

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 3
MAY-JUNE 2020



2020 Ford Expedition
Platinum 4x4 EcoBoost

VEHICLES • EQUIPMENT • TECHNOLOGY • PEOPLE • EVENTS • DESTINATIONS • ATTRACTIONS





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ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

news & features May-June 2020

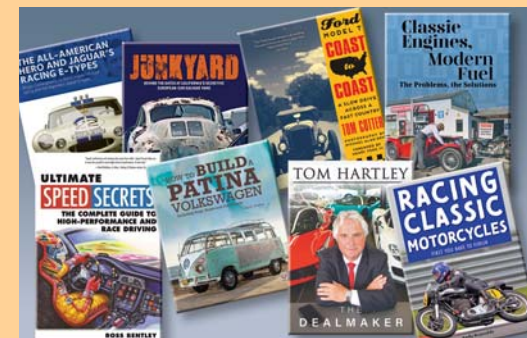
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COVER: The generation-four 2020 Ford Expedition Platinum 4x4 3.5L EcoBoost V6 on a rainy Arizona spring day. **Photo: Joe Sage**



CallPhoto



James Lee / SixSpeedBlog.com



START YOUR ENGINES : FROM THE PUBLISHER

We had lots planned for this issue! We were headed to the big Geneva and New York auto shows. We had new vehicle launch events scheduled. We had several regional multi-vehicle awards comparos booked. And locally, we had a much longer than usual list of a wide variety of events we were going to catch and tell you about.

Our cover was going to feature Arizona's own Valerie Thompson—*The World's Fastest Female Motorcycle Racer*—as she headed to Australia's Lake Gairdner dry lakes for a shot at world's fastest, period, no gender qualifier! We even had our finger on the button to book flights and a camper, so we could witness it all in person. The Coronavirus hit right then. Valerie's flights were cancelled, with the crew and craft already on site and figuring out how to get back. (We'll be following up on her plans and next steps.)

We were also covering Pete Murray, as he prepped for the storied Isle of Man TT, but that, too, was cancelled, though we bring you an overview in this issue.

NASCAR at Phoenix Raceway came just before restrictions, so we made it to that—and bring you some big announcements in this issue. We followed Rat Rod Addiction on a run to Canyon Lake just as pandemic rules started to kick in. After that, all the events on our calendar were cancelled. Weekly vehicles have continued to arrive through this stretch, with great care now taken as machines are swapped back and forth among human hands (and a couple of brands calling a moratorium on the whole thing for now). Some vehicle launches and announcements have gone to Zoom conferencing, but the vast majority of events have been postponed, tentatively rescheduled—it's going to be a crazy busy fall!—or flat-out cancelled for this year.

Joe Sage - Publisher/ Executive Editor



ARIZONA DRIVER
MAGAZINE



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- SAMA.....Southern Automotive Media Association
- TAWATexas Auto Writers Association
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- USMA.....United States Motorsports Association

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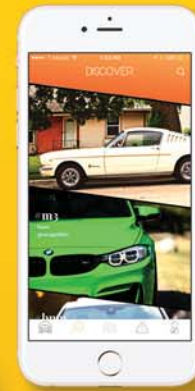
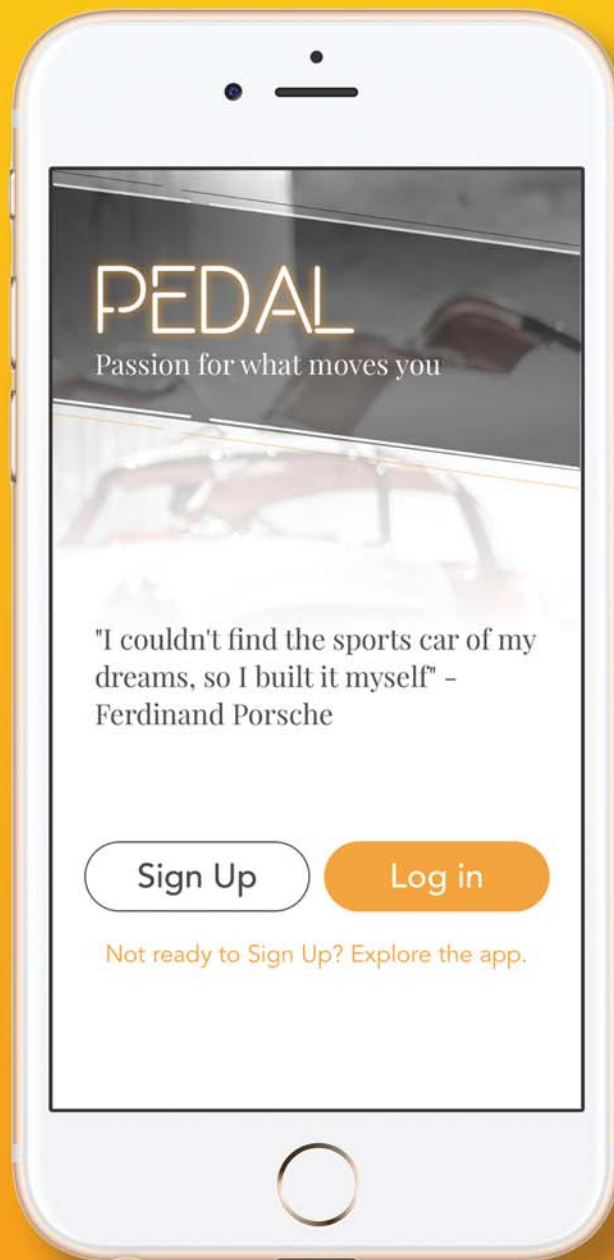
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Bentley Continental GT with Styling Specification

▼ You can now add an extra sporting edge to your **Bentley** Continental GT, Continental GT Convertible or Bentayga with the release of their new Styling Specification, including handcrafted, precision-built front splitter, side skirts with metallic 3D Bentley badges, rear diffuser and trunk lid spoiler in high gloss carbon fiber—adding high gloss carbon fiber bi-plane tailgate spoiler and rear screen strakes on Bentayga, with the option of front air blades, wing vents and mirror caps in a matching finish. As on interior veneers, carbon fiber exterior components are precisely mirror-matched across the centerline of the car. The weave is a 2x2 twill pattern, woven in the same direction for consistency across all components. The package was engineered by the same team as on the previous-generation Continental GT (including GT3-R and Supersports) and the Pikes Peak and Ice Race Continental GTs. Specifically designed to complement the vehicles' dynamics, Spec designs are assessed and refined using computational fluid dynamics (CFD) software for aerodynamic performance including front and rear lift and overall drag. Simulations are made for powertrain cooling, brake cooling and NVH. Electrical tests minimize any affect the carbon fiber parts may have on vehicle systems, from park distance control to radar to antennae for on-board communications and entertainment. Virtual assessments are followed by the first physical prototypes—refined in the wind tunnel, on the test track and across all driving condi-

tions and speeds, for stability, feel and performance under acceleration and braking. Durability development follows—100,000 km including wading, curb strikes and rough roads. Lab testing assesses the rigors of vibration, thermal cycling, point loading and impacts. Only after all that is the manufacturing process refined—using 3D scanning and comparison to a nominal metrology buck to assess manufacturing accuracy for consistent, repeatable tol-



Bugatti Veyron 16.4 (2005)

erances. Styling Specification is available via Bentley dealers, with a new order or retrofitted at a later date. It will also soon be introduced for the new Flying Spur.

▼ A speed of 407 km/h (± 253 mph) had never been achieved with a series production car until 15 years ago, when **Bugatti** became the first series manufacturer to do so with the Veyron 16.4, a record which

still stands today. It's a goal the French luxury hypercar builder had set for itself and the public believed unachievable. The engineering genius and driving force behind Bugatti, Ferdinand Karl Piëch, had developed the legendary Porsche 917, delivering Porsche's first win in the 24 Hours of Le Mans in the 1960s with a top speed of 406 km/h on the Hunaudières Straight. The Veyron sought to beat this. Designed for an output of over 1,000 PS (986 hp) and acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h (62 mph) in under 3 seconds, its 8.0L 16-cylinder, quad-turbocharged W16 engine was developed from scratch. Those horses and 1,250 Nm of torque (922 lb-ft) ran through a newly developed seven-speed dual clutch gearbox (DSG) to permanent all-wheel drive. Zero-to-100 km/h took 2.5 seconds, 200 km/h took 7.3 seconds and 300 km/h just 16.7 seconds. But, while no series production vehicle had broken the 400 km/h barrier at that point, Bugatti's main development goal was that 407-km/h top speed. The car reached an unbelievable 411 km/h on the straight, and a digital display at the test site even record-

ed 427 km/h—not record-worthy, as it only measured accurately up to 300 km/h, then extrapolated higher speeds. With precision equipment, the Veyron reached over 408 km/h several times, but in the end, the value entered in type approval documents was 407 km/h. The Veyron 16.4 was thus indeed the world's fastest series production sports car at its production launch in 2005. Veyron broke two further

records in subsequent years—in June 2010, the Veyron 16.4 Super Sport, its enhanced engine producing 1,200 PS, hit speeds of up to 431 km/h, again claiming the world record as the fastest street-legal



McLaren Speedtail hyper-GT hybrid

series production vehicle; and in April 2013, the open-top Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse reached 408.84 km/h, making it the world's fastest street-legal roadster. In 2019, Bugatti was first to exceed 300 mph, with the Chiron Super Sport 300+, at 304.773 mph (490.484 km/h). Bugatti has repeatedly been able to say: never before has a series-production manufacturer's vehicle reached such speeds.

▼ **McLaren's** fastest car ever, the hyper-GT Speedtail, has completed high-speed validation tests in the US, reaching a top speed of 250 mph more than 30 times. McLaren engineers achieved this through aerodynamics and low weight, as well as advanced powertrain technology. Its racebred hybridized drive system incorporates pioneering battery technology, unlocking intense acceleration from standstill to 186 mph in a breathtaking 13 seconds, on the way to that 250-mph top speed. The Speedtail's M840TQ powertrain comprises a 4.0L V8 internal combustion engine and an electric drive unit, together developing up to 1,055 bhp and up to 848 lb-ft of torque. The V8's technology evolves from McLaren's legendary first hybrid hypercar, the P1. A new lightweight air intake system, improved cylinder head cooling and a revised piston design contribute 747 bhp and 590 lb-ft of traditional gasoline-powered output to the Speedtail, while its electric motor, using Formula E-derived technology, generates more than 308 bhp (230 kW), giving it the highest perform-

ance installation—including cooling and integration—of any electric motor currently in a production road car. Power delivery is 8.3 kW/kg, twice the efficiency of an average sports car. Engineers from McLaren

Applied—a division focused on virtual product development, telemetry, electrification and control—worked with the Speedtail Electric Drive Technology team to integrate its groundbreaking motorsport-developed inverter and DC/DC converter technology into the electric drive system, ensuring levels of control and power management required for the hybrid hyper-GT to realize its extraordinary performance. The high voltage energy storage system is where the



Ford Mustang Cobra Jet 1400 electric dragster prototype

Speedtail truly innovates. A uniquely-arrayed high-power cylindrical cell, the 1.647-kWh unit is extremely compact and claims the best power-to-weight ratio of any high voltage battery available today, with a power density four times that of the unit in the McLaren P1, providing 5.2 kW/kg and an output of 362 bhp (270 kW). The design and integration of the battery system enables the Speedtail to

achieve its maximum speed via intelligent energy deployment, with its headline figures achievable because the cells are thermally controlled by a dielectrical cooling system and permanently immersed in a lightweight, electrically-insulative oil that quickly transfers heat away from the cells. The first of its kind in a production road car, the system is highly efficient and allows the cells to run harder and for longer.

▼ **Ford** Performance has introduced a first-ever, one-off Mustang Cobra Jet factory drag racer with all-electric propulsion. It won't hurt your ears and doesn't use a drop of fuel, but it's projected to crush the quarter-mile in the low-8-second range at more than 170 mph. The battery-powered, purpose-built Mustang Cobra Jet 1400 prototype is projected to deliver over 1,400 hp and over 1,100 lb-ft of instant torque, developed to demonstrate the capabilities of an electric powertrain in one of the most demanding race environments. Following the debut of the all-electric Mach-E—the first all-electric Mustang, in SUV form—the Mustang Cobra Jet 1400 prototype represents another opportunity to advance Mustang heritage and performance while incorporating some of the most advanced technology coming to Ford's future powertrains. Mustang Cobra Jet 1400 also hon-

ors the original Cobra Jet that first dominated drag strips in the late 1960s and still is a major force in sportsman drag racing today. Ford Performance continues to test Cobra Jet 1400 ahead of a world debut at a drag racing event later this year, where fans, media and competitors alike will see exactly what it's capable of on the asphalt



▼ Launched in January 1977, the original **Mazda 323** was the manufacturer's first modern hatchback, a compact family car that started a model lineage that stretches



all the way to today's Mazda3. Badged as the Mazda Familia in Japan and the Mazda GLC (Great Little Car) in North America, the original Mazda 323 was offered as both a three- and five-door hatchback, with a station wagon version introduced in 1978. While its hatchback body style was still not that common, the original rear-drive 323 was a pioneer that came along just as the late '70s and early '80s saw a boom in hatchback popularity in Europe. That popularity continues to this day, with the original Mazda 323 recognized 43 years after its launch as an innovator that started a long and successful lineage, with 323 and Mazda3 hatchbacks having played a big part in the brand's success, all the way to today's World Car Design of the Year-winning Mazda3. Three gasoline engines were offered in the early years: a 985cc and 1,272cc, and from 1978 a 1,415cc. The range in 1977 in the UK included a 1000 three-door, 1300 three-door, 1300 three-door Deluxe and 1300 five-door Deluxe—with Deluxe models featuring split rear seats and an in-cabin tailgate release. Despite the model naming, all UK cars initially featured the 1.3L four-cylinder 1,272cc engine, which produced 90 bhp. A four-speed manual gearbox was standard with the option of a three-speed automatic. The rear-drive 323 featured front disc brakes with drums in the rear and, as was common in the '70s, recirculating ball steering. With no power assistance, even with its small by modern standards 13-inch

wheels, low-speed maneuvers required some physical input. By 1979 the UK spec Mazda 323 SP 1.4 featured the larger 1,415cc engine, with 69 bhp. By the end of the '70s, Mazda's UK lineup had grown

to also include the Montrose (626) Saloon, the 818 Saloon, the 616 Saloon and the 929 Saloon, plus the new RX-7 sports car. Over 890,000 Mazda 323s were sold in its first three years of full production. In 1979, it was updated with square headlights and a five-speed gearbox. In 1980, the second-generation Mazda 323 arrived, the manufacturer's first front-wheel drive, front-engine compact hatchback.



