thru Time show, which included some 130 vehicles that ranged from two 1905 models—a 1905 Cadillac Model E and a 1905 Sears Motor Buggy—to a 1986 Chevrolet Corvette, as well as several vintage travel trailers, fire trucks, motorcycles, bicycles and a scooter.

But the Evanses' truck stood out because it had been outfitted for use by a sheepherder, with such unusual features as features as a couple of old tractor seats mounted on the wooden front bumper—no doubt a great place to sit and watch the sheep—with all sorts of tools attached to the sides of a truck bed covered by a Conestoga wagon-style canvas top, beneath which there is room to eat, sit, and even a cot for sleeping.

The Evanses have owned their truck for six years. They bought it from a

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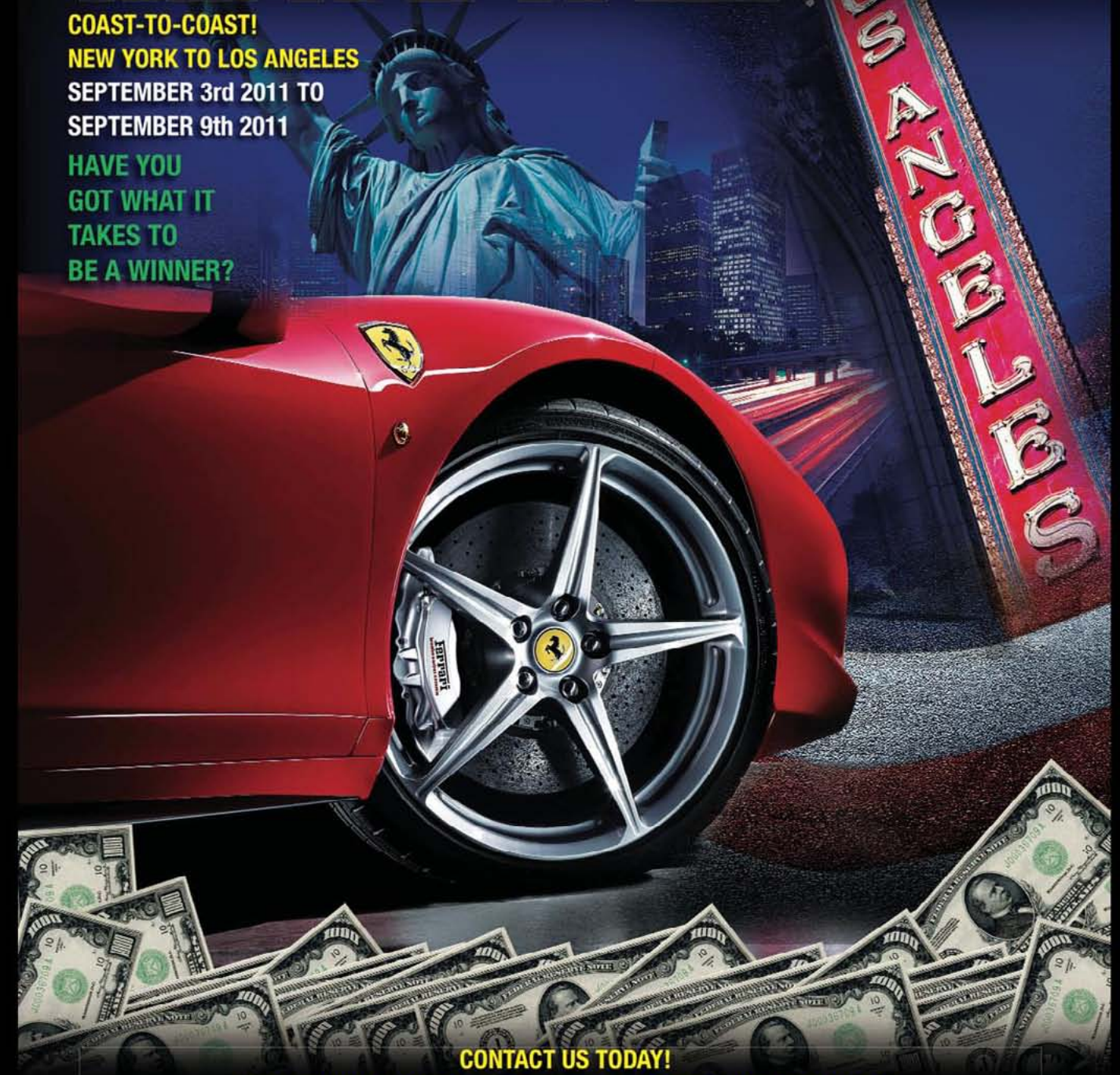
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(Above) Robin and Scott Evans' 1931 Ford Model AA (double rear-wheeled) truck set up for sheepherder use, complete with tools and living quarters.

(At left, clockwise from top left) Bob Jordan's 1959 Ford Skyliner, Daniel J. Obele's 1906 REO Town Car chassis, Jim and Debbie Wagon's 1939 Packard Super S, Frank Kummerfeldt's 1927 Franklin sedan, John A. Clark's 1956 Oldsmobile 98, Larry Rovey's 1928 John Deere Model D, Francis Knuckley's 1952 MG-TD, and Ed and Elaine Cain's 1952 Chevrolet pickup truck.

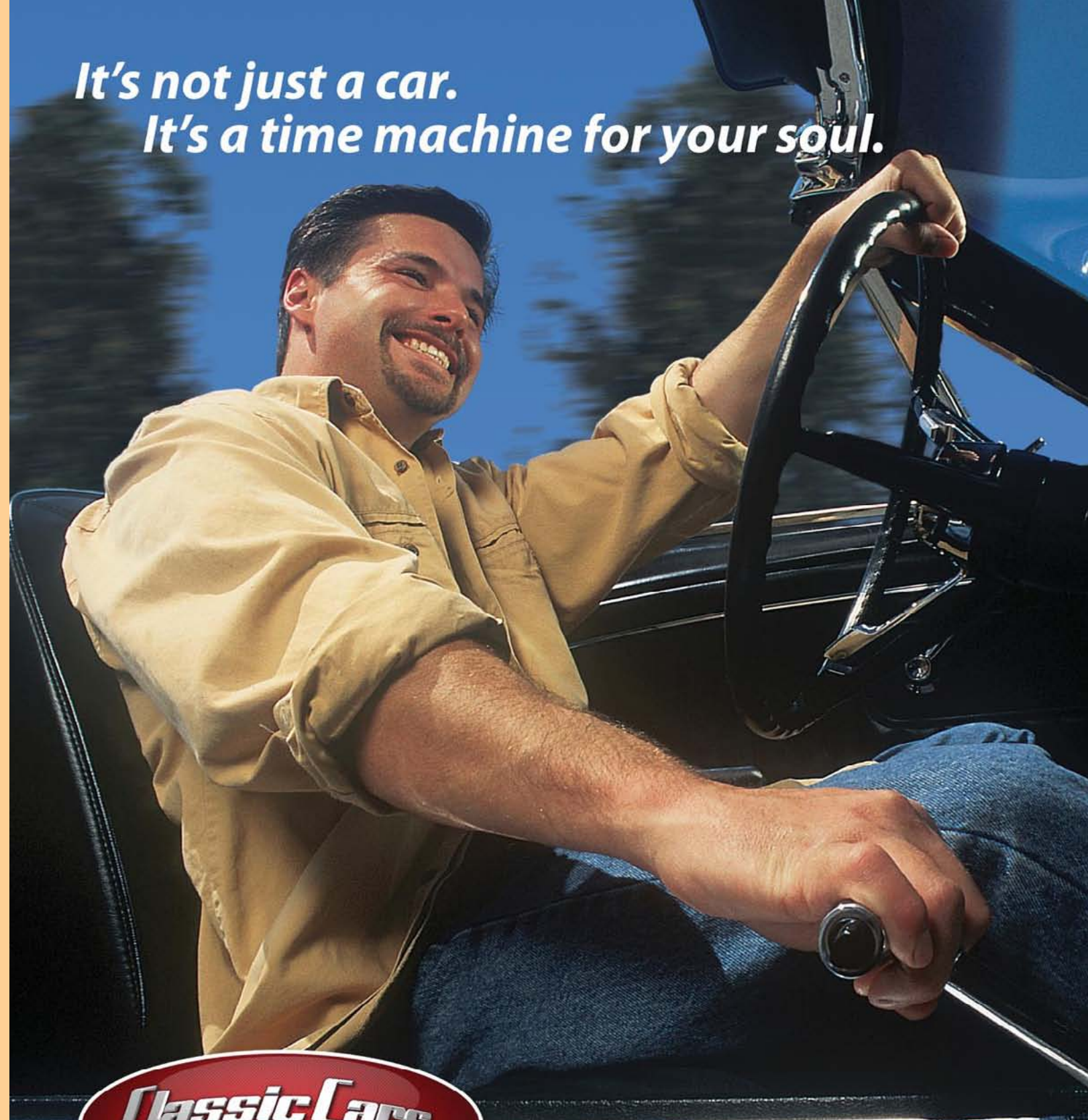
"motorcycle friend" in California. The friend also was a Boy Scout troop leader and used the truck for scouting campouts. The friend found the truck sitting in front of an antiques store in Colorado, where the truck apparently was used for many years by actual sheepherders.

Although the Evanses have had to replace an exhaust system that rusted off, the Model AA's dualie-style rear wheels still are turned by the truck's original four-cylinder engine as it emits its characteristic "puckity-puckity" sound.

Robin said that when they bought the truck, they drove it Beverly Hillbillies-style from Southern California to Phoenix on Interstate 10. However, she said, they were careful to remove the sharp tools and any glass objects hanging from the truck's side so nothing would fall off and damage other vehicles and their gawking occupants.

She said the truck gets a lot of attention on the road, especially when it's on its way to various car shows in the company of her father's Model A roadster. ■

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Kia adds power and SX appeal

BY JOE SAGE

The Japanese spent decades mastering the intricacies of what the US market expected—in quality, price, features—in our vehicles, electronics, optics, you name it. And they did it well, creating what was for a long time the world's second-largest economy. When the Koreans began sending us their cars in the '80s, they were largely an unknown entity here, which they mitigated by offering confidence-building long warranties to prime the pump and interest buyers. And they've paid close attention to the desires of the US market. Quality, style and feature sets have grown by leaps and bounds, while prices have stayed low and value has risen. We have been struck by how closely they study, how well they respond and how quickly they do it.

Long delivering considerable bang for the buck, while developing increasingly nice road presence, Kia rates very high in owner satisfaction. But they spotted one more stratum they hadn't specifically addressed: the affluent buyer with a lust for power. Enter the Kia SX lineup, bringing a higher degree of performance and handling, along with subtly more aggressive styling. New for 2011 are the Kia Optima SX, Forte 5-Door SX, Sorento SX and Sportage SX. The Sportage SX and Optima SX also introduce Kia's first turbocharged engine.

