

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 1
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012

ARIZONA AUCTION PREVIEW
2012 PORSCHE CAYMAN R
2013 LEXUS GS 350, GS 450h
2012 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE
ACTIVE LIFESTYLE VEHICLE OF THE YEAR
SEMA SHOW HIGHLIGHTS
ROUGH ROAD TRIP IN THE NISSAN XTERRA
GOODGUYS 14TH SOUTHWEST NATIONALS
CORONADO SPEED FEST SAN DIEGO
CITY CREEK CENTER SALT LAKE CITY
SEDONA DESTINATION LODGING

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news & features

January-February 2012

SPECIAL EVENT	A Horses & Horsepower benefit polo event6
BOOK	B Route 66 Ruins and Relics.....6
SPECIAL EVENT	C Audi Club of Arizona road rally6
SPECIAL EVENTS	D Arizona January collector auctions preview.....16 It's showtime. Schedule and ticket info, plus a few things to watch.
MOTORSPORTS	E PIR "Night to Remember"18 A star-studded pre-race night at the Biltmore. By Randall Bohl
VEHICLE INTRODUCTION	F 2013 Lexus GS 350, GS 350 F SPORT, GS 450h20 The all new Lexus GS combines luxury so well with performance, they had us drive it at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. By Joe Sage
SPECIAL EVENT	G Ford Driving Skills For Life, with Courtney Force.....24 Ford's award-winning teen program visits Valley schools, connecting with the audience via a lively rising driver. By Randall Bohl
TRAVEL	H Sedona lodging awards and events.....26
VEHICLE IMPRESSION	2012 Jeep® Grand Cherokee Limited 4x428 Our fourth session in one year finds this still a winner. By Joe Sage
MOTORSPORTS	I Coronado Speed Festival30 Fleet Week in San Diego comprises many sights and sounds. Arizona vintage racers go for the speed. By Tim and Kristin Sharp
VEHICLE IMPRESSION	2012 Porsche Cayman R34 Take the mid-engine of a Boxster, the form and format of a coupe, juice them up to the "R" level, and see what happens.. By Joe Sage
SPECIAL EVENT	J 2011 SEMA Show Las Vegas38 Highlights, awards and a few surprises. By Larry Edsall
SPECIAL EVENT	K Active Lifestyle Vehicle Awards42 National competition was held this year in Arizona. By Larry Edsall
ROAD TRIP	L Christmas Tree Pass and Grapevine Canyon44 The author takes the long way home from southern Nevada, in a Nissan Xterra PRO-4X, and as usual is better for it. By Larry Edsall
TRAVEL	M Salt Lake City's new Creek Center50 One more great reason for a serious Utah road trip. By Joe Sage
SPECIAL EVENT	N Goodguys 14th Southwest Nationals52 The Goodguys Rod & Custom Association finishes its 2011 show season again at WestWorld in north Scottsdale. By Larry Edsall

departments

FROM THE PUBLISHER : START YOUR ENGINES4
AUTO NEWS UPDATE8
THE INSIDE TRACK : BRIEFS AND RUMORS56
UPCOMING FEATURES.....58



COVER: The mid-engined Porsche Cayman R, in Peridot Green Metallic, looks ready for adventure, and a rainy December day in Arizona says "bring it on." **Photo: Joe Sage.**

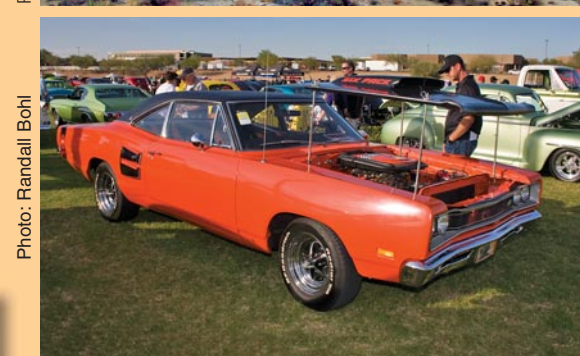


Photo: Joe Sage

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Photo: Kristin Sharp

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Photo: Larry Edsall

Photo: Randall Bohl



It's becoming that time of year when the sun keeps shining here, while most places are cold, grey and snowy. As such, there have been a lot of events lately, and there are more coming right up. Huge on the immediate horizon, of course, would be the series of collector car and related auctions that collectively comprise Arizona auction week in mid-to-late January. We bring you a quick look at the fundamentals of six of them, along with one item of interest from each. Watch for a followup in our March/April issue.

We also visit a pre-auction polo match (backed by Barrett-Jackson) at WestWorld, an Audi Club of Arizona road rally from metro Phoenix to Jerome and Cottonwood, the SEMA Show in Las Vegas, a Phoenix International Raceway pre-race nighttime charity event, the Goodguys season-ending Southwest Nationals and the national Active Lifestyle Vehicle Awards, held in the Valley this year.

Speaking of Las Vegas, you can ride along with **Larry Edsall**, as he returns from SEMA in a Nissan Xterra PRO-4X via a rocky canyon longcut, and we also fly there to drive the new 2013 Lexus GS lineup at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. Speaking of racetracks, we also travel along with **Tim and Kristin Sharp** to San Diego, for coverage of Arizona vintage racers participating in Coronado Speed Festival during Fleet Week. Navigating the cones closer to home are Valley high school students, participating in Ford's Driving Skills For Life program and meeting race driver Courtney Force for safety and performance tips.

As long as we have performance on our minds, we spend some time on public roads with the new Porsche Cayman R, a lightweight extra-performance iteration of their mid-engined coupe—sort of a Boxster in 911 clothing—or is it? Let's find out.



Rounding things out, besides our travel to San Diego and Las Vegas, we bring you information on Sedona's award-winning lodges, and we visit the construction site of a new road trip destination in Salt Lake City—the City Creek Center.

Enjoy the ride.

Joe Sage - Publisher/ Executive Editor

ARIZONA DRIVER

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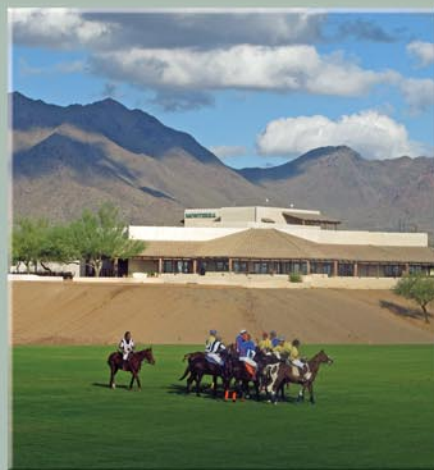
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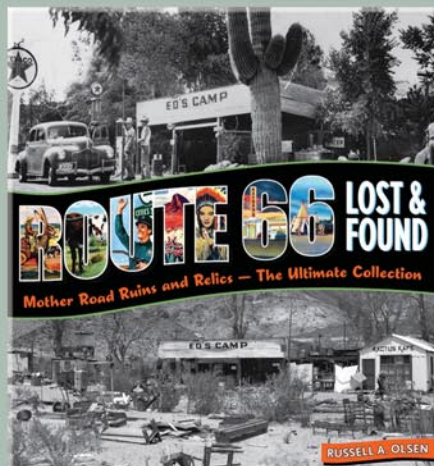
SPECIAL EVENT : HORSES & HORSEPOWER BENEFIT



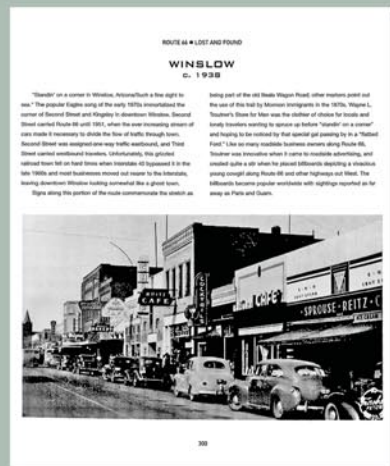
Polo Party, Arabian Horses and Exotic Cars
A solid combination of key cultures in Scottsdale joined for the first-ever Polo Party at WestWorld in November, to benefit the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA) and Scottsdale Downtown & Entertainment District Association. The picture-perfect day's theme of "Horses & Horsepower" included a luxury car preview by Barrett-Jackson Auction, a dazzlingly costumed field parade by the Arabian Horse Association of Arizona, Lamborghini and Ferrari club displays, a champagne lounge, high-energy party and cigar lounge sponsored by local hot spots—and an exciting US Polo Association match against Team Colombia, presented by the Arizona Polo Club, with first ball drop by Phoenix Suns legend Dan Majerle. The game was a thriller, as Colombia squeaked out the win. Visit www.thepoloparty.com



BOOK : ROUTE 66 RUINS AND RELICS



Route 66 Lost & Found - by Russell A Olsen
Born in Chicago and now living in LA, Russell Olsen has made his home on both ends of the Mother Road. On his first trip down Route 66, in 1995, Olsen unexpectedly shot 27 rolls of film. Annual road trips followed, and he also began collecting mid-century postcards of classic stops along Route 66. Two successful earlier *Route 66 Lost & Found* volumes are now combined in the new 420-page *Route 66 Lost & Found: Mother Road Ruins and Relics: The Ultimate Collection*, which also adds more than 50 new sites. Motor courts, cafes, filling stations and greasy spoons are presented in over 200 profiles with more than 500 photos and maps, all resequenced to take you on one remarkable ride down America's Main Street. The book is \$30 from online retailers and as an ebook via www.voyageurpress.com.



SPECIAL EVENT : AUDI CLUB ROAD RALLY



Jerome-Cottonwood-Strawberry-Beeline
Audi Club North America (ACNA) Arizona Chapter gathered its enthusiast members in mid-November on one of the Valley's first notably cold and windy days of the season. Spirits were high, as 14 members in nine Audis—A3, A4, S4, S5, TTS—launched from north Scottsdale, joined a second group at Carefree Highway and I-17, headed north into the fog, over the world-famous doglegs to and through Jerome (sporting some early snow), to lunch at Concho's Mexican Restaurant in Cottonwood. Some then headed back down I-17, a shortcut that still yielded a good 8-hour day on the road, while others took a loop through Strawberry, Pine, Payson and back to the Valley down Arizona 87, the Beeline Highway. For more information on ACNA Arizona and its activities, visit the club at www.audiclubaz.org.



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Mercedes-Benz F125! research vehicle

THE MERCEDES F125! TIME MACHINE

The Mercedes-Benz F125! is a research vehicle that is like a time machine for future technical developments in the large luxury segment. The hydrogen-powered vehicle explores emission-free driving, looking forward to 2025 and beyond, rather than the typical seven- or eight-year window of a traditional concept vehicle. By combining hydrogen power with a high-efficiency lithium-sulphur battery, the F125! will have a range of up to 600 miles, full day-to-day suitability, superior performance and first class comfort. The expressive design is created with lightweight hybrid bodyshell construction using fiber-reinforced plastics, carbon fiber, aluminum and high-strength steels. Instrument panel displays are enhanced by 3D projections, and some controls—like opening and closing the gullwing doors—can be done by a hand gesture. Other innovative highlights include e4MATIC all-wheel drive, networked telematics assistance systems for semi-autonomous driving and a trailblazing exterior and interior design based on a completely new saloon architecture. ▼



2012 Buick Verano

BUICK'S LUXURY COMPACT VERANO

▲ Buick is on a roll, introducing its third all-new model in three years. Verano is the latest model in the Buick product renaissance that began with the Enclave and continued with the LaCrosse and Regal. The Verano, based on the Chevy Cruze, has all the elegance of the Buick LaCrosse flagship but in a more compact size similar to a Volkswagen Jetta or Volvo S60. A 180-hp Ecotec 2.4-liter direct-injected four-cylinder engine with six-speed automatic powertrain is standard. The Verano accelerates from 0 to 60 mph in 8.0 seconds and still gets an estimated 31 MPG on the highway. The answer to the enthusiast question, "Will there be a turbo in the future?" is yes. Verano comes in one very well equipped base model, along with two optional trim levels. Base price is \$23,470 including the destination charge. Add the convenience group and leather group and the price rises to \$26,850, with only a few other options like navigation available. Verano went on sale during the last quarter of 2011.

VW PUTS MORE MONEY TOWARD GOAL

For several years, Volkswagen has been boasting a plan to become the world's largest automaker, and sales have indicated they were headed that direction. Now the 20-member VW board has taken an

even more aggressive step by committing an additional \$86.4 billion to build new plants and vehicles, along with more research and development, between 2012 and 2016. CEO Martin Winterkorn said, "Top of the agenda for us is our investment in environmentally friendly, sustainable models and drives." In 2010, VW made a similar investment of an additional \$71 billion outside of China and \$13.7 in China over a five-year period. Volkswagen has a strong presence in the Chinese joint ventures, Shanghai-Volkswagen Automotive and FAW-Volkswagen Automotive, and plans to invest an additional \$19.5 billion there through 2016. Volkswagen currently has 11 plants in China and operates 62 factories globally. The company estimates Chinese sales for this year could reach more than 2.4 million vehicles. The global forecast for 2011 is for a record 7.5 million units.

MITSUBISHI i BAY AREA CARSHARE

Mitsubishi Motors North America, Inc., (MMNA) and San Rafael Mitsubishi conducted the first fleet delivery of the 100% electric-powered 2012 Mitsubishi i to the Bay Area's City CarShare in a ceremony at the Green Vehicle Showcase in front of San Francisco City Hall Plaza in December. City CarShare is a Bay Area nonprofit organization founded in 2001 with the

help of local nonprofits and the cities of San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland to promote innovative mobility options to improve the environment and the quality of life in the area. By providing short-term access to cars, City CarShare aims to reduce traffic congestion, parking problems and oil dependence while promoting cleaner air and quieter streets. The 2012 Mitsubishi i is the first of several advanced, alternative-fuel vehicles Mitsubishi plans to bring to the North American market over the next few years.

THE RESURRECTION OF LINCOLN

Ford has pledged \$1 billion in an effort to breathe new life into Lincoln. At the beginning of 2011, Designer Max Wolff was recruited from Cadillac and given a separate (from Ford) design studio and a team of about 120 engineers, designers and marketing people. He was tasked with creating a new image for the Lincoln brand and the plan is to introduce seven new Lincoln vehicles by 2014 updating existing models (MKS, MKZ, MKX, MKT and Navigator) and to add a compact car. Ford Product chief, Derrick Kuzak, said the Lincolns will not be rebadged Fords, but they will share platforms. Most models will have available all-wheel drive, plus there

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Ford Fiesta ST concept



will be active noise control systems, electric steering and electronic chassis control suspension systems. Early analyst reports indicate the new designs are impressive. The redesigned MKS was shown at the Los Angeles auto show in November and the next-generation MKZ concept will appear at the Detroit show in January 2012.

LOCAL MOTORS CO-CREATION FORUM

Arizona-based Local Motors, a next-generation car company that employs a co-creation approach to vehicle design, has launched The Forge, a collaborative web-based platform that allows OEMs, aftermarket companies, educational institutions and hobbyists to engage the Local Motors community for ideas, design and engineering development. The Forge provides an open platform and a community of contributors, as well as a turnkey process for product development. An expert team can guide clients and sculpt development challenges for a successful outcome. The Forge community benefits from a talented network of over 13,000 members in the co-creation process, and from tools exclusively available to the Local Motors community. In partnership with Siemens PLM Software, The Forge community has access to Solid Edge Design1, the first affordable professional CAD software for

design and engineering enthusiasts, for \$19.95 per month, as well as a free new 3D viewing experience based on Siemens' widely used JT data format. For more information about Local Motors and The Forge, visit www.local-motors.com.

FORD FIESTA ST AT FRANKFURT

▲ Ford used the annual Frankfurt Motor Show for a surprise unveiling of a new Fiesta ST concept alongside the all-new production version of the Focus ST. Every Ford to carry the ST badge will be a performance car that emphasizes fun-to-drive qualities. However, every performance aspect is designed to be highly refined and balanced to bridge the gap between an everyday driver and a car used for running down a twisty road. Ford ST models will share key physical similarities in areas such as colors and exterior styling, as well as interior styling and driver-orientated interior features. Vehicle attributes like the feel of the steering, the sound of the engine and comfort of the suspension are also dictated by the DNA, meaning customers will recognize an ST the moment they sit in one, no matter where in the world they are. Target performance levels for the Fiesta ST Concept are 178 hp and 177 lb-ft of torque—enough to propel it from 0-62 mph in under 7 seconds with a top speed exceeding 137 mph.