▼ In February, before the global pandemic shutdown, Classic Motor Cars (CMC) of Bridgnorth, Shropshire UK had started work on restoring one of the world's rarest cars, the **Aston Martin Bulldog**. The car, a British icon, was designed by Aston Martin in the late 1970s to show off the capabilities of their new engineering facility. It worked its way down through the years to its current owner, who sent it to CMC for a

full nuts-and-bolts restoration, after which the plan is to run the car at over 200 mph and then take it on a world tour. Nigel Woodward, CMC managing director, says, "Being given the opportunity to restore this car is a real accolade. On February 27th, just two days after we had unveiled the car to the press, we set about stripping it down. There has been huge interest from around the world, and we thought that we would be able to get on with the eighteen-month restoration and regularly share the progress with the media. However, that was not to be, and we had to stop work a few weeks later. However, we wanted to show what progress we had made and how far we had got prior to the lockdown, so we are releasing a series of pictures over the next couple of months to bring people up to speed. In the meantime, the break in restoration has allowed us to do even more research on the car. The initial publicity received from when we announced the restoration has resulted in people sending us a number of historical pictures we had not seen before. These will help us when we get the restoration underway again." Styled by William Towns, the Aston Martin Bulldog was a one-off concept car created to demonstrate that Aston Martin was not only a small company of renowned motoring arti-

sans, but that its engineering prowess was also world-class. They believed the car was capable of well in excess of 200 mph, but due to budgetary constraints, testing runs were only able to prove 192 mph. Development and testing were curtailed when Victor Gauntlet became chairman of AML in 1981. The tests they ran, however, did confirm the Bulldog's position as fastest road car of all time for over six years. ■

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RAT ROD ROAD RUN

Rat Rod Addiction describes their ethos: Building rat rods is a therapy. A person can take an old car or truck and bring it back to life, while showing their personality and creativity at the same time. It may come from an old barn or farm field, battered from years of use and neglect, now reborn to make its bold comeback, and there's no right or wrong look. It's all up to what's available and the builder's imagination.

The hardest part is finding that perfect car or truck that fits you. From there, you can fabricate many parts with just a grinder and 120 welder. The parts you can't fab, you should be able to pick up on eBay, Craigslist, wrecking and scrap yards, and back yards. With family and friends, when it comes to finding parts, the hunt is half the fun. The time involved is another story. For every hour of hands-on work, you might spend four hours scratching your head on how to make it work. As for paint, just let mother nature give her touch.

There are many different opinions on what makes up a rat rod. Some builders order their parts, assemble them, give it a vintage paint job and then call it a rat rod. Rat rod purists are not so sure about that approach, though they're finding that the popularity of rat rods is creating a market where old school, pull-off parts—the blood of a traditional rat rod—are getting ridiculously expensive and harder to find.

"I'm sure the rodder in you can see yourself building a ride of your own," say the folks at Rat Rod Addiction, "and believe me, you can."

One of the last events we caught before things went into fairly total lockdown over the coronavirus pandemic was a Rat Rod Addiction cruise to Canyon Lake from Apache Junction, in March. Rat rods—described by the group as “family backyard builds”—have long caught our eye. We may even have the bug.

The group gathered at Fry's supermarket in AJ in the morning, then headed caravan-style up AZ Highway 88 to Canyon Lake (the second-up of the Saguaro-Canyon-Apache-Roosevelt series), about a 15-mile drive featuring classic cactus and canyon scenery, plenty of twisties and elevation changes, smooth pavement and an open road.

(Actually, traffic picked up quite a bit as the day wore on—turns out we weren't the only people thinking we'd have the whole thing to ourselves these days.)

Building rat rods is the group's hobby, but they've also created a Rat Rod Addiction line of shirts, hats, hoodies, goodies and other accessories, found at www.ratrodaddiction.com. You can also follow things on Facebook and YouTube at @ratrodaddiction.

With quarantine rules amped up since then, this summer's events have been cancelled or postponed. Up next, as of now, is their 4th Annual Cruise to the Pines, centered around Pinetop-Lakeside in the White Mountains of Arizona, September 25-27, 2020. Other events are also already on the calendar for 2021. ■



ADRENALINE AND NITRO EQUAL PARTS "WOO HOO!" AND "OH YEAH!"

BY JOE SAGE

Lexus builds F Sport versions of many models and full-blown performance-built F models of some, not always the same ones year to year. Between weekly vehicles and regional or national comparo events, we've surely driven most if not all.

Every sedan and coupe in the current Lexus lineup is a rear-driver except the midsize ES, their top-selling sedan (with AWD available on many). This creates a lot of opportunity for performance builds. Currently, only GS and RC (coupe equivalent of the IS sedan) offer full F models. We've realized for a while that we had never driven an F and an F Sport of the same vehicle back to back. We did have the RC F Sport and RC F some months apart, about a year and a half ago. This time, we nailed it.

The GS 350 F Sport arrived first; it departed one week later when we swapped it for the GS F.

Past experience with both types of build, one at a time, had already shown us their fundamentals—sort of a nimble pony car versus beefy muscle car personality comparison. If you really like chocolate, what's best? A milkshake or cake? Surely you'll like them both. It's much the same here.

If you naturally gravitate toward an F Sport first, it's likely because it's available on so many mod-

els, even the front-drive ES. You may also go with F Sport for its all-wheel-drive availability.

If you dream of a full F car, your lust will start with its high-powered V8 and only grow from there, as you delve into details of its suspension, brakes, wheels and torque vectoring rear end with track and slalom modes, then settle yourself into its performance-inspired interior. But again, all this is only available on two cars.

And the GS F rear-drive-basis sedan is one of those two. Compare specs at right, but also compare pricing. The GS 350 F Sport's base is more than \$32 grand lower than the F. Percentage-wise, that's almost 40 percent off. Fuel mileage ratings are three points lower in the F, not likely to be a real dealmaker or -breaker in this category.

Then again, the F Sport's horsepower is almost 35 percent lower than the F, and its torque almost 30 percent. What's more, the GS F is quite complete right out of the box, while our F Sport added enough options to bring its price a notable degree closer to that of the F (enough so that inspiration could build to cross-shop). Notable is that the F Sport adds an array of options—limited slip rear end, orange brake calipers, dynamic handling and

rear steering, and an F Sport steering wheel—that seem as though they should be part of an F Sport build in the first place, probably an active decision by Lexus to keep price comparison first impressions farther apart. Whether that creates a cost-saving opportunity or a gap-narrowing annoyance will depend upon your goals and response.

Migrating in sequence from F Sport to F, as we did, reveals an interior that is fundamentally very similar, though with black carbon fiber insets and in our case Circuit Red leather sport seats in the GS F, not an over-the-top move from family sedan to race car, but a very solid step in that direction.

The GS F has a more dramatic body when you compare details, though its basically clean presentation belies the power beneath its skin. The grille is, surprisingly, the same. Air intakes are bigger on the F, but more wildly styled on the F Sport. Scalloped and F-badged fenders and door sills on the GS F are far more dramatic, though still low key. All in all, the F has the edge on edginess, but as standalones, they are both visually strong.

The GS F is 300 pounds heavier than the GS 350 F Sport (8.26 percent), but its power and torque are 50.2 and 39 percent higher, with differences in zero-to-60 times and top speeds as you would expect (see sidebar). Weight distribution front/rear remains the same in both, despite the V8 versus V6, with the weight of an advanced rear suspen-

sion in the GS F balancing out increased engine size. Differences in suspension, wheels and engine size impact not only your drive and performance, but various dimensions and capacities—with notable differences in specs for legroom and cargo volume, as well as turning circle.

Our time in both consisted of what most daily drivers' time will—freeways and surface streets. Drive modes work through an effective controller—twist one way for eco, the other way for sport (and twist again for sport-plus). Press a button in the center to exit the modes—a great eyes-off interface. In some cars, modes rate a shrug, but in both of these, they are effective, especially satisfying in the GS F, which gives you an added grin from its amped-up but authentic V8 soundtrack.

All in all, are they dramatically different? Yes and no. The differences are obvious, but when you live with one and only one (kind of like getting married), the experience is equally wonderful with either. The only thing we didn't do was move from the F back to the F Sport. Would that be disappointing? If so, only momentarily? Our guess is yeah a little bit and yeah definitely. But we've learned a lot and affirmed a lot. Everything we thought even when driving them months apart holds water, and the decision to be made is no easier nor harder with our newfound experience.

Test drive either one, and you're likely to think, why would I even need to look at the other? Or test drive both, and join the conundrum club. It's a pretty great conundrum to have. ■

SPECIFICATIONS: GS 350 F SPORT

ENGINE	.....3.5L alum/alum V6 DOHC 24v VVT-i
HP / TORQUE	.....311 hp / 280 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....11.8:1
DRIVETRAIN	.....RWD (AWD avail)
TRANSMISSION	.....8-spd sequential auto, paddles
MODES	.....eco, normal/custom, sport, sport S+, snow
REAR DIFFERENTIAL	.....(RWD) 2.937
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	.....5.7 sec / 143 mph
SUSPENSION	.....F: dbl wishbone w high-mount upper arms, coils, gas shocks, stblzr bar; R: multi-link, coils, gas shocks, stblzr bar; F SPORT: Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS)
STEERING	.....speed-sens elec power rack & pinion
BRAKES	.....F: 14.0x1.2; R: 12.2x0.7
WHEELS	.....(F SPORT) 19x8 front, 19x9 rear
TIRES	.....F: 235/40R19; R: 265/35R19 summer
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....192.1 / 112.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....(w LDH rear steering opt) 33.4 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....5.1 in
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....38.0 / 37.8 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....42.3 / 36.8 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....18.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIBUTION	.....3726 lb / 53/47%
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....91 premium unleaded / 17.4 gal
MPG	.....19/27/22 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$52,760
COLOR HEADS-UP DISPLAY	.....900
PREMIUM TRIPLE-BEAM LED HEADLAMPS	.....1160
LIMITED SLIP DIFFERENTIAL	.....500
PREMIUM AUDIO: Mark Levinson premium surround sound audio w 17 speakers, 7.1 premium surround, GreenEdge and CLARI-FI tech	.....1380
ONE-TOUCH POWER TRUNK	.....400
ORANGE BRAKE CALIPERS	.....300
INTUITIVE PARK ASSIST	.....500
LEXUS DYNAMIC HANDLING, REAR STEERING	.....1700
F SPORT HEATED LEATHER STEERING WHEEL	.....150
OPTIONS: Rear bumper applique (85), illuminated door sills (425), trunk mat (105), wheel locks (80)	.....695
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1025
TOTAL	.....\$61,470

SPECIFICATIONS: GS F

ENGINE	.....5.0L alum/alum V8 DOHC 32v VVT-iE
HP / TORQUE	.....467 hp / 389 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....12.3:1
DRIVETRAIN	.....RWD w torque vectoring differential w slalom, track and standard modes
TRANSMISSION	.....8-spd sport DSG auto, paddles, man
MODES	.....eco, normal/custom, sport, sport S+
REAR DIFFERENTIAL	.....2.937
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	.....4.5 sec / 168 mph
SUSPENSION	.....F: linear adaptive variable system, dbl wishbone w high-mount upper arms, high-rate coils w bound stopper, large-diameter hollow stblzr bar; R: linear adaptive variable system, multi-link w low-mount upper arms, high-rate coils w bound stopper
STEERING	.....speed-sens elec power assist, rack & pinion, F Sport mode adjustable
BRAKES	.....Brembo vented, opposed alum calipers, high-friction pads; F: 14.9, 6-piston; R: 13.5, 4-piston
WHEELS	.....19x9 front, 19x10 rear
TIRES	.....F: 255/35ZR19; R: 275/35ZR19 Michelin PSS
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....193.5 / 112.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....36.8 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....5.1 in
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....38.9 / 37.8 in
LEGROOM (R/R)	.....40.6 / 32.8 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....14.0 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIBUTION	.....4034 lb / 53/47%
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....91 premium unleaded / 17.4 gal
MPG	.....16/24/19 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$85,010
BBS 19" WHEELS: hand-polished, split	.....600
COLOR HEADS-UP DISPLAY	.....900
PREMIUM AUDIO: Mark Levinson premium surround sound audio w 17 speakers, 7.1 premium surround, GreenEdge and CLARI-FI tech	.....1380
ILLUMINATED DOOR SILLS	.....425
PKG: Trunk mat, cargo net, wheel locks, rear bumper applique, glove	.....370
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1025
TOTAL	.....\$89,710

FAREWELL, LEXUS GS? Between the time we drove the Lexus GS F Sport and GS F and the time these words hit the page, word came down the pike that Lexus plans to discontinue the GS after this year. Then again, this year has been so disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, everybody's crystal balls have become murkier since that announcement. Plus... didn't we hear the same thing in 2019 about 2020? And yet here we are.



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It's not complicated by Joe Sage

VW's car lineup is both simple and complex. Set aside hatches, wagons and discontinued Beetles, and there are three sedans: big Arteon (evolved from CC), midsize Passat and compact Jetta. Set aside GLI, R-line, Premium and 4MOTION variants, and there are three fundamental trims for the Passat: S, SE, SEL.

Pick your model, pick your trim, and your job is pretty much done. Our sample driven here is that midsize trim, SE, on that midsize car, Passat. Check the specs in the sidebar: it's complete-as-is, simple yet thorough and effective. The pricing structure is short and sweet. Choose, sign and drive.

The SE is priced less than \$3000 higher than an S and adds a long list of standard features, including keyless entry-start, power seats, auto climate control, heated seats, additional rear USB ports, adaptive cruise and lane keeping, and much more.

The SE is priced more than \$5000 lower than a line-topping SEL and forgoes leather, a more advanced audio-nav unit, sunroof, bigger wheels and a few other things.

A fourth trim, R-Line (which we had set aside earlier for simplicity) has sporty trim elements and bigger wheels. Priced between SE and SEL, with a mix of features accordingly, it conveys a general air

of performance, though all models have the same drivetrain, steering, suspension and brakes.

Factoring features and price point, this SE is at a favorable balance point—demonstrably more than midway up the feature curve while less than midway up the price curve. Simple.

A little more complicated are a few of the controls, though any owner will get used to any vehicle's eccentricities. Notable are steering wheel-mounted interface controllers with a left-right up-down logic that reminds us of all the years VW's mirror controls were set up 90 degrees different from anybody else's, which we noted as "side-ways to the car and sideways in their behavior"; and a digital clock that requires digit-by-digit changing and confirming that reminds us of 1992.