SINCE SOUL

Kia has particularly ramped up its styling and overall lineup in the past couple of years. One benchmark they refer to frequently is the introduction of the Kia Soul, introduced at the 2008 Paris Motor Show and put into production, largely unchanged from the concept, for the 2010 model year. Sales have



(Left) Kia Optima SX with twincscroll TGDl turbo. (Above) Kia Sportage SX with twincscroll turbo, Forte 5-Door SX with 2.4-liter CVVT and Sorento SX with 3.5-liter V6.

been strong for the Soul, but the real magic has been in an increased awareness of the brand overall. "Since Soul" is the company's mantra as they review recent successes: market share for the Kia brand was up 6.9 percent for 2010 over 2009, and a whopping 48 percent over 2009. The Kia Sorento midsize SUV (see our review in this issue), with new features and improved styling (including the new company-wide "tiger grille" and overall freshening) sold 108,000 units in its first year. Its popularity is substantiated every day in traffic. Total brand sales for 2010 were over 356,000, and by February 2011, sales were 31 percent higher year-to-date than 2010. R. L. Polk & Co. recorded Kia as the "most improved in customer loyalty," and ALG Industry Report named it the "most improved mainstream brand."

Kia has focused on the following attributes to achieve these heights: fuel, technology, safety, quality, value and design. What next?

In 2010, Kia entered motorsports for the first time, with two Forte Koups. The racing Koup placed number 5 out of all OEMs for the season, and a Kia Forte Koup podiumed at Daytona for the first time (in second place).

Reaching deeper into their customer base, they have sponsored the LPGA Kia Classic, definitely moving up in target markets—their first time involved with golf, and seeking customers new to the Kia brand.

Kia was a Super Bowl sponsor for the first time last year (with the Sorento) and repeated this year (with the Optima). Awareness of the brand, and consideration of purchase, are accordingly up, measured for one thing by 25,000 test drive downloads after that exposure.

Kia has also plugged in with 13 NBA partners, including the Phoenix Suns, and generated considerable buzz with their Slam Dunk Contest this year, in which Blake Griffing took the gold, leaping and dunking over a Kia Optima on the court. Impressive and attention-grabbing.

What does all this bring into the showroom and into your garage? Plenty.

TGDI ON TWO, UPGRADES ON ALL

There are really two things in play as we digest the enhanced end of the Kia lineup: the model designation and the engine. They do not go hand-in-hand. Each SX model comes with a full complement of overall upgrades, and each with an engine upgrade, but two stand out in particular. The SX name applies to all four, but for the turbocharged Sportage SX and Optima SX, a TGDI badge does the talking. GDI stands for gasoline direct injection, and these two add T for turbo.

In the Optima SX and Sportage SX, a 2.0-liter DOHC four-cylinder twin-scroll turbo replaces the 2.4-liter four

that powers the LX and EX models.

In the Optima lineup, the 2.0-liter TGDI engine is also available on an EX 2.0T. The standard 2.4-liter four delivers 200 horsepower and 186 lb-ft of torque. The 2.0T boosts these to 274 hp and 269 lb-ft. While promising V6 power from a four, the Optima SX with TGDI engine still delivers 34 mpg and runs on regular gas (highway mileage is the same as the base engine, though city mileage drops from estimated 24 to 22 mpg, all of these with automatic; manual base engine varies).

Sportage delivers slightly different before-and-after power figures, despite using the same engine, due to backflow pressure from its exhaust routing. The 2.4-liter normally-aspirated four in the Sportage specs out at 176 hp and 168 lb-ft, while the Sportage SX with the 2.0-liter twincscroll turbo achieves 256 hp and 264 lb-ft. Fuel mileage drops a little with the turbo, from 22/31 mpg (city/highway in 2WD) to 22/27 for the turbo. (AWD figures are a mile or three lower across the board.)

Forte turns this displacement difference on its head, with a 2.0-liter CVVT DOHC four in the LX and EX, and a 2.4-liter CVVT DOHC four in the SX. But no turbo, though Kia suggests this will follow in due time. Accordingly, the performance boost in a Forte 5-Door SX is modest: a 156-hp base spec nudges up to 173, while torque increases from 144 to 168 lb-ft. Fuel mileage drops with the larger engine on the Forte SX, from 25/34 mpg (city/highway, with automatic) to 23/31. (Figures for manual transmissions and for the 4-door Forte vary.)

Sorento—Kia's first vehicle to sell 100,000 units—rounds the formula out in yet another way: both the Sorento LX and EX are available with a 2.4-liter CVVT four or a 3.5-liter dual CVVT V6 engine. For the SX, only the V6 is available. Thus the Sorento's power benefit is available across the full range. Despite not applying a turbo to the Sorento's engine upgrade, its power increase is far more dramatic than the non-turbo Forte SX, on a par with the Optima and Sportage: the base Sorento provides 175 hp and 169 lb-ft from its four, while the V6 Sorento puts out 176 hp and 248 lb-ft. It does not, however, have the fuel mileage bragging rights of the turbos: the V6 achieves 19/25 mpg (city/highway) in 4x4 form or 20/26 in 4x2, while the four-cylinder delivers 21/29 as a 4x2 automatic (with slightly different figures for 4x4 auto or 4x2 manual).

Optima and Forte are front-wheel-drive only, including SX models. Sorento and Sportage are available as front-drivers or with AWD.

The base models for Optima and Sportage come with manual transmissions, the rest—including SX—with a six-speed automatic. Forte is again different, with a

manual transmission standard on the 5-Door SX (as on the 5-Door EX) and the automatic available as an option. All Sorentos have an automatic standard, with a manual as an option on just the base LX model.

And what's the price for performance and style?

The Kia Sorento starts as low as \$21,195 and, short of the SX, ranges to \$29,295 in AWD. The SX trim (and TGDI twincscroll turbo) raise it by \$4800, to \$34,095.

Sportage starts at \$18,295. The TGDI turbo and SX trim here add just \$2500 at the high end, capping at \$27,295 for a Sportage SX AWD.

Forte 5-Door, which offers only an EX or an SX, commands a premium of just \$1500 for its admittedly less involved SX level. Top price for the auto-shift Forte 5-Door SX is \$19,395. Perhaps the Forte's SX upgrades were kept modest to keep the whole lineup under \$20k.

Optima? A base-model Optima LX with manual is just \$18,995. Working to the SX at the top, gaining the twincscroll TGDI turbo and perhaps the most distinct cosmetic and feature upgrades of the four, the Optima SX hits just \$25,995. This most directly compares with either the base-engine EX at \$22,495—a \$3500 upgrade—or to the middle model unique to the Optima range, a 2.0T turbo in EX clothing, at \$24,495. In the Optima, you can choose performance alone, or full-blown SX performance and style points.

BEHIND THE WHEEL IN THE KIA SX

We met the Kia SX lineup at the Arizona Grand Resort in Tempe, where we chose our first steed for a drive out US 60 through Miami and Globe, north past Roosevelt Lake to Payson, and back down the Beeline Highway to metro Phoenix. Strictly speaking, we could have driven all four, but realistically, we took one on the drive north and the other on the return trip. Our choices? The two with TGDI twincscroll turbo: the Optima SX northbound and the Sportage SX southbound.

Do they perform? Just ask our codriver: she managed to get arrested for speeding in not one but both of these vehicles. A good time was had by all.

All in all, the Kia SX lineup is a study in relativity. Ka has already positioned itself enviably, offering a stylish, reliable and affordable set of vehicles that compare very favorably with other offerings in their segments. They have managed to preserve the value portion of their formula, even as models improve dramatically in quality, features and styling. The SX models are no exception. Relative to the cost of their lesser siblings, their upgrade prices are quite reasonable for all they deliver. And relative to the cost of their performance competitors, they still deliver value along with the goods. ■





Photos: courtesy of LeMay—America's Car Museum (2)

Pacific Northwest treasure chest takes shape

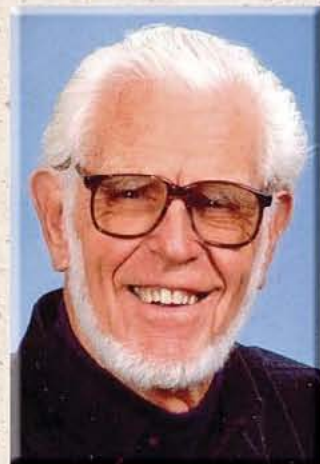
A BACKSTAGE PASS TO A MUSEUM IN THE MAKING

By Joe Sage

A funny thing happened on the way to the landfill. One man with one trash truck grew into a \$150 million waste management enterprise, and one old cast-off car became the foundation of the world's largest private car collection. Harold E. LeMay didn't set out to collect cars. Born in Yakima, Washington, in 1919 and raised by his uncle, LeMay graduated from high school near Tacoma in 1937. In the early '40s, he purchased a garbage-route, put a hand-cranked wooden dump box on a 1935 Chevy truck and got down to business. After a stint with the Navy Seabees during World War II, he decided to fire up that truck again. And thus began a classic American success story.

We learned the Harold LeMay story as we learned about construction of LeMay—America's Car Museum during auction week in late January. The Board of Directors had left midwinter in the Pacific Northwest for a retreat in Scottsdale, where we met with David Madeira, the Museum's President and CEO, Scot Keller, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, and Dominic Dobson, Chief Development Officer. And we learned that these dynamic individuals are putting together a fascinating new project in downtown Tacoma.

Harold LeMay was a trash collector, not a car collector—at first. But a car was left out for disposal, and he brought it home. This happened again and again, till he realized he had the bug. He never asked what to collect: for this, he had his own internal compass. Over the years, Harold and Nancy LeMay amassed over 3000 vehicles and thousands of artifacts. As his collection grew, he shared it with thousands, buying the 80-acre Marymount Military Academy in Spanaway,



Harold E. LeMay

which hosted the LeMay family's annual Car Show and Open House each August for more than 30 years.

Roots of the LeMay Museum

In 1998, Harold and Nancy LeMay formed the charitable Harold E. LeMay Museum organization, chartered to secure, preserve and interpret the LeMay Collection for the public, within a theme of American lifestyle. Harold LeMay passed away in 2000, at age 81. His waste management businesses, sold in 2008, still bear his name.

Harold's spirit is still embraced in Tacoma. As the original western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad, Tacoma in the 1800s was known as the City of Destiny. As the years passed, the busy port became gritty, and mills became superfund sites. But a town built on timber and shipping wealth has a lot of movers and shakers, and today, Tacoma is having a renaissance. The Tacoma Dome hosts large events, and downtown has a new University of Washington campus, new bridges, light rail, and a museum corridor already comprising the Washington State History Museum, Tacoma Art Museum and the highly regarded Museum of Glass.