FIAT 500 "PINK RIBBON" EDITION

Anyone purchasing the new Fiat 500 Pink Ribbon Edition will be indirectly donating \$1,000 to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation® (BCRF). The limited edition model is available in Argento (silver) and Bianco (white) exterior paint colors and features a signature dark pink bodyside stripe with "500" logo and an accenting "ribbon" in light pink. The interior is finished with Nero (black) leather seats with pink accent stitching on the perimeter and signature "500" logo embroidered on the front seatbacks, with a pink ribbon embroidered on the floor mats. Pink accents are also hand-stitched through the Nero leather steering wheel and provide additional contrast in front of the body-color instrument panel bezel. A pair of uniquely designed Fiat 500 Pink Ribbon key fobs are included. MSRP of the 2012 Fiat 500 Pink Ribbon edition is \$22,500 (including \$500 destination). Visit www.fiatusa.com/500PinkRibbon.

INFINITI: QUICKEST FULL HYBRID

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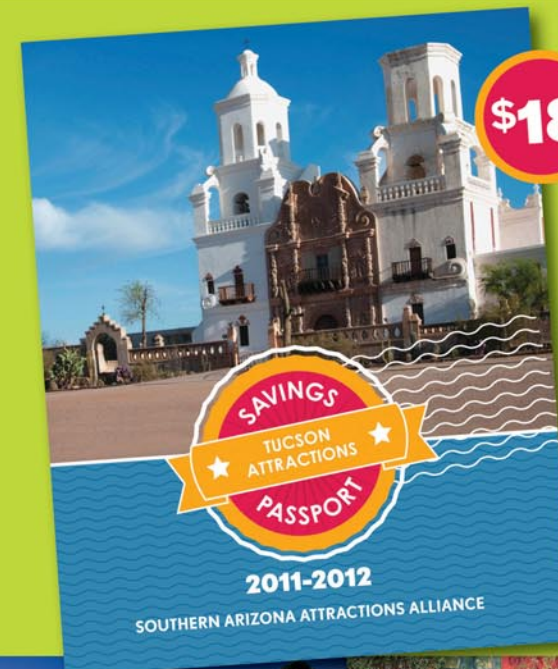
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an average quarter mile time of 13.9031 seconds over a series of acceleration runs, Pollard, said he got the best times by just letting the automatic transmission shift on its own. The standard production model Infiniti M Hybrid set the record on August 23, 2011 at the UK's Santa Pod Raceway, home of the FIA European Drag Racing Championships. The hybrid uses a combination of electric motor torque from 0 rpm and V6 power at high revs to achieve the record time with speeds in excess of 100 mph for each run. The Infiniti Direct Response Hybrid™ system uses a 302-hp 3.5-liter V6 gasoline engine, 50kW electric motor, Lithium-ion battery pack to produce a combined 360-hp output driving the rear wheels through a seven-speed automatic transmission. The hybrid has a 32 miles per gallon Highway and 27 MPG City EPA rating.

JEEP WRANGLER WINS 4X4 AWARD

▲ *Four Wheeler* magazine has named the 2012 Jeep Wrangler Rubicon the winner of its highly-sought-after Four Wheeler of the Year award. *Four Wheeler* magazine has been presenting the award since 1974, and it is springs from one of the most daunting competitions a vehicle can undergo. Jeep Wrangler Rubicon faced stiff competition this year from the Infiniti QX56 but ultimately emerged vic-

torious, also edging out its longer Wrangler Unlimited Rubicon sibling by the narrowest of margins. Vehicles are evaluated in five categories: trail performance, mechanical and empirical data, highway performance, interior and exterior. The competition takes five days and runs for 1000 miles, providing a panel of seven judges ample seat time in each of the 4x4s. Judges test performance on a number of terrain types—and pavement—to get a feel for power and capability, as well as comfort and design of the interior and chassis. Vehicles must be in production form and either all new or substantially revised from the previous model year. All vehicles must also bear a transfer case with a dedicated low-range gear (all-wheel-drive vehicles with no low-range are excluded).

FORD WEBSITE FOR DESIGN DREAMERS

Ford has launched a sophisticated new website (www.ford.com/cars/mustang) that puts the Mustang design paintbrush in the hands of the daydreamers and aspiring designers. Pick one of the four Mustangs—V6, GT, Boss 302 or Shelby GT500—and add body kits, wheels, decals, grilles and decklids, along with parts from Ford Racing Performance Parts and Ford Vehicle Personalization. In addition, you even get to pick the back-

ground—a dragway, cityscape or drive-in restaurant—along with five different angles from which to check out the design. The site also incorporates social media, as users can log in through their Facebook account to save and share all of the Mustangs they have created. A Facebook “battle mode” lets users go head-to-head to see who has the best-looking car. By posting their Mustang to their Facebook wall, users can accumulate votes that will be tallied on a leaderboard for others to check out. They can even identify a nemesis to go after in battle.

GM PIONEERS CENTER AIR BAG

General Motor is adding a new center airbag designed to help protect the driver and front seat passenger in far-side impact crashes. The front center air bag is mounted in the right side of the driver's seat and positions itself between the front seats when deployed. The tethered, tubular air bag is designed to provide restraint during passenger-side crashes when the driver is the only front occupant, and also acts as an energy-absorbing cushion between driver and front passenger in both driver- and passenger-side crashes. The air bag also is expected to provide extra protection in a rollover situation, too. The first application is in 2013 model year Buick Enclave, GMC Acadia and

THERE'S A NEW KID ON THE BIG BLOCK

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Volkswagen Cross Coupé concept

Chevrolet Traverse midsize crossovers. The front center air bag is expected improve the vehicles' record of third-party crash test performance. The 2012 model year editions of these midsize crossovers have received five-star Overall and Side Crash safety ratings from NHTSA's New Car Assessment Program, and 2011 Top Safety Picks from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

VW CROSS COUPÉ CONCEPT

▲ Volkswagen revealed the Cross Coupé concept at the Tokyo show, an all-wheel-drive plug-in hybrid vehicle showing how VW designers envision a crossover that's part four-door coupe and part compact SUV. The sporty Cross Coupé concept is based on Volkswagen's new modular transverse matrix (MQB)—their first vehicle shown on this platform. The four-seater SUV is powered by two electric motors and a TSI® direct-injection turbocharged gasoline engine. The Cross Coupé can drive up to 25 miles purely on electric power. Longer than a VW Golf and shorter than a Tiguan, the concept is 171.1 inches long, 73.5 inches wide and 60.0 inches high, sized in the globally popular A-segment. With a very long wheelbase of 103.5 inches—two inches longer than a Golf and an inch longer than the Tiguan—compared to its overall

length, the Cross Coupé has correspondingly short overhangs at the front and back. The muscular proportions are underscored by wide 62.4-inch front and 63.5-inch rear track dimensions. The Cross Coupé is designed to be practical off-road as well as on pavement, with strong approach and departure angles and high ground clearance.

KIA'S FOUR-DOOR COUPE CONCEPT

Kia headed off in a new direction with the GT Concept revealed at the Frankfurt Auto Show. Under the typical auto show bling of copper trims, carbon-fiber wheel fins and suicide doors lies Kia's first rear-wheel drive platform and a striking four-door coupe design. Rumors suggest the car is destined for production in a more refined version to do battle with graceful sedans and hatchbacks like Porsche Panamera, Audi A7, and founder of the four-door coupe genre, the Mercedes-Benz, but with a much more sedate pricing. Dimensions indicate the GT is likely built on the family's Hyundai Genesis and Genesis Coupe underpinnings. Under the hood is a new turbocharged 3.3-liter V6 (390-hp) with the new 8-speed automatic transmission, which debuted recently in the larger Hyundai Genesis and Equus sedans. The GT design, which has hints of the Audi A7

design, comes from the team of Kia design chief and former Audi Designer, Peter Schreyer. The GT concept adds fuel to the rumors that Kia is headed upscale.

VW PANAMERICANA WORLD RECORD

In a Volkswagen Touareg V6 TDI, Rainer Zietlow and his team have set a new course record in the renowned Carretera Panamericana race, running the entire length of North and South America, with a driving time of just 11 days, 17 hours and 22 minutes. Zietlow and his team covered a total of 14,136 miles on the route between Tierra del Fuego and Alaska; they passed through 17 countries as well as most of the Earth's climate and vegetation zones in the record drive, which has been certified by the TÜV Nord testing organization. The race endured challenging course conditions including extreme heat, heavy rain, sandstorms and snow. Zietlow broke the previous world record set in 2006 by four days. The Touareg's eco-friendly 3.0L V6 TDI Clean Diesel engine consumes 30 percent less fuel and emits up to 25 percent less CO₂ than comparable vehicles with gasoline engines in its class. Rainer Zietlow has documented his world record drive with extensive video and photographic materials at www.tdi-panamericana.com. ■

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Barrett-Jackson will have cars from a dozen collections among the hundreds that cross its block, including the Jimmy Richardson Collection, Gomez Collection, Tom Crook Collection, Thomas O. Gephart Collection, Ron Pratte Collection, Blackhawk Collection, Dan Minor Collection, Jerry Minor Collection, Jim Mangione Collection, Brett Torino Collection, Bobby Wigington Collection and Richard M. Hubbard Collection. Things kick off with the event's second annual road rally the first Saturday, then continue with charity Family Value Day, auctions, food, booths, displays and events all week. One-day, multi-day or full-week passes are available;

early-purchase discounts and special rates for evenings, seniors, students, military and children.

SOMETHING TO KEEP AN EYE ON:

Lots 5001.1 and 5001.2 will be sold as a pair: a 1971 Plymouth HEMI GTO "Pilot" 2-door hardtop—serial number 00008, used for reference and part descriptions in the 1971 Mopar parts catalogs and first sold to the public from a used car lot in Oklahoma—and a 1970 Dodge Coronet "Pilot" convertible—a pre-production car originally built up as an assembly of the new for '70 Coronet sheet metal and later used in photographs for the assembly manuals and parts catalogs.



Photos: courtesy Barrett-Jackson Auction Company

BONHAMS

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Thursday, January 19, 2012

Westin Kierland Resort & Spa - 6902 East Greenway Parkway - Scottsdale - www.bonhams.com

This is a new event for the busy week of collector car auctions in the Valley, but Bonhams is not remotely new to the game. Not only have they been for 15 years the auction house for the prestigious Collectors' Motorcars auction in Carmel during Monterey car week in August, they are one of the world's oldest and largest auctioneers, set up in London in 1793 and recognized worldwide in the fine art, antiques and collectors' market. In 2001, Bonhams acquired the Brooks auction house, founded in 1989 by the former Head of Cars at Christie's, who specialized in the sale of classic and vintage motorcars. Bonhams achieves high dollars: at the

Goodwood Revival in 2004, they sold a 1929 Mercedes Benz Two-Seat Sports Tourer 36045 for £4,181,500 (about \$6.5 million today). The inaugural Bonhams Scottsdale Sale will run one day, Thursday, January 19, at the Westin Kierland.

SOMETHING TO KEEP AN EYE ON:

This 1929 Rolls-Royce Phantom I transformable convertible sedan was given to Marlene Dietrich by Paramount Studios director Josef von Sternberg, after Dietrich's role as a femme fatale in *The Blue Angel* (*Der Blaue Engel*). Both Dietrich and the Rolls-Royce were featured again in the movie *Morocco*.



Photo: courtesy Bonhams

GOODING & COMPANY

5TH ANNUAL SCOTTSDALE AUCTION

Friday-Saturday, January 20-21, 2012 (viewing 19-21)

Scottsdale Fashion Square - E Camelback Rd and N 68th St - Scottsdale - www.goodingco.com

Gooding & Company—the official auction of Pebble Beach Concours, also with an auction during Amelia Island—continues to have great success at Scottsdale, where 121 cars last January brought nearly \$35 million, an average of \$289,090 per car. Viewing is from 9am to 6pm on Thursday and Friday, and 9am to 5pm on Saturday, at the west end of Scottsdale Fashion Square. The auction starts at 11am both Friday and Saturday. An auction catalog for \$80 admits two to the viewing and auction. General admission to the viewing and auction can be purchased at the tent for \$30 per person. Children under 12 are admitted for free.

SOMETHING TO KEEP AN EYE ON:

This 1932 "Clark Gable" Packard Twin Six 905 Coupe Roadster has won the concours d'élégance trifecta, taking First in Class at the 2009 Pebble Beach Concours d'Élegance, as well as First in Class at Amelia Island and Meadow Brook.

One of only a few 905 Convertible Coupes known to survive, originally owned by



Hollywood legend and automotive enthusiast Clark Gable, and restored by the esteemed Thomas A. Moretti, this CCCA-judged 100-point car has been called the closest thing to what collectors can call a "perfect" Packard. The estimated selling price range for the Clark Gable Package is \$650,000 - \$850,000.

Photo: courtesy Gooding & Company

MOTOEXOTICA

2ND ANNUAL PHOENIX CLASSIC & EXOTIC CAR AUCTION

Saturday-Sunday, January 14-15, 2012

Dealers Auto Auction of the Southwest - 1433 South 19th Avenue - Phoenix, AZ 85009

MotoeXotica president Scott Brandt began typically enough, some 22 years ago, buying cars he liked—from ISO Grifo to Jaguar, Lamborghini and Rolls Royce—keeping and driving them for awhile, typically 6-18 months, then selling via *Hemmings* or word of mouth. Once he started selling on eBay, his personal ownership time was dropping to more like 4-6 weeks, and he realized he had developed a full-blown business. The next step was to start a classic and exotic public car auction in St. Louis, his home turf. And last year, he branched out to Phoenix. For season two here, MotoeXotica has a new venue and new partnership: Dealers Auto Auction

of the Southwest (DAASW) about a mile or so southwest of downtown Phoenix. Over 300 vehicles will cross the block over two days. Last year's inaugural auction had 278 cars with over \$1.2 million in gross sales, a 43% sell rate and lots of positive feedback. Brandt anticipates growth this year, with many repeat buyers and sellers.

SOMETHING TO KEEP AN EYE ON:

This 1948 Buick Super convertible is an older restoration with a new power soft top and a smooth-running 263-cu.in. inline eight. The Super was built

from 1940-1942 and 1946-1958, bridging a time-span from the late classics to the tailfin era. Its long wheelbase was shared with the Buick Roadmaster, and the two were replaced by the new Electra in 1959. The Super is relatively quick, able to achieve speeds over 90 miles per hour.



Photo: courtesy MotoeXotica

RM AUCTIONS

13TH ANNUAL AUTOMOBILES OF ARIZONA

Thursday-Friday, January 19-20, 2012 (preview 18-20)

Arizona Biltmore - 2400 E Missouri Ave near N 24th St and E Camelback Rd - Phoenix

Last January, RM Auctions sold 96 percent of the cars that crossed their block at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa, for a total of \$30.8 million, a record for RM's dozen years of Arizona auctions, at an average \$293,090 per car. RM remains a bellwether on the collector car calendar, attracting enthusiasts and collectors from around the world to Phoenix each January. Now in its 13th year, the 2012 event will again feature highly desirable and historically significant motor cars of impeccable provenance. Admission requires official catalog purchase for \$120, which admits two when presented at the entrance. www.rmauctions.com.

SOMETHING TO KEEP AN EYE ON:

With an estimated sale price of \$1,750,000-2,250,000, this 1957 Ferrari 410 Superamerica Coupe by Scaglietti was built with a 340-hp, 4962cc SOHC V12, three Weber four-barrel carburetors, a four-speed manual, independent front suspension, rear live axle and four-wheel hydraulic disc brakes. Of only 34 Ferrari 410 Superameri-

cas produced, this is the only one originally bodied by Scaglietti, built specifically for longtime Ferrari patron Dottore Enrico Wax. The one-off design has been restored by ex-Ferrari and Scaglietti craftsmen and is a Pebble Beach class-winning restoration.



Photo: Darin Schmabel ©2011 Courtesy of RM Auctions

RUSSO AND STEELE

12TH ANNUAL SPORTS & MUSCLE IN SCOTTSDALE

Wednesday-Sunday, January 18-22, 2012

N Scottsdale Rd and E Mayo Blvd at AZ Loop 101 - Scottsdale

Locally-based Russo and Steele promotes a For Enthusiasts By Enthusiasts™ philosophy and a boutique-style, theater-in-the-round setting. The principals actively participate in concours d'élégance shows, road rallies, vintage racing and other collector car events all year long, in addition to attending auctions nationwide to keep a close eye on market movements. Last January, Russo and Steele's sales exceeded \$21 million, and a 1970 Plymouth Hemi 'Cuda convertible at \$17.1 million was the fifth-highest among some 2500 sold here that week. Russo and Steele hosts annual auctions in Scottsdale and Monterey. www.russoandsteele.com.