There is a center armrest, but no console, and its underside is quite sharp (perhaps it's a lid in some other model), and it blocks the cupholders and a coin bin to a notable degree.

There may be mitigations to all of the above, but we had no owner's manual for deeper digging.

A big plus is the big trunk, almost 16 cu.ft. It doesn't open like other VWs, with their slick rocking VW emblem, but rather via a

SPECIFICATIONS

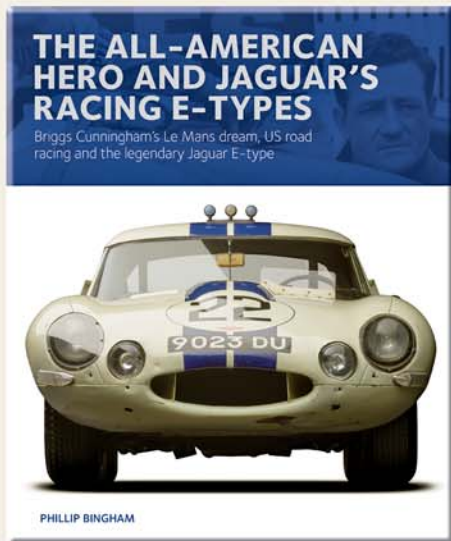
ENGINE	2.0L inline-4 16v turbo/intercooled, TSI
HP / TORQUE	174 hp / 206 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	FWD
TRANSMISSION	6-spd auto
SUSPENSION	F: strut-type w lower control arms, coils, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar; R: multi-link, coils, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar
STEERING	elec power assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 12.3x1.0 vented; R: 10.7x0.4 solid disc
WHEELS / TIRES	17x7J alum-alloy / 215/55R17 94H AS
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	193.6 / 110.4 in
TURNING CIRCLE	36.4 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	5.4 in
HEADROOM (F/R)	38.3 / 37.8 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	42.4 / 39.1 in
CARGO CAPACITY	15.9 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3325 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	regular unl / 18.5 gal
MPG	23/34/27 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$25,845
DESTINATION CHARGE	920
TOTAL	\$26,765

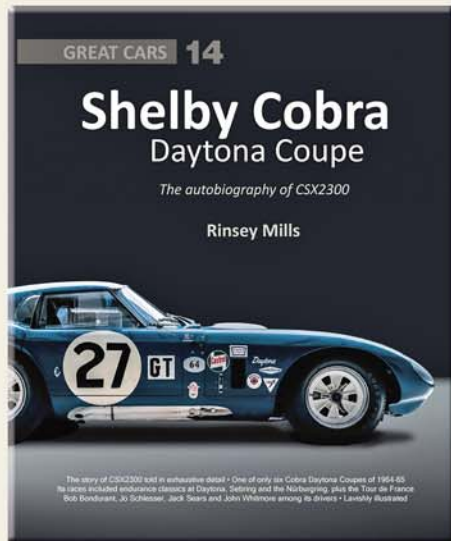
hatch-like release along the bottom lip.

Engine and suspension performance are solid, fuel mileage is quite good and the cabin is spacious and cleanly laid out. Check out feature functions for yourself. The price is right. ■

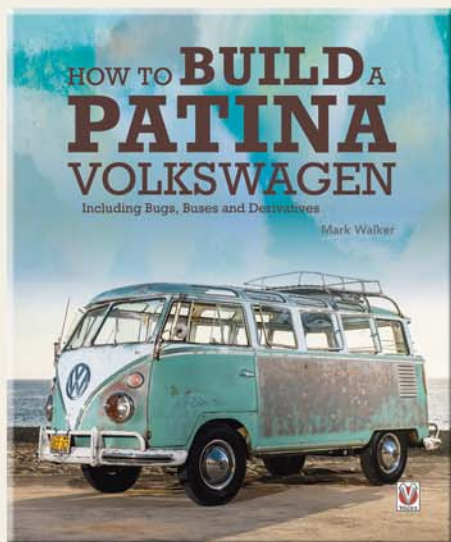




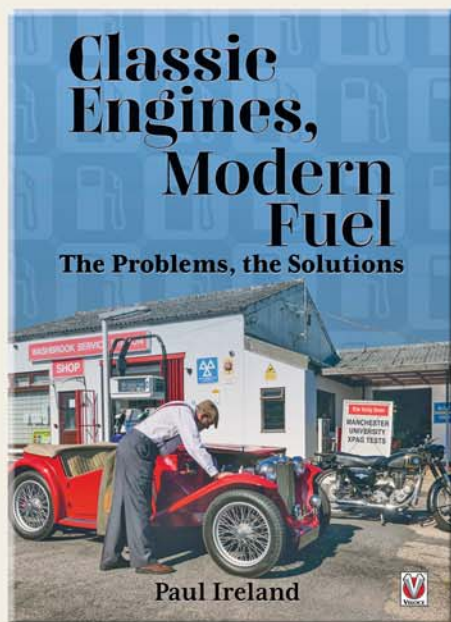
The All-American Hero and Jaguar's Racing E-types
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Phillip Bingham
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 250x300 mm - 288 pp - 250+ images
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Shelby Cobra Daytona Coupe
 The Autobiography of CSX2300
 Great Cars Series No. 14
Rinsey Mills
 Publisher: Porter Press International, February 2020
 235x285 mm - 336 pp - 300+ images
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How to Build a Patina Volkswagen
Mark Walker
 Publisher: Veloce Publishing
 207x250 mm - 160 pp - 333 images
 \$45.00 - hardback - ISBN: 9781787115002



Classic Engines, Modern Fuel
 The Problems, the Solutions
Paul Ireland
 Publisher: Veloce Publishing
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The All-American Hero and Jaguar's Racing E-types
PHILLIP BINGHAM

First shown at the 1961 Geneva Motor Show, the Jaguar E-type redefined perceptions of how a sports car could look. Enzo Ferrari is said to have described it as "the most beautiful car in the world." Demand swiftly exceeded supply after Jaguar initially planned to build it in relatively small numbers. It was an instant hit on racing circuits: Graham Hill took a roadster to victory on its debut at Oulton Park. Chassis 875027, the focus of this story, was the first E-type campaigned by American racing entrepreneur Briggs Cunningham's famous team, and its performances helped persuade Jaguar to use the E-type as the basis for a competition thoroughbred that has become one of the most coveted of all time: the Lightweight.

Shelby Cobra Daytona Coupe
 The autobiography of CSX2300
RINSEY MILLS

In his foreword, Peter Brock, director of special projects at Shelby American from 1962-65, says: "There have been many words written about the Shelby era, but relatively few that focus on this most intensive early period with the Daytona Cobra Coupes." The story is told in unprecedented detail and with special emphasis on one of the six Coupes built. Author Rinsey Mills, the writer of Shelby's authorized biography, draws on first-hand accounts from Shelby American drivers and team members, and shares many period photographs never previously published.

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How to Build a Patina Volkswagen
MARK WALKER

The explosion of patina Volkswagens on social media has inspired car fanatics who realize you don't have to restore a car to end up with a good-looking ride—you can stand out from the crowd, even on a tight budget. Patina builds are unspoiled and characterful and have inspired the media and celebrities. Interest has led to higher values and given an honest, cool mode of transportation a high price tag. Enthusiasts have grown with the hobby, finding ways to achieve a great look on a tight budget, and producing a micro-industry that still manages to embrace the "built not bought" ethos. This book looks at differing styles of patina VW build, with tips on finding and buying a project car and doing a sympathetic patina style renovation, with a chapter on recreating a patina finish on repaired areas or missing parts.

Classic Engines, Modern Fuel
PAUL IRELAND

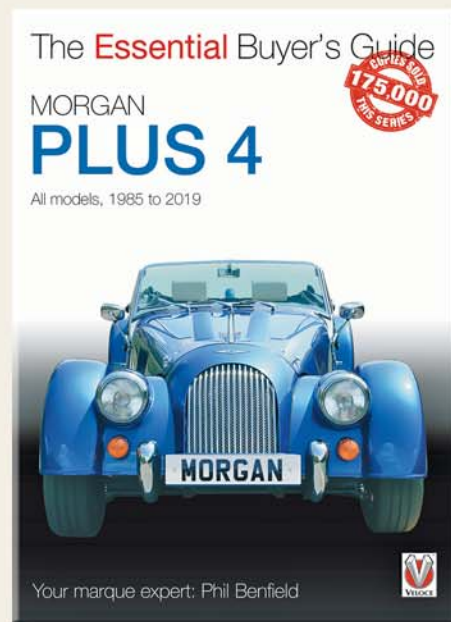
A collection of popular articles previously published by the author in assorted car magazines and based on in-depth research carried out at Manchester University, this book investigates how classic engines respond to modern gasoline, in a way any enthusiast can understand. One chapter ranks some brands and grades of modern fuel, while other chapters debunk some of the myths about gasoline and engines. Real data helps you tune your classic and ensure it runs as it should. The appendix gives a down-to-earth description of how to rebuild and tune SU and similar carburetors.



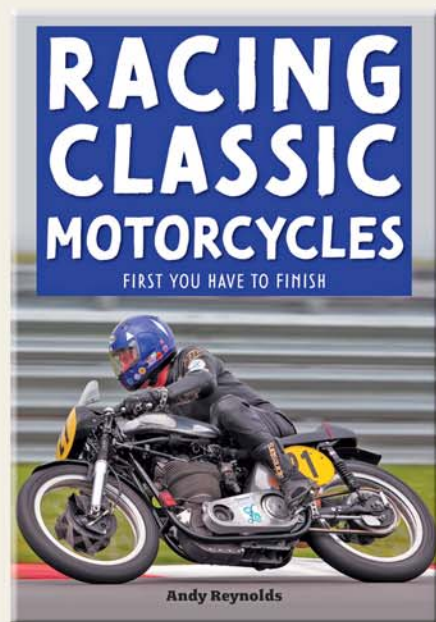
The Dealmaker
 Tom Hartley / with Ken Gibson
 Publisher: Veloce Publishing
 148x210 mm - 240 pp - 179 images
 \$30.00 - hardback - ISBN: 9781787115675



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Nicholas Greene
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The Dealmaker
TOM HARTLEY

Walking out of school at age 11, unable to read or write, Tom Hartley set up his own business buying and selling cars, ripping up the rule book on his way to the top. Today, "The Dealmaker" runs one of the most successful independent luxury, performance and classic car businesses in the world. Hartley had made his first million by age 17, then went from hero to zero, living in a mobile home with his wife and working from the back of a car, but his burning desire to be the best saw him climb his way back to the top. He has survived and thrived through four recessions and three life-threatening illnesses. His unshakable belief in himself is an inspiration to anyone who dares to dream. Written in collaboration with Ken Gibson, 24-year award-winning motoring editor of *The Sun*.

Mercedes-Benz G-Wagen
NICHOLAS GREENE

The boxy, square-edged, no-frills W460 Mercedes-Benz G-Wagen set out to be Stuttgart's answer to the Range Rover. Adhering to Gottlieb Daimler's premise of "nothing but the best," it was soon known worldwide as "The Best 4X4." This guide navigates model changes, from the simple hand-built W460 to the more luxurious W463, with details of engine specifications and issues you may come across when shopping for one of the best purpose-made vehicles around. Greene has written many feature articles for classic car and club magazines in the UK and France. His passion for Mercedes-Benz cars has led him to research and writing for an elite motor manufacturer. Having restored many cars, his present stable includes a Mercedes W126 S-Class 560SE, his beloved Mercedes G-Wagen, and several classic Citroëns and Renaults.

Morgan Plus 4
PHIL BENFIELD

Want the Morgan experience, but afraid you'll buy a lemon? Having this book in your pocket is just like having a real marque expert by your side. Benefit from Benfield's years of experience, and learn how to spot a bad example quickly and assess a promising one like a pro, so you can get the right Morgan Plus 4 at the right price. Packed with good advice—from running costs, through paperwork, vital statistics, valuation and the Morgan community, to whether this classic car will suit you and your lifestyle—this is the complete guide to choosing, assessing and buying the Morgan Plus 4 of your dreams.

Racing Classic Motorcycles
ANDY REYNOLDS

This is the story of a classic motorcycle racer fortunate enough to have ridden many of the best classic machines at the highest level from 1976-2016, on many of the world's most famous road racing courses. There are tales of success, friendship and the loss of racing pals. Machine preparation and mechanical failures feature heavily, as the author recounts his frustrations and joys. Reynolds maintained and built many of the bikes he raced and ultimately retired from riding to become both a machine scrutineer and a sponsor. All aspects of motorcycle racing are covered in an easy and entertaining narrative. Bring your checkbook and medical insurance!