David Madeira's last assignment had been securing huge endowments for the University of Illinois. He took a little time off after that, enough to ride a Royal Enfield motorcycle from India into the mountains of Tibet. He learned about the fundraising needs of the LeMay Museum and moved to the Tacoma area.

Dominic Dobson, a former race driver with seven Indy 500 starts under his belt, moved to Seattle in 1994 to start the PacWest Racing Group. Madeira arrived in 2002 and met Dobson in '03 at a charity driving event. "I scared Dominic to death," says Madeira. "He was my teaching instructor, I drove, and he had to sit in the front seat."

Scot Keller came to LeMay from stints as a global executive with Chrysler and then General Motors.

To Madeira, the LeMay Museum project sounded "really interesting and challenging," he says, "but I didn't know how challenging." He found that the organization had 100 members and \$30,000 in the bank. The group asked him to perform a feasibility study, to which he responded, "save your money. I could give you a strategy now, or I could do the study and come back in two years, but I'll tell you the answer right now. You can't do it." He figured people will give to their church, their college, a hospital and causes like that, but this is about a rich person's car collection. Who would do that?

On the other hand, he told them that if they could come up with a vision, something people are interested in and can embrace, then they could get it done.

Madeira signed on. He figures it was a plus that he had no background in museums. He traveled to study museums worldwide, especially car museums. He found the paradigm for a car museum was "pretty broken." Most were vanity projects, where dependence upon a family lineage sooner or later petered out. His study expanded, to include Universal Studios, Disneyland and EPCOT Center, broader attractions. "How do you create something that's interesting to people and will bring them back?" Madeira asks. "We went out, and we learned. And I think what actually drew me to this was what will draw people to it, always."

KEEP RIGHT >>

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

During Museum construction, vehicles are migrating from the LeMay collection and other donors to an interim staging facility in Fife WA, for documentation and preservation steps. The feel of potential, as cars neatly cycle through a tightly-packed warehouse and shop, has a magic of its own. We toured recent arrivals with Renee Crist, Director of Collection Management, and Scot Keller, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer.

1919 STANLEY STEAMER

This 4-passenger, 2-cylinder, steam-powered car generates 115 hp. The Stanley Steamer is "kind of a rare bird," says Scot Keller. Renee Crist recalls that when she first opened the hood, she had remarked "it looks like a still."

1959 CADILLAC COUPE DE VILLE

Volunteer preservations had this '59 Cadillac—one of several already in the collection—completely torn apart during our first visit, but back together for our second. "It has cruise control," says Crist. "For a 1959, that's a rare option." Its 390-cu.in. V8 puts out 325 hp.

1983 MERCURY MARQUIS WAGON

This all-American station wagon was donated by a local woman who had the car since new. "It's all original, 100,000 miles," says Keller. "You don't see them like this," add Crist. "It's always been garaged, and by this age they're usually faded. By the time the family bought this car, the kids were grown, and they bought it with every option. It just runs and runs."

1930 DUESENBERG MODEL J

Keller calls this car "one of the pride and joys of the collection, our top car." Its 8-cylinder engine pumped out 265 hp of luxurious power. A variety of coach builders built bodies for Duesenbergs, but Murphy was their largest provider, and their work was highly regarded. The red paint is an update: while Duesenberg engines were green, this car arrived with a green paint that Crist says "clashed horribly."

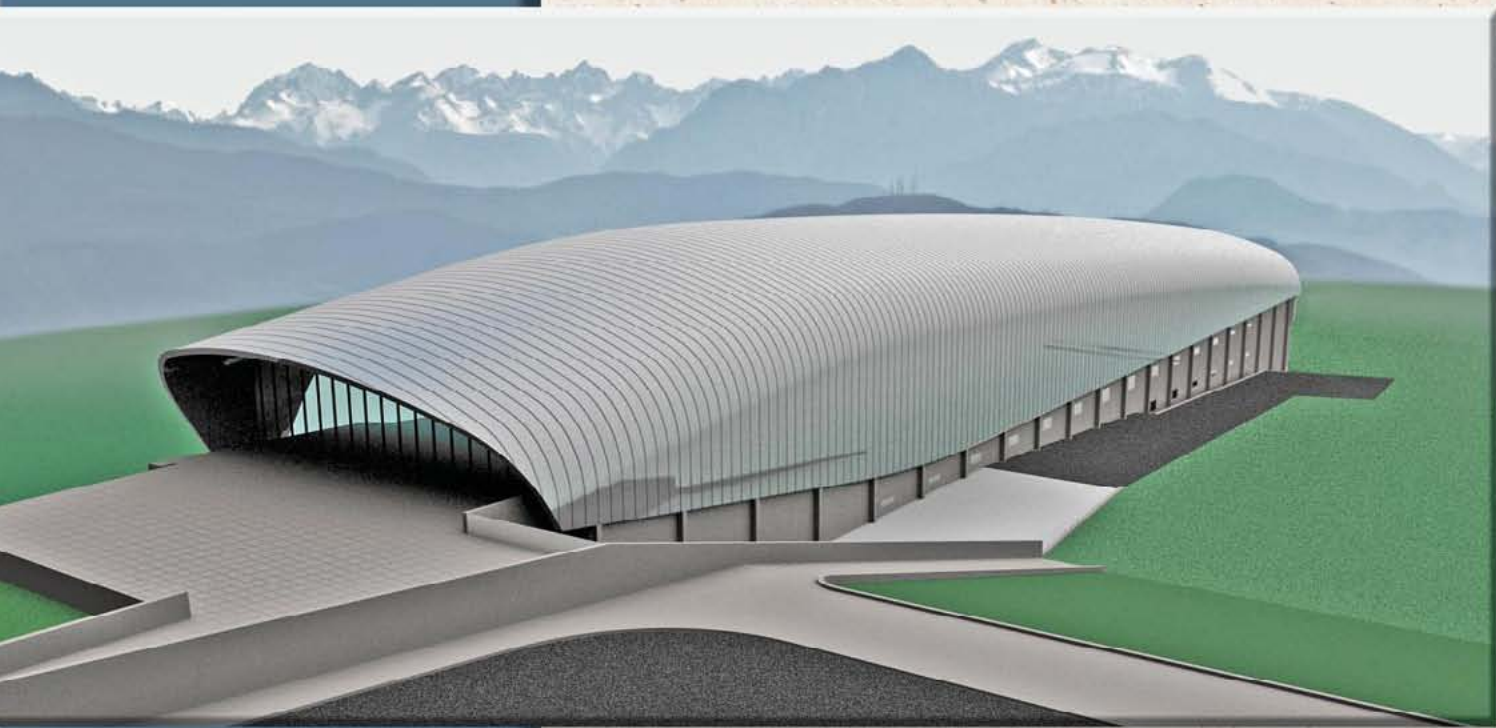
1963 STUDEBAKER AVANTI #1001

A Museum "rescue project," this car holds great intrigue. It has an unusual heavy-metal-flake green paint and modifications, but bears the VIN of Avanti #1. Crist is working with key enthusiasts to expand its documentation. Clues suggest it was possibly shown at the car's 1962 NY Auto Show reveal, and it was gifted to a racecar driver. The engine number matches the build sheet; mirrors and other original parts are in the trunk. "If you look underneath the wheel wells, it wasn't even driven; there's overspray where this flake would have come right off," notes Crist. Keller notes it may have been used in advertising.

(cont'd) >>



Photos: Joe Sage (6)



Renderings: Grant Architects courtesy of LeMay–America's Car Museum (2)

The 165,000-square-foot LeMay Museum Pavilion includes showcase galleries, the AAA Heritage Road display ramp, storage galleries, technology galleries, a theatre-in-the-round, a racing-experience-in-the-round, plus education and administrative centers. The ETFE (ethylene tetrafluoroethylene) miracle polymer shell is supported by massive glue-lam beams derived from Pacific Northwest forests. The 3.5-acre Show Field will host car corrals, concours, music festivals and even drive-in movies viewed from priceless classics. (Left) Groundbreaking event emcee Keith Martin reviews his notes, as Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland, Washington Governor Christine Gregoire and Nancy LeMay bask in the moment at ceremonies last fall. (Below left) With shovels in hand, Museum Board members ceremonially kicked off construction.



America's Car Museum: the vision

Between studying museums around the world, Madeira got acquainted with the LeMay Collection. "All of us, growing up in our era, we loved the car," he says. "It was our life—family road trips and all that. So I looked at the collection and said, gosh, this goes back to 1903, it's quintessentially American, it's not someone's wonderful Ferrari exotic (which is wonderful in its own right), but this is something Americans can all relate to. You remember the first car you ever bought. You remember making out in the car and which one it was. You remember the family road trip vacation. A Ford Galaxie station wagon, with fake wooden panels, that was ours. That's us! And that's a part of this collection."

With the LeMay Collection as a starting point, and that vision, they created America's Car Museum. "That collection has the power to tell the story of America and its love affair with the car," says Madeira. "And if we're smart and we do it like a destination place, and make it fun, it will draw people. And if we get in the center of the hobby, and help the hobbyists and the car clubs, and people want to use their cars, and promote events, and drive cars, and help provide opportunity, and then help the collectors, through archives and things like that—it'll be different. As the building is being built, we're trying to turn people's focus to realizing a building really isn't it. It's what do you do and who you are. So it's Smithsonian in nature, or Henry Ford Museum." Those are not only impressive benchmarks, but they start to

paint the picture of the Museum's broader nature, well beyond its home site.

Memberships and partnerships

The Museum in Tacoma will be a great destination in its own right, one that people will promise themselves they'll visit one day (much as the Smithsonian or The Henry Ford). But it will also generate a nationwide army of enthusiasts and participants, akin to, say, the National Corvette Museum. Chapters of the NCM keep themselves busy regionally, but they belong to the mother ship, and each and every one of them will get to Bowling Green someday if they can.

"And, speaking to that," says Madeira, "we said, let's create a membership. You can come in any time you want, all year long, bring two guests, bring your grandmother." That's a common enough museum membership scenario. But Madeira continues, "What *ours* is: you're part of a car club, in essence. Come on in and participate in the activities. We have a Show Field we're constructing now, that for my money is the most important piece of the whole \$60 million project, because it's a place where you and I can drive up in our own cars, look at each other's cars, have Vette Fests and Mustang Corrals and Porsche Parades, and our own car shows and concours—and make it come alive. We'll have music fests. We're going to have a movie screen out there, so we can do drive-in theater nights."

The Museum publishes a magazine four times a year,

works social media and blogs, throws some events and works word of mouth. They're innovative with events: for the New York Auto Show this year, for example, they've set up an invitational for mini and micro cars, in which club members in the NY metro area will display their own vehicles in the Museum's space. "Instead of hauling our cars all the way from Tacoma," says Keller, "local enthusiasts said wow—my car's gonna be in the NY Auto Show. They send their own cars, on their own nickel, and they work the show. It's a great outreach to the collector community and a model we can use often, so we don't have to haul 20 cars across the country."