SOMETHING TO KEEP AN EYE ON:

This 1965 Shelby 427 Cobra CSX3127 Street 427 Prototype was the fourth of just 260 original 427 Street Cobras built at Shelby American in 1965. CSX3127 served as a test vehicle and to gauge customer response to the 427 street cars. While most Cobras were shipped by boat to the States, CSX3127 not only was shipped by air, but delivered to Shelby in bare aluminum,

unpainted. Shelby American completed 3127 on September 9, 1965, then used it as a demonstrator and public relations car including on the famed Cobra Caravan tour. For exposure, CSX 3127 was lent to astronaut Scott Carpenter and others until it was first sold in May 1967. In 1986, it was a gift to Sylvester Stallone upon completion of the movie *Cobra*. ■



Photo: courtesy Russo and Steele

West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame honors Kevin Harvick for Outstanding Personal Achievement

ARIZONA BILTMORE EVENT RAISES FUNDS FOR HALL OF FAME AND CHARITIES

PHOTOS BY RANDALL BOHL



ESPN's Jamie Little, Ken Clapp of the West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame, and NASCAR driver Kevin Harvick

Phoenix International Raceway presented their first annual "Night to Remember" on November 10 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa in Phoenix, where the West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame honored NASCAR Cup Series driver Kevin Harvick for "Outstanding Personal Achievement" as part of a charitable fundraiser presented by PIR leading up to the Kobalt Tools 500 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race weekend. Event attendees spent an evening with honored NASCAR guests while enjoying food and beverage and an exclusive charity auction. The event, hosted by ESPN pit reporter Jamie Little, raised funds for the non-profit West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame and other designated charities.

Both Harvick, a Bakersfield, California native, and Little—originally from Las Vegas—have deep ties to racing in the West. Their support of the Phoenix event was a perfect fit as the Hall of Fame looks to grow its presence not only throughout the West, but throughout NASCAR.

"We're extremely pleased to present Kevin with an Outstanding Personal Achievement honor," said Ken Clapp, board chair for the West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame, "and we look forward to the day when he will be eligible to receive nomination for induction into the West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame."

WEST COAST STOCK CAR HALL OF FAME

The West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame, based in Burbank, California, was conceived in 2001 as a means of recognizing significant contributors and contributions to the sport of stock car racing. The mission of the West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame is to preserve history and heritage of the important role West Coast stock car competitors have played in the sport's development and continuation, and to recognize, through annual enshrinement, outstanding individuals and groups within the sport—such as designers, engineers, mechanics, drivers, race track owners, promoters, publicists and members of the motorsports media.

NEXT AT PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY

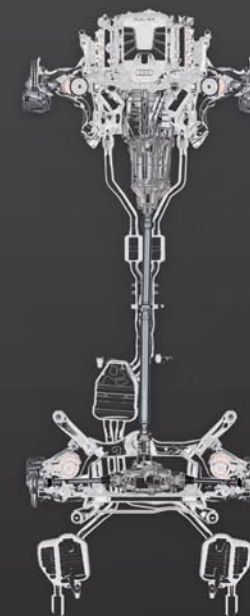
Mark your calendars for the SUBWAY Fresh Fit 500™ NASCAR weekend, March 2-4, 2012. Events include the NASCAR K&N Pro Series West Race, NASCAR Nationwide Series Race, and SUBWAY Fresh Fit 500™ NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Race.

Schedules, information and tickets are available at online at PhoenixRaceway.com or by calling 1-866-408-RACE (7223).



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ALL-NEW LEXUS GS HITS LIKE a TORNADO ON THE TRACK IN LAS VEGAS

BY JOE SAGE



As the Lexus GS hits its 21-year mark, it launches its fourth generation. Luxury is still a given, as is a level of performance. The fundamentals remain, but are all revisited, reengineered, revised, upgraded and up-powered. The revisions, though, have Lexus excited enough that they chose the challenging asphalt of Las Vegas Motor Speedway for the introduction. Good plan.

THE LEXUS GS LINEUP

The GS body style has always been distinct from others in the Lexus lineup, with its extended greenhouse and foreshortened rear decklid. The first way to spot the new GS is its new "spindle" grille, not quite as radical as the LF-Gh concept that presaged it—just a year ago—but close. The main difference is a crossbar that maintains a tamer upper/lower intake treatment—for now, but

likely to evolve. Inlets on the outer corners serve as cooling ducts, while high-tech projector-beam headlights include LED daytime running lamps in an "L" shape.

The 2013 Lexus GS lineup comprises three models: the GS 350 (standard or luxury, with or without all-wheel drive), the GS 350 F SPORT (sold as a package for the GS 350)—all due in February—and the GS 450h, a hybrid due to hit showrooms in May. The two GS 350 models can be thought of as three—with both standard and Luxury models plus the F SPORT—or, in a way, as one—with both Luxury and F SPORT as options, which is how they are ordered. The base model includes 17-inch wheels, 10-way power driver's seat and backup camera. The Luxury Package moves to 18-inch wheels and 18-way seats, plus adds 3-zone climate control, adaptive front lighting, adaptive variable suspension and interior finish upgrades (and a Premium Package adds a few

more). The F SPORT package, with its own look and badging—rear lip spoiler, sport interior, sport bumpers and valance, mesh grille—also offers all-wheel drive, ups the wheels to 19-inch (staggered width for RWD or single-width for AWD), has a 16-way power sport driver seat with side bolsters plus thigh and lumbar support, and adds a tuned adaptive variable suspension, larger front brakes with high-friction pads, and—RWD-only—variable gear ratio steering. Notable options include a heads-up display, night vision system and Lexus Dynamic Handling (LDH) System with Dynamic Rear Steering (DRS). And the tire pressure monitoring system shows info for each tire separately, a welcome breakthrough.

The GS 350 gets the numeric half of its name from a 3.5-liter 24-valve V6 generating 306 hp and 277 lb-ft of torque, fed by direct and port injection and Lexus ETCS-i (Electronic Throttle Control System with intelligence) and

At right, top and bottom, the full lineup of Lexus GS models for 2013 prepares to enter Las Vegas Motor Speedway's infield track or to depart for various highway or other local drive routes. Weather upon our arrival the night before was not the most typical palm-tree paradise-type: very heavy rain gave fair warning that a storm was brewin' for tomorrow.

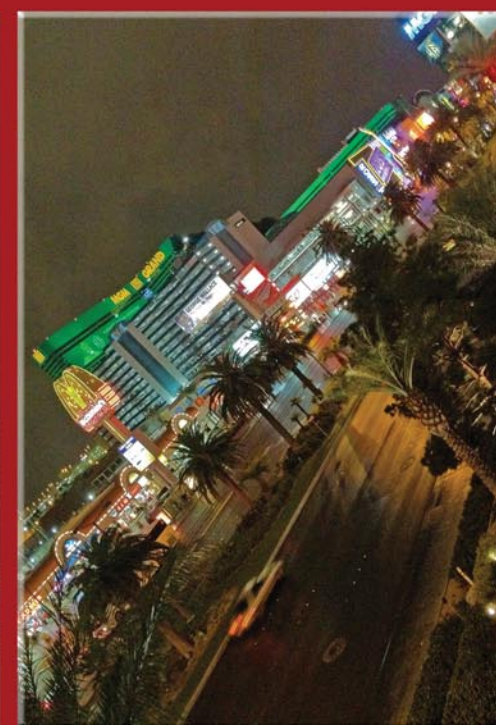
requiring premium fuel. A 6-speed sequential-shift transmission with paddles has options of Normal, ECO, Sport (plus S+ on some models) and Snow modes. The GS 350 weighs in at 3795 pounds, or 3980 with AWD.

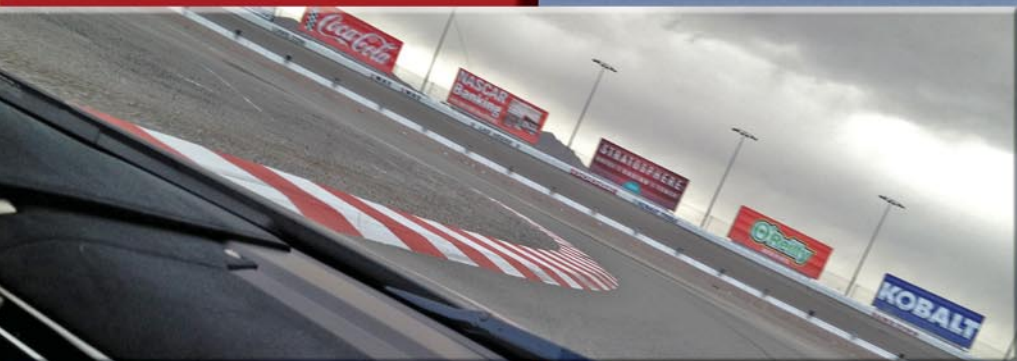
The GS 450h hybrid, despite the "450," has the same 3.5L V6, but adds two electric motors: a 180-hp primary generator for starting and to control engine speed, and a 200-hp motor to drive the rear wheels and gather regenerative braking energy. A bundle of 240 sealed NiMH batteries brings GS 450h weight to 4109 pounds.

The new GS, though completely reworked, is the same length as its predecessor. And yet rear seat legroom is increased, as is trunk volume, due to clever repackaging throughout the layout, such as lower rear springs. The trunk is large, even on the 450h hybrid, where an improved stacked battery significantly increases luggage volume.

Here are the quick cues to telling which GS is which: The rear bumper of the GS 350 has L-shaped LED taillights, a distinctive integrated exhaust diffuser, and centered aero fins for underbody airflow.

KEEP RIGHT >>





The rains on our arrival night in Las Vegas were a precursor to powerful Santa Ana winds that blasted through Utah, Nevada and Southern California. Semi trucks were blown on their sides on Interstate highways by winds as high as 98 mph. The morning started out wet, and overnight winds had blown all the course cones away, but the pavement mostly dried out for our track driving time.

At bottom, the rare and powerful new Lexus LFA supercar joins us for some track hot laps. At a price of \$375,000, there are so far only a handful in the US. We took laps with a designated driver.

The GS 350 with F SPORT package includes its own front bumper and rear lower valence, rear lip spoiler and F SPORT mesh grille inserts.

The GS 450h hybrid has concealed tailpipes (if not zero emissions, then at least zero visible tailpipe), and blue badging Lexus uses across its hybrid range. An available three-lamp design combines high- and low-beam LED lamps and turn signals in a single row.

Exterior paint on the GS uses a new advanced coating process with multiple layers of paint and baking—with the Liquid Platinum of the GS its first application. Its pronounced highlights and shadows emphasize folds and details of the car's new sheetmetal.

NO GOING BACK

Brian Smith, vice president of Lexus marketing, had November's sales figures in hand on December 1: up 12 percent month-over-month—the best since Japan's earthquake and tsunami struck earlier in 2011—and the first year-over-year increase of the year, great news in a year that had lost 50,000 units of production.

Smith had evidence that the market is also cautiously recovering, with the luxury market up 3.5 percent year-over-year, and the mid-luxe market (domain of the Lexus GS) cutting its losses to 3 percent. Lexus has targets an ambitious segment share increase of 12-13 percent with the 2013 GS. They hope to obtain fully 50 percent of these buyers from other brands, such as the Mercedes-Benz E-Class, BMW 5 Series and Audi A6.

Their confidence comes from a "One Team" concept, in which all global markets are addressed by the same car—not only accommodating style and taste, but with heavy testing on the tough roads of Russia, China and South America. Though those roads were rough, Lexus aims to deliver luxurious comfort, but with a "sharp and emotional" driving experience. On paper, that's a winning combo. The new GS launches in February, establishing the direction of the whole Lexus brand to come, and from there, says Smith, "there is no going back."

HITTING THE PAVEMENT

The GS 350 hits 0-to-60 in 5.7 seconds (or 6.0 with AWD) with a top speed of 142 mph (131 with AWD). The GS 450h hybrid beats the 350 off the line, at 5.6 for 0-to-60, and ties the all-wheel-driver at 131 mph top.

You might wonder why a car with acceleration numbers in the upper fives would be introduced at a race-track. It's more about personality than land speed records: the new GS looks, sounds and hugs more than the sum of its stats. That sound comes from a true dual exhaust, plus an "intake sound creator" on that side of the manifold, for a nice growl on acceleration.

The new Lexus GS lineup includes the GS 450h hybrid (top right); the GS 350 F SPORT, shown in the photo of our opening spread and represented below right by its performance interior, instrument panel and engine; and the GS 350 (bottom right).

The AWD option allows traction split from the RWD standard of 30/70 to an even 50/50. The car's computerized Active Variable Suspension (standard with F SPORT and Luxury packages, optional with others) provides driver-selectable shock absorber damping, augmented by speed-sensing electric-assist rack and pinion steering and a Vehicle Dynamics Integrated Management system (traction, ESC and other functions). Shift paddles can be invoked in either M mode or while still in D. They have been remapped to gain about 0.3 seconds in upshifts and 0.2 in downshifts, and the unit provides throttle blipping as first introduced on the performance-oriented Lexus IS-F and now on the exotic LFA. Body and chassis are 14 percent stiffer than on the previous generation GS, due to features such as hot pressed steel B-pillars that reduce flex overall.

We ran an infield course at Las Vegas Motor Speedway in pretty much every model. Winds in the 60-80 mph range may have affected some of our senses, but the GS seemed powerful and comfortable in all iterations. Controls were well-implemented and easy to use, in typically exemplary Toyota/Lexus fashion, even while distracted by quasi-track driving and a raging typhoon.

We tried the ECO mode on a run of 30 or 40 miles up the Interstate and back, which we know saved us fuel but didn't seem to detract any from our experience. (It's worth noting we were told the ECO mode can affect A/C output, clearly a factor in Arizona, though we don't have any more specific information on that yet.)

While providing that pleasantly powerful aforementioned engine soundtrack, the Lexus GS is quiet where it needs to be: while the brand is already known for very favorable NVH (noise-vibration-harshness) numbers, they have applied new insulating materials throughout. A quiet ride and fuel economy are both also helped by not only small fins in the underbody, but also tiny fins engineered into the sides of the lights.

Rear-wheel steering is implemented on the GS 350 F SPORT. This has been available at times over the past few decades on several vehicles, such as the Honda Prelude and some of GM's full-size pickups. The consensus at our event was that it does seem to have a noticeably favorable impact on handling, but the mystery remains that if it's such an interesting—and you might think obvious—feature, you can only wonder why it never really catches on industrywide (cost and complexity both spring to mind), or in this case, lineup-wide.

FINAL DECISIONS

Fuel mileage for the GS 350 is 19 MPG city, 28 highway and 23 combined (19/26/21 for the AWD model), while the hybrid is 29 MPG city, 34 highway and 31 combined.

Base price for the GS 350 is \$46,900. Optioned as a GS 350 F SPORT, the base price is \$52,590. Prices for the GS 350 Luxury Package and for the GS 450h hybrid had not been released by press time. Variables among models are simultaneously subtle, dramatic and largely about budget and taste. There is not a bad choice among them. ■



Courtney Force focuses students behind the wheel

Photos by Randall Bohl

FORD'S AWARD WINNING TEEN SAFE DRIVING
Driving Skills
FOR LIFE
skillsforlife.com



Established in 2003 by the Ford Motor Company Fund, the Governors Highway Safety Association and a panel of safety experts, Ford Driving Skills for Life teaches newly-licensed teens the necessary skills for safe driving.

"We've had the opportunity to host several Driving Skills for Life programs in both Phoenix and Tucson over the years, and we always get a great response from local teens and their parents," said Jim Graham, manager of the Ford Driving Skills for Life program. But, he added, "this is the first time we are bringing the program directly to high schools in the state."

Ford program expands to Arizona

The vast majority of high schools in Arizona no longer offer driver's education programs. Largely due to budget cuts, they have now become nearly obsolete in our state. In response to this, Ford brought its award-winning national teen driver safety program, Driving Skills for Life, to Coronado High School in Scottsdale and Perry High School in Gilbert in November, as part of a nationwide 32-school tour Ford launched earlier in the year.