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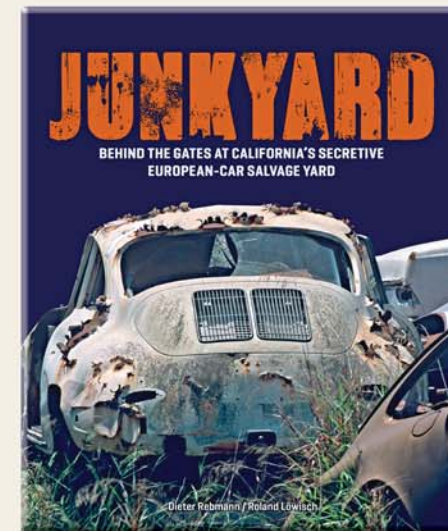
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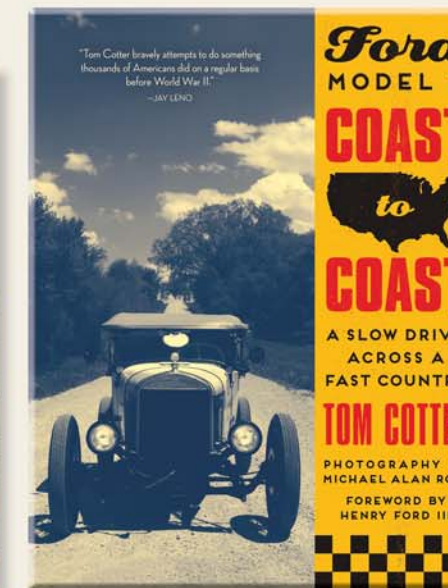
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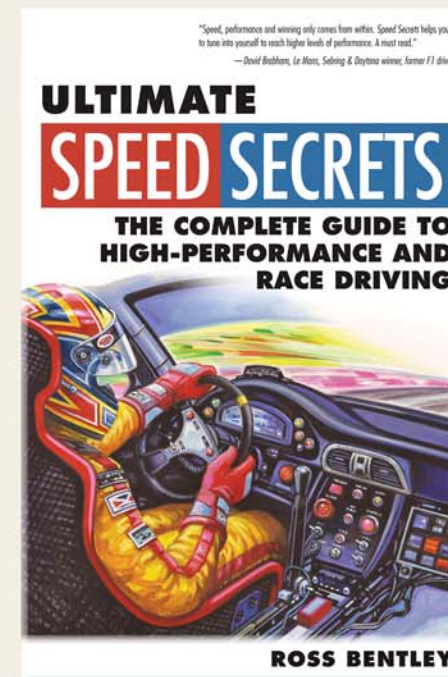
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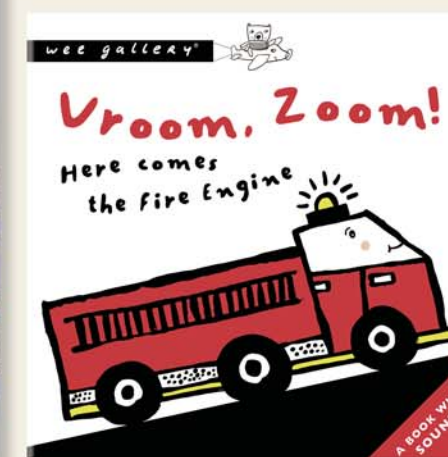
Junkyard
Behind the Gates at California's Secretive European-Car Salvage Yard
Roland Löwisch / photos: Dieter Rebmann
Publisher: Motorbooks (Quarto Group)
245x290 mm - 176 pp - 157 images
\$40.00 - hardback - ISBN: 9780760367681



Ford Model T Coast to Coast
A Slow Drive across a Fast Country
Tom Cotter
Publisher: Motorbooks (Quarto Group)
190x246 mm - 224 pp - 150 color + 25 bw images
\$35.00 - hardback - ISBN: 9780760359464



Ultimate Speed Secrets
The Complete Guide to High-Performance and Race Driving
Ross Bentley
Publisher: Motorbooks (Quarto Group)
152x229 mm - 336 pp - 115 color + 26 bw images
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Vroom, Zoom!
Here Comes The Fire Engine
Surya Sajnani
Publisher: words & pictures (Quarto Group)
457x457 mm - 8 pp - a book with sounds
£9.99 - board book - ISBN: 9780711253896

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Junkyard
ROLAND LÖWISCH / PHOTOS: DIETER REBMAN
In 1967, Rudi Klein began buying wrecked, damaged and worn-out high-end European cars under the business name "Foreign Auto Wrecking," amassing a stunning collection over time. Some 20 years ago, after much negotiation, photographer Dieter Rebmann and author Roland Löwisch were granted rare entry to the grounds to create the only known photo documentation of Klein's famed stockpile of distraught—but very rare and valuable—Aston Martin, Ferrari, Maserati, Porsche, even a one-of-one 1935 Mercedes-Benz 500K built for pre-war racer Rudolf Caracciola. Klein passed away in 2001. The collection remains under the care of his sons, who operate it as elusively as their father, maintaining its decades-long air of mystery. No one is sure what other prizes rest behind the yard's not-open-to-the-public gates.

Ford Model T Coast to Coast
TOM COTTER
Contemplating early 20th century American automotive life as talk turns to autonomous cars, Tom Cotter documents a cross-country adventure with photographer Michael Alan Ross as they pilot a century-old Model T Ford on a 3,000-mile journey from Atlantic to Pacific. They stop in small towns and share locals' stories about cars, travel and life. They explore back roads adjacent to their main route, the Lincoln Highway—the first transcontinental road, evoking Cannonball Baker, Jack Kerouac, John Steinbeck and Bill Bryson. Some are the same roads young Edsel Ford traveled in his father's Model T upon high school graduation in 1917. They visit automotive and transport museums, as well as Model T clubs, mechanics, junkyards and collectors, while also recording the numerous trials and tribulations of keeping a 100-year-old car operating on a 3,000-mile journey.

Ultimate Speed Secrets
ROSS BENTLEY
Performance and racing drivers constantly seek ways to sharpen their skills and lower their lap times. This book can help you go faster, whatever your goals. Pro race driver and coach Ross Bentley has raced everything from Indycars to production sedans, on ovals, road courses and street circuits around the world. His proven techniques—choosing the correct line, overtaking maneuvers, adapting to new tracks and cars, the mental game and dealing with adversity, even finding (and keeping) a sponsor—benefit novices as well as pros. Specially commissioned color diagrams illustrate the concepts. It's the ultimate high-performance driving tutorial.

Vroom, Zoom!
SURYA SAJNANI
Listen as the sounds of the city come alive and hear the fantastic noises of four favorite city vehicles—helicopter, bike, fire truck and taxi—in this interactive board book. A wonderfully simple sound book with fun and noisy sound effects that help babies recognize familiar sounds and introduce older toddlers to descriptive words. Durable and tactile, this fun and engaging sound book is ideal for the nursery, the play center, the changing area—wherever you and your child are. Parents can even switch the sounds off if they wish. Updated edition with new and easy-to-press sound chips. ■

Arizona at the Isle of Man TT

Ready to roll, delayed by coronavirus.

By Kelly Sallaway

Photos by Martynsfotos, Cole Horchler, Paul Phillips and James Qualtrough



In February, Team Arizona had big plans for an event after Arizona Bike Week, to mark 20 years at their Gilbert training center and celebrate sport bike fans and riders. They had a celebrity appearance up their sleeve—Pete Murray, a Phoenix local who had competed in five events on the historic Isle of Man track and as one of the sole Americans at the storied TT (Tourist Trophy) event, was scheduled to be the guest of honor.

The celebration had been planned for late April at the TEAM Arizona facility, a five-acre lighted outdoor site dedicated to rider safety. There would be a motorcycle ride-in, an Isle of Man TT scooter track, a motorcycle dealership midway, food trucks and special guests, all in a family-friendly atmosphere.

We all know the rest. As the coronavirus epidemic and lockdown grew more serious through March and April, both the celebratory event here and the race itself on Isle of Man were cancelled.

Roadracing is its own kind of controlled craziness, with racers nearly horizontal coming into turns and hitting straightaways at 200 mph. But in this risk versus reward context, no venue is as

famous or as dangerous as the Isle of Man. This legendary race has been scaring the bejeezus out of riders and spectators since 1907. It holds a special history and mystery for anyone who has ever ridden a bike, and it's been a dream come to life for Murray.

The Isle of Man TT is the most dangerous race in the world and the most fatal. Although the risk is off-scale (275 people have died, versus 22 for the Indy 500 over the same time period), it still lures riders as the ultimate test of skill and survival. According to Pete Murray, "There is nothing like it," and as for why? Pete and other racers who have bested the 37.73-mile circuit say, "We live in a time when anyone came climb Everest. The TT is the last real challenge. Not anyone can do it. Some won't even try, and once you have done it you will never find anything else like it... nothing. The exhilaration of pushing a bike to the limits (my limits, anyway) around the most challenging course on the planet. It's the most difficult and most fun thing I've ever done."

As one of the handful of brave humans to ever qualify and race the Isle of Man TT, a conversation

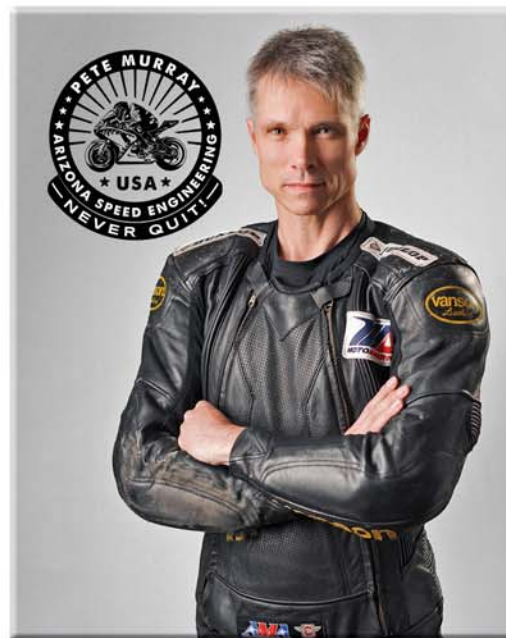
with Pete may strike you as like finding out your neighbor walks a tightrope without a net over a pool of Great White sharks.

It's rare for any American to make the field, and, in fact, Pete was the only US racer in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Murray is humble about being the lone Yank in the international field, saying, "I was just glad to know the American flag would be flying over the grandstand."

Murray came into racing later in life. After college with a degree in Aeronautical Science, he now balances roadracing in MotoAmerica, his career as a pilot for American Airlines, and his obsession for training and qualifying for the Isle of Man. At 49, one of the oldest TT competitors, at an age when most racers are considering their exit from the sport, Murray made a decision: "It was just a matter of fact: that's the most challenging motorcycle race on the planet, so that's the motorcycle race I am going to go do."

Pete's a hands-on motorcycle guy, building his own bikes and hauling them to domestic races, but logistics for the TT forced him to seek out a different solution. Finding a race team in the UK was

Left page: Martynsfotos / At right, upper: Cole Horchler; Martynsfotos / lower: Paul Phillips; Martynsfotos; James Qualtrough



the answer—Robbie Sylvester's VRS Racing.

"VRS is a small affair that Robbie runs on the side out of the shop in his back yard," says Murray, "but he has had some great riders on his bikes over the years, and his team is one of the most professional operations in the paddock. Renting a bike from him made perfect logistical sense. He shows up with well prepared bikes, under a professional awning, with a support team that takes care of everything. All I have to do is show up... it's like I'm a superstar!"

Before ever attempting the TT, normally held annually the first week in June, Pete followed a plan designed for newcomers, racing in the Manx Grand Prix, an amateur event held on the Island in August. The ManxGP and a Classic TT, where past Champions return for laps in front of adoring fans, are combined events with all the TT pageantry, but without the pressure or huge crowds. Murray suggests that trip as an alternative to the TT. "I would recommend that anyone wanting to watch racing on the IOM go to the ManxGP. You'll still see fast bikes, but also more of this beautiful island."

Murray takes his place as a role model serious-

ly. He is an advocate for any American who wants to attend or race in the IOMTT, and will continue to race and mentor other riders. "I would love to see an All-American team at the TT. If I have to start that team myself, I will."

Pete Murray will be up to the challenge. "It's what Americans do, it's who we are. We seek out challenges and crush them."

Murray will be competing anywhere that is open and running in 2020. He's entered into both the Classic TT and ManxGP on the Isle of Man in August. If those races go ahead, he will be back on the Isle of Man, but still waiting for another shot at the TT next year. ■

TEAM Arizona is the premier motorcycle rider training organization in Arizona. Operating for more than 30 years in Arizona, TEAM Arizona has motorcycle safety courses to obtain a motorcycle license (endorsement) or enhance rider skills. Motorcycle riders have been coming to TEAM Arizona since 1989, where their experienced instructors have trained more than 135,000 motorcycle, scooter and three-wheel motorcycle riders. TEAM Arizona has fourteen locations throughout the state and can be contacted at 480-998-9888. •

The Isle of Man—a self-governing British Crown dependency in the Irish Sea between England and Ireland—is a study in contrast. Picture the world's fastest sport bikes careening through bucolic English villages. The Isle of Man TT is famous for being extremely hard to get to. Over 60,000 fans make the journey, none without a lot of planning. Pete Murray's first impression was that it "felt like home ... I grew up on a farm in a small town in western New York, and the feel of the island is very similar." The worst aspect? "The weather." Gorgeous green hills are the result of a lot of rain, one reason veteran visitors suggest making flexible plans for your trip—expect inevitable delays. The locals either love the race and welcome foreigners with open arms or they hate it, leave and rent out their homes. The 5,000-mile trip is best done by flying to Ireland and taking a ferry from Dublin or Belfast to the Isle of Man. Accommodations, from castles to BNBs to a tent camping spot, book out a year in advance. The well-organized race website directs travelers to every service: www.iomtraces.com. ■

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A WEEK WITH : 2020 JEEP® COMPASS LIMITED 4X4

OH BABY

BY JOE SAGE

Ask anyone to draw a picture of a Jeep, and you'll probably get a Wrangler. That's understandable, though the lineup now contains six vehicles: Wrangler, Gladiator, Grand Cherokee, Cherokee, Compass and Renegade. Wrangler is in a league of its own, as is Gladiator (though the latter does inhabit the midsize truck segment). The other four are your basic full-size, midsize, compact and subcompact SUVs (with some room for interpretation). All include versions with top-flight off-road capability, and some offer builds that move well into luxury and/or performance terrain.

It's great to have choices, and all are very popular in our neck of the woods—check the office parking lot or drive a mile, and we're sure to see examples of all six. (Also watch for a three-row Grand Wagoneer or equivalent, once this coronavirus fog lifts and things get back on track.)

One of the neat things about the Jeep lineup—Wrangler is a dead giveaway—is that it's not just a papa-mama-baby bear set of sizes. Rather, each vehicle has its own distinct character, style, form and attributes. The variety is a big plus and/or a conundrum, as it can lead to apples'n'oranges buying decisions. One arguable exception is the Jeep Compass (which replaced both Liberty and a com-

pletely different Compass a few years ago). Based on everything from styling to its range of models and finishes, it has been loosely known to many as a Baby Grand Cherokee. And those are some big adult-sized shoes to fill.

Compass and Renegade are priced about the same (starting at about \$22,000). Their interior size specs are very similar and in some cases overlap—the smaller Renegade, for example, having more headroom. And that may shed light on the Compass's personality—a bit lower, sleeker and more carlike, while the Renegade is taller, boxier and more utility-like. Both have a 180-hp 2.4L TigerShark four-cylinder engine, though Renegade also offers a 160-hp 1.4L turbo (with higher torque than the 2.4L). Both have the Fiat-based 9-speed automatic, while Renegade offers a manual only with the 1.4L engine, and Compass offers a manual (or 6-spd auto, not 9-spd) with two-wheel drive only.

Compass's Jeep Active Drive system is four-wheel/two-wheel automatic, with 4WD lock plus drive modes for sand and mud.