The new Museum will also boost local venues—including the other Tacoma museums and the Tacoma Dome. "This is the biggest thing that'll have hit Tacoma in years," says Madeira. "If we can do like Mike Yager does with his Corvette Funfest in the middle of Illinois, in that soybean field—what is it, 45,000 people? 14,000 Corvettes? So yes, we'll use the Dome and fill it, too."

Their participation in the National Association of Automotive Museums will bring reciprocating benefits to Museum members. And contractual partnerships are in the works with other museums, for event or even storage opportunities for their members.

ACM exhibits could easily hit the road at times. "We have a collaboration with a number of museums, and have talked philosophically about trading cars or motorcycles and exhibits," says Keller. Considering the time, investment and magic that goes into an exhibit, the question is, "Could we not just exchange cars, but exhibit? And the answer isn't yeah, but *heck yeah!*" Many museums have the vehicles, but bringing in the exhibitry would flesh out the concept. And it gets the LeMay name spread far and wide, too.

Building the Museum's brand and its approach is as important as the collection. "It's about the audience," Keller affirms. They care less who owns it and care more how cool the car is and how cool the exhibitry is."

The ClubAuto network

It's really about being at the center of the enthusiast community," Madeira says. "We want to provide opportunities to members, like the Pebble Beach Motoring Classic, small car trips that we'll do around the Willamette Valley in spring, or out of Denver and other places. So we created a level of membership called ClubAuto. As a ClubAuto member, no matter where you live, when we do something—say go to Italy, or Sturgis, we'll set up a group or trip or drive, and you get first shot at going."

ClubAuto nodes are already in place in Kirkland WA and Denver, with discussions in play for Illinois, Florida, Michigan, Kansas City, Silicon Valley and others. The buildings are generally in light industrial areas, with garage space, a lounge and a big parking lot for events and cruise-ins. Hagerty Insurance sponsors the ClubAuto program. Having a critical mass of people willing to join and make a commitment is the key, in any location.

"We do want to *not* be geographically bottled," says Keller. "We want to be at the center of the hobby."

The LeMay Museum folks came to Arizona last year and spent some time with a group of collectors, looking for that critical mass and discussing locations. So far,



1954 PONTIAC CHIEFTAIN DELUXE 8

"Like our Marquis," says Crist, "we have this beautiful Pontiac station wagon that was donated by the original owner, driven only by the family (dad was an Oregon Pontiac dealer), given to the son, who drove it until he was old enough to donate it to the Museum."



1994 FLINTSTONES FLINTMOBILE

This George Barris custom was built for the 1994 *Flintstones* movie. It toured with World of Wheels and Autorama, was displayed at Universal Studios Theme Park, then sold at auction to a collector who donated it to the Museum. It's an electric vehicle—basically a golf cart with a second frame and fiberglass body work (the designers took trips to California's ancient forests for inspiration and reference). The car will likely see use as a VIP transport at times (the lieutenant governor of Washington has already had a ride).



RAMBLER ROGUE

This car was donated by an owner in Hawaii, who, as part of the donation, was including a case of pineapples and macadamia nuts in the trunk. (Those, however, vanished in transit.)



1912 INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER

This IH MWX farm truck is basically a horse-drawn buggy with a motor: a 2-cylinder that sends 20 hp through a 2-speed friction transmission and chain drive. High wheels—fitted with solid rubber tires—provided clearance on deeply rutted rural roads. The radiator says 1911, but it's a 1912. Built in the US, it predates left-side steering standardization. The rear seat was a "Sunday-go-to-meetin'" option.



1937 PLYMOUTH PT-50 PICKUP

Plymouth built trucks from 1935-1942. In 1937, they built their own first standalone pickup. Fenders were normally black, but could be ordered in matching body color. This sample has been custom painted in a coordinated two-tone. "While not its original color," says Keller, "this one's in terrific condition—and a rare bird." In 1937, \$525 bought a half-ton pickup with an 82-hp inline-6 engine.



WAILERS 1976 ELDERADO TOUR CAR

Much early '60s rock came out of the Pacific Northwest. The Fabulous Wailers of Tacoma were first to record Louie Louie in the rhythm famously covered by The Kingsmen and known to generations. They would drive this 1976 Cadillac Eldorado tour car, featured on a Wailers album cover, to the annual Louie Fest in Tacoma. The band had recently visited the car, and talk soon turned to a new festival on the Museum's Show Field, with The Fabulous Wailers joined by The Ventures, also from Tacoma, and The Kingsmen, from Portland.



Photos: Renee Crist courtesy of LeMay–America's Car Museum (2)



Photos: Joe Sage (6)

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Fresh concrete floor pours are held in place by steel jacks while they dry, as we tour in February. An army of workers is oblivious to midwinter conditions in the Northwest. (Left) A proof-of-concept main roof arch features an incredibly strong glue-lam beam about four feet deep. The site is adjacent to the Tacoma Dome.



they haven't cemented a deal, but they're working on it. Much discussion has been with enthusiasts who already keep their cars in facilities of their own, but without the vehicle storage component, a clubhouse project isn't economically feasible. "We need the big collectors to be a part of it," says Madeira, "but our museum is very eclectic and relevant to a wide audience." A good location will be central to key facilities and events such as the racetracks, the auctions and notably the airport.

The LeMay Museum site

By 2007, the Museum had secured its 9-acre site next to the Tacoma Dome, at the interchange of I-5 and I-705, where some 7-8 million people pass every year, often en route between Seattle and Mount Rainier. It is also adjacent to the district of History, Art and Glass museums.

The first thing the team did was to negotiate this prime location. They had developed a plan for a \$100 million campus, to be developed in one fell swoop. "Which was nuts," Madeira now figures. "I mean, you don't build a college that way." (They're building Dubai that way, we suggest. "I know! I wish!" he laughs.) The Museum's site was acquired from the City using underutilized parking areas adjacent to the Dome. The site, plan and budget were in place. "We had nothing to lose," Madeira says. Fundraising went well, with contributions, sponsorships and partnerships large and small. But the economic downturn of the past three years proved challenging. "We got to \$48 million," says Madeira, "and the economy tanked. We were fortunate to survive. When everybody pulls back, corporations aren't philanthropic, they're in this for their own marketing. We scaled back, said all right, we won't do the whole campus all at once, but we'll build the first building." Plans

for construction of the main Museum pavilion moved ahead. The full campus can develop in due time.

The ACM Pavilion and Show Field

The Museum had raised money for the main building by May 2010—that original \$30,000 pot had grown to some \$60 million—and they broke ground in June.

"That first building is 165,000 square feet," says Madeira, "with an almost-half-mile road through it, four ramps, sponsored by AAA. You come in to this big place that's about 250 feet long, with a hundred-foot-wide gallery, and it's wrapped around by this road. As you go down each level, you'll be at racing galleries, or you'll be at the State Farm theater, or you'll be at 'X' or 'Y' gallery, or the banquet hall, or the Concours Club where big donors play, or a slot car place for the kids, the pine box derby spot, and walk your way through."

All through the center of the main building's ramp road and displays is storage of cars. Put it all together, and this is technically the second-largest automotive museum building in the world. Mercedes-Benz has one that's bigger, by just about 10,000 sq. ft. And then, built out or not, they have the campus, with the Show Field.

The Museum will celebrate construction completion in September with a Hard Hats and High Heels Gala, then start opening in a limited fashion through the year, as they finish off details and move the cars in. A formal Grand Opening will follow in spring 2012.

Keller says it will take about six months to prepare the first major exhibit. They just hired their first curator, well-known collector and journalist Ken Gross. "Instead of hiring a curator and it's the same old guy all the time," says Madeira, "we'll have different ones. In fact, when I started my conversation with Scot about

this, he said what about journalists, instead of a typical academic museum curator? Journalists tell stories, and we have a story to tell: America's love affair with the car." Gross will curate at least through the opening.

Cars by the thousands

The original LeMay Collection had peaked at over 3000 cars. The family sold about 1200-1500 cars in the last decade, "starting from the worst up. You'd see the parts guys come out and buy them for twenty bucks and haul 'em away," says Madeira. Better examples were sold at a community auction that didn't generate wide publicity. Then, three years ago, Bonhams auction house did a sale out of the Museum's inventory, as the family began to transfer cars to them out of the collection. Museum staff assessed them and made a few decisions, hard or easy, such as, "A '53 Chevy is so easy to get, and this one would take so much to upgrade, we're going to sell it." Several hundred cars were sold in two such auctions.

Renee Crist, Director of Collection Management, developed a complete evaluation and preservation program. Volunteers receive training, then donate their time to come in, develop pertinent paperwork and completely prep these priceless vehicles. They go through each, checking numbers and lineage, draining fluids and making sure each is ready for storage. Volunteers are exceptionally skilled and delighted to be involved: the class has never had an empty seat, and there's a waiting list.

The bulk of the Museum's cars are now in a temporary facility in Fife, Washington, where all operations are headquartered during construction. The museum currently owns just short of 300 cars. Mrs. LeMay has gifted hundreds more (about 775 total) to the Museum, with ownership to be transferred over a period of time, but allowing access to any, any time. The LeMay family maintains ownership of hundreds of cars spread between the Museum and a combination of the LeMay family home and Marymount Academy, south of Tacoma.

There will typically be about 140-150 cars on active display in the Museum at any given time, selected in support of a particular story being told by current exhibit. Of those, typically the Museum will own some, but others on active display will come from third parties, by design. Madeira points out that "the public doesn't care who owns the car, they just want to see it."

Touring the Fife interim facility

Scot Keller and Renee Crist took us on a tour of the Fife facility in February, where hundreds of cars are being researched and undergoing preservation. Cars we saw then captured the very nature of the Museum. You might expect the cars to be the story in a car museum. But each has its own story, or more importantly is likely to trigger the visitor's own memory and stories. The ones on hand were the latest to arrive and had the freshest stories.

"We've developed a display standard for the cars," says Keller. "While we have some Pebble Beach-worthy cars, which have been there, a lot of our cars are in the vernacular of good, solid, honest 10-footers, where you walk up to it and maybe it's not original paint, but certainly in original color, it's not horsed up with out-of-period aftermarket parts, it would be something you walk up



1903 OLDSMOBILE RUNABOUT

This is one of the Museum's two oldest cars, sort of. Built in 1953 for the brand's 50th anniversary, it's a replica of the 1903 Olds. Its one-cylinder 4.5-hp engine achieved 25 mph and 25 mpg. The Curved Dash Olds had a run of 4000 in 1903 and 19,000 total from 1901 to 1907. With a delivery box in the rear, this was the US Post Office's first delivery car.



1960 FORD ZODIAC MARK II (ENGLISH)

This Ford was sold in Canada, common in the Pacific Northwest and suited to America's Car Museum. Very similar to the English Ford Cortina, and to GM's Vauxhalls of the day, it was heavily inspired by American styles—the circle of logic again arriving back on our shores. The Zodiac sports a 2553-cc 85-hp engine and 3-speed manual transmission.