In response to growing awareness about teen fatalities and driver distraction, the Ford Driving Skills for Life program announced a \$1 million expansion for 2011 and launched a 30-city national tour. As the national tour proved its effectiveness, Arizona dates were added to the schedule with the support of funding from Ford's Operation Goodwill Phoenix program.

We visited the program at Coronado, where students engaged in hands-on driving courses set up in



the school's parking lot. Students started at the crack of dawn (6:50am at Coronado), participating in hands-on, behind-the-wheel modules designed to equip each student with the fundamental skills necessary for safe driving.

Courtney Force makes the point

A morning assembly addressed the entire student body on the issues of safe driving, after which hands-on driving sessions continued throughout the day. Grabbing students' attention and providing positive focus was NHRA drag racing driver Courtney Force, who—besides currently attending Cal State Fullerton with a major in communications—and in addition to having been a high school cheerleader in the not-so-distant past—is a Top Alcohol drag racer for John Force Racing.

Courtney is the youngest daughter of 15-time NHRA Funny Car national champion John Force. Courtney earned her NHRA competition license in 2005. She started her racing career in Super Comp before earning her Alcohol Fuel license and moving to Top Alcohol dragsters (TA/D), along with her sister Brittany, in 2008. She reached the final round twice in 2009, at Seattle and Pomona. Courtney Force recorded a career best reaction time to date of .006 in the final event of 2009 at Pomona and went on to win her first national event in 2009, in the Top Alcohol Dragster category at the 22nd annual NHRA Northwest Nationals in Seattle. Force has raced her sister Brittany on three occasions, beating her every time.

A respite from cafeteria food came during lunch with community partners like Red Means Stop Traffic Safety Alliance, local police and fire departments.

A course that should not be optional

The key basis for the program is the grimest: vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers. Ford Driving Skills for Life teaches students skills in four specific areas: Hazard Recognition (including avoidance of distractions), Vehicle Handling, Space Management and Speed Management. The program aims to teach students the crucial skills they need to be better, safer drivers. One highlight was a Ford Mustang equipped with skid plates, which gives a highly controlled and highly accurate environment for students (or anyone) to learn how to properly correct their steering in the event they lose control. Students also ran the cones in the new Ford Focus and Ford Fiesta.

"Student driver safety is always a concern, since vehicle crashes kill more teens than anything else in our country," said Perry High principal Dan Serrano.

"The hands-on modules conducted by Ford's professional drivers will grab our students' attention and provide them with crucial driving skills that will help prepare them for potentially dangerous road situations," added John Biera, principal at Coronado High School.

"Arizona represents a small percent of all licensed drivers, but they cause more than four times as many crashes as the average," says Alberto Gutier, director of the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety. "Through partnerships like the Driving Skills for Life program, we can work to reduce the negative statistics associated with teen drivers." ■



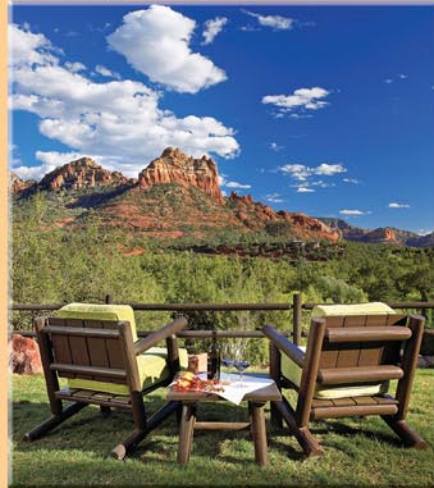
El Portal Sedona



Adobe Grand Villas



L'Auberge de Sedona



Three Sedona properties win awards as tops in US

2011 READER CHOICE AWARDS BY CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER

Final winners were picked through more than 8 million votes cast in *Condé Nast's* 2011 annual Readers' Choice Awards survey, reflecting the combined opinions of 28,876 *Condé Nast Traveler* readers rating the cities, islands and hotels they visited in the past year, as well as airlines and cruise ships they traveled with. Sedona came home with two out of 49 total Small Hotel awards and one in the highly competitive Top 200 overall.

EL PORTAL SEDONA – El Portal Sedona Hotel—billed as Sedona's luxury hacienda—is located in the heart of Sedona, near Tlaquepaque Village, a private retreat within walking distance of Oak Creek, that is also pet-friendly. www.elportalsedona.com

ADOBE GRAND VILLAS – The Adobe Grand Villas of Sedona feature fireplaces in living rooms and bathrooms, waterfall showers and oversize whirlpool tubs. The Villas like to point out that their bathrooms are larger than most hotel rooms. Guests check in to the aroma of fresh-baked bread from their own breadmaker. Decor ranges from rustic mountain furnishings to Tuscan marble. www.adobegrandvillas.com

L'AUBERGE DE SEDONA – L'Auberge has a premier site in Sedona's Red Rock Country, immediately on the banks of Oak Creek. Among the fine culinary options is their creekside patio under a shady canopy of sycamore trees. Private outdoor showers can rejuvenate you under the starry night sky or creekside in the morning. A highly attentive staff assures a maximized hotel experience. www.lauberge.com

SEDONA ATTRACTIONS

Bearizona Wildlife Park, with Zoological Association of America (ZAA) accreditation, lets visitors drive into the wilderness and see herd and pack life from the safety and comfort of a private vehicle. www.bearizona.com.

National Register of Historic Places landmarks in Sedona include The Chapel of the Holy Cross, the Hummingbird House, Jordan Historical Park and the Sedona Ranger Station.

UPCOMING SEDONA EVENTS

- Sedona Marathon.....February 4
 - Sedona International Film Festival.....February 20-27
 - Sedona Bridal Fair.....February 18
 - St. Patrick's Day Parade, Festival, Fun Run.....March 5
 - Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival.....Apr 22-May 1
 - Dine in Sedona Restaurant Fest.....16 days in June
 - Red Rocks Music Festival.....a week in August
 - Sedona Hummingbird Festival.....August
- For information, visit www.sedonachamber.com. ■

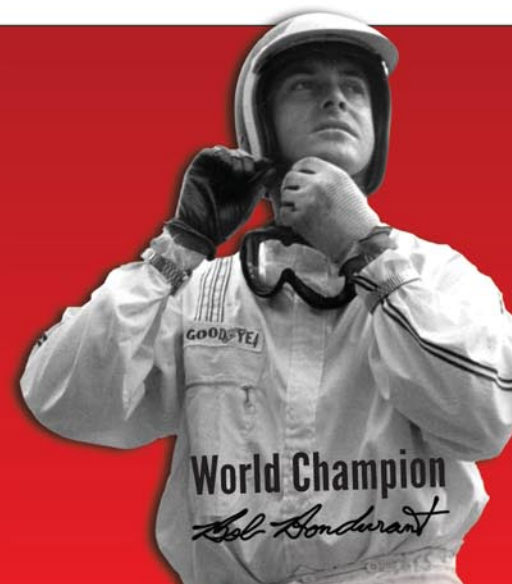
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Lightning Round

Fate delivers us our fourth Jeep® Grand Cherokee within a year—and is also 4-for-4 on weather – Joe Sage

The Jeep Grand Cherokee was all new for 2011—completely and truly all new, and claimed by Chrysler to be their “best ever.” Three trips we made to the Pacific Northwest last spring put us behind the wheel of three 2011 Grand Cherokee V6 Laredos: red, black and white (all in Washington, but with Michigan, Oregon and Washington plates, respectively). The first one was provided to us by Jeep, as we had sought its combination of style, capacity and function to carry a full load of VIPs at times, while tackling mud, rain, sleet and high water at others. It delivered so well that we rented

the other two for ourselves on subsequent trips. As we noted in our May/June 2011 issue, all three looked good wet—a lucky thing, in that part of the country.

In late 2011, we drove a new 2012 Grand Cherokee for a week, back home in Arizona: silver (with Michigan plates), also a V6 but in Limited 4x4 trim. The rain seemed to have followed us back to the desert, along with the brand—all the more reason this fourth drive seemed like a lightning round. In May/June, we noted that we liked the new Jeep Grand Cherokee a lot and would “do it all again.” Let’s compare notes.

The Grand Cherokee has two engine options—the new-last-year 3.6-liter Pentastar V6, or (on most models) a 5.7-liter V8. (V6 highway fuel economy is up one point from last year, now 16/23 MPG city/highway.) There

are three four-wheel-drive setups: Quadra-Trac I (one-speed transfer case), Quadra-Trac II (two-speed transfer case), and Quadra-Drive II (fully-automatic full-time system with locks for both front and rear axles).

Our 2012 Grand Cherokee makes us four-for-four for the V6. It was equipped with Quadra-Trac II plus optional Selec-Terrain adjustable suspension and traction.

Base prices run from the Laredo at \$27,490 to the Overland Summit at \$46,595, to the SRT8 at \$60,960. Our Limited 4X4 has a base price of \$39,295. Extensive standard features were rounded out by a media center upgrade (\$465) and rear entertainment package (\$1495). With \$825 destination charge, this one was out the door for \$42,080. (The Overland and Overland Summit add bigger wheels, more leather and a few other features; the SRT8 of course adds a 470-hp 6.4-liter HEMI® V8.)

Last spring, we had noted that “despite all its electronic advances, we appreciated very straightforward controls.” This winter’s notes were simi-

lar: controls are intuitive and the touchscreen works well, although we would definitely allocate the climate controls differently (the most prominent knob is only for the fan when on manual). We noted the audio as well above average and easy to calibrate. The backup camera’s image quality was very good, though when you’re ready to fire it up and go, you have to wait for the Jeep splash screen, then the legal disclaimer, before you get the image, making it too tempting to give up and be in motion by then. We’d find more safety in a faster camera than in the safety disclaimer.

We had noted some oddities with shifting in the hills of Tacoma last spring, but here on the flatter streets of the Valley, we found it “phenomenally smooth, with easy, strong power for entering traffic.”

Jeep marketing chief Chris Ellis had told us this vehicle would make “zero compromise, on- or off-road.” We’ve not yet taken one on the Rubicon Trail, but we know full well they could not produce this if it couldn’t dominate that. Our off-road times have been limited in both locales. Around town—where so many buyers’ real world usage occurs—we were repeatedly impressed by the Grand Cherokee’s maneuverability. Its turning circle is 37.1 feet, about the same as a Honda Accord and within spitting distance of a MINI. Despite its size, we could easily do a 135-degree turn and zip right into a parking spot on the other side of a bidirectional herringbone. No wonder it can conquer the Rubicon.

Aerodynamics are improved, engines are more efficient, creature comforts are increased, but Jeep never loses track of its prime directive. When a vehicle that can tackle terrain like a truck—or, well, like a Jeep—can also be this comfortable and nimble as a daily driver, its mission is complete. ■



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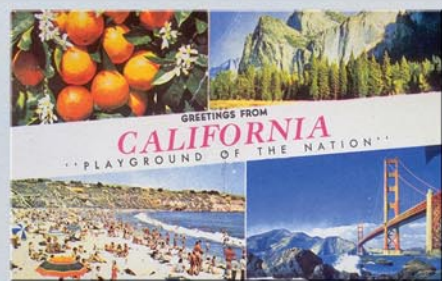
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ARIZONA DRIVERS BRING THE HEAT TO CORONADO

Story by Tim Sharp
Photos by Kristin Sharp



Racing on the airport course at Coronado transports us back to the day when, yes, we knew the world was round, but the road race circuits were still flat.

Tom Benjamin of Boulder wows the crowd up close and personal in his #61 1964 Cobra; Edie Arrowsmith of Scottsdale passes the base's oil depot in her #42 1970 Porsche 914/6 GT; Jonathan Ornstein of Phoenix strapped into his #73 1969 Datsun 510; Lon Walters of Sedona banks into a corner in his #18 1964 Elva Courier; and Nick Colonna of Palos Verdes Estates, in his #69 1964 Cobra, feels the heat from Jeff Kline of La Jolla, in his #4 1964 Ginetta G4.

On the last weekend of September, temperatures in Phoenix were above the century mark. Temperatures in San Diego were in the cool seventies. This might be reason enough to spend the weekend in Coronado and escape the desert heat. However, for a few Arizonans it was more about bringing the heat than escaping it.

A dozen race drivers from Arizona traveled to the Coronado Speed Festival to compete against some of America's finest vintage racers. The Arizonans' race cars ranged from modest machines like Johnathan Ornstein's 1969 Datsun 510 to Brent Berge's exotic 1978 Lola T-333 sports racer. However, each Arizona driver had a common goal: to finish on the podium.

An airport race track changes everything

Unless you attended sports car races in the 1950s or '60s, you may have never seen a sports car race run on an airport course. The Coronado race circuit at the North Island Airbase is a bona fide old school sports car track. It mirrors the old airfield race courses of Santa Barbara, Palm Springs and Hourglass Field.

What makes the Coronado Speed Festival race special is that it features genuine vintage machines, racing on a genuine vintage airport road racing circuit. Today, most vintage races are run on modern race tracks which favor power over handling.

So forget what you think you know about sports car races: an airport race track changes everything. For starters, at an airport course you can see every inch of the race track from the grandstands. There are no hills, trees or valleys to block your view of the racing action. Therefore, races on an airport course are quite easy to follow and very exciting to watch.

On an airport course, there is also no banking to help slow the heavier cars in the corners or to hold them onto the race track. Since massive V8 power can only be applied on the straightaways, it is of less worth on short airport tracks. Thus, a petite Porsche can pass a powerful Corvette in a braking zone and go on to win the race.

Essentially, airport road courses are "The Great Equalizers." They allow light, small-displacement race cars to compete on a level playing field with heavy, big-bore machines. Airport race courses place a premium on driving skill, braking and passing technique. Airport circuits also force drivers to manage their brakes and tires wisely. Race drivers who do this will usually finish on the podium.

The best David vs. Goliath matchup of the weekend pitted a 1953 Porsche/Cooper with 1750cc displacement against big V8 Corvettes, Kurtis and Devins. When

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Where the roads are dry and the cars are slick.



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er Robert Lavinia managed to finish mid-pack on Sunday with his 1994 T-Bird in this highly competitive race.

Tucson's Gary Roberts raced his 1971 Hawke in the toughest event of the weekend: **1962-1972 Sports Racing and Formula Cars Under 2000cc.** Gary managed to finish mid-pack in a race filled with former Indy and SCCA professional drivers Dennis Firestone, Dave Vegher and Skip Streets. Vegher took the win.

Phillip Reysn drove his second mount, a 1974 Chevron, to a respectable tenth place in the **1969-1980 Sports Racing and Formula Car Race.** Tempe's Frank Eckert finished immediately behind him in his 1980 March Super Vee. Dan Marvin, a talented ex-professional driver from Northern California, won the event in a 1976 March 76B.

What we like about the Coronado Speed Festival

We enjoy traveling to Monterey and Sonoma to see the vintage races at the Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and Infineon Raceway tracks. Both have remarkable road race circuits with banked turns and silky smooth surfaces. Both have beautiful rolling hills and superb track amenities. However, the Coronado vintage venue is a refreshing change from the modern road racing circuits. Coronado is a nostalgic trip down memory lane.

Coronado transports us back to the day when temporary grandstands were constructed on an airfield and hay bales were laid about to mark the boundaries of the track. Yes, we knew the world was round, but the road race circuits were still flat.

Coronado teaches us that bigger is not always better and that power does not always win over precision. It reminds us that there was a day when innovative men like Ken Miles and Pete Lovely believed they could build lightweight "Specials" which could beat the best Italian sports cars that money could buy. They built them. They beat them.

Coronado also reminds us that there was a time when there was no substitute for driving talent. There were no antilock brakes, no traction control or no ground effects systems to help race drivers like Bob Bondurant, Phil Hill, Ken Miles and Dan Gurney when they raced on airport race tracks. It was all about race driving skill and car control.

Coronado also takes us back to the day when the American public could go onto a US Naval Air Station to watch a road race. It is remarkable, really, that Fleet Week San Diego has made this possible. Moreover, if you have not been onto a military base lately, you will not believe how courteous and helpful our armed forces are. Great guys.

Do you want to see fifty years of vintage Navy aircraft on display? It is at the Coronado vintage races! Do you want to go onto the USS Midway aircraft carrier? You can do this also. You really must take advantage of Fleet Week San Diego on the last weekend of September. Find details at www.fleetweeksandiego.org, then mark your calendar.