There are similarly useful comparisons with the Cherokee, but its combination of bigger engines (the main thing we'd like available on Compass) and \$4k-higher pricing (advantage: Compass) is the main one. That leads to Grand Cherokee, another \$8k higher still, or \$12k (more than 50 percent) higher than Compass. Which brings us right back to the Baby Grand thing. Once you've taken a mental spin through the whole lineup, the Compass's appeal is clear. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	2.4L TigerShark in-line 4 w MultiAir2 alum/alum 16v SOHC w engine stop-start (ESS)
HP / TORQUE	180 hp / 175 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	4x4 (4x2 available)
TRANSMISSION	(4x4) 9-spd automatic
4X4 SYSTEM	Jeep Active Drive: fully disconnect 4x2 mode w auto 4x4 engage; full-time 4x4 mode w active on-demand clutch (alt: Trailhawk: Jeep Active Drive Low w 20:1 crawl)
ELECTRICAL	160A, dual batteries w ESS
SUSPENSION . F.	MacPherson strut, coils, flat front steel crossmember, hi-strgrth steel dbl shell lower control, stblzr bar; R: Chapman strut, hi-strgrth steel links, isolated steel rear cradle (4x4), coils, stblzr bar
STEERING	electric rack & pinion
BRAKES . F.	12x1.1 vented w 2.36 single piston float cal; R: 10.95 solid w 1.5 single-piston floating caliper
WHEELS	18x7.0 polished alum / grey pockets
TIRES	225/55R18 BSW all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	173 / 103.8 in
TURNING CIRCLE	36.4 ft (Trailhawk 35.3)
GROUND CLEARANCE	(4x4) 8.2 in
APPROACH / BRKOVER / DEPART	16.8 / 22.9 / 31.7
HEADROOM (F/R)	(w sunroof) 38.6 / 38.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.8 / 38.3 in
CARGO CAPACITY	27.2 / 59.8 cu.ft
WEIGHT / TOW CAPACITY	3327 lb / (4x4) 2000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	regular unl / 13.5 gal
MPG	22/30/25 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$29,905
REDLINE PEARL-COAT PAINT	195
PREMIUM LIGHTING GRP: LED, bi-xenon	695
LUXURY SEAT GRP: leather, vented, pwr, memory	595
UCONNECT® 4C NAV W 8.4": w wifi hot spot	1245
FULL SUNROOF: power front, fixed rear	1595
AUDIO: premium Alpine® speaker system	795
REAR CONVENIENCE GRP: power liftgate, revrsbl mat	725
SAFETY/SECURITY GRP: rear park assist, blind spot & cross-path detect, rain-sense wipers	745
ADVANCED SAFETY GRP: auto high beam, adaptive cruise w stop & go, lane depart warn plus, full speed fwd collision warn plus, advanced brake assist	795
COMPACT SPARE	345
DESTINATION CHARGE	1495
TOTAL	\$39,130



Heavy duty gains mainstream appeal

BY JOE SAGE

We have a theory that the new round of mid-size pickups has a psychological impact on full-size truck buyers. In a world long dominated by full-size 150 (or 1500) and 250/350 (or 2500/3500) trucks, new midsize trucks are much closer in size and capability to full-size light trucks than in earlier generations. The wild card in our speculation is that rather than the market breaking between mid-size and full-size, for a lot of buyers it may break between midsize plus light full-size on the one hand, and heavy duty full-size on the other. The more casual buyer (as opposed to those with specific industrial needs) may increasingly be inspired to go with the heavy duties—go big or go home.

That brings us a truck like the one we have here—an F-350 with premium King Ranch materials, finishes and style, as well as top-level touchscreen interface and a full range of electronic driving aids. (Actually, it turns out all these things are welcome with traditional commercial drivers, too.)

This shift in patterns feeds itself from both ends. As a higher volume of buyers seek a more luxurious version of a heavy duty pickup—a truck best suited to special duty and produced in smaller volume not that long ago—it becomes more feasible to mass produce them.

All major pickups have ever higher payload and tow capacities, with many light pickups now sur-

passing heavy duties of a few years ago, while new heavy duties of course surpass their former selves even more so. The Ford F-350 we're driving here (diesel, 4x4, crew cab, longer bed, single rear wheels) can tow 20,000 pounds, or 22,000 with a fifth-wheel setup. If it were a dually, it could tow 34,700 pounds, or 35,400 if it were a regular cab dually, 35,750 if it were a 4x4 regular cab dually.

There are always tradeoffs in play. Two-row trucks are by far the most popular in today's market, but you might choose a full crew cab with shorter bed or a cab-and-a-half with a bit longer bed. Some single cabs even offer an eight-footer. Heavy duties often offer a longer wheelbase, thus more combinations. A dually is a lot to handle if your daily driving is around town and seldom specific to a heavy task (extreme livestock or boat, say). Four-wheel drive, by its own weight, reduces tow capacity in some builds, but not all. Some



might choose a particular build for a likely slight difference in fuel mileage, for long-term service complexity or even just to cut purchase cost.

We gave this F-350 a daily driver-style workout, given that we had it during one of the earliest weeks of the pandemic lockdown, during which nobody was quite sure what was even allowed. We didn't tow livestock, haul construction materials or go off-roading. (Nor did we go country clubbing.) But we ran it through duty that is representative of this newly expanded general appeal.

Drive-through windows—suddenly popular, or required—can challenge mirrors, wheels and corner overhangs, but it's not our first rodeo, and we eased in and out of quite a variety, unscathed. (A dually, though, might still be waiting for the lockdown to lift.) We squeezed through multi-level underground parking, with challenges from tight gates to columns throughout, all with bad lighting, easily conquering that, as well. Around town were the usual challenges of quick freeway lane changes, boulevard U-turns, parking spaces and such, all of which the F-350 conquered with the same basic ease as a lighter truck. And it earned an A-plus on speed bumps, though a tight low speed turn could generate some chattering from the rear wheels.

The truck's Power Stroke diesel powerplant is a big factor in its capabilities, and whereas its prodigious torque is ideally suited for those heavy-duty-specific tasks like towing 10 or 15 tons, it's welcome for its acceleration and general strength.

Not being sure what was allowed in early quarantine, but with media having been declared "essential" (even us?), we loaded a bag full of magazines into the truck, just in case we needed a solid explanation of our mission. We headed from the northeast Valley to the far East Valley, then up into the Apache Trail lakes, a chance to cover some miles, in turn a chance to enjoy one of the deluxe truck's great features—massaging seats, controlled (along with lumbar variables) via the center screen. That screen, along with steering wheel controls and binnacle readouts, is part of Ford's Sync 3 system, their best yet, with several details we noted as operational breakthroughs, where engineers clearly took a fresh look at things, while a few others were noted as "innovative but odd" (and that's the short version of very long notes).

The interior of this King Ranch-outfitted truck is

gorgeous, from leather (with stitched, embossed and debossed logos) to smooth koa-like insets, with all materials top-tier and appropriately used to convey both a premium cabin feel and truck toughness. Power running boards—a feature we're tall enough to usually wish were not in the way—can be set on automatic, or permanently deployed, or permanently retracted.

Over a week with lots of around-town stop-and-go, interspersed with long freeway stretches and open two-lane roads out of town, we averaged 17.5 mpg, quite good for a category that would have needed a long-miles, low-RPMs hypermiling special effort to achieve that a few years ago.

Task-duty buyers already know their needs and the purpose of the basic Ford F-350. For more general and diverse buyers—a huge and growing category—our particular truck here is built to the nines (and its price nudges into the eights, just barely, if you include delivery). You could shave many options off that and still have pretty much the same truck (especially if you don't require the diesel's torque). The fundamentals, though, as well as the King Ranch package, are pretty compelling. Next time you go F-150 shopping, you owe it to yourself to check these out, too. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

PLANTS	.....Kentucky Truck, Ohio Assembly
BUILD	.....fully-boxed high-strength steel frame, aluminum bed and cab
ENGINE	.....6.7L Power Stroke® diesel V8, compacted graphite iron block, aluminum heads
ALTERNATOR	.....std 240A (dual configs avail)
HP/TORQUE	.....475 hp / 1050 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	.....4x4
TRANSMISSION	.....TorqShift® HD 10-spd auto w SelectShift
SUSPENSION	.....F: mono beam (narrow front track) w coils, HD gas shocks, stblzr bar; R: solid axle, leaf springs, HD gas shocks
STEERING	.....power hydraulic, adaptive
BRAKES	.....4-whl vented discs, ABS: F: 14.29; R: 14.29
WHEELS	.....18" / LT275/65R18 123/120S M/S
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....250.0 / 159.8 in
TRACK (F/R)	.....68.3 / 67.2
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....8.8 / 8.5 in
APPROACH-BREAKOVER-DEPARTURE:	.....17.5/16.7 - 17.5/20.9 - 18.2/20.1°
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....40.8 / 40.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....43.9 / 43.6 in
BED LENGTH AT FLOOR	.....(160" SWB) 81.9 in
WEIGHT	.....(F-350 6.7L SRW 4x4 SWB) 7303 lb
PAYLOAD	.....(11,500# GVWR pkg) 3940 lb
TOW CAPACITY:	.....(6.7L d, SRW 4x4, crew) 20,000 lb
	.....(5th wheel/gooseneck) 22,000 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	.....(160" wheelbase) 34.0 gal
MPG	.....na

BASE PRICE	.....\$62,220
EQUIPMENT GROUP 710A	.....10,495
6.7L POWER STROKE V8 DIESEL	.....390
3.31 ELECTRONIC LOCKING AXLE	.....135
ALL WEATHER FLOOR MAT	.....740
ADAPTIVE CRUISE CONTROL	.....1000
ADAPTIVE STEERING	.....325
WHEEL WELL LINERS FRONT/REAR	.....595
TOUGH SPRAY-IN BED LINER3350
KING RANCH ULTIMATE PACKAGE1595
DESTINATION CHARGEna
TOTAL\$80,845

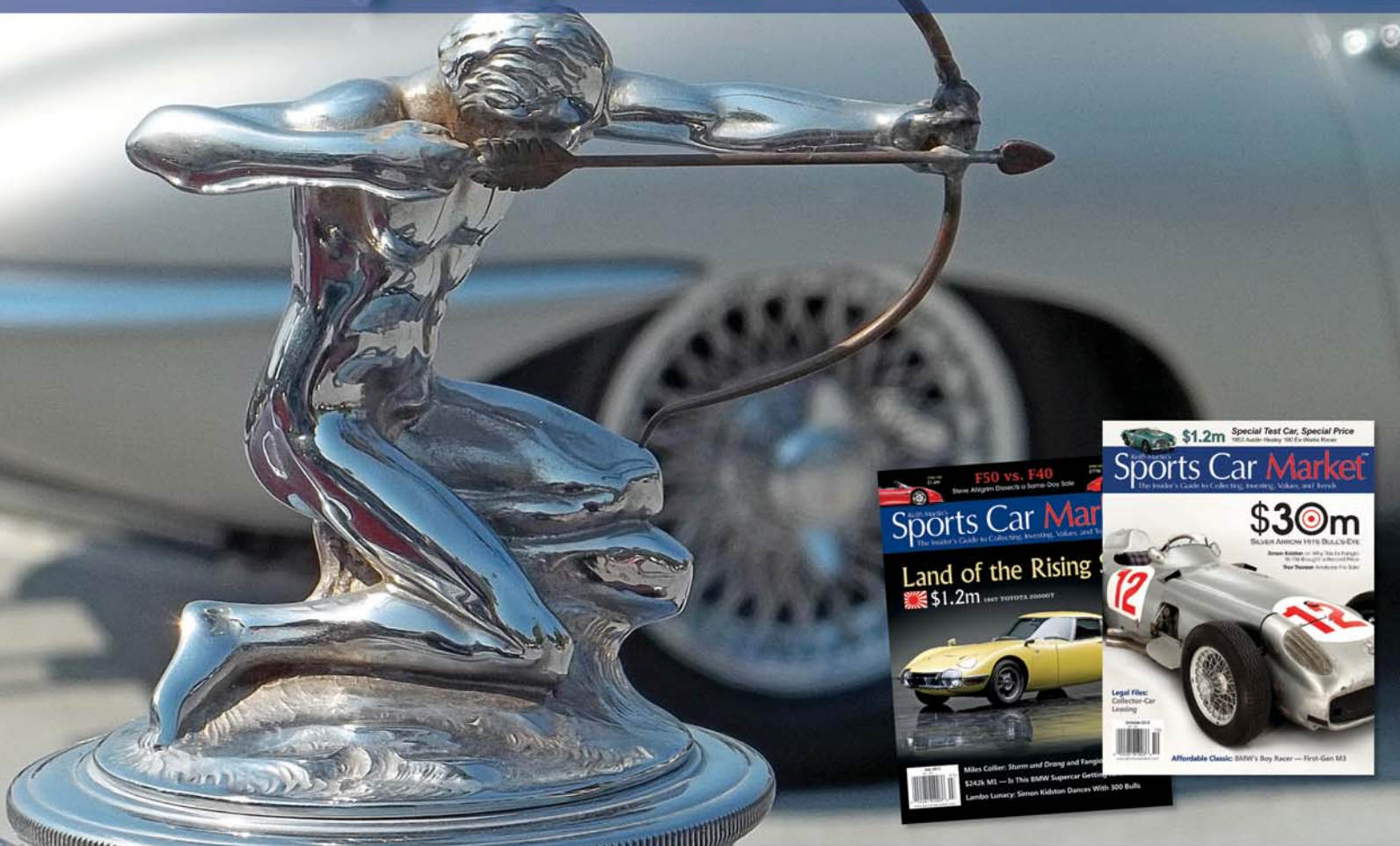


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A WEEK WITH : 2020 NISSAN VERSA SR CVT

A size below, a notch above

BY JOE SAGE

Nissan has a very complete car lineup, with sedans from Maxima, the biggest, through Altima and Sentra, down to Versa, the smallest. For EV fans, there's the long-established Leaf. Also over the years, there has been a Versa Hatchback, then Versa Note five-door. The Versa Note departed after 2019, leaving this Versa sedan for 2020.

Versa is classified as a subcompact. You would be forgiven for not guessing that from inside. Nor really from outside. Traditionally, you buy a starter car because it's affordable and gets the job done. This one, however, is bigger than what you pay for, more handsome than you pay for, and has more features than what you pay for, so to speak.

Versa follows Maxima and Altima in receiving Nissan's Emotional Geometry—longer, lower, wider, more aggressive. The 17-inch wheels on our top-trim SR are a big factor in its particularly strong stance. (At one point, we noticed a “twin” that had parked next to us turned out to be a nominally larger Sentra, but just a couple of years older.)