1926 OLDSMOBILE HOLDEN 30D

"GM's Holden brand in Australia did a lot of cars based on Chevrolets," Keller tells us, "but an Olds-Holden is pretty rare." The car started out in the US as an Oldsmobile frame, cowl and engine, then shipped to Australia for Holden coachwork and the flip to righthand drive. Crist received an email from Canberra, from the son of the man who restored this car "from a pile of rust" in 1980. A phone call to the builder's wife confirmed all numbers.



1932 CHEVROLET HUCKSTER TRUCK

ACM has three superb huckster trucks from both GM and Ford. The tradesmen cars of the day, hucksters evolved from medicine show wagons of the 1800s. They were the way most people got their milk, their food, their pots and pans, or their shoes cobbled. (Looking at the size of the door, Crist remarks that these tradesmen must have been four-foot-nine.)



1983 DELOREAN DMC 12

"A single car can tell so many stories, depending on your age," says Keller. "People say, 'Oh, Back To The Future, got it!' or, 'John Z, got it!' And some know its exact automotive history. A common reaction is to ask if it's painted, and to want to touch its stainless steel finish.



1915 CRANE SIMPLEX MODEL 5

Collection Director Crist and her husband Pat often drive these cars. The Crane Simplex is a memorable one. Built from just 1907 to 1917, the Crane Simplex combined a powerful racing engine with luxury style and build, in limited numbers, at a high price. Its 9.8-liter six pumped 46 hp through a 3-speed manual. Despite an advanced suspension for 1915, Renee jokes that driving it was "a frightful experience, a handful, with 'arm-strong steering'." It was smooth, but better suited to a time when it was king of less-populated roads.



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Photos: Joe Sage (5)

Photos: Joe Sage (6)



Rendering: Grant Architects courtesy of LeMay-America's Car Museum (1)

From the ClubAuto Lounge on one floor and the Concours Club on another, a spectacular view to the north includes Tacoma Harbor, Foss Landing Marina, the Route 509 Cable Bridge, University of Washington Tacoma, the Bridge of Glass, the museums of Glass, Art and History, Commencement Bay and Vashon Island.

to and say, yep, boy, I remember one of those. Great! Some drive, some don't, but we're not looking to over-restore them, just to present an honest car."

The concept is so attractive, we discuss whether a major concours d'elegance might someday feature a category of "good, solid 10-footers," much as they have come to embrace barn finds, unrestored preservation classes and so on. Keller points out, "We prepare cars for the Motoring Classic, and we've had our cars at Pebble Beach, albeit restored ones, judged as show cars. But, that'd be a lot of fun. We have some great conventional cars." The relationship runs in both directions. "As a matter of fact," Keller continues, "one of the ideas we're toying with for the grand opening is an exhibit on Pebble Beach itself, as a fair amount of the cars that have been on the green at Pebble are here."

"We get asked all the time, does 'America's Car Museum' mean only American cars?" says Keller. "And the answer is, no, it's what you would have seen on the road at the time. Given the type of cars that Harold gravitated to, the majority of our cars are American brands, but not all of them."

"How many Volkswagens did you see on the road?" adds Crist. "And how many Jaguars?"

"Our trick from a curation standpoint," says Keller, "is to be diligent and authentic in telling the story of the car, obviously, because car enthusiasts will appreciate the car and would know if we got it wrong. But then again, we know that a whole lot of the audience is just going to be more interested in their own memories of that car, or that period, or whatever it might be. So you have kind of two different groups: one is going to enjoy the stories around the car and the period, and the other is going to enjoy more the detail of the car."

Keller points out that roughly just 10 percent of the population are car enthusiasts or experts, but everyone understands America's love affair with the car. "The cars become storytellers in and of themselves. We appeal to not only enthusiasts, but to people who don't really know anything about cars. We'll tell the story, too, of that whole time. We'll cover music, technology, history, fashion, culture and all those things, tied around the lifestyle of the car. It will be a big surprise and should bring a lot more relevance than just car after car after car, and our building is conceived for us to be able to do that, theme by theme. The key to the collection is that it spans over 100 years, and it's very eclectic."

Touring the construction site

We arrived during a week that marked the official halfway point in construction. Construction crews are undaunted by the wet and chilly winter weather. The textured concrete walls are in place for the lower levels, and the floors have been poured, though they are still curing, held in place by steel jacks (which were removed by the time we visited again in March).

The top of the walls we stand at the base of that day, about 38 feet up, are really the first floor of the Museum galleries, then the roof will extend another 38 feet up above that, enclosing a big open space. There are four floors below that, set into a hillside.

"We have 50 different exhibit ideas on our list right now," says Keller, "which will carry us for (he laughs) 40 years. The way the Museum's laid out, we'll have one big grand display, which will be the Harold E. LeMay Collection, the story of his life, as you walk in, for quite some time. But then we have this series of ramps, just short of a half-mile, that move down through the build-

ing like a parking garage, and each of those ramps has 12 cars on it. Every time you turn, there's going to be another gallery or another ramp. So we'll have six ramp galleries, and three storage galleries, open storage in the center, where the cars are. Then there's the main gallery, and three other kind of cornerstone galleries. Add that up, and that's thirteen galleries at any given time." Add to that slot cars, a kids' zone, a library, a banquet hall and two private clubs.

Guiding ourselves around supports, cables and tools, we walked the full inside display road, as Keller and Crist point out the locations of nodes that will provide one themed experience after another, as people work their way up and down the ramps. The cavernous central area is unglamorous at the moment, but reveals its future as a publicly accessible version of what we saw at the Fife facility, but with museum-grade lighting, signage, decor and elbow room. Not fully themed like the ramps and main display galleries, this area will offer a serendipity of its own.

Particularly striking are two member and VIP facilities at the north end of the upper floors: the Club Auto Lounge, and the Concours Club, for donors of \$100,000 or more. The views alone—not to mention a description of their amenities—are enough to inspire as much involvement as any budget may allow.

A huge expanse of dirt to the east of the building, piled a couple of stories high, is topsoil preserved as the Show Field is cleared for construction, to be replaced, contoured and landscaped. A parade ground will run around that, with plans to prep a handful of cars and train volunteers to drive people around it. "You want a ride in a Model T?" asks Keller. "People love that. Plus it gives a young person some living history."

The Show Field will also beautify the space between the Museum and the Tacoma Dome. The Dome has never won any beauty awards, but the sweeping, curved roof of the Pavilion will create a synergy between the two that will do the Dome a great service. Madeira says, "The shape the architect has given us should work well with the Dome. It has an automotive flair, so you may see it as a hood scoop, or as a rear quarter panel, or it has motion to it. That's what he wanted to do. But he also wanted to *not* fight with the Dome, and I think he's done it. When you enter town, if you're coming south on I-5 from Seattle, you have the Dome, and as you turn on 705 to enter Tacoma, we're right there on the turn. When the roof is up, you won't miss it—it'll be the first thing you see when you hit Tacoma."

A new national icon

We've all been to grassy fields full of Ferraris and Bugattis, and to auctions full of million-dollar Rolls-Royces and racecars. Make no mistake: the LeMay Museum has those. But we've also all had some of our most animated conversations when we stumble upon a car full of memories in a parking lot. And this is where LeMay shines. People plan pilgrimages to key attractions all the time: the Smithsonian, the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, the Museum of Flight. And now? LeMay-America's Car Museum, in Tacoma.

The LeMay collection embodies a dream that started out as happenstance. Now, every car *you* remember, yourself, has found itself a home. ■

ROYAL ENFIELD MOTORCYCLES

The LeMay family collection includes over 50 motorcycles, shown annually at the Marymount facility. Many will rotate through the new Museum. Shown are Enfields that CEO David Madeira and Hagerty Insurance CEO McKeel Hagerty rode through the Himalayas, then bought, crated and shipped here.



1972 CHEVROLET EL CAMINO SS

This El Camino had been in storage for a long time, on an old stackable car transport trailer, and the car above it unfortunately had spilled a lot of fluid. They were pretty sure the paint was shot, or panels might even have to be cut out. Preservationists found it was just oil, easily fixed. The red paint was custom, not original, but it hadn't been destroyed.



1927 LASALLE 303 ROADSTER

The Crists drove this LaSalle to the Kirkland WA Concours. Renee says at 30-40 mph, you feel as though you're going 100. All cars of this era took "concentration" to drive, she says, and this was no exception: "It wasn't like getting in, turning the key, power steering and go." This car has twice done the Motoring Classic, from Kirkland to Pebble Beach.



1930 LINCOLN L BROUGHAM

Nicknamed Abe, this classic 136-inch WB Lincoln has been driven to three events by Crist. "Driving it in traffic is incredible. Visibility is difficult, and it's an armful when you're going slow and trying to turn," she says, but "a nice driving car." Powered by a 348.8-cu.in. 60-degree-V L-Head Eight, the big Lincoln makes 90 hp. Two retractable tops make this an "All Weather Brougham." Front-opening rear doors were for the chauffeur's ready use.



1926 MARMON MODEL 74

This is so rare that in early research, clubs were asking Renee more questions than she had. They're now co-developing a database of details never decoded before. Pat Crist has driven the Marmon and says, "You feel like Barney Oldfield. It also has some of the most supportive and comfortable seats in any car of that vintage." The car has an all-aluminum engine with a cast aluminum block. The body is also aluminum; the fenders are steel.



1963 CORVETTE STING RAY

This LeMay-logged 327, 300-hp Daytona Blue '63 split-window Corvette (with automatic transmission) was used in an on-track event by NASCAR. This car brings out the core spirit of the Museum, as Keller says, "Everybody has a car they can just really anchor their imagination in. My father's best friend's wife had a '63 in '63, and I saw it for the first time in San Diego when I was a little biter. I still remember it like it was yesterday...." ■



Photos: Joe Sage (4)

Photos: Joe Sage (6)

Grand Cherokee in the Great Cascades



The Jeep Grand Cherokee takes in the sights of Anderson Island, accessible by Pierce County ferry.



Electronics are all new, as are the drive systems and the structure itself. The Grand Cherokee comes with a 5.7-liter V8 or an all-new 3.6-liter Pentastar V6 (the first application of this engine). The V6 has a rated fuel economy of 16 mpg city, 22 mpg highway, and boasts a range of about 500 miles between fill-ups—a plus for a vehicle you can take anywhere whatsoever.