If you miss the Coronado Speed Festival, you will miss everything that sports car racing was all about back in the 1950s and 1960s. Talented drivers, driving real vintage race cars on a real vintage race track. It just does not get any better than this. ■



Tom Claridge of Los Gatos in his #88 1962 Ginetta G4R has C Patrick Costin of Reno closing in, in his #901 1966 Porsche 911; Terry Miller of Simi Valley flat out in his #60 1963 Corvette; Paul Ryan of Coronado in his #7 1962 Lotus Super 7.



SAN DIEGO FLEET WEEK FOUNDATION

FLEET WEEK SAN DIEGO each September honors and celebrates our Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen through events that entertain the public and alliances that thank and support these heroes. Fleet Week San Diego was created by community and business leaders as a means for San Diego to express its support in a way that would share their vision for recognition of the contributions made by the naval services to the many communities of the greater San Diego region. In 1997, after extensive planning and team building, Fleet Week San Diego was born. Nurtured by the Chamber of Commerce, the annual series of events grew quickly and by 2001 was incorporated as The San Diego Fleet Week Foundation, a non-profit California Public Benefit Corporation. The Foundation donates proceeds in excess of operating expenses from Fleet Week San Diego to charities that provide critical support to military families. ■



the dust settled, it was Cameron Healey's little Porsche/Cooper in first, followed by Thor Johnson's 1959 Lotus 17 and John Goodman's 1958 Devin SS. Phoenix's Bob Hardison finished a well deserved sixth in his 1958 Echidna and Mesa's Terry Larson finished tenth in his recently acquired 1953 Jaguar XK120.

The Desert Dozen at the Coronado Speed Festival

Arizona's "Desert Dozen" represented the Grand Canyon State quite admirably at the Coronado vintage races. While they were not victorious, many were in serious contention for the win at Coronado.

In the **Historic Trans-Am Race**, Tucson's Jim Click finished fourth in his 1969 Ford Mustang, and Drew Alcazar, of Russo and Steele Auction fame, finished thirteenth in his 1969 Boss Ford Mustang.

Sedona's Lon Walters finished fourth in the **1953-1966 Under 2000cc Race** with his 1964 Elva Courier, and Ed Roll was twentieth in his little 1964 Fiat Abarth.

Chandler's Phillip Reysn finished seventh in the **FIA Manufacturer Championship Race** with his 1971 Lola T-212, and Mesa's Brent Berge finished just behind him in his 1978 Lola T-333. Jim Click was eleventh in his 1966 Ford GT40.

Phoenician Jonathan Ornstein finished tenth overall in the **1959-1966 Production Car Race.** Ornstein's 1969 Datsun 510 was edged out by Terry Forland's 1980 BMW 2002 sedan. Scottsdale's John Breslow finished mid-pack in his 1965 Alfa Romeo GTA. Ornstein was also runner-up in the **Sedan Group.**

While Jim Click's 1964 Cobra clocked the second fastest time in the **1962-1966 Production Cars over 2500cc Race**, he experienced mechanical problems and did not finish the race. Scottsdale's Edie Arrowsmith also clocked one of the fastest times in qualifying with her 1970 Porsche 914/6 GT. However, Edie also had a DNF. Bob Paris, also of Scottsdale, did manage to finish mid-pack in his 1965 Mustang.

The Valley's Tommy Thompson also logged one of the fastest qualifying times on Saturday in his 1994 Ford T-Bird **NASCAR Historic Class** machine. However, Tommy's car did not make the race on Sunday. Paradise Valley driv-

balance

PORSCHE'S MID-ENGINE LINEUP CONTINUES TO DEFINE ITS TURF

BY JOE SAGE



Generation after generation and decade after decade, to our taste, there are few things in the automotive world as pleasing to the eye as a Porsche 911 coupe. Nonetheless, some three-quarters of 911 sales in the US are of the cabriolet. In the late 1990s, the 911 was joined by the Porsche Boxster, with exceptional mid-engine handling and balance, but less power. To us the choice seemed easy: if you want a coupe, the 911 is a beauty; and if you want an open roadster, take the neutral poise of the mid-engined Boxster. Either one had sufficient power to enjoy its type of drive.

What complicated things was the introduction in 2006 of the Porsche Cayman, a new coupe that shared its layout with the Boxster. Two coupes, two open cars. Two rear-engined and two mid-engined cars. Suddenly, our original logic was up against more variables.

The 911, Boxster and Cayman share their showroom with front-engined SUVs. The Cayman and Boxster share a heritage of mid-engined Porsches from the 550 Spyder of the 1950s, to the 904 of the '60s, the VW-derived 914 of the '70s, the Carrera GT supercar and next the anticipated \$850,000-or-so 918 (which has already hit the track and show circuits as the 918 RSR hybrid racer), as well as an expected smaller version of the Boxster.

Since the rear-engined coupe and cabriolet cars both carry the 911 name, while the current mid-engined ones—Boxster and Cayman—carry completely different names, you could say mid-engine models outnumber the 911 in the lineup. Had they done a better job of foreseeing the coupe, that naming fluke might have never happened. With "Boxster" standing for a combination of the boxer engine and roadster configuration, the non-roadster car presented a branding challenge. It was christened "Cayman"—more similar to the unrelated Cayenne, arguably, than to the Boxster. But that's that, well established by now, though still vulnerable to a slip of the tongue.

CAYMAN, CAYMAN S

Though it took about three years for the Boxster S to join the base Boxster in the lineup, the Cayman S was released first, before the regular Cayman a little over a year later. The second-generation Cayman and Cayman S, introduced in 2009, have 2.9-liter and 3.4-liter flat sixes, putting out 265 and 320 horsepower, respectively (up 20 and 25, respectively, from the first generation).

CAYMAN R

The downside to introducing the S first is perhaps that the lineup dropped a tad in thrill factor next (a special edition or two notwithstanding). Time to amp it back up.

The Porsche Cayman R was introduced in late 2010 at the LA Auto Show and hit the showrooms during 2011 as a 2012 model. As the Cayman and Cayman S are hardtop cousins to the Boxster and Boxster S, the Cayman R is kin to the lightweight Boxster Spyder. It's tempting to think of the Boxster Spyer and the Cayman R as performance-tuned strippers, but removing weight is just part of the formula. Highly tuned sports suspension is added, along with more horsepower, and rather than going the plain-jane route, there are many design details added, including a hard-to-miss rear deck spoiler.

Glimming down

The primary goal in development of the Cayman R was weight reduction, which in and of itself would increase performance, agility and driving dynamics. When you order your Cayman R, you're paying for lightweight materials in many components, but you're saving some from the omission of various normally standard equipment. First to go were the A/C and the sound system. The absence of A/C would seriously limit use of any car

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SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE: Horizontally opposed 6-cyl 3.4L engine, 24-valve DOHC VarioCam Plus variable valve timing/lift, 2-stage resonance induction, hi-po manifolds, cylinder-specific anti-knock control.

Horsepower.....330 hp
Torque.....273 lb-ft

TRANSMISSION6-speed manual

SUSPENSION & TECH: McPherson strut with stabilizer bars front and rear, PSM (Porsche Stability Management), ABS, EDTC (Engine Drag Torque Control), ABD (Automatic Brake Differential), ASR (Anti Slip Regulation).

WHEELS-TIRES

Front wheels.....8.5Jx19 alloy
Front tires235/35ZR19
Rear wheels.....10Jx19 alloy
Rear tires265/35ZR19
Tire pressure monitoring system

BRAKES: Vented rotors with 4 piston calipers, 12.5" front, 11.8" rear.

MPG/EMISSIONS:

Fuel mileage city (EPA est)...19MPG
Fuel mileage hwy (EPA est)...27MPG
LEV II (Low Emission Vehicle)

Stainless steel exhaust system

SAFETY: Body shell hot dip galvanized both sides, high strength steel and Boron steel safety structures, aluminum front trunk lid. POSIP (Porsche Side Impact Protection) driver and front passenger airbags, thorax airbags in seats, head airbags in doors, front belt pre-tensioners and force limiters.

COMFORT & CONVENIENCE: 3-spoke height/telescope wheel, power rack and pinion variable steering, Porsche side stripes, fixed rear spoiler w contrasting color, halogen headlights w home feature, alarm, HomeLink®, cruise, multifunction trip computer, 2 power sockets.

BASE PRICE\$66,300

OPTIONS:

Peridot Metallic paint, black std leather, sports seats, fixed rear spoiler, rain sensor, Bluetooth®, PCM 3, floor mats:

.....\$ 0
Auto dim mirrors.....690
PCM w navigation3455
Bi-xenon w cornering lights1560
Sound Package Plus w storage700
Automatic A/C1760
Sport Chrono Package Plus960
XM® Satellite receiver.....750
Universal audio interface345

EXCLUSIVE OPTIONS:

Wheels painted black\$1815

DESTINATION CHARGE950

TOTAL PRICE.....\$79,285



PERFORMANCE / PRICE

	CAYMAN R	CAYMAN S	CAYMAN
Engine (liters)	2.9	3.4	3.4
DFI	—	DFI	DFI
Horsepower	265	320	330
Torque (lb-ft)	221	273	273
0-to-60	manual 5.5	4.9	4.7
	PDK 5.2	4.8	4.4
Top mph	manual 165	172	175
	PDK 163	171	174
Weight (lb)	manual 2932	2976	2849
	PDK: add approx 55 pounds		
	\$51,900		
	PDK: \$55,320		
	\$62,100		
	PDK: \$65,520		
	\$66,300		
	PDK: \$69,960		



We checked the consumer build-your-own site to see what the options are on spoiler color. No dice. Even if you get a black car, then the wing (and side decals) will become silver. Not bad, but still too showy for a car whose essence should include a degree of stealth. But that's just us. You may love it. The front spoiler, given the lowered suspension, is a bigger challenge than most when navigating driveways, speedbumps or drainage troughs. We'd hate to scuff up that Peridot paint.

Speaking of the Peridot, despite it being a key promotional color for the car—something Porsche often charges dearly for—it's one of four standard (no-cost) paints. Another half dozen are \$710 upgrades, and a couple of specialized metallics can dazzle for \$3140.

The chart at left compares vitals of weight, power and price. To save you some calculation: the power-to-weight ratio of the Cayman R is 8.58 lb-per-hp for the 6-speed manual version, or 8.8 lb-per-hp for the PDK direct-shift dual-clutch 7-speed clutchless, no-pedal manual with automatic mode.

(Side note: convertibles generally weigh more than hardtops, due to mechanisms and to strengthening and stiffening needed in the body, without a top to hold it all together. The Boxster Spyder, however, actually weighs less than its Cayman R kin—2811 pounds vs 2849 for the coupe. The Spyder of course has no mechanism and barely a top at all, plus the well-developed structure the basic open Boxster already brought to the table.)

With lower top speed, more weight and a higher price for the privilege of PDK, we'd opt for the manual—our preference, anyway, and faster, lighter, cheaper. The PDK may be quicker to 60, but we'd rather spend a couple of tenths of a second shifting our own car.

SETTING SITUATED

Our first move when we received the car was to doublecheck whether that rear spoiler should retract—as it does on a normal Boxster or Cayman. But no. We did make that boy racer comment in our logbook, but we'd have to say that while writing this and looking at the photo at right, well, maybe it has grown on us. Looking at the photo at left, maybe not.

The primary instrument binnacle has no canopy, a treatment we've seen before in such models as the Boxster RS 60 Spyder Special Edition in 2008. It lets the sun shine on the instrument faces, but it's a good look and we like it. As you would expect in a car with weight-bearing luxuries stripped out, it has a fully manual seat. We're not lazy, and we'd probably only set ours once and let nobody else drive it. It takes some work to get it right, but that's a small price to pay for the prime mission.

Strap pulls inside the doors, in red—instead of door handles—are a cool look (unless you think it's sticking its tongue out at you), but they seem likely to not live as long as the rest of the car, and their open slots may let dirt, grime and moisture get inside the door.

The center console is body-colored, as is a narrow strip along the instrument panel, nice no-weight style points (that console treatment is evocative of the inexpensive and funky little Nissan Juke). The console comes up short on storage spots for sunglasses and phones, though a package shelf under the IP mitigates that some.

Though Porsche specifically points out the removal of the sound system to save weight, they then add it back

in: preparation for radio is a no-cost option on our sample, and the sound system was installed (\$700). Speaker grilles incorporated into the door panels have a subtle beehive pattern that's visible on the far door, but hidden at your elbow. Nice. It turns out we've also had an A/C unit added (\$1760). Thus it also turns out you can own this car in the Sonoran Desert and drive it year-round. Ours also adds nav (\$3455). But these add-backs are bringing it closer to Cayman S territory, other than weight-saving wheels (available other ways) and its distinctive spoilers and lowered chassis. As options bring it closer to the less expensive S in weight, the car costs more. You will want to spend some time comparing the S and the R, with and without various options and deletions, before you sign on the line.

WHEEL TIME

We distinctly remember falling in love with the Boxster's mid-engine handling within the first ten feet, back in 1997. We've had many Boxster miles since then and anticipated the same. The suspension and lightweight wheels of the Cayman R, however, are much more highly tuned and bring all the nuance of the surface right through the system and to the wheel. Road feel is generally a good thing, but it seemed surprisingly sensitive even on flat, smooth roads at lower speeds, at least at first. We perceived more feel—and pebble noise—from the rear wheels. Weight distribution is in the 45/55 range, so that may be a factor, but not a huge one.

But most of the time behind the wheel, the logbook shows we had little to say. Hand on the lever,

hand on the wheel, 330 horses in a relatively fly-weight chassis, and we just drove. And drove.

We didn't have the opportunity to take the car on a long road trip, but we could have. The cabin in the lightweight version is fundamentally as comfortable as in the full-luxury S. With each sweeping turn on the open road, or with each foray into the tight spots of town, the Cayman's mid-engine handling shines. And a long trip is actually one place the coupe can beat the roadster: top-down time is always welcome, but when hours turn to days and miles turn to states, at least on the Interstate among the semis, the closed coupe is a winner.

THE BALANCE THING

The concept of balance struck is in several ways with this car. First, there's the balance (or set of tradeoffs) between the 911 and Boxster/Cayman lineups (rear-engine vs mid-engine and open vs closed). Then there's the balancing act within the Cayman lineup itself, deciding whether you want more features or less weight, and within that decision, how exactly to option the car. You might also think about how you balance your luggage needs, as the 911 has just its front trunk, the Boxster has trunks front and rear, and the Cayman has even more volume: the same in the front and a spacious hatchback from the seats to the rear. You can balance your needs, and in the

Cayman you can balance your load. Ultimately, there is the balanced handling afforded by the mid-engine layout.

After all is said and done, we remain in our conundrum. For an open car, we would still ignore the high sales numbers of the 911 Cabriolet and snatch up a Boxster in a heartbeat, for the mid-engine. But for a coupe? Tough call. Fifteen years ago, we would have welcomed a Cayman, for mitigating the wild tail action of the 911, which would thrill some or send the unfamiliar into the ditch. But that's so well tamed now, it's less of a factor. And whereas Porsche originally kept the cost of the Boxster (and by implication, the later Cayman) as far from the 911 as they could, they have clearly moved closer together and can now overlap.

We went into our week thinking the 911 ruled, as a coupe. But by the end, we were at one with the Cayman while driving, plus we realized we kept pulling out the phone to take more snapshots of the car. It comes down to personal preferences on all counts, as well it should. Porsche has, as always, done their homework thoroughly, maintaining positioning and alternatives in an increasingly complex lineup. They also may not mind if we can't decide on just one: they know most of us have two- or three-car garages. After all, that's why they invented the Cayenne. ■



Mickey Thompson's Challenger 2: Chapter 2

BY LARRY EDSALL



Challenger 2.5 scale model

Photo: Larry Edsall

In 1960, Mickey Thompson, a racing pioneer and innovative genius who built cars for Indy, for drag racing, and for off-road competition, set out to become the first American to exceed 400 miles per hour in a piston-driven vehicle.

He built a Bonneville-style streamliner, the Challenger I, and used its quartet of supercharged Pontiac engines to cover a measured mile at 406.6 mph, nearly 100 mph faster than the 22-year-old world record.

Unfortunately, Thompson was denied the record because his car could not complete the second half of the required two-way run on the Utah Salt Flats.