To preserve its spot in the pecking order, Versa's inclusions are kept simple in some cases—such as seat and climate controls or cable handbrake—but we quickly found this to be a big part of its

charm. Power seats offer a little more control, but for something you only set once, the one-calorie workout of perfecting your position is no biggie (multi-driver households may disagree). Being able to reach over and grab a knob, eyes-off, for instant gratification of airflow is arguably a benefit. And a visible, tangible handbrake leaves no uncertainty.

At the same time, the Nissan Safety Shield 360 suite of driver assist tech is available on all.

Seats are of a material that's so similar to leather in style and form that we had to double-check the spec, even while sitting in them. Even on lesser details, quality is all a notch above.

Whether base model or top trim like our sample, the new Versa is a nice car for the money. Some features or design details provide more than you'd expect, while others may remind you that there are more models above it, which is as it should be.

The Versa's power feels like more than its 1.6L and 122 hp might suggest, largely due to its 2729-lb weight, as well as expertly engineered balance.

Our sample has pushed above \$20,000, more than Sentra's starting price of \$19,090, but that's a base Sentra. Versa S starts at just \$14,730 and largely delivers all the same fundamentals that made us enjoy our week with the new Versa SR.

One more wild card: the base Versa S is available with a 5-speed manual transmission.

As long as your expectations are reasonable for

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	1.6L transverse-4 16v DOHC, alum/alum
HP/TORQUE	122 hp / 114 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	D-step Xtronic CVT
DRIVETRAIN	FWD
SUSPENSION	F: indep strut, twin tube shocks, 21mm stblzr bar; R: torsion beam, twin tube shocks
STEERING	elec power assist
BRAKES	F: 10.02x0.87 vented disc; R: 8.0 drum
WHEELS	17x6.5JJ alum-alloy
TIRES	205/50R17 AS
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	177.0 / 103.1 in
TURNING CIRCLE	34.8 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	6.8 in
APPROACH / DEPARTURE	17.3 / 20.1°
HEADROOM (F/R)	39.5 / 36.3 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	44.5 / 31.0 in
CARGO CAPACITY	15.0 cu.ft
WEIGHT	2729 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	regular unl / 10.8 gal
MPG	32/40/35 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$18,240
CONVENIENCE PKG: heated front seats, intelligent cruise control	300
ELECTRONICS PKG: illuminated kick plates, frameless auto-dim mirror w universal remote, map pocket light	855
LIGHTING PKG: external ground lighting, internal ambient lighting	690
CENTER ARMREST W STORAGE	300
CARPETED FLOOR MATS, TRUNK MAT	210
DESTINATION CHARGE	895

TOTAL \$21,490

an affordable subcompact, the new Nissan Versa will definitely exceed those expectations. It can also meet or exceed the expectations of many buyers looking at bigger, pricier categories. ■



Plenty of bang

BY JOE SAGE

Although it's an industrywide phenomenon, we often turn to Dodge Charger as an ultimate example of price stairstepping—or "price walk," as it's known to manufacturers and dealers. Charger sits—or starts—at the affordable to moderate end of the price scale and has a tremendous range of models, as well as a wide range of performance, drivetrain and feature builds, presenting a fascinating study in offering a range of options for each, without stepping on the attributes or pricing of models above and below each.

Dodge/SRT engineers are an enthusiastic and ambitious lot, and they keep coming up with more ways to up the Charger's game—especially in the upper-performance models—more power, more features, more style—yet no matter how much they add, they are determined to deliver any new build at a price point that's still lower than the next model up. Each model sits at a balance point that's clearly defined and eminently desirable. The comparative upstream or downstream is always a winner. This one is no exception—and it's pretty far up the scale.

Longer, lower, wider! You hear it regularly when new models are introduced, but in this case it's the visual core of a special Widebody build—3.3 inches

wider, as you'd expect, but also 2.6 inches longer and with three-quarters of an inch less height than a base SXT. It's also faster, has enhanced suspension, and is more of a head-turner, to boot.

It's quite a head-turner, in fact, despite its family sedan (and even police cruiser) basis. It's always interesting to see what response a vehicle gets from our fellow travelers, obvious to us since we drive different things all the time, and this one boiled the boy racer blood in everything from econocars to big SUVs. (It also could turn the heads of the aforementioned police, even in an area with no shortage of high-powered vehicles.)

The Monroney on this one indicates the model is an R/T Scat Pack Plus, and Widebody is an add-on package, though if you're shopping you'll find the Scat Pack Widebody is identified as a model. Either way, you'll have no trouble finding the right one. With a Scat Pack basis (which already brings you the big 485-hp 6.4L SRT HEMI® V8 at \$40 grand), its \$6000 Widebody Package (see sidebar) adds dang near a Hellcat's-worth of performance, short of the Hellcat's supercharged 707 hp, but also—even with a whole raft of additional add-ons—still well shy of Hellcat's \$72k price.

Note that the Hellcat is now a Widebody, too, so one of its most distinctive attributes, its appearance, is immediately part of your deal with the Scat Pack Widebody. And that's a nice deal.



The irony is not lost on us that we're sitting on 485 hp here and showing you the rear camera, but it's a stunner, with a strong and very useful image.

The Hellcat is also the only Charger with SRT in its name, and this Scat Pack Widebody comes with a full array of Hellcat tech—drive modes, performance pages, race options, pre-stage, shift light, line lock activation, engine holding, and that most brag-worthy of all, launch control.

We had the Charger Scat Pack Widebody for a week early in the virus lockdown. The whole world seemed like a cathedral, which could have made it odd to be roaring around in this, though we had our share of the usual array of showy company.

Quarantine nonetheless allowed us a great drive up AZ 87, the Beeline Highway. Aside from the possibility of track sessions, it's exactly the perfect kind of drive you'll want to do in your own. ■



SPECIFICATIONS

BUILD	.....unitized steel body, aluminum hood
ENGINE	.....6.4L (392 cu.in) SRT Hemi® V8 w MDS
HP/TORQUE	.....485 hp / 475 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	.....RWD
TRANSMISSION	.....8-spd auto 8HP70
ALTERNATOR	.....220 amp
SUSPENSION	.....High perf suspension: F: indep SLA w high upper A arm, lateral & diagonal lower links, coils over monotube Bilstein ADS gas shocks, 32mm hollow stblzr bar; R: five-link indep w coils, monotube Bilstein ADS gas shocks, isolated susp cradle, link-type 22mm hollow stblzr bar
STEERING	.....elec power w multi-mode assist
MODES	.....four-mode: street, sport, track, off, w ESC/traction control mode selection
BRAKES	.....(w Widebody pkg) SRT/Brembo ultra-hi performance 8+9 tandem-diaphragm vacuum booster, ABS, traction control, ESC, brake assist, brake knockback mitigation, hill-start assist
F:	15.4x1.34 two-piece alum hat, vented, slotted, 1.42 Brembo six-piston fixed monoblock alum calipers; R: 13.8x1.10, vented, slotted, 1.26 Brembo four-piston fixed w alum housing;
WHEELS	.....(w Widebody pkg) Devil's Rim 20.0x11.0 in
TIRES	.....opt Pirelli P Zero 305/35ZR20 3-season perf
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....201.0 / 120.0 in
TRACK (F/R)	.....65.6 / 65.3 in
OVERALL WIDTH	.....(at rear flares) 78.3 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.0 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....5.2 in
DRAG COEFFICIENT	.....0.380 Cd
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....(w/sunroof) 36.9 / 36.6 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....41.8 / 40.1 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....16.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIB (F/R)	.....4373 lb / 55/45
FUEL CAPACITY	.....18.5 gal
MPG	.....15/24/18 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE (SCAT PACK)\$40,495

SCAT PACK WIDEBODY PKG: Brembo 6-piston fixed front caliper brakes, performance shift indicator, body-color fender flares, leather flat-bottom steering wheel, widebody competition suspension, adaptive damping suspension, Pirelli P Zero 305/35ZR20 (107Y) all-season perf tires, 20x11 Devil's Rim alum wheels.....6000

2DV PLUS GROUP: Scat Pack logo Nappa/alcantara seats, auto-dim outside driver mirror, power/heated mirrors w courtesy lights, radio-driver seat-mirror memory, blind spot mirror indicator, power tilt-tele wheel, power front seats w 4-way pwr lumbar, heated-vented front seats, heated rear seats, premium-stitch dash, front lower & overhead LED lighting, premium floor-mats, rear armrest w storage cupholder, illum rear cupholders, blind spot & cross-path detect1995

TECH GROUP: advanced brake assist, rain-sense wipers, lane depart warn, auto high-beam, full-speed fwd collision warn-plus, adaptive cruise w stop1895

DRIVER CONFIDENCE GROUP: bi-function HID projector headlamps795

NAV & TRAVEL GROUP: Uconnect 4C NAV w 8.4" display, GPS nav, SiriusXM travel & traffic (5-yr)995

HARMAN KARDON AUDIO: GreenEdge® amp, GreenEdge 19 spkrs, surround sound1595

POWER SUNROOF1295

305/35ZR20 PIRELLI P ZERO 3-SEASON TIRES695

RED BRAKE CALIPERS595

DESTINATION CHARGE1495

TOTAL\$57,850

SXT RWD292 hp\$29,995

AWD292 hp\$33,595

GT RWD300 hp\$31,995

AWD300 hp\$34,995

R/T370 hp\$36,495

SCAT PACK485 hp\$40,495

SCAT PACK WIDEBODY485 hp\$46,495

SRT HELLCAT WIDEBODY707 hp\$72,095

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Driver's ed extreme

By Tyson Hugie / drivetofive.wordpress.com

We headed out to Wild Horse Pass this winter to meet the fifth-generation 2020 Toyota GR Supra—a car with big shoes to fill, since the outgoing model was discontinued more than 20 years ago and there has been a great deal of hype around the successor. For the new car, Toyota partnered with BMW to create a sports car that reignites Supra's heritage by way of an inline-6 engine (which is what prior generations of Supra were also powered by).

Vehicle product training specialist Dave Lee gave our group the lowdown on some of the engineering features, design background and performance stats of the new Supra while we waited for our track session to begin. Benchmarking Porsche Boxster and Cayman, the GR Supra achieves 50/50 weight balance on a surprisingly smaller wheel-base than its "86" (formerly Scion FR-S) sibling.

2020 Toyota GR Supras are powered by a 335-hp 3.0-liter inline-6 engine coupled to an 8-speed automatic transmission. A low center of gravity, launch control mode, active differential and grippy Michelin Pilot SuperSport tires ensure that all the power gets to the ground exactly when it needs to.

Toyota had slotted our group's track time into an already-scheduled National Auto Sport Association (NASA) event at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park, which meant our time was closely cal-



Photo: James Lee, SixSpeedBlog.com

culated. I saddled up with my helmet securely fastened and with a professional driver in the passenger seat. The Supra launched me around the 1.6-mile track with speed and agility.

It took a couple of laps until I got comfortable actually pushing the vehicle to such an aggressive extent without feeling like I needed to apologize to it. I remembered thinking to myself a couple of times, "I have never driven my own vehicles this hard," as the right-seat pro driver yelled at me, "BRAKE HARDER!"

The Supra left me feeling impressed. Even with a helmet on, I had ample headroom to pivot and oversee my surroundings. Acceleration was responsive and rapid, and the car's lack of body roll was confidence-inspiring. With each lap, I shaved time off—thanks to being increasingly comfortable with the car, with the track and with my skills.

Of course I'm thinking I need just one more session to really fine-tune my expertise. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

SEATING	.....two
ENGINE	.....3.0L inline-6 dir inj w twin-scroll turbo
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....11:1
HP/TORQUE	.....335 hp / 365 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	.....RWD
TRANSMISSION	.....8-spd automatic
SUSPENSION	.....F: double-joint type MacPherson strut, 23.5mm stblzr bar; R: multi-link w five-arm construction, 18mm stblzr bar
STEERING	.....elec power steering
BRAKES	.....F: vented 13.7" disc w Brembo 4-piston fixed caliper; R: vented 13.6" (3.0 Premium & Launch Edition) or 13.0" w single-piston floating caliper
WHEELS	.....forged aluminum: F: 19x9.0; R: 19x10.0
TIRES	.....Michelin Pilot Super Sport: F: 255/35R19 96Y; R: 275/35R19 100Y
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....172.5 / 97.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....34.1 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....4.5 in
HEADROOM / LEGROOM	.....38.3 / 42.2 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....not stated
WEIGHT	.....3397 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....premium / 13.7 gal
MPG	.....24/31/26 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE (3.0 Premium, right page)	.....\$53,990
PREMIUM INCL: 8.8" wide-format touchscreen w AM-FM-sat-nav, Supra Connect telematics, wireless Apple CarPlay, premium 12-spkr 500w JBL audio, wireless phone charging, color heads-up display, 13.6" rear brakes.	
DRIVER ASSIST PKG: Dynamic radar cruise, blind spot monitor, rear cross traffic alert, parking sensors w emergency braking	.....1195
OPTIONS: First aid kit (30), emergency kit (59), cargo tote (49), carpet cargo mat (80), wheel locks (65)	.....293
PAINT PROTECTION FILM	.....395
CARBON FIBER MIRROR CAPS	.....925
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....955
TOTAL	.....\$57,743
[OTHER MODELS]: Supra 3.0	.....\$49,990
Supra Launch Edition	.....\$55,250

Author Tyson Hugie is greeted at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park by Faye Hadley, IG @pistonsandpixiedust, YouTube.com/fayehadley

Latest evolution

By Joe Sage

The new-for-2020 Toyota GR Supra, introduced just a few weeks into 2019, has danced its way in our direction in stages. First were the simultaneous reveals at NAIAS in Detroit and at Barrett-Jackson in Scottsdale (we did Scottsdale), a first chance to see it in the flesh, but not drive it.

It started to appear on the horizon for a week in our fleet, but would get delayed. Last September, we finally got to drive it during NWAPA's Run to the Sun in Oregon, a 24-vehicle, 24-leg open road event, though for us the Supra fell on a stretch on Interstate, not on the two-lane twisties or high desert blasts. Come November, we had track time in the car at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park (left page). And through it all, it would also appear on our weekly schedule but then get postponed again. Finally, in late April, it arrived! We'd had the basic drive experience, and we'd had brief orientation to its ergonomics and controls, but this time we could go for days, on all manner of roads, and we'd unavoidably get into features in depth.

The car falls above the Toyota 86, at twice its

price (we'll be driving that again in the next issue). Toyota VP Bob Carter had told us at Barrett-Jackson that Supra goes against Asians starting at \$50k and Europeans at \$59k—such as 370Z NISMO, Porsche Cayman, BMW M2 and Audi TT. Supra's path to maintaining Supra's inline-six heritage.