There are three available four-wheel-drive systems: Quadra-Trac I (a one-speed transfer case), Quadra-Trac II (a two-speed transfer case), and Quadra-Drive II (a fully-automatic full-time system with locks for both the front and rear axles). Selec-Terrain adjusts suspension and tractive capability for rock, sand/mud, snow, sport—or auto. Active air suspension provides additional ground clearance of 2.6 inches on demand—10.7 inches total—



Three trips to the Pacific Northwest and three Jeep Grand Cherokee V6 Laredos; a red one with Michigan plates, a black one with Oregon plates and a white one with Washington plates. All three looked good wet.

and automatically lowers at highway speeds. Everyday ingress and egress are great, with wider doors and door angles front and rear, plus keyless entry and start. Knee room, legroom and cargo volume are all increased significantly, and its combination of full gate and flip-glass rear window are the only such offering still in this class.

We did no towing on our trip, but with the V6, the Grand Cherokee is rated for 5000 pounds (the same as the all-new Ford Explorer); with the V8, it can tow 7400 pounds.

Options and interior appointments are thorough, with models including stitched leather armrests and instrument panel and a new steering wheel with more controls, so you can keep your hands on the wheel. Base prices run from the Laredo at \$30,215 to the Overland at \$41,910.

Using all of the above—other than towing—for a combination of airport runs with luggage, executive chauffeuring and island hopping by Pierce County Ferry was all comfortable, rugged, stylish and flawless—and we know we barely scratched the surface of what this machine can do over the long haul. Despite all its electronic advances, we appreciated very straightforward controls—technology adapted to simplicity and elegance of function instead of overkill is always preferable.

Backing into parking spots at our hotel, we

found the proximity sensors to be a bit oversensitive, getting increasingly alarmed until we figured we dared go no farther, only to find three more feet available back there.

The audio system was well above average, easy to calibrate on the go, with simple equalizers and a CD slot that resides behind a primary video screen that pivots up and out of the way for this seemingly simple need.

We may need to spend more time with the 5-speed automatic. Climbing a steep hill in Tacoma, stuck behind a small pickup traveling below the speed limit, we found the range struggling a bit—not just shifting down but stalling, lugging, hunting down for the sweet spot. Using the manumatic was a mixed solution, as we never did find a way to get it back into D, other than to pass through N. We suspect there's another way.

All in all, we liked the new Jeep Grand Cherokee a lot. We liked it so well, in fact, that we went ahead and rented one on our own dime on each of two subsequent trips to the same area. We didn't so much need the VIP style on those trips, nor the four-adults capacity. We didn't scratch the surface on the Grand Cherokee's overall capabilities on any of the trips. But all three times, we had a comfortable, solid vehicle that suited our needs perfectly. We'd do it all again. ■

TACOMA SCRAPBOOK



Doing the math

BY JOE SAGE



It's not really all that different. At least when we were young, new drivers, we all did the math, regularly. How far can we go without having to put gas in the car? How far is it to that station where gas is 10 cents less a gallon? We'd bargain with ourselves, and we'd find a way to make it work. Is it any different, driving an electric vehicle today? Not really. The range is shorter, yes. And the refueling spots are, if not rare anymore, less familiar. And it does take longer to "refuel." But dad still doesn't want the car coming home empty.

While others build hybrids or devote vast resources to quixotic quests like the hydrogen car, Nissan (with partner Renault) has devoted its efforts singlemindedly to the electric car. Unlike similar efforts of a couple of decades ago, they are tackling one of the most important aspects, comprehensively and globally: they have worked to establish a standard plug-in, and they are working (as are others) to see these installed—meaningfully, plentifully and clearly identified—worldwide. (Granted, "J1772" isn't a catchy name, but there will surely come a more tongue-friendly alternative, as surely as few users remember WiFi is really IEEE 802.11.)

We've been seeing the Nissan Leaf at big auto shows for well over a year, so its arrival on our test schedule came with much anticipation. Or at least with

much aforethought. In the sickly pale green of the original show car, the Leaf had been of interest but hadn't inspired lust. (What's more, the test cycle was going to be shorter than usual: just four days. And for us, it overlapped a week with the Porsche Panamera, a vehicle decidedly from the other end of the scale.) We admit we hadn't fully absorbed just how cool the Leaf is, until it arrived and we got behind the wheel.

Simple arithmetic

We received our Nissan Leaf on a Thursday, along with a bit of an orientation. The shifter is a little knob, basically functioning like a switch. It could have been joysticked any number of ways, but despite not mimicking a shifter handle, it presents a familiar shift pattern. Slide it to the left and forward for reverse, or back for drive. Jog it to D again and it goes into Eco; jog it again and it comes out of Eco. It's an elegant solution, fully integrated and not button-happy. The electronic parking brake is right behind that.

The main instrument cluster is all about electric: a recharge and drain gauge, battery temperature, and both a graph (much like a fuel gauge) and digital-numeric readout of estimated range. As delivered, fully charged (it was brought by flatbed to a staging point a block or

two away), range was stated as 108 miles in Eco; click the shifter to come out of that, and it says 98 for regular Drive. Not a big difference, but we weren't driving yet.

We were still sitting in a parked car, and it was getting stuffy, so we asked whether we could turn on the a/c for a minute. We did, and our range (still sitting, not running) dropped to 80 miles. That was particularly noteworthy to us, as we had about a 70- to 80-mile drive on the books for the next day.

There's a second binnacle above the steering wheel showing speed, the high position of which makes it like a heads-up display, handy and cool. This also can display an alert triangle, in which case you refer back to the larger display below. We decide this is handy, too, and clean, sort of a cross-reference, like a footnote.

A colleague of ours in the Pacific Northwest was driving the Leaf at the same time we were, and hers came with its own iPhone, for purposes of using a dedicated Leaf app. Ours did not, but we have the phone so we figured we'd just download the app. Unfortunately it requires a long-term subscription, available to owners, so we had to pass. Too bad, as we might have liked to experiment with reading the charge, or starting the air circulation, from the office desk. We did, of course, download an app for locating charging stations.



In the nose of the Leaf, there are two plug-ins: one is for a charging cable (we were provided with a 120-volt cable, though it can plug into, and charge must faster from, 240). Next to that is the cleverly named "turbo charger," for dedicated rapid charging stations.

Trial by fire

Knowing we had an e-challenging drive to make on Friday (and knowing it had arrived fully charged), we left our Leaf parked on Thursday, ready for morning. We had to make it from the northeast Valley to Glendale for a midday event—and back, we would hope—about 35-40 miles each way. Based on our readout, we might be pushing it, especially if a couple of hours of driving were more than we wanted to do with no interior airflow.

That same colleague in the Northwest had already informed us that range numbers "aren't necessarily reliable and can in fact be downright confounding." We had already seen that if we turn on the a/c, we'd have an 80-mile range, and we were hoping not to have to recharge en route. Our iPhone app indicated quite a few charging locations, though. (In fact, compared with most of the country, metro Phoenix is very well equipped.) Three of these were Nissan dealerships that were within reasonable distance of our route. But we didn't know how much explaining we might have to do, to waltz in and hustle the process, and recharging does take some time, while our own outlet awaited us back at the office.

We vowed to of course use Eco mode, skip a/c and try not to use any accessories. Our Northwest colleague drives some 25 miles each way, each day, and had warned us to be frugal. Even though she'd achieved 100 miles of new range on her best overnight charge, she was driving with the wipers off (in greater Seattle), the heat off (in 35-degree temps), everything off except the radio—"to distract me from the hypothermia." We were about to tackle the warm-weather equivalent challenge.

Tomorrow's tech today

Our logbook noted that as far as just driving, the Nissan Leaf is just a perfectly normal and very pleasant little car. Being all-electric, one of the first things we realize is that we don't have to be nursing the pedal, as in a hybrid, to avoid kicking in the engine while trying to be as economical as possible. In this, we always will be, and we just try to drive it well.

Initially we note that it won't get any major awards for steering or suspension, though it's a perfectly capable, typical small car. But minutes later, we take it back: in lane-to-lane slalom, it handles beautifully. And yes,

as with any electric car, it pumps out the pound-feet across the full power band, offering plenty of torque, hot off the line. In aggressive surface street traffic, as well as on freeway ramps and entering high-speed traffic, it holds its own very well: we were able to pick a spot in another lane, accelerate and dart into it like a champ.

In typical Nissan fashion, controls are simple and straightforward. The center stack is quite intuitive, and its implementation of a touchscreen interface makes all the difference. Power, park and parking brake are all electronic, so there are a few buttons to push each time, though the brake will release itself in the start-up-and-drive-away sequence.

As we start our Friday range challenge, we pass a popular hybrid and find ourselves thinking: hey, buddy, you're yesterday's news. The Leaf does give us a cutting-edge feeling, not what you'd get from most very small cars. We were then passed by a brand new Buick, thinking that's a good-looking new car, GM is doing its best building into the future, but thinking again that our Leaf is really tomorrow's news. However, we're on our way to a Chevrolet Volt event, so we give them credit for tackling the future many different ways.

A psychologist would have no trouble at all with our other encounters on the mean streets. Fellow motorists with something powerful, expensive and showy seem compelled to see whether they can just dust this little vision of tomorrow. (Answer: not really.)

We tag up with a classic Porsche 356 cabriolet, a great counterpoint that we hope always has its place.

Suspension on the freeway is wonderful: firm, smooth and quiet. We feel what we want to feel, little ribs and bumps, basically the feel of the road, while it delivers an overall silky smooth ride.

When we give it a little gas for another lane change, we hear the slightest whine, plus a little bit of road noise and a little bit of wind. And that's it: nice and quiet. We feel the torque, we hear the whine, and imagine we're straight out of a cyborg sci-fi movie.

We're loving highway speeds in this, so as we note construction on the other side of the freeway, with traffic very thick and slow, we make a note to avoid this on the way back. Wrong idea, as we will soon learn.

Basic subtraction

Yes, we are enjoying the drive, but our focus at the moment is on our 80-or-so-mile round trip. We have the windows open, despite any turbulence that may add, because we don't dare turn on the a/c. The car's estimated range was 107 Eco and 97 regular when we first

got in; after about a mile, though, the Econ estimate had dropped to 101. After just two miles, we'd lost nine off the chart. At three miles? Econ range has now dropped to 88 from 107—19 miles lost in those three miles of driving. Worse, this estimate left only a few more than we needed for our trip, and they were disappearing at a much faster than pro-rata pace. At seven miles, we had lost a full 34 from the gauge.

We dropped it out of Eco and into normal drive, just to compare: this cost us just five miles of estimated range, pretty meaningless since we had now lost 39 miles of range in our first ten of driving—in Eco. We of course switched right back to Eco, nonetheless.

We closed the window to reduce freeway noise and high-speed battering, but also to see if it helped the range. It quickly got stuffy inside (outside temp was 74 at the time). We pursued a little airflow, but without a/c.

As we exit the freeway near our destination, we hit a traffic light just as it's turning yellow, but nobody is behind us, so we give it a solid brake. Wow. The brakes are very powerful and very firm. Better than expected and better than most small cars. Range now: just 50, less than half of what we started with (107). Things are looking bad for the return trip.