Five years later, that record was broken by the Summers Brothers and their four-engined Goldenrod racer, which completed the necessary two-way run and boosted the wheel-driven record to 409.189 mph.

Undaunted but even more determined,

Thompson built a new car. Officially known as the Ford Autolite Special because of its pair of supercharged Ford engines, Thompson's Challenger 2 was rained out of its bid for a record run in 1968, and the entire effort was put on hold in 1969 when Detroit automakers withdrew their financial support of such motorsports programs.

Thompson went on to other racing endeavors, but early in 1988 he approached his son, Danny, and suggested they revive the quest, with Mickey preparing the car and Danny doing the driving.

"A month later, my father was killed," Danny recalls, tears still filling his eyes these 23 years later, as he announced his plan to update his father's car and to make an attempt late next summer "to finish my dad's dream and to fulfill my dream."

Thompson made his announcement at the recent Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) Show, which annually brings together those who produce and those who buy automotive

aftermarket equipment around the world. Their wares fill all three huge buildings that comprise the Las Vegas Convention Center and overflow into the parking lots outside.

Though a closed-to-the-public trade event, the SEMA Show annually draws around 100,000 people and a couple thousand customized vehicles for one of the largest automotive events in the country.

Remarkably, the official wheel-driven land speed record Mickey Thompson pursued and Danny Thompson seeks has climbed only to 417.020 mph, though cars recently have exceeded 440 on one-way runs at Bonneville.

With financial backing from Mickey Thompson Performance Tires & Wheels and, he hopes, additional sponsors, a 63-year-old but remarkably fit Danny Thompson will equip Challenger 2.5 with a pair of nitro-fueled 500-cubic-inch engines he expects to provide 3000 horsepower to a set of M/T tires that already have been "spun" to 590 mph.

SEMA SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

The SEMA Show is a trade show produced by the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), a nonprofit trade association founded in 1963. Since the first annual SEMA Show in 1967, the event has been the leading venue to connect manufacturers and buyers within the automotive specialty equipment industry. Products featured enhance vehicle styling, function, comfort, convenience and safety. The SEMA Show and the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) vie for position as the largest in Las Vegas annually, by various measures.

SEMA CAR AND TRUCK AWARDS

The SEMA Award honors vehicles that specialty equipment manufacturers vote as best platforms for accessorization and that showcase this year's coolest products, in four categories: Hottest Car, Hottest Sport Compact Car, Hottest Truck and Hottest 4x4-SUV. The award also underscores the cooperative relationship between automakers and SEMA-member companies.

The 2011 SEMA Show had over 2,000 exhibitors, who manufacture thousands of products for every make and model, but this year they were investing heavily in the four winners, meaning consumers can expect to find more options for accessorizing these vehicles.

The winners, with examples (shown at right), are:

HOTTEST CAR: CHEVROLET CAMARO: Chevrolet and Hot Wheels unveiled a life-size Hot Wheels Camaro Concept, inspired by the Custom Camaro Spectraflame 1:64-scale toy from the original 16 Hot Wheels cars released in 1968. A Camaro SS was modified with classic Hot Wheels design cues, including flat-black graphics, red-line wheels and a dazzling metallic-green finish.

HOTTEST SPORT COMPACT CAR: FIAT 500: Road Race Motorsports prepared this Fiat 500 for Zeitronix, with added performance for B-Spec racing, one fearsome little hatchback. The heavily-customized Italian track car has been totally stripped for weight and its engine tweaked for more power, a respectable 133hp. Power enhancements include a Road Race intake system, sport exhaust and tuned engine.

HOTTEST TRUCK: FORD F-SERIES: This super Ford Super Duty monster truck is the product of Odyssey Batteries by EnerSys®, through a new partnership with legendary monster truck innovators BIGFOOT® 4x4 Inc. EnerSys will provide ODYSSEY® batteries for the team's seven touring BIGFOOT monster trucks, in addition to its fleet of transporters and support vehicles. All will sport ODYSSEY® battery logos for the 2011 season.

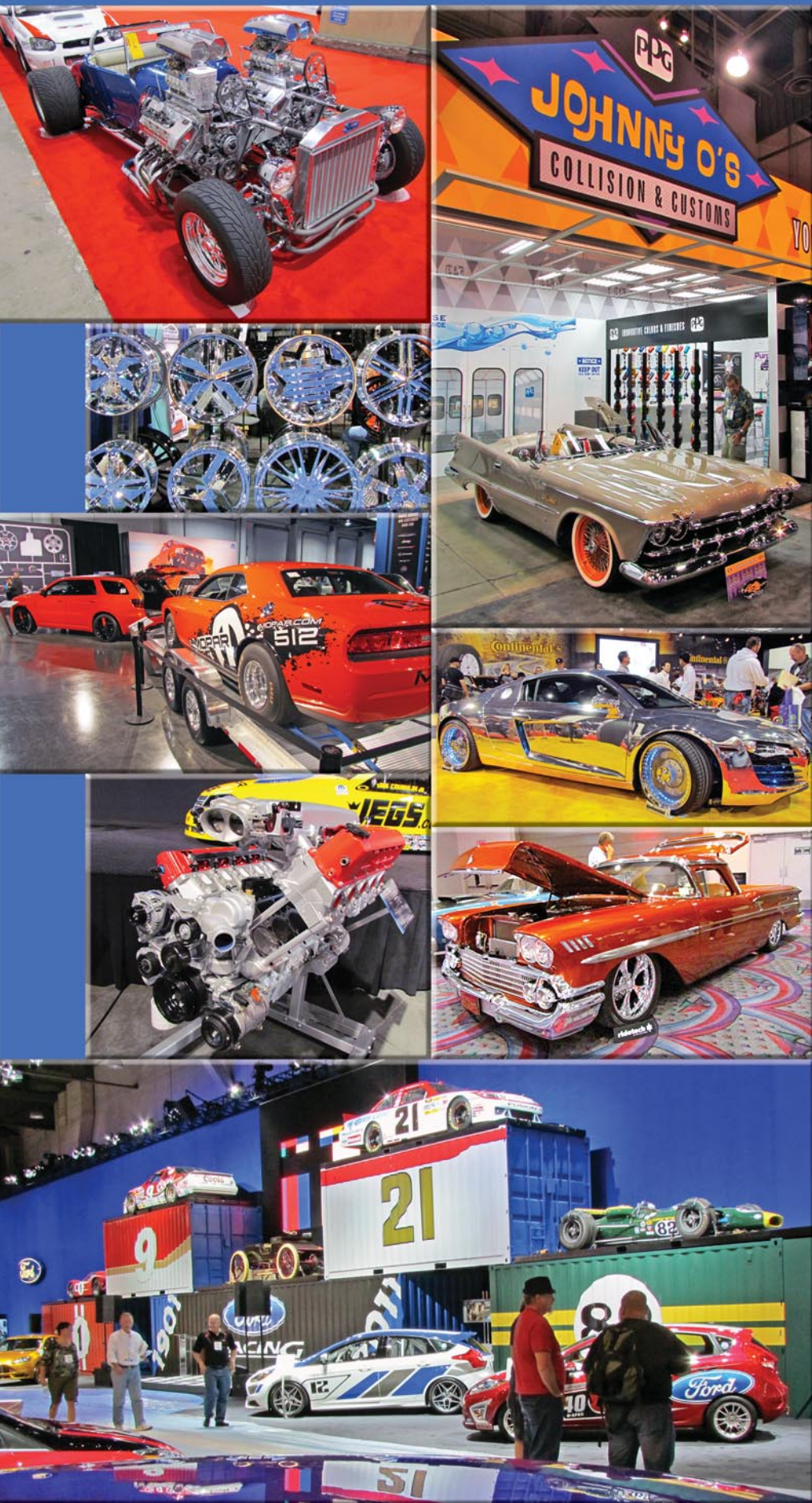
HOTTEST 4X4-SUV: JEEP® WRANGLER: BDS Suspension added more than a few touches to a 2010 Jeep Wrangler to produce this four-no-door beauty. BDS went with a "great outdoors" theme at SEMA, complete with campfire and tent. BDS Suspension engineers and manufactures high quality aftermarket suspension lift kits, leveling kits and accessories for 4x4 off-road truck and Jeep enthusiasts, with a lifetime warranty.



Photo: Larry Edsall



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SEMA SHOW

A TASTE OF SEMA

(Clockwise from upper left):

Double Trouble is the name given this hot-rod, two-engined, 1927 Model T roadster built by Gordon Tronson, a New Zealand native who lives in Las Vegas. And, yes, that's a blender mounted above the right-side V8.

PPG promotes its specialized automotive paint products by setting up a huge display, which this year took the form of Johnny O's Collision & Customs shop. Parked in the garage was the 1959 Imperial Speedster, automotive designer Murray Pfaff's idea for a Corvette and Thunderbird competitor Chrysler didn't build.

Tron is an Audi modified by West Coast Customs for Continental Tire. The car rides on 20-inch Custom wheels which, like the side vents, grille and interior, feature constantly changing LED lighting.

Chevrolet didn't produce its car-based El Camino pickup truck until the 1959 model year, so upstate New York resident Joe Cherry built his own. He calls the El Nomado because he started with a 1958 Chevy Nomad station wagon.

To celebrate its 110th anniversary—and Henry Ford's historic racing victory over rival automaker Alexander Winton—Ford's display featured race cars from the Henry Ford Museum, displayed safely out of reach atop shipping containers.

Someone at Chrysler's Mopar not only figured out how to stuff a Viper V10 engine underneath the hood of a Dodge Challenger, but how to put the newest cylinder heads on a previous-generation and more widely available Viper block. The result—as much as 800 horsepower!

Tow Hook is the name given to the orange-colored Dodge Durango that pulls the trailer carrying a race-ready and V10-powered 2011 Mopar Challenger Drag Pak. The Tow Hook was displayed at SEMA on 22-inch wheels and had other upgrades. We hear the Mopar Underground isn't quite finished, however, and is working to put a Cummins diesel into the engine bay.

This is just one of the seemingly dozens upon dozens of wheel displays at the SEMA Show.

— Larry Edsall



Photos: Larry Edsall



MANUFACTURER PROJECTS

(Say that five times, fast.) For years, the aftermarket was on its own, to acquire vehicles, reverse engineer and create their own add-ons. Vehicle manufacturers are now a big part of the game, with the savviest among them actively providing all their new-model specs and dimensions as early as possible, ensuring a variety of aftermarket offerings for enthusiast buyers at launch, good for all concerned. They also now create their own SEMA show cars, though we can only scratch the surface of the hundreds shown. Let's scratch.

MAZDA MX-5 SUPER20: Mazda's MX-5 Super20 from last year returned with Hyper Orange Mica paint, gloss black fixed hardtop, stripes, and an interior with color-matched roll bar, seats, stitching and suede inserts. Performance mods include upgraded ECU, header and exhaust, front and rear anti-roll bars, clutch, coil-overs and tower braces, rotors, lines, pads, and front brake ducts, black 16-inch Enkei twin-spoke racing wheels, Toyo high-performance tires and wheel spacers front and rear.

INVADER TC-3: The Tanom Motors Invader TC-3 high performance reverse trike, shown as prototype last year, is ready for production, with the Detroit factory tooling up for body panels using RTM (Resin Transfer Molding) and RIM (Reaction Injection Molding), as in F1 and IndyCar. Super lightweight and incredibly strong, the bike will also be available with the hood, roof, front fenders and storage compartment doors in carbon fiber.

HONDA HPD CR-Z RACER: Honda showed 12 modified 2011 Honda CR-Z sport hybrid coupes, including this HPD CR-Z Racer—by HPD, Honda's North American racing wing. Serious racing capability comes from a turbocharger and upgraded IMA™ hybrid system—for a combined 200 hp and 175 lb-ft of torque—plus performance clutch, limited-slip differential, circuit-tuned suspension, upgraded brakes and aerodynamic components. Two HPD CR-Z Racers were set to run at the 25 Hours of Thunderhill endurance race in December.

ZERO S MOTORCYCLE: Zero Motorcycles' first time at SEMA included its high-performance race motorcycle, developed with K Squared Racing, running in the electric bike racing series TTXGP and ePower. Shown is the electric 2012 Zero S street fighter, in either 6 or 9 kWh configuration—achieving a 76- or 114-mile range. Its broad electric torque band and acceleration reach a top speed of 88 mph. Brushless motors and regenerative braking recoup energy during deceleration, and a maintenance-free belt drive system makes it “just about the world's easiest to own form of transportation.”

KIA RIO: Kia showed off its growing motorsports cred—coming off their first two motorsports championships in history at the 2011 Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge (CTSSC). Built by Kia's racing partner, Kinetic Motorsports, the all-new 2012 Rio 5-door B-Spec track-ready racecar is set to compete in the newly established showroom stock racing class in 2012 against a variety of competitors.

HYUNDAI VELOSTER: Hyundai teamed up with ARK Performance to transform the new 3-door Veloster into a sleek rally car with a custom twin-scroll turbocharger (210hp). The modified Veloster has mechanical, interior and exterior modifications including an open wheel concept with aggressive fenders and Nitto tires. ARK will also develop a range of Veloster-specific parts. ■



LAST RIDES "YOU URNED IT"

A family from Tucson is taking the automotive aftermarket into the afterlife.

Last Rides Custom Urns had perhaps the most interesting if macabre booth at the SEMA Show. Christopher and Erik Enriquez of Tucson say their father, Jesse, comes up with rather bizarre ideas, though could anything the artist/fabricator/mechanic/woodworker have dreamed up ever been more bizarre than this?: one-of-a-kind urns that look like scale-model vehicles but are to hold the cremated remains of car guys (and gals).

“The idea behind ‘Last Rides’ came to us one night as we contemplated the current state of the economy and the expense that is incurred even at death,” they say. “Planning ahead would be the best way to avoid having loved ones make these difficult decisions. Since cremation was our choice, we decided to research what was available in funerary urns. After viewing hundreds of different urns, we realized that none we had seen expressed anything about us. Contemplation of that final journey and our enthusiasm for cars launched the idea of creating that special car that would provide our ‘Last Ride’ to our final resting place.”

After consulting with a client, the Last Rides family and its artistic friends sculpt from clay a scale version of the client's favorite vehicle—the one in which he or she would like to take his or her last ride. It may be a car the person restored. Or perhaps one they owned back in the day. Or even one they always dreamed of owning.

After sculpting, the urn is cast, then hand painted, and mounted on a wooden base. Cremated ashes are inserted into the urn through the bottom of the vehicle.

Christopher Enriquez says several customers have taken delivery of their Last Rides and have them on display in their home, office or garage on a sort of buy now, use later plan.

— Larry Edsall

Visit online: www.last-rides.com ■



Active reaction

Story by Larry Edsall
Photos by Brenda Priddy & Company



Not quite a decade ago, three accomplished athletes who also were members of the news media were among the journalists going from press conference to press conference at the Los Angeles Auto Show.

At each press conference, it seemed, the trio heard automakers proclaiming how they were designing their newest vehicles for those who lived active lifestyles.

The trio listened, though in growing disbelief. The vehicles being unveiled seemed to have little to offer people who raced bicycles, paddled kayaks, or had to haul around other assorted sporting gear.

The trio decided the automakers could use some help and encouragement, and needed to be introduced to people who truly lived such lifestyles. Soon, they launched the Active Lifestyle Vehicle of the Year program to draw attention to vehicles that actually met the transportation needs of those who did, indeed, live active lifestyles.

The Active Lifestyle Vehicle of the Year program was the brainchild of a trio comprising Bob Babbitt, founder of the Competitor Group and an inductee into the Ironman Hall of Fame; Jim Woodman, founder of Active.com and an endurance cyclist; and Nina Russin, an automotive journalist and marathon runner.

Each year, the ALV of the Year committee, which is headed by Phoenix resident Russin, announces category parameters and seeks entries from the various automakers. Typically, around 50 vehicles are entered in the various categories.

Throughout the spring and summer, a national panel of automotive journalists evaluates the vehicles as part of their regular work. Early in the fall, those auto writers and broadcasters cast their votes for the vehicles they believe best meet the needs of those with active lifestyles.

The top cars in each category are then invited to participate in the ALV of the Year finals, where athletes are invited to drive and evaluate them throughout a day-long program. Those athletes—divided into teams based around each of the seven vehicle categories—vote on the vehicles which best meet their lifestyle needs.