The engine has great acoustics, perfect really, which is kind of rare—neither overdone nor underdone as a match to its performance and style. The car always delivered what we needed in tight traffic challenges, both in power and maneuverability, although automatic (only) shifts did not always match desires. Manumatic mitigated this, though it's the type that stays where mandated, even if you get distracted and really need it to revert to automatic behavior.

They've hit the nail on the head for price and performance, to a point. Perhaps hitting it on the head kept them from covering some ground above and below this price. For this, there's still the 86—

or see what's coming for 2021 (sidebar). ■

SUPRA FOR 2021

While we're all still getting acquainted with the new 2020 Toyota GR Supra, guess what: there's big news for 2021.

[1] The biggest surprise—given their deep emphasis on keeping the marque's storied heritage of an inline-six powertrain—is that they will be bringing a four-cylinder to market for 2021, the GR Supra 2.0.

The GR Supra 2.0 turbo-4 has 255 hp, 18-inch wheels, simpler suspension and differential, smaller brakes, and weighs 200+ lb less than the GR Supra 3.0 turbo-6. Comparisons have developed between the less expensive Toyota 86 two-plus-two and the 2020 GR Supra; the new four-cylinder will slot between the two (price unknown).

[2] To clarify the new stairstep, the 2021 GR Supra 3.0 moves from 335 to 382 hp.

[3] Arriving in August is the GR Supra GT4, a straight-to-track model developed by Toyota Motorsport GmbH, with 430hp, 7-speed paddle-shift trans, performance exhaust, splitter and wing, and more, all weight less than 3000 lb.

The new Supra 2.0 and 3.0 were slated to arrive in June, the GT4 in August. Given the pandemic, we'll see. ■





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A WEEK WITH : 2020 MERCEDES-BENZ CLA 250

Raison d'être recalibrated

BY JOE SAGE

Mercedes-Benz introduced the CLA in 2013 as a 2014 model—a new entry-level machine in their stable, very purposefully kept under \$30 grand (\$29,900), yet styled in the vein of the very desirable (and pricey) CLS, the car that had started the whole luxury “four-door coupe” craze in 2004.

The CLA is built to a solid formula of Mercedes-Benz quality and styling, competitive against more affordable brands with a similar layout, as well as against more expensive models in its own lineup. Its power-to-weight formula proves satisfying, and its suspension, steering and handling are so solid we doublechecked the decklid *and* the sticker, as this is a (rare for Mercedes) front-driver, yet hugs about as well as all-wheel drive (three other available models of CLA are indeed 4MATICs).

If price point was a key factor in the CLA's introduction, it must be noted that its base price is now 22.6 percent higher. The consumer price index has risen just 10.2 percent over the same span. We actually don't see a problem with this. They know

their costs and margins, and aiming for a lower-cost buyer may have been a goal that wasn't worth it—they have badge panache to protect (for their own sake and for the sake of buyers themselves). It only took the first three-tenths-of-one-percent CPI rise to breach that \$30k ceiling, anyway, a great time to rethink the car's goals.

In an era where top quality can come in all sizes—where small does not have to mean cheap—it's arguably a good thing to let the CLA buyer bask in the same glory as the \$69,950-and-up CLS buyer, simply actively preferring the smaller size (and sure, saving a few bucks, just icing on the cake).

Building the CLA in the form of the CLS makes it competitive against much more expensive cars.

Yet if you want to buy “the Mercedes-Benz of” a widely popular more affordable segment, you can. You'll now pay accordingly, but still come out on top. That seems more than reasonable. ■

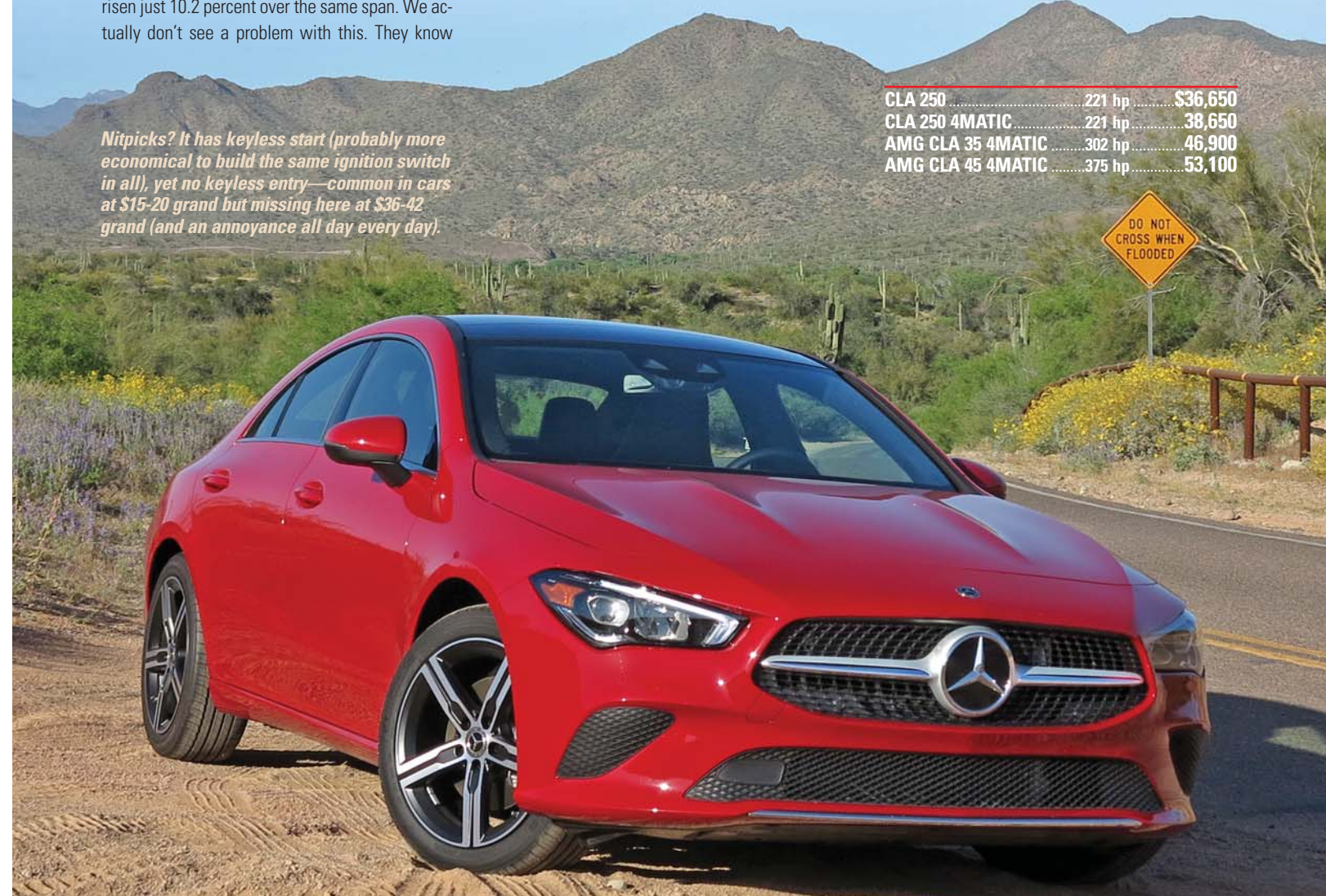
Nitpicks? It has keyless start (probably more economical to build the same ignition switch in all), yet no keyless entry—common in cars at \$15-20 grand but missing here at \$36-42 grand (and an annoyance all day every day).

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	2.0L inline-4 alum alloy 16v turbo
HP/TORQUE	221 hp / 258 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	FWD (avail AWD)
TRANSMISSION	7-spd dual clutch (DCT)
SUSPENSION	F: indep McPherson strut w coils, dbl-tube shocks & tubular torsion bar; R: indep multi-link w coils, single-tube shocks & tubular torsion bar
STEERING	speed-dep electro-mech rack & pinion
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	6.2 sec / 130 mph (lim)
BRAKES	F: 13.0; R: 12.6 (no further info)
WHEELS / TIRES	8x17 / 225/45R18
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	184.6 / 107.4 in
TURNING CIRCLE	(wall to wall) 36.1 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	4.3 in
HEADROOM (F/R)	38.5 / 35.7 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.8 / 33.9 in
CARGO CAPACITY	11.6 cu.ft
WEIGHT	(FWD) 3362 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	13.2 gal
MPG	25/35/28 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$36,650
MULTIMEDIA PKG: MB nav, nav services 3 yrs, MBUX augmented reality nav, speed limit assist	1150
PREMIUM PKG: 10.25" center display, 10.25" digital cluster, auto-dim mirrors, power fold-in side mirrors	1100
OPTIONS: 18" 5-spoke wheels (200), blind spot assist (550), SiriusXM w trial (460), heated front seats (580), 64-color interior ambient lighting (310), wireless chg (200)	2300
DESTINATION CHARGE	995
TOTAL	\$42,195

CLA 250	221 hp	\$36,650
CLA 250 4MATIC	221 hp	38,650
AMG CLA 35 4MATIC	302 hp	46,900
AMG CLA 45 4MATIC	375 hp	53,100



HYPERMILING HYUNDAI

BY JOE SAGE

We had driven the all-new 2020 Hyundai Sonata at its launch event here in Arizona this winter (see our JanFeb issue). And we had attended the Sonata Hybrid reveal at the Chicago Auto Show in February (see MarchApril). In March we were to fly to LA for the Hybrid's launch event—a Hollywood reveal of both the 2020 Sonata Hybrid and 2021 Elantra (facing page), followed by a nice long drive in the Sonata Hybrid.

We had already learned a lot about the generation-eight Sonata itself at the non-hybrid launch drive here. The model goes back to 1985 (or 1989 in the US starting with gen two). For 2020, it has a new platform and chassis, enabling significant revision of body build fundamentals, proportions and details that enter a realm usually occupied only by luxury cars at two or three times the price.

Sonata follows suit to the new Kona launched the year prior, in that its restyling, though easily recognizable, moves toward more distinct personalities among models—becoming more a “set of chess pieces” than bearing one uniform look. Advanced lighting tech also plays a bigger role.

Interior styling is completely redone with a new slim horizontal instrument layout replacing the bulky, tall center stack, while adding more soft-touch material and customizable ambient lighting.

Advanced suspension not only improves ride, handling and NVH, but allows crisper body dimensions, again evoking much pricier brands.

We had learned many Sonata Hybrid fundamen-

tals when the covers came off in Chicago. The full launch drive in California would be a chance to tie it all together and get our first hands-on experience with the newest iteration.

But it was not to be. As coronavirus cases started popping up in Europe, events with huge attendance were already being cancelled in Barcelona, then Geneva. More event dominos began to fall.

The Sonata Hybrid drive event was scheduled too early to see this all coming, but ultimately too late to run. Planning and prep for these is enormous. But just a few days prior, first a pandemic was declared, then a national emergency, and this too bit the dust. Unfortunate, but a good move, as specifics only grew worse. We all know the tale.

The Elantra reveal went on, more or less as scheduled, but without attendees, via livestream.

A drive event without attendees is another thing. Within a couple of weeks, though, Hyundai pulled together the presentation (classroom) portion of the launch, complete with product specialists and engineers, and presented it via Zoom conference (our first of what would become many).

Put it all together, and after one regular Sonata and two Hybrid exposures, we can tell you a lot about the car, just not the Hybrid drive experience.

With a 54 mpg highway rating on its especially fuel-sipping Blue model (51 mpg on SEL and Limited trims), the alt-powertrain version of the new sedan claims best-in-class fuel mileage, topping its main Japanese rivals. The horsepower from its

hybrid system beats even that of the regular gasoline Sonata with either engine. And Sonata Hybrid boasts the segment's top front leg- and headroom.

Are you ready to put quarantines behind, hit the open road and roam freely again? Sonata Hybrid's range is estimated at 686 miles—enough to get you from, say, Flagstaff to Seattle or St Louis with only one stop for gas. An available solar roof system can keep the hybrid battery topped off while the car is turned off and can also add another estimated 700 or so “free miles” per year.

The Hybrid's electric drive system solves a paradox in which hybrids have not used fuel-saving torque converters because they sap energy and lose time en route to the wheels. The new Sonata Hybrid has software-logic-based Active Shift Control, which monitors rotational speed in the electric motor 500 times per second, to synchronize with rotational speed of the gasoline engine, delivering 30 percent faster and smoother shifts—and in turn quicker acceleration and better fuel economy, as well as longer durability for the transmission.

Advanced aerodynamic details such as a cross-hole grille with active air flaps, aero alloy wheels and a rear spoiler all contribute to a Cd of 0.24.

Included are an extensive range of SmartSense safety and driver assist features, with even more available optionally. A four-camera surround-view system gives you a bird's eye view. And Digital Key is an available option, offering a wide range of (Android) smartphone or NFC card access.

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....2.0L GDI DOHC 16v inline-4 DCVVT
HP / TORQUE	.....150 hp / 139 lb-ft
ELECTRIC MOTOR	.....permanent magnet synchronous
POWER / TORQUE	.....39 kW (51 hp) / 151 lb-ft
BATTERY	.....lithium-ion polymer 270V (max) 56 kWh
COMBINED HORSEPOWER	.....192 hp
DRIVETRAIN	.....FWD
TRANSMISSION	.....6-spd electronic auto, shift lock w Shifttronic manual shift mode
SUSPENSION . F:	MacPherson strut, gas shocks, 21.8mm stblzr bar; R: multi-link, gas shocks, 18mm stblzr bar
STEERING	.....column-mounted motor-drive rack & pinion
BRAKES	.....power assist w pressure-proportioning valves; F: 12.0" vented; R: 11.2" solid
WHEELS	.....Blue: 16x6.5J alum alloy; SEL / Limited: 17x7J alum alloy
TIRES	.....Blue: P205/65R16; SEL / Limited: P215/55R17
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....192.9 / 111.8 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....36.1 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....5.3 in
COEFFICIENT OF DRAG	.....Cd 0.24
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....40.0 / 38.4 in
LEGROOM (R/R)	.....46.1 / 34.8 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....16.0 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIBUTION	.....3325-3530 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....reg unleaded / 13.2 gal
MPG	.....Blue: 50/54/52 (city/hwy/comb); SEL / Limited: 45/51/47 (city/hwy/comb)

At the Sonata launch last winter, we had a brief drive in a still-in-development Sonata N-Line (a 290-hp light performance version, short of a full N model). Clearly, the development team is achieving great things atop the Sonata's blank canvas.