As we park, though, our range meter has bumped back up to 55 miles, just over half of our initial range. Before we exited the Leaf, we took one phone call. It was not a long call, but the range dropped to 49 while sitting there. Overall, we were hovering just above or just below exactly half of our original estimated range. Would we make it back? Should we plan to blow time on a dealer recharge?

Ah, yes, range anxiety. That's the catch-all term GM has picked up on to promote the Chevy Volt, which in addition to its primary electric propulsion has a "range-extending" gasoline motor that doesn't drive the car, but rather tops off the juice to keep the electric power feeding the drive system for many more miles. But that adds weight and complexity, too, giving the Volt less than half the initial electric range of the Nissan Leaf. Then again, the Volt is also a more conventional car, larger and harder to distinguish from a multitude of midsize sedans, which GM felt would be a plus. The Leaf is small, quirky and fun. Apples and oranges on more than one level.

We shared a sandwich with a colleague from GM at our event. He was amused no end, to see us experiencing range anxiety up close. We felt as though we were 30 miles from Moab with an empty tank, and our buddy

KEEP RIGHT >>



had brought a couple of extra gerry cans of gas along, while we had not. The Volt, after all, has its onboard range-extender. Our Leaf does not.

Group-think at lunch concluded we should forego the freeway on the way home, since regenerative braking during slower stop-and-go traffic would provide charge back to the system. We've had considerable experience pushing this on Toyota and Lexus hybrids, and the principle is sound. Of course this would take longer, but probably not as much longer as heading to a Nissan dealership for a rapid recharge. Was it a sure thing, though? Only one way to find out.

Advanced mathematics

We left on our return trip with the gauge reading 49 miles to go, stopped to answer a few questions about the car at the parking lot exit, but found the meter actually went up to 52 over the first few miles. We headed east on Glendale Avenue, figuring we'll see how the numbers stand when we get to I-17. We'll jog up to Bell Road at that point, keeping more Nissan dealerships in range. We travel the surface streets at about 45 mph or so, applying the brakes from time to time to gain regenerative charge. The range meter stays at 50 for awhile.

Our attention is now fixed on a different gauge, a set of little balls with three to the left, one neutral point, and ten or so to the right. This shows whether we are consuming power or recharging, as on a typical hybrid. Our goal is to keep ourselves near that neutral ball, or no more than one ball up on the consumption side. If we can do this, we think we'll make it back.

Are we painting a nightmare scenario? No. It was only our first day with the car, and we were now having fun.

(We do wonder why these balls aren't color coded, red for bad and green for good, perhaps. Instead, we have to scrutinize a bit, to see where we are on a series of blue balls with white dots on the active ones. It's especially hard if wearing polarizing sunglasses.)

We have of course turned off the air for this. Not just the a/c, but we have no airflow whatsoever. If something needs juice from the battery pack, it's not getting any from us today. The temp is now 85 degrees. If our Northwest colleague had used her radio to distract herself from hypothermia, we were wishing we could use it to distract ourselves from heatstroke. Of course it will be 20-30 degrees warmer by the time you read this. We relent, open one window, crack the other.

By 35th Avenue and Glendale, we were still reading 50 miles of range remaining. We have plenty of distance ahead of us, but this is a very good sign. Our consumption is near nothing, with these methods. We get a red light and think, atypically, good! More regenerative energy.

The basic concept now is that surface streets are good, freeways bad. Nonetheless, we stick with our plan to take I-17 a few miles north to Bell. We can see how this goes, then decide whether to indeed exit as planned—continuing the benefits of stop-and-go traffic, while giving ourselves the last two dealership options, as well), or rationalize for time and continue on freeways the rest of the way.

We note the similarities between personal finance and vehicle range efficiency. We drove over,

"spending" our range like there's no tomorrow. We then saw our "statement" and received a wake-up call. We became frugal for five or ten miles after that, and now that things were going so well, we were ready to blow it all again on a good freeway. You know what they say: spend it like ya got it.

Driving north on I-17, we stayed in the slow lane, at about 53 mph. There was little braking, and our remaining range indication did drop here, but only from about 50 to 47. Hmm. Making pretty good time, we were tempted to stay on the freeway, taking the 101 east from 17. But our little ball gauge showed we were consuming at all times now. One ball, in fact, was as good as it got. If we were able to hit even a little more freeway speed, we'd be consuming at the two- or three-ball level. We knew that once we got to the 101, it would be pretty impossible to maintain anything like 55 mph. The limit is 65 mph, and most people are cruising along faster than that. So we did exit again at Bell Road, aiming for another stretch of regenerative braking. Good plan.

Our range was now just 41, in fact, so that few miles of freeway had cost us dearly. Watching the clock roll forward as we took the surface streets was costing us dearly, too, though, back at work. By the time we got to Bell and Cave Creek Road, we were reading 37 miles to go, and we figured we had about 12 to actually cover. 25 miles of headroom? Our colleague had commented about making it home with exactly that, which sounded fine to us at the time. Now we realized how uncomfortable that could feel, with the outcome still unknown.

(Right about now, we also glance at the recharge-time readout. It says if we recharge at 120 volts—our office option—it will take 16 hours to recharge to 100 percent. Okay. If we do make it back, and we plug it in about 3pm, we can leave it till 7am, no problem.)

Entering the Loop 101 Freeway at Cave Creek Road, the gauge said we had 33 miles to go. Actual distance was more like eight. We remembered the earlier stop-and-go construction traffic on this stretch, and now we actually hoped we got that. Alas, we did not. By Scottsdale Road, about four miles later, 33 had dropped to a balance of 22 miles. Actual remaining distance, about four. Exiting near the Airpark, we had dropped by only one more, to 21. The last few miles were close to pro-rata on the gauge, and we pulled up to the office (and a blessed outlet) with 19 miles left on the gauge.

Triumph.

We gave the Leaf a full 19 hours of 120-volt charging—which is what the meter ultimately suggested—from 3pm on Friday to 10am Saturday. Our new numbers, however, were less than they had been upon initial delivery: an 85-mile range in normal, or 93 in Eco.

In retrospect, our self-inflicted bleeding-edge range challenge was not quite the intended use of the Leaf. And it was just our first day with the car. For someone tackling a more predictable daily commute, the math will become well known, second nature. If your work is, say, 25 miles or less from home, you should be able to do the round trip every day, even if you add in some errands on the way. You may be able to handle double that. If you're able to plug in while at work, double it again. (But if you can't plug in, and your workday may require an unexpected dash to a meeting 30 miles away, you may hope for a recharge there, too.)

For new technology, this is a tremendous start. The ultimate product is so well executed, it's hard to even believe it's a new idea. There are always things you can do to be more frugal, but we're quite sure that anybody who buys the Nissan Leaf is going to want to know one thing: can I just drive this like a normal car? Yes, you can.

Honey, I forgot the milk

For our last couple of days with the Leaf, we enjoyed the heck out of it. This actually is one of those rare cars, when you're as jaded as we are, that makes you glad you have to run out and do another errand you forgot. It's flat-out fun to drive.

The car handles well, with smooth and balanced cornering and no noticeable front-drive torque steering. Weight distribution from the low-center-mounted battery pack is surely a big contributor to this.

Scientists and engineers (as well as marketing people) can make a solid case for the all-electric approach, as in the Nissan Leaf and others, or for the extended-range approach, as in the Chevy Volt. We conclude that it's largely philosophical or emotional for most buyers. Beyond the variables of size, of cost, of feel and finish, and of conventionality, it may likely become mostly a matter of personal comfort and taste. Of course your specific driving formula is key: do your own math.

A new lifestyle of range and recharges is part of the magic. And this time around, we expect electrics to catch on in a big way, so this won't be fringe but rather early adopter behavior. Ultimately, it's no different from having to keep an eye on your gas gauge and knowing where the pumps are. No-one has invented a perpetual motion machine, and there is no free lunch. If you can stop for gas, you can stop for a plug-in. Range is shorter at this point, and charging times generally longer than fuel refills, but increasingly fast options are coming.

As we grab our camera, we think about how long we'll be out and how many shots we may take, grab an extra battery and put it in our pocket. We realize this is all familiar terrain in its own way.

Electric cars certainly generate conversation from skeptics who point out that they are not zero-emission but rather zero-tailpipe-emission vehicles, and rightly so. We find that most skeptics then point their blame right at coal, even though slightly less than 50 percent of US power stations are coal-fired. (The rest include natural gas, nuclear, a little oil, then renewables such as wind and hydroelectric.) Most importantly, those are issues that warrant being addressed in their own right. And they are. The electric car conversation encourages the overall conversation. All for the better.

Our last weekend is much more routine. After running a number of errands in multiple trips, the gauge is sitting at 72 miles in Eco, 66 in normal Drive. We've had the a/c running, the windows open and the radio on. We ran in Eco mode the whole time, as we never found a reason to change; Eco is plenty peppy.

Next to a high-end European SUV on an open boulevard, we realize its driver is trying to be a tough guy, perhaps smoke our little blue car off the road. It's fun to find that this car can match their every move, or in fact exceed their every move since their car has to perform shifts. The Leaf will leave you feeling as though you have many tricks up your sleeve. ■

SWIMMING UPSTREAM

MITSUBISHI CHARTS ITS OWN COURSE

BY JOE SAGE



Mitsubishi dances a bit to its own drummer. You would, too, if you had to battle for mindshare with Toyota, Nissan, Honda and the others. For perspective, compare market shares in the US (year-to-date March): Toyota 14.2%, Honda 10.1%, Nissan 9.3%, Hyundai 4.7%, Kia 3.4%, Mazda 2.1% and Mitsubishi 0.7%.

So they put their best foot forward, differentiating by style and a high level of features at an attractive price, as in the case of their small SUV, the Outlander, and its smaller sibling, the Outlander Sport, driven here. Its drivetrain is another example of their idiosyncrasies: rather than all-wheel-drive, per the norm, they promote AWC, for All Wheel Control. Not a bad term, really, considering all the controls they (and many contemporary models) have in place for safety and handling. But different.

The Outlander Sport starts at just \$18,495 in two-wheel drive, or \$22,995 in AWC all-wheel drive. The 2.0L DOHC inline-4 MIVEC engine puts out 148 hp and 145 lb-ft of torque; the SE with AWC weighs 3263 pounds. EPA estimated fuel mileage is 24 city, 29 highway, quite respectable for any capable SUV, partly due to its regenerative brakes, which capture braking energy as power.

Extensive amenities include a range of electronic interfaces, keyless entry and start, HID headlamps, 18-

inch wheels, paddle shift, hill start assist, locking 4WD, four-wheel disc brakes, ABS, 4-wheel independent suspension, heated seats, rain-sensing wipers and much more. Standard is a 6-speaker sound system, but part of our car's \$1800 Premium Package (along with an LED-illuminated panoramic glass sunroof) was a 710-watt Rockford Fosgate premium 9-speaker system with 10-inch subwoofer. With that plus destination charge, our test car stickered at \$25,575. Lots of inclusions for that price.