The journalist votes count for half a vehicle's ALV

Some 70 athletes and over a dozen automotive journalists convened in Phoenix to evaluate some 50 vehicles with attributes favorable to the active lifestyle. Seven manufacturers went home with the coveted ALV trophy. The event was presented by OnStar, Local Motors, Mindfold, Inc. and Russo and Steele Auction. Below left, host Local Motors shows off its Rally Fighter in their shop; at bottom, the Rally Fighter gets some serious air.



total. The athlete votes also count for 50 percent.

At the end of the athletes ride-and-drive day, the winners in each category are announced.

Late this past fall, after several years in San Diego and one in South Bend, Indiana, the finals of the ALV of the Year competition were staged in Phoenix, where some 70 local and elite athletes drove and evaluated vehicles in seven categories. Going home with the honors in the seven categories were:

URBAN

(for small vehicles priced at \$20,000 or less)

★ Mazda5

BEST VALUE ON ROAD

(for vehicles priced at \$34,999 or less and designed primarily for driving on pavement)

★ Subaru Impreza

BEST VALUE OFF ROAD

(for vehicles priced at \$34,999 or less but designed for use on or off pavement)

★ Jeep Wrangler

LUXURY ON ROAD

(for vehicles priced at \$35,000 or more and designed primarily for driving on pavement)

★ Audi A7

LUXURY OFF ROAD

(for vehicles priced at \$35,000 or more and designed for use on or off pavement)

★ Jeep Grand Cherokee

GREEN

(for hybrids, clean diesels and electric vehicles)

★ Volkswagen Jetta Sportwagen TDI

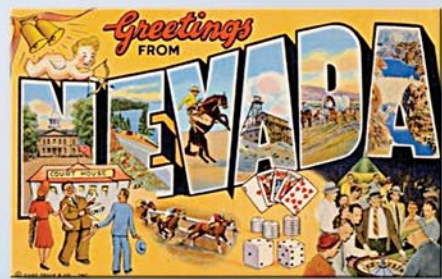
FAMILY

(for vehicles with three rows of seating)

★ Audi Q7 TDI

For the eighth annual ALV of the Year program, the athletes' ride-and-drive was based at Local Motors, the auto-building micro factory that develops and produces the Rally Fighter vehicle in Chandler. ■





TAKING THE LONG WAY HOME FROM LAS VEGAS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LARRY EDSALL

It used to be that the highlight of the drive back from Las Vegas was that part of the trip that involved the descent to, the slow but nonetheless pleasing drive over, and the climb up into Arizona from Hoover Dam. And if you were returning after dark, there was an amazing eeriness to the experience because of the way the lights provided the Black Canyon of the Colorado River with an otherworldly glow.

Of course, now that they've built the elevated and time-saving bypass over and around the dam, we no longer are allowed to drive home across this man-made marvel. (You can drive across the dam from Nevada, but the road on the Arizona side is closed and you have to backtrack back to the Boulder City side and take the new high bridge to Arizona.)

However, that doesn't mean there still isn't a way to break up the monotony of the opening leg of your journey as you make your way home.

Let's face it, except for that dip down to the dam, neither route back from Vegas—

KEEP RIGHT >>





NISSAN XTERRA PRO-4X

Our vehicle for the trip on Christmas Tree Pass Trail—as well as other off-pavement trails near and in Death Valley National Park and on pavement to Las Vegas—was the 2011 Nissan Xterra PRO-4X.

The Xterra is Nissan's popular sport utility vehicle, which has become even more capable on non-paved routes with the addition of the PRO-4X model.

"Rock crawlers, just strap in and go: roof-rack-mounted off-road lights, Bilstein off-road performance shocks, skid plates, 16" machine-finished aluminum-alloy wheels with P265/75R16 BFGoodrich Rugged Trail T/A OWL tires, electronic locking rear differential, hill descent control and Hill start assist, clutch start/cancel, Rockford Fosgate audio system, Bluetooth Hands-free Phone System and white-face gauges," it says on Nissan's consumer website, www.nissanusa.com.

And all for a base price of \$29,670, or some \$5,410 more than the basic rear-drive Xterra model.

But if you plan to do any serious off-roading, the cost is worth it, because those shocks, skid plates, BFGs, locking dif, and hill helpers can make sure you not only reach your intended destination, but also get back home safe and sound.

And the upgraded 300-watt audio, which includes satellite radio, can make the drive more enjoyable whether you're on paved highways or rocky trails.

Also increasing your pleasure is the Xterra's 261-horsepower 4.0-liter V6 engine which provides a stout 281 pound-feet of torque. Though available with a six-speed manual transmission, our Xterra Pro-4x had a five-speed automatic gearbox. The powertrain was rated at 15 miles per gallon in town and at 20 on the highway, but we averaged nearly 23 MPG overall on our trip, which included three off-pavement crawls and some Arizona and Nevada rural highway driving at speeds of 65 (and perhaps slightly higher).

The Xterra's interior provides comfort—and plenty of room for gear. Our only truly negative comment would involve the high-beam headlamps. While the low beams and fog lamps provided great illumination, we found the high beams lacking

when it came to driving after dark on paved desert highways.

For the most part, we were able to leave the transfer case in its 2WD High setting, though we had occasion to use both 4WD High and 4WD Low, the later needed to get us moving after we got perhaps a little too close to the Big Dune off US 93 between Amargosa Valley and Beatty, Nevada.

(Speaking of Amargosa Valley, the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge is a seemingly unknown to tourists gem located just east of Death Valley National Park, which closely supervises Ash Meadows' Devils Hole and its unique and world's only population of Devils Hole pupfish.)

We didn't need four-wheel drive as we explored the Titus Canyon Trail, a 25.4-mile trek that starts west of Beatty, climbs over Red Pass, past Leadfield—a now-deserted former mining boomtown—and on into Death Valley between the high rock walls of Titus Canyon.

Nor did we need power to all four wheels later that day as we drove 27 severely washboarded miles each way to visit the Racetrack, a Death Valley attraction where softball and larger sized rocks leave trails as they make their way across the surface of a dry lake bed—though not even scientists who have studied them can tell you for sure what moves those rocks.

We did, however, use 4WD and hill descent control the following day on the Bonnie Claire Trail, which climbs more than three thousand feet in elevation, up past Hard Luck Mine to more than 7600 feet on Hanging Mesa.

With its 106-inch wheelbase, the Xterra is wonderfully nimble at maneuvering around even tight mountain-trail hairpins turns and through the slot-like openings of Titus Canyon, and those BFG Rugged Trail tires were up to every challenge.

—Larry Edsall



US 93, which runs nearly arrow-straight on its diagonal through the Detrital Valley to Kingman, nor US 95, with barely a kink in its way as it searches its way to Searchlight—offers much of interest as you gaze through the windshield.

But—Happy Holidays!—there is a wonderful if somewhat rugged road on the way home that offers both natural and man-made wonders to behold. It's called the Christmas Tree Pass Trail. It starts a dozen or so miles south of Searchlight and returns you back on pavement just above Laughlin on Nevada 163 (which links to Arizona 68 and brings you into the northwest side of Kingman).

We'd seen the sign indicating the trail on previous trips to and from Vegas, and after being sent a copy of the new book *Nevada Trails/ Southern Region: Backroads & 4-Wheel Drive Trails* (\$24.95 from Adler Publishing, Parker, Colorado), we made a point of taking the trail on our way back from an automotive trade show at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

KEEP RIGHT >>



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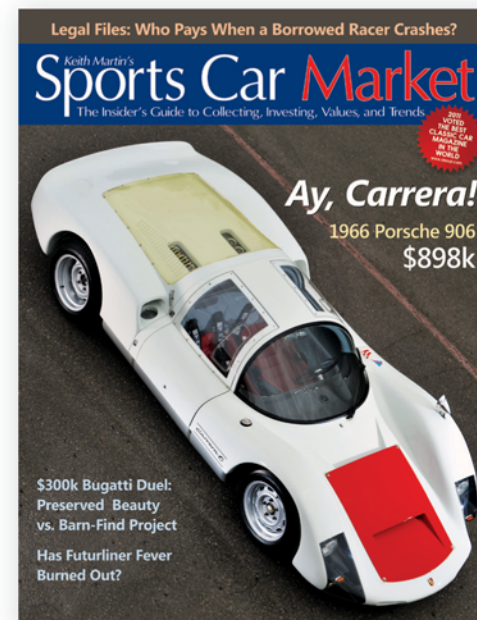


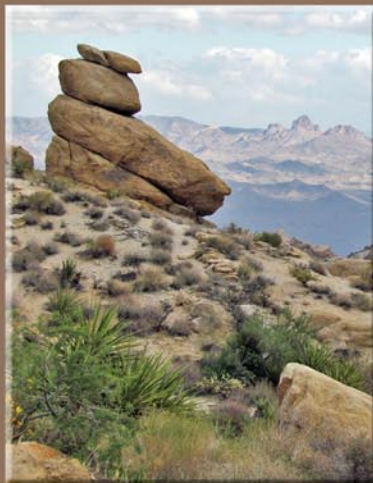
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We were driving a sport utility vehicle—a 2011 Nissan Xterra PRO-4X—though as the new off-pavement guide book notes: “The trail is a wide, graded two-lane dirt road,” which, it adds, “can be corrugated and slightly eroded in places.”

Nonetheless, it rates the route a mere “1” on a 10-point scale for degree of driving difficulty, and thus Christmas Tree Pass Trail can be driven in your typical family sedan. However, we’d recommend something more along the lines of a sport or crossover utility vehicle, a pickup truck or at least a rental car, because there are places where the road is washboarded and others where there are rocks sticking up a couple of inches through the road surface. As with any desert road, we recommend more caution in or after rainy weather.

But in decent weather and road conditions, if you’re comfortable driving the Apache Trail out to Roosevelt Dam east of Phoenix, you should have no worries about the route to Christmas Tree Pass.

And while the Christmas Tree Pass Trail is rated only a 1 in difficulty, the guide book gives it an 8 in scenic splendor.

You can drive the trail in either direction. We took it on the way back, which meant a left turn off US 95. The first mile or so traverses the Piute-Eldorado Area of Critical Environmental Concern, with signs warning you to please stay on the road and to leave plant and animal life alone. The road is wide and covered in sand and gravel as it crosses the flatland before tightening and twisting up into the Newberry Mountains.

The tallest of the Newberrys is Spirit Mountain (5639 feet), which the guide book notes is believed by the Yuman tribes of the Colorado River to be the spiritual

birthplace of their ancestors and is included on the National Register of Historic Places as a Traditional Cultural Property.

The Newberrys are an amazing outcrop of naked rock and boulder formations, of peaks and spires and wind- and water-carved sculptures. Near the top of the pass there’s a stack of four huge boulders that looks as though Mother Nature placed a cairn so she wouldn’t lose her way.

The guide book doesn’t specify how Christmas Tree Pass got its name, except to note that for some period of time, travelers have decorated trees near the pass with shoes, beer cans and other objects as though they were Christmas tree ornaments. We saw a tree with tinsel hanging from some low branches, and a small Christmas stocking duct-taped to a Rough Road Next 16 Miles sign.

After traveling east up to and over the pass, the road turns south toward Laughlin. Just two miles from its finish, there’s a sign indicating the Grapevine Canyon trailhead parking area. There’s a deep wash just north of the parking area. Walk about a quarter-mile hike west along the wash and you come to a cut in the mountain. On the rocks on either side of the cut are hundreds of petroglyphs.

The guide book says they were made as long ago as 800 years, by AhaMakav and Southern Piute people who used the canyon as hunting grounds.

The Christmas Tree Pass Trail runs for only 16.3 miles, and the guide book says it should take only about 45 minutes to travel that way. We’d suggest you carve out a couple of hours because, like us, you’ll likely want to stop frequently to take pictures or simply to inhale the amazing vistas. ■

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THE CREEK FLOWS ANEW IN THE CROSSROADS OF THE WEST

Salt Lake City, anchored in the fertile plains at the outer reaches of ancient Lake Bonneville, is nestled right up against the mountains, with the waterline of the old lake visible along them high overhead. Out of those mountains and through the city used to gush beautiful City Creek. Now, through an innovative downtown development, the creek runs again.

It is no mean feat to insert a huge and comprehensive new shopping and dining complex in the heart of an already vibrant and growing downtown Salt Lake City—City Creek Center comprises 700,000 square feet—nor to manage the intricacies of existing businesses, from small to anchor, during the lengthy transformation.

Macy's had its whole front removed for a revised historic facade, and Nordstrom built a stunning new store—but they otherwise may look as though they had never left. But leave they did, demonstrating the complexities during construction. Nordstrom absorbed traf-



fic at its Murray location (and/or generally just held its breath) during the shutdown, ready to add back its downtown location this spring.

Launched before the nationwide financial crash, the development benefits from greater Salt Lake's continued population growth and far-above-average economy, fueled partly by a Utah tech boom, and from the horsepower of owner-operator Taubman Centers, Inc., with funding from City Creek Reserve, Inc. (CCRI), deriving in turn from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Nature stakes a claim downtown

Sustainability and green concerns—from healthy air, to vegetation, to energy efficiency—have been addressed comprehensively. City Creek Center is fully LEED Certified—Stage 2 Silver overall, with some elements Gold. The site also contained a neglected element of pure magic. City Creek was a natural feature when the area was first settled, cascading down from the Wasatch Mountains and providing water to the first pioneer farmers. But the flow had been tunneled underground as the city grew. As its name implies, City Creek Center brings this bubbling brook back to life. As they stroll the courtyards and plazas of the Center, shoppers can enjoy a 1200-foot-long re-creation of the south fork of City Creek, with two 18-foot waterfalls. Three major fountains, by the designers of the Bellagio in Las Vegas, will include musically choreographed fire and water displays.

A four-sided outdoor fireplace overlooking the stream has art relief panels depicting Utah's four seasons. Other artwork is inspired by area mountains, canyons, foothills and the Great Salt Lake. The Center features animal tracks sandblasted into stone, throughout, plus sculptures of Utah's wildlife—bears, eagles, elk and seagulls. The courtyard near Nordstrom will include a migratory bird sculpture. At the heart of the Center, a fully retractable glass roof spans the shopping galleria, while a pedestrian skybridge crosses Main Street and the light rail. The etched glass panels of the skybridge roof automatically lift open to provide cross ventilation.

History repeats—and writes a new chapter

The retail center is part of the mixed-use City Creek project developed by Salt Lake-based master developer CCRI, constructed on the site of two former shopping malls, with more than 80 percent of the material from the former malls recycled or reused as part of its sustainability program. Elements of modern architecture and historic restoration are often combined within the same piece. The ZCMI facade is a story unto itself. The facade you see at lower right is an exacting reproduction

of the original. The previous facade—constructed 35 years ago—was also a reproduction of the original. ZCMI (Zions Co-operative Mercantile Institution) was one of America's first department stores—once the largest retail establishment west of the Mississippi River—originally built to establish fair trade practices on the early frontier. (Before the transcontinental railroad, and the driving of the Golden Spike near Provo, ZCMI even accepted a unique Mormon pioneer currency.) When the prior facade was removed, the decision was made to do a new restoration. Though in great condition, the prior work wasn't as elaborate as the original, and its size and shape were not perfect for new construction. Over 1000 components of the 75-foot-tall storefront were meticulously removed, catalogued, cleaned, repaired and reassembled. The beautiful new historic facade—built by the same local company as the prior restoration—has all the flavor of exactly what it is: the original location of ZCMI going back to Salt Lake City's earliest roots. And it fits in with the rest of the Center's modern design just as effectively as the Center fits in with all of downtown.

The new Nordstrom facade on West Temple integrates art glass, merchandising windows and a dramatic two-story entrance, with a two-story translucent glass wall of LED lights that glow and subtly change colors—the only Nordstrom exterior of its kind.

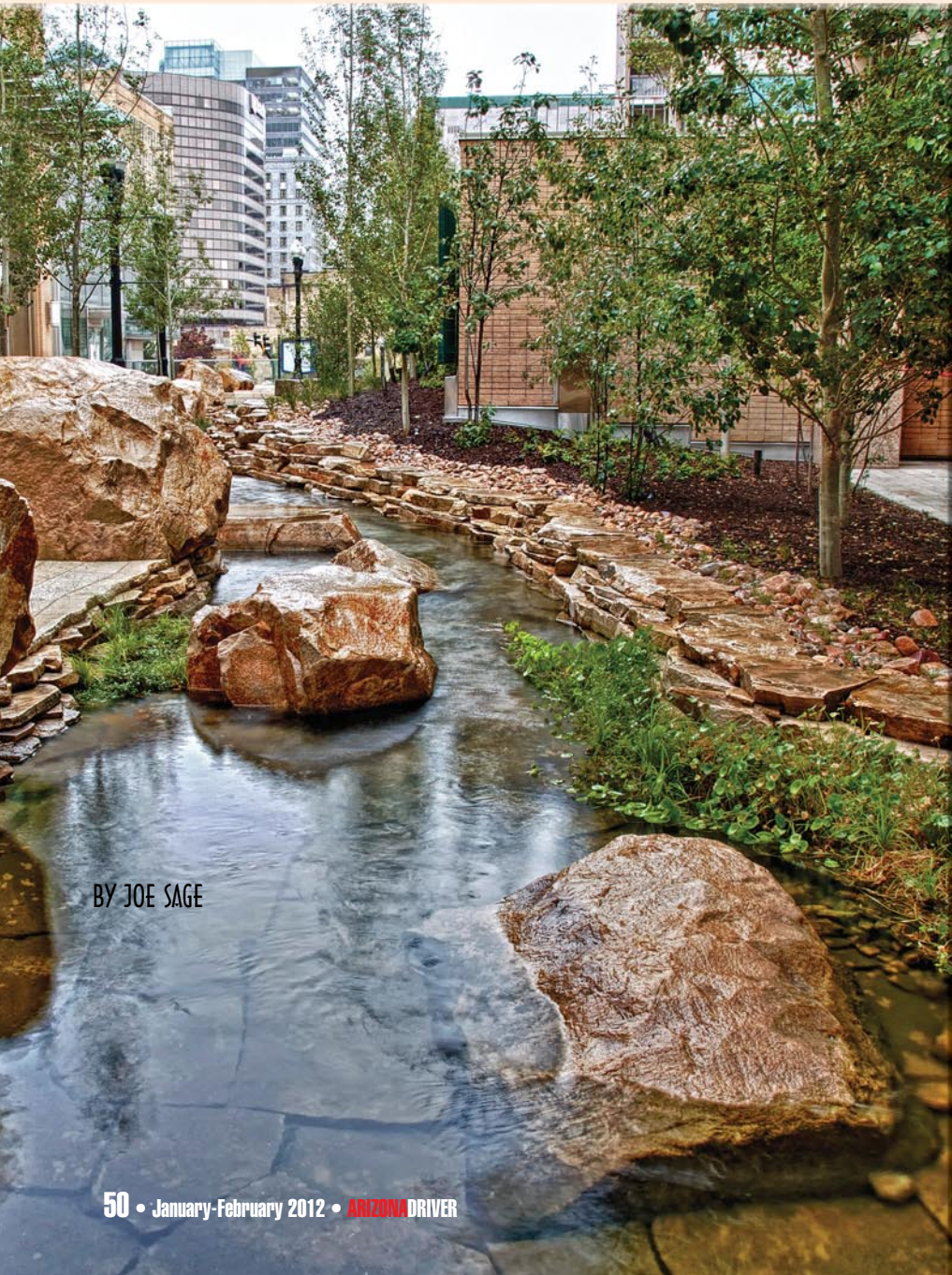
Shop, dine and be merry

City Creek Center will have about 80 stores and restaurants, fully one third of which are new to the Salt Lake City market, and most new to the state of Utah. A sampling of retail operations includes 77kids® by American Eagle®, CCBG Max Azria, Bose, Brooks Brothers/Brooks Brothers Women, Coach, The Limited, L'Occitane, Michael Kors, N3L Optics, Papyrus, Porsche Design, Tiffany & Co. and Yankee Candle Company.

Food court restaurants already open include Bocata, Chang Chun, Great Steak, McDonald's, Roxberry Juice Co., Sbarro, Subway, Suki Hana and Taste of Red Iguana—and they will be joined by full service dining options such as Texas de Brazil Churrascaria (its first location in Utah), where costumed Brazilian gauchos deliver skewers of sizzling meats in traditional churrascaria style (open flame) and carve them tableside. There are many more.

Opening in March

City Creek Center opens March 22. Bordered by South Temple, 100 South, West Temple and State Street, the Center is in the heart of downtown Salt Lake City, just blocks from I-15 and I-80, or a 10-minute drive from Salt Lake City International Airport. Or a road trip from Arizona will take you past a number of National Parks and Monuments—Zion, Bryce, Cedar Breaks, Arches, Escalante-Grand Staircase—and plenty of great open road driving in between. The I-80 corridor across northern Utah includes a chance to visit the Bonneville Salt Flats, Historic Wendover Airfield Museum and Miller Motorsports Park (see Nov/Dec 2011 issue). When you're ready to settle back into civilization, Salt Lake City is your anchor. Traditional attractions abound, including Temple tours and historic sites. For information and updates, visit www.ShopCityCreekCenter.com. ■



BY JOE SAGE

WORLD'S FASTEST SPORTS CAR

1971 TRIUMPH GT6 FROM TUCSON HITS 305.596 MPH

Story and photos by Larry Edsall

Keith Copeland of Tucson was traveling an estimated 250 miles per hour when his car blew over backwards on the Bonneville Salt Flats in the late summer of 2008. Copeland was seriously injured in the crash. Indeed, his recuperation needed a year and a half. But recuperate he did. And when he did, he approached his long-time race car-building buddy and fellow Tucson resident Mark Hanson to build him a new racer.

Hanson agreed, but with one major provision. Hanson had not designed the car that crashed in 2008, but he insisted he create this new car, and from end to end.

"I've helped Keith for six years," Hanson said at the Goodguys Rod & Custom Association's annual season-ending Southwest Nationals car show at WestWorld in Scottsdale, where the new and record-setting car was among the most unusual of the couple of thousand hot rods and custom vehicles on display.

"We learn something each time we race," Hanson added, "and we learned a lot in his crash."

Copeland's goal was to set a world land speed record while exceeding 300 miles per hour.

Copeland and Hanson would prepare their new car for the BFMS category. That's B as in blown, F as in fuel, M as in modified, and S as in sports car category.

To fit within the rules as set forth by the Southern California Timing Association, which governs such speed record racing, Hanson sought a small car with exceptional aerodynamic airflow off its rear end. However, rules allow for some seri-

ous modification to the front of the car, and the addition of stabilizing fins to the rear, for that matter.

Hanson's quest came down to two vehicles, though neither certainly was built originally to set any sort of land speed records.

Car One was a three-wheeled and boat-tailed Messerschmitt, one of Europe's tiny and so-called bubble cars of the post-WW2 era. Car Two was a 1971 Triumph GT6, a 95-horsepower British sports coupe.

Hanson really liked the idea of modifying the Messerschmitt, but the SCTA would not accept the three-wheeler. Hanson was undaunted. Though not designed for anything approaching Bonneville-level speeds, Hanson knew the GT6 "has a really good posterior, especially once you chop the top off the car."

While the back end of the car would remain basically in stock form, well, except for adding some sheetmetal stability fins and the parachutes needed to slow the car at the end of its runs, rules allow extreme modifications ahead of the firewall, and thus the Black Salt Racing team's GT6 looks unlike anything British Leyland ever built.

KEEP RIGHT >>





For one thing, the wheelbase was stretched from 83 to 130 inches. For another, a 360-cubic-inch Brodix-block V8 engine was installed, and topped with a pair of turbochargers. Power—1400 horsepower—from that engine goes to the front wheels, not those at the rear.

Hanson, who owns a company called StrangeFab Metalcrafts, sheathed the front end in swoopy, aero-efficient sheetmetal.

Hanson said he opted for front-wheel drive because "I've never seen a carriage with a horse pushing it."

He also said that because of the FWD setup, the car tracks as straight as a dart, a very important characteristic in a vehicle capable of speeds in excess of 300 miles per hour.

By the way, Hanson's operation

demonstrates that you don't have to be big to be good. He works out of a two-car garage, where he also builds bodywork for off-road racers, rock crawlers, road racers and drag racers, and does other metalworking projects.

It took Hanson nine months to build the car, then another two days to find a way to get the low-slung vehicle into the trailer that would carry it to Bonneville for the Speedweek speed runs in 2010.

The car hit 275 mph on only its third run down the salt. Though unofficial, that speed exceeded the existing record of 237.87 mph set by nothing less than a Ferrari Enzo.

In the fall of 2011, just a few weeks before the Goodguys season finale at WestWorld, the Black Salt team was back

at Bonneville. This time, Copeland did 313 mph, only to have rain stop his mandated return run and bid for the official record. But he achieved both those goals the following day, and secured the official C/BFMS record at a two-way average of 305.596 mph.

The Black Salt team plans to return to Bonneville late in 2012, and already has begun tweaking the engine and making some modifications to the car. It has set a goal of taking its record to 340 mph, a speed, Hanson notes, that presents an interesting challenge.

"At 340 mph," he explains, "the air under the car goes supersonic," and thus creates its own sonic boom, "and we're not sure what's going to happen when it goes 'BANG!'" ■



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THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS



Bentley Continental Supersports Convertible ISR

■ Bentley's most potent and radically-styled convertible ever, the 202mph Continental Supersports Convertible ISR, celebrates the world "Ice Speed Record" set by Finland's four-time world rally champion Juha Kankkunen in a Bentley Continental Supersports Convertible. Only 100 will be produced. Driving the all-wheel-drive, biofuel-powered 6-litre, 12-cylinder Continental Supersports Convertible on the frozen Baltic Sea, off the coast of Finland, Kankkunen achieved a speed of 205.48 mph, eclipsing his own prior ice speed record of 199.83 mph, set in 2007 in the Continental GT.

■ Want a chance to race nine-time AMA Drag Bike Champion Rickey Gadson—and to win a 2012 **Kawasaki Ninja® ZX™-14R**, the world's quickest production sportbike? Submit an essay explaining why you should race Gadson, at www.kawasaki.com/zerotohero. Eight "Zero to Hero" semi-finalists will be chosen from submissions between January 1 and February 14, 2012. From March 14 through April 14, fans can vote online for their favorite. The field will then be reduced to four finalists, who will travel to Las Vegas for two days of instruction from the champ at Rickey Gadson's Drag Racing School, while also qualifying for their own NHRA Bracket license. Once qualified, the four will race against each other in elimination-style rounds, and the quickest contestant will have a chance to race Gadson for a brand-new 2012 Kawasaki Ninja ZX-14R sportbike.

■ Powered by a Chery 12-valve multi-port fuel-injected DOHC 812cc triple that produces 53 hp and over 40 MPG, the **Oreion Sand Reeper** has locking entry doors, a steel cage, luggage rack, street or mud tires, dual windshield wipers, a full canvas enclosure, center storage box, upgraded projector-style headlights, large LED turn signal mirrors and rear fender reflectors. Other details include an MP3 music controller and color-matched engine cover with handles. A 5-speed transmission makes the most out of the motor, and the shifter has been redesigned. The Sand Reeper is available in 2x4 and 4x4 drive configurations. Randy Webster is the sole broker for Sand Reepers in Arizona: 623-466-2564 or randy@oreionmotors.com.



Oreion Sand Reeper

■ The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) has announced a \$5 million grant by **Toyota** Motor Sales USA Inc. to assist community-based organizations supporting parks and other public lands, at a time when financial and volunteer support are greatly needed. NEEF was joined at their announcement by EPA and White House officials, in line with America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

■ **BMW** Group and **Toyota** Motor Corporation have announced a mid-to-long-term collaboration on green-friendly technologies. They will share research on next-generation lithium-ion battery technologies and discuss other possible collaborative projects. BMW has already agreed to supply 1.6-liter and 2.0-liter diesel engines to Toyota Motor Europe

starting in 2014, for Toyota vehicles in the European market. Toyota plans to expand its European lineup of fuel-efficient, low-CO₂-emission diesel vehicles.



Kawasaki ZX-14R

■ **Smart** promises to shake things up at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit during January, as they introduce The Rule-Breaker—a.k.a. the



smart for-us concept

smart for-us (the company disdains capital letters)—an urban pickup geared toward the realities of 21st century traffic. A concept vehicle, presented in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek manner, smart states that the for-us is the right car for the young and young-at-heart who have active lives but attach importance to low emissions and to taking up minimum road space. The concept translates to a two-seater that can haul a modest practical load in the city.

■ The new **Optrix HD Sport** transforms your iPhone 4, 4S or iPod Touch into an HD action sports cam. Its rugged weatherproof case and mount allow extreme sports enthusiasts an easy way to shoot, edit and upload image-stabilized 1080p video from the highly connected device that's already in your pocket. The Optrix HD Sport interface lets you see a full-screen image of a framed shot, and one-hand quick-release design makes adjusting shooting angles fast and painless, avoiding the out-of-frame videos you may have shot with other options. A variety of base mounts securely adhere to any surface. Spill-, splash-, bump- and drop-proof, the casing is made of high quality, military grade materials utilizing ultrasonic welds and silicon gaskets designed to keep moisture and dirt at bay. Pre-order at \$79.99 at www.optrixhd.com.



Optrix HD Sport

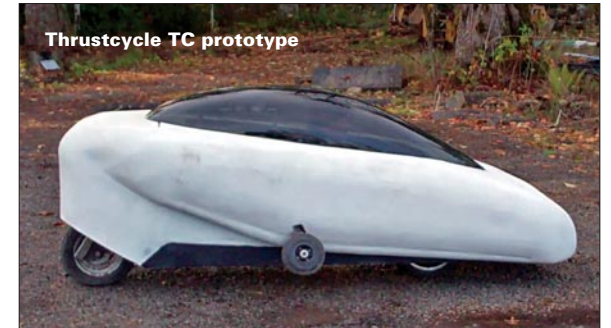
■ The 2012 **Pirelli** Calendar—the 39th issue of The Cal™—features Italian photographer Mario Sorrenti. Shot in rugged Corsica landscape, 25 images in a canvas-

lined portfolio—18 B&W, seven color—present nine models and three actresses including Brazilian Isabeli Fontana, Russian Natasha Poly, Americans Joan Small and Guinevere Van Seenus, Britain's Kate Moss and others.

■ Hot on the heels of its new Nuda 900 R, **Husqvarna** presented its next motorcycle, the Concept Strada, at the Salon de la Moto show in Paris. Like the Nuda, the Concept Strada is aimed at youthful on-road motorcyclists who appreciate its sharp styling, fun handling and great road manners. With a low weight, a punchy 650cc single-cylinder engine and quality components throughout, the Concept Strada is designed to provide a thrilling ride—whatever the distance. The ultra-reliable 650cc engine was originally developed by BMW

for its F model range and powers the new G 650 GS. Husqvarna engineers have given a power upgrade to the engine, in an extremely lively machine that weighs less than 375 pounds dry.

■ A prototype by **Thrustcycle** Enterprises LLC of Honolulu has a flywheel kinetic energy recovery system (KERS) that uses gyroscopic forces to keep itself upright and for stability and control. The flywheel/gyroscope functions simultaneously as stabilizer and battery, improving safety, performance and efficiency. The system maintains a fixed plane in space: rather than merely dampen oscillations—like gyroscopes on oceangoing ships—if the hit with force from the side, or in slippery turns, the cycle will slide but remain firmly upright. The stronger that force, the stronger the reaction. The system also provides regenerative braking, for extended range and bursts of speed. The prototype is rear-wheel-steered, though front- and all-wheel-steered versions are being studied, with two, three or four wheels, all-electric



Thrustcycle TC prototype

or hybrid. For more information and a video, visit: www.thrustcycle.com.

■ Inspired by Juha Kankkunen's world-record-breaking ice exploits (see facing page), **Bentley** and **Breitling** combine British chic and Swiss precision in the Ice Speed Record Commemorative Chronograph, echoing the Bentley ISR itself with



Breitling ISR Chronograph

its red detailing, carbon fibre fascia, dashboard-style dial and knurled finish on the control buttons. Just 100 timepieces will be produced, available "without charge" only to those who buy the 100 cars. ■

UPCOMING FEATURES

Arizona Auction Week followup



The Mullin Automotive Museum - Los Angeles



Marlis Williams '32 Ford Roadster



Governor Jan Brewer behind the wheel



2012 Jeep® Wrangler Sahara 4x4



2012 BMW Z4 2.8i



2012 Ford Mustang Boss 302



2012 BMW 650i Coupe



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