So is the value there? We had heard lukewarm opinions already, so we worked hard to give it the benefit of the doubt. Logbook notes indicated seats were uncomfortable, manual and hard to improve. Climate controls weren't getting us cool, and this on a 73-degree spring day, with another 40 degrees due in summer. We noted steering torque and so-so suspension, rough on drainage troughs and speed bumps. But mostly, we noted what seemed like a great deal of straining on the part of the drivetrain, mostly gauged by its sound effects. We confirmed it sounded gutless, thus feeling gutless. After one aggressive lane change, we noted: mission accomplished, but it sounded as though it would die trying.

Driving with the manumatic improved the experience, as we pushed all the shift points a little bit early. Though

shifting up should drop the power curve, all in all this gave us a higher sense of control and power, with what we had to work with. We put it in all-wheel drive on a mildly hilly and curvy—but very sandy—road and gave it some gas. We felt some slipping and grabbing, as its systems seemed more reactive than preemptive.

While most of our performance critiques were about drivetrain noise, our experience with the Rockford Fosgate audio system was very good. The interface is simple and includes options for punch, field, hall, live and stage, plus a range of normal, pop, rock and so on. We settled on hall and rock. The subwoofer is strong.

The styling's well executed, given that its oversize grille is a Mitsubishi trademark. From a three-quarter rear view, the little SUV looks fairly attractive and bold. The 18-inch wheels help its overall stance considerably and rear storage space is quite adequate.

The Mitsubishi Outlander Sport's fit and finish, instrumentation, inclusions and accessories were fine for the price. The weak point was the driving. Competition is stiff, and you may compare other vehicles both new and used. But if you turn up the Sport's above-average audio system up to the point that you don't hear the straining drivetrain, you can have an enjoyable little ride. ■

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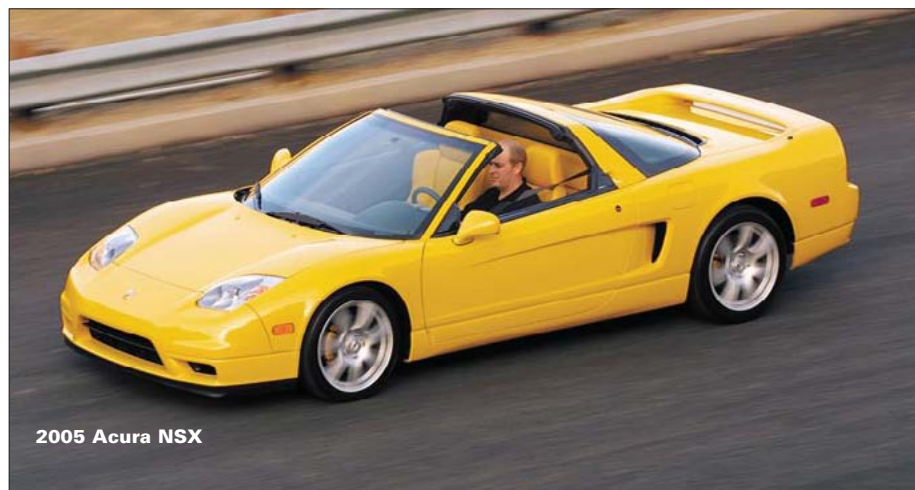
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THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS



2005 Acura NSX

■ The **Acura** NSX sports car replacement program that was canceled when the bottom fell out of the automobile market appears to be back on again. Honda was testing V8-powered, rear-wheel-drive prototypes when the program was shelved. Japanese sources say the NSX projects are back, but using a green V6 hybrid powertrain with all-wheel drive. The new NSX is expected by 2014.

■ The **Hyundai** HCD12 Curb concept is the latest in a new vehicle grouping called Urban Activity Vehicles (UAV), which includes vehicles like the Nissan Juke and Hyundai Veloster in a compact size range. What sets the Curb apart from some of the others, however, is that Hyundai is also using it as a test bed for future Hyundai Blue Link™ and vehicle connectivity technology. Like other recent Hyundai designs, Curb came from an evolution of the Hyundai “Fluidic Sculpture” design language, with the intent of appealing to younger buyers. The vehicle needed to secure the advanced Blue Link and connectivity features against impact and shock. From these ideas, the “technology rugged” design direction for Curb was formed.



Hyundai HCD12 Curb concept

■ Take the unique styling of **Lotus** automobiles and transfer the DNA to clothing and you have the new Lotus Originals collection of performance outerwear, refined, luxury knitwear and leather goods. Lotus Originals new clothing designs are now available exclusively available from the Lotus website (www.lotusoriginals.com). The clothing collection is accompanied by a range of Lotus Originals lifestyle accessories. Hand-crafted luggage is available in sumptuous tan leather or lightweight canvas also calfskin leather driving gloves in tan, black, Lotus green and bright yellow are the ultimate driver's indulgence. Plans call for a flagship store to open in London near the end of 2011.

■ **Volvo** is expected to add another XC to its crossover/SUV lineup by the end of 2013. According to sources, new Volvo CEO Stefan Jacoby wants the smaller car to compete with the upcoming BMW X1, Land Rover Range Rover Evoque and Audi Q3. (In addition, Mercedes-Benz may be adding a similar vehicle to the mix, likely called the GLC.) The Volvo would probably be called the XC30 and be derived from the all-wheel-drive platform of the current C30 coupe. Our source speculates there may be two versions, too, a longer wheelbase version for the US and China markets and a shorter one for Europe.

■ Right now all the Dodge products are wearing the cross-hair grille, but that will soon start to change. Ralph Gilles, Dodge CEO and chief designer of Chrysler Group,



Ram Power Wagon

said at the Chicago Auto Show that Dodge will phase out the trademark grille design. However, he said, **Ram Trucks**, formerly Dodge Ram, will keep the distinctive grille design. The 2011 cars are in the showrooms now, so don't look for the change until the 2012 models are shown.

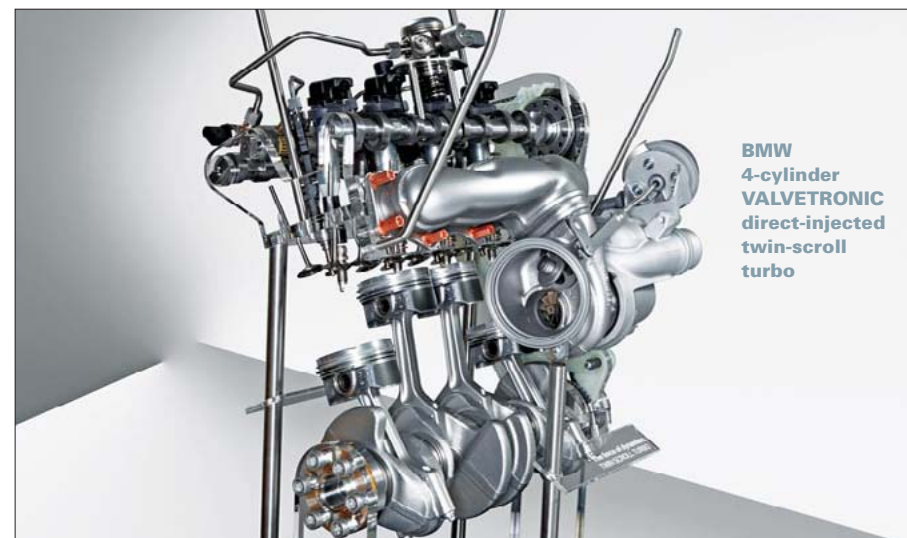
■ **Mitsubishi** is planning to build a new family of vehicles based on the platforms of the Outlander, Outlander Sport and Lancer sedan, according an inside source. Presently those products are built in Japan, but they would be moved to the company's Normal, Illinois, factory. The US plant currently builds the Galant sedan, Endeavor crossover, Eclipse and Eclipse Spyder and those products are being phased out in 2013, according to the Japanese newspaper, *Nikkei*.

■ **Infiniti** designers are looking down the road at a premium entry-level compact, and they displayed their progress at



Infiniti Etherea concept

the recent Geneva Motor Show. The Etherea, which is about the same size as a Volkswagen Golf, is designed to project both an “evolving Infiniti identity” and a profile that is distinctly different from any current vehicle available in the premium compact class. Etherea blends elements of coupe, sedan, hatchback and even crossover designs in one highly sculptural, near-mono volume form. It is powered by a supercharged 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine, developing 245 horsepower. An electric motor is used to boost power when needed and to provide emission-free driving at low speeds. The transmission is a continuously variable (CVT) type. An independent suspension, regenerative braking and advanced drive-by-wire electric/hydraulic steering further enhance performance. Photos are available at www.iveho.com.



BMW 4-cylinder VALVETRONIC direct-injected twin-scroll turbo

■ For 10 years, the automotive press has deliberated over what to call a flock of more than one Prius, or even a pair—is it

still Prius, or Priuses, Prii or something completely different? With other Prius versions in the pipeline, **Toyota** wanted to come up with a plural name, rather than having everyone make up their own version, so Toyota democratically put the name to a vote. In a six-week period following the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, 1.8 million votes were cast—and, by a slim margin, consumers chose to call more than one Prius: Prii. The original Prius name came in second with 24 percent of the vote.

■ Shoppers may be able to make a better decision on a **used car** if the dealer is using a new fuel economy sticker on the window. At least, that's what the EPA is thinking. Until now used car buyers, who outnumber new car buyers by 4 to 1, have not had the benefit of a fuel economy window sticker. Now, used car sellers can print a window sticker—at www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/sticker.jsp—showing the vehicle's city, highway, and combined fuel economy rating, a photo of the vehicle and important information about the vehicle's configuration—such as engine size, transmission type, and fuel type—to help identify it. For high-tech shoppers there is a QR Code, scannable with a free downloadable app. There is no government mandate requiring the fuel economy stickers at this time. They are just being made available as a courtesy for shoppers.



Toyota Prius c concept

■ Further enhancing their move away from larger displacement to smaller turbocharged power plants, **BMW** is bringing back the four-cylinder to the US market for the first time since 1999. Like the company's latest 3.0-liter turbo inline six, the new 2.0-liter engine will combine twin-scroll turbocharging with high-pressure direct injection and BMW's VALVETRONIC intake control. With 240 horsepower and 260 lb.ft. of torque, this little four offers more power and torque than BMW's normally aspirated 3.0-liter inline six. As we went to press, vehicles being outfitted with the new engines were set to be announced at the New York Auto Show in late April. ■

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

The 21st Annual Copperstate 1000



Photo : Joe Sage

Photo : Tim and Kristin Sharp

Mercedes-Benz CLS550 and CLS AMG



Cadillac CTS-V Coupe



Pebble Beach - Monterey Preview : Concours-Concorso-Races-Auctions



Photos [2] : Joe Sage

Camaro Convertible



New York Auto Show



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