Hyundai plans to have a Sonata Hybrid delivered to us here in Arizona before long (our fourth Sonata encounter, third Hybrid), so we can get a hands-on week behind the wheel. Stay tuned! ■

ELANTRA UPSCALES

Hyundai's Elantra compact sedan will be more than two inches longer, an inch wider and almost an inch lower, taking on an upscale four-door coupe profile and a dramatic new look for 2021, in its seventh generation. Leg, head and shoulder room are all increased, rear legroom by 2.3 inches.

Introduced by livestream from Hollywood after its in-person event with the new Sonata Hybrid was cancelled due to pandemic, the new Elantra will be immediately recognizable by its crisply angled sheet metal, a styling theme they call “Parametric Dynamics,” within the “Sensuous Sportiness” design theme introduced with the new 2020 Sonata.

Also coming for 2021 is the first-ever Elantra Hybrid, aiming for over 50 mpg.

Besides upscaling in size and going upscale in style and form, the new 2021 Elantra piles on technology beyond its price point, including segment-first wireless Android and Apple connectivity with dual Bluetooth support for two devices at once, plus available twin 10.25-inch multimedia screens (under

Elantra Hybrid

ENGINE	.....1.6L GDI Atkinson Cycle
ELECTRIC MOTOR	.....32 kW
BATTERY	.....lithium-ion polymer 1.32 kWh
TOTAL SYSTEM OUTPUT	.....147 hp / 132 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	.....6-spd dual-clutch (DCT)

Elantra SE, SEL, Limited

ENGINE	.....2.0L MPI Atkinson Cycle
HP / TORQUE	.....139 hp / 195 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	.....Intelligent Variable Trans (IVT)
MPG	.....tbd

one piece of glass), optional Digital Key via smartphone or NFC card, enhanced natural-language voice recognition and much more.

Built on Hyundai's K3 third-generation vehicle platform, the new Elantra is stronger and lighter, with a lower center of gravity, for increased road-hugging performance and fuel economy. The platform uses a multi-load path structure for enhanced safety in case of a collision. Rear suspension is fully independent multi-link, improving handling as well as rough road impact absorption inside.

Standard SmartSense tech includes forward collision avoidance, pedestrian detection, lane keep and lane follow assist, high beam assist, driver attention warning and a rear camera with dynamic guidelines. An additional range of features are optional.

Plans call for production to start this fall, with sales launching in the fourth quarter. ■



Maximum package by Joe Sage

The Mercedes-Benz GLS (formerly the GL, the model that has now lent its flagship letters to the entire Mercedes SUV-crossover lineup: GLA, B, C, E and S) has always been a standout, not just among their own lineup, but across the whole segment. Noteworthy at its (the GL's) introduction in 2006 as the first big three-row, seven-seat European SUV, GLS launched its third generation for 2020. For 2021, an AMG model is once again added, the one we are driving here (so new, its fuel mileage was not yet rated). Whether in Mercedes-Benz or Mercedes-AMG build, the GLS successfully delivers the compelling blend of luxury and utility its badge and format promise—and priced accordingly and appropriately.

The lineup starts at \$75,950 (the 362-hp inline-six turbo GLS 450) and steps to \$98,800 (483-hp bi-turbo V8 GLS 580). Take a lateral move to an AMG-handcrafted 603-hp V8, bumped to 624 hp via the inclusion of Mercedes' power-juicing, fuel saving, low-end torque-boosting EQ Boost mild hybrid technology—currently working its way into more and more models—and you have our Mercedes-AMG GLS 63, at \$132,100. Its power-and-torque formula delivers zero-to-60 in 4.1 seconds, compared with 5.9 or 5.2 with the Benz models. That's

cutting 21 percent off the GLS 580's time and adding 29.2 percent more horsepower, at 33.7 percent higher cost, reasonable given all the other elements added in the AMG version.

Add-ons are, as usual, numerous and relatively pricey, though at this level, the extensive list added to our sample represents only a 15 percent price bump, easily absorbed by most in its target audience. AMG badging is kept low-key, but the model is immediately recognizable by its grille—sharing styling first introduced in the GT Roadster series about three years ago and expanding through appropriately rarified models since then.

Much of what charmed us in the GLS is being applied through much of the overall Mercedes lineup. There's that EQ Boost powertrain. There's the twin-12.3-inch widescreen instrument panel (a driver-centric digital instrument cluster and a center media display, the latter a touchscreen), which surprised us with several why-didn't-anybody-else-ever-think-of-that implementations (e.g. extremely useful new and/or redundant paths to audio content selection), as well as with a whole raft of settings that—quite uncharacteristically—we changed absolutely none of. Their defaults suited us perfectly. Having searched for auto start-

PRICING

BASE PRICE	\$132,100
METAL WEAVE INTERIOR TRIM	440
CARBON FIBER ENGINE COVER	1500
AMG PERFORMANCE STEERING WHEEL	600
AMG 21" WHEELS: multi-spoke forged matte black.....	4950
AUGMENTED VIDEO	350
PREMIUM AUDIO: Burmeister high-end surround.....	4550
MAGIC VISION CONTROL	350
WARMTH/COMFORT PKG: rapid heat, heated door panels, front/rear armrests, center console.....	1100
EXECUTIVE REAR SEAT PKG: heated/vented multicontour rear massage seats, lux armrests, extended console, lux center armrest w 7" MBUX tablet, storage, 2 USBs, wireless charging, heated/cooled cupholders.....	3700
ENERGIZING PKG PLUS: Air-Balance w fragrance.....	550
NIGHT PKG: dark trim A-wing, front splitter, window frames, rear apron, tailpipes; gloss black roof rails.....	750
ACOUSTIC COMFORT PKG: extra cabin insulation, infrared-reflecting windshield film, acoustic/infrared-absorbing side window film.....	1100
DESTINATION CHARGE	995
TOTAL	\$153,035

stop defeat in dozens of vehicles, we were delighted to find it right next to the engine start-stop here, another why-didn't-anybody-ever solution (though we wish it were in plain sight).

We had the AMG GLS through a patch of decidedly nasty weather, which gave us just that much more appreciation for its well above average camera system, rain or shine, with a screen that fade-animates to life, typical of that just-a-bit-more approach to features throughout.

Most buyers will likely choose the AMG version

SPECIFICATIONS

CONFIGURATION	4-door steel unibody; 6- or 7-seat
ENGINE	handcrafted 4.0L V8 twin turbo w integrated EQ Boost starter-alternator
HP/TORQUE	603 hp / 627 lb-ft incl EQ Boost up to 624 hp / 811 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	AMG Performance 4MATIC AWD w fully variable torque distribution
TRANSMISSION	AMG Speedshift TCT 9G auto
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	4.1 sec / 174 mph (lim)
SUSPENSION	F: indep dbl wishbone w Airmatic air suspension & ADS+ adaptive damping; R: indep multi-link w Airmatic air susp & ADS+ adaptive damping
STEERING	speed-dependent electro-mech rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 15.7"; R: 14.5" (further details tba)
WHEELS	F: 9.0x21; R: 11.5x21 cast
TIRES	F: 275/50R21; R: 315/45R21
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	206.4 / 123.4 in
TURNING CIRCLE	tba
GROUND CLEARANCE	tba
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	39.4 / 40.2 / tba in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	40.3 / 41.9 / tba in
CARGO CAPACITY	17.4 / 42.7 / 84.7 cu.ft
TOW CAPACITY	tba
FUEL CAPACITY	23.8 gal
MPG	not yet rated

for its power and performance, but it has decent off-road chops, with trail, sand and slippery modes in addition to sport, sport plus and comfort—plus your customizable individual recipe. Ground clearance and towing are not yet stated, but for the buyer who goes for AMG not just for power and performance, but as the maximum presentation of everything that comprises the GLS, every layer—from capacity and layout, to powertrain and performance, to all-wheel-drive road and trail worthiness—delivers in top form. ■



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Glorious domesticated beast BY JOE SAGE

Have you driven a Ford... lately? That slogan from years past springs to mind as the automaker pursues its declared goal of ceasing the manufacture of "cars" (other than Mustang and Ford GT), putting vehicles such as this big SUV (or the F-350 heavy duty pickup also in this issue) ever moreso in the position of core brand ambassadors. (Even Mustang is feeling this influence, with the advent of the Mustang Mach-E electric SUV.)

This is not all bad. Case in point: this beautiful and highly capable Ford Expedition.

Expedition was born in the late 1990s, a larger sibling for the top-selling Ford Explorer, but built atop the F-150's basic body-on-frame structure (in the era of the curvy "aero" F-150). A few years later, it was joined by the larger, F-250-based Excursion, which satisfied a few competitive points Ford customers had long clamored for. By the mid-2000s, though, Expedition had entered its second generation, while political sensibilities of the time led to the big Excursion's departure. Two years later, the third-gen Expedition arrived, with a more trucklike character that helped fill the Excursion's void (as general capabilities also continued to increase dramatically in both the pickups and the SUVs). Expedition also introduced the EL variant, about a

foot and a half longer, also helping it to pick up that Excursion torch. (This extended version is now known as Expedition MAX.)

If you just read "Expedition" and "Excursion" enough times to make your head spin, that may be another reason it's not all bad to now have just the one. Plus, Expedition had always struck us as a better name for the biggest in the lineup, anyway. (Be that as it may, a return of the Excursion some-time down the road wouldn't really surprise us.)

The Ford Expedition we're driving here is gen four, new for the 2018 model year—to our eye the most handsome and (though refined and lightly glamorized) most trucklike Expedition yet.

Despite its civilized character, Expedition is a pretty big rig. We don't want to say it's ponderous, though it certainly helps if you're used to driving a full-size pickup. If not, this is a great place to start.

We're very used to big pickups, and we made friends with this vehicle pretty quickly. We knew it was going to be blue, so we had visualized the vivid hue of an Explorer ST. Instead, the Expedition arrived in this classier subdued blue that complements its aluminum build. (We get a kick out of paint names, but this one is officially called simply Blue Metallic.) A top-level Platinum interior, with

such amenities as ceramic-toned heated and cooled massaging leather seats with quilted bolsters, along with a 375-hp EcoBoost V6 turbo and smoothly calibrated 10-speed automatic powertrain, all sitting on advanced suspension atop a ControlTrac® 4x4 drivetrain and 22-inch wheels, set the stage for a pampered yet high-performing week. It was going to be a busy one. Pandemic lockdowns had not kicked in yet (by a matter of days), and we had a daily high-miles commute to Phoenix Raceway for the first several days, with a couple of days of significant rain following that.

Initial settings and adjustments were smoother and easier than average, easily setting up comfortable and highly functional features throughout (of course with a handful of system implementation quirks and nitpicks noted, universal in this era).

Temperatures during this spring week varied tremendously, but the combination of heated and cooled (did we mention massaging?) seats and a highly effective air handling system (once we set it on max, anyway), with ceiling vents for rear passengers, provided a comfy cocoon in all conditions.

The Expedition is a relatively high vehicle, with almost 10 inches of ground clearance, but for a taller person, like us, that's an easy step-in-step-

out. If you're shorter, you'll appreciate the vehicle's retracting running boards. If you're tall, you can lock them away. If you're short or tall, you can also lock them in deployed position, handy for taking care of rooftop loads.

The vehicle is also large inside. If you're familiar with the F-Series pickups, you'll recognize the same geometrically handsome instrument panel and vents, while seats are more carlike in style. The cabin's size makes some controls—touchscreen elements and vents toward the right side—a stretch for a shorter person, to be expected.

The interior layout is executive class. Legroom is above 40 inches in all three rows (way above in the first row) and even third-row headroom (which is always compromised by being raised for suspension) is almost as much as in the other rows.

On the road—in the always aggressive and competitive traffic of our freeways—the Expedition is nimble as well as powerful. Grabbing a more favorable spot in an adjacent lane is mission easily achievable, with plenty more power (and even more torque) on tap to quickly extricate yourself from any uncooperative traffic tangle.

Suspension is perfect for this vehicle—tough but always comfortable. We happened across an uncharacteristic war zone construction patch at one point that would have knocked the axles off a lesser vehicle, but in this we hardly felt it.

Thanks to someone who suddenly tore out of a side street onto a high speed frontage road at track speed, straight across four lanes, aiming for an otherwise unreachable freeway on-ramp, we also learned that the brakes (for which we don't have complete specs) are sports-car effective.

You can very slightly feel the electric nature of the steering at first, but that soon fades away, leaving behind simply great handling.

SPECIFICATIONS

BUILD.....aluminum alloy body / high strength steel frame	
PLANT.....Kentucky Truck Plant	
SEATING.....eight (seven w opt 2nd row buckets)	
ENGINE.....3.5L EcoBoost V6 turbo, alum/alum alloy	
HP/TORQUE.....375 hp / 470 lb-ft	
DRIVETRAIN.....ControlTrac® 4x4 (4x2 avail)	
TRANSMISSION.....10-spd auto w SelectShift®	
SUSPENSION F: indep short & long arm, coil-over shocks, stblzr bar; R: indep multi-link w stblzr bar (rear mechanical load-leveling available) (F/R: Gas-charged continuous damping available)	
STEERING.....elec power-assist rack & pinion	
BRAKES.....power 4-wheel disc, ABS, brake assist, EBF	
WHEELS.....22-in machined alum w painted pockets	
TIRES.....285/45R22 AS BSW	
LENGTH / WHEELBASE.....210.0 / 122.5 in	
TURNING CIRCLE.....not stated	
GROUND CLEARANCE.....9.8 in	
APPR / BRKOVER / DEPART.....23.3 / 21.4 / 21.9	
HEADROOM (F/2/3).....42.0 / 40.0 / 37.3 in	
LEGROOM (F/2/3).....43.9 / 41.5 / 40.9 in	
CARGO CAPACITY.....20.9 / 63.6 / 104.6 cu.ft	
WEIGHT.....(4x4) 5623 lb	
TOW CAPACITY.....(4x4) 6500 lb or if equipped w Heavy Duty Tow Pkg: 9200 lb	
GCWR.....(4x4) 12,500 lb or if equipped w Heavy Duty Tow Pkg: 15,200 lb	
FUEL / CAPACITY.....regular unl / 23.6 gal	
MPG.....17/22/19 (city/hwy/comb)	
BASE PRICE \$77,085	
SECOND ROW BUCKET SEATS.....595	
DESTINATION CHARGE.....1395	
TOTAL \$77,680	

Our Platinum trim level (\$77,085 as a 4x4) is expected to account for about one in five purchases. The base Expedition XLT starts at \$52,810.

As a nod to the trucklike basis of the Expedition and to the trucklike direction of Ford overall, there are two new models of interest: a King Ranch edition (see our F-350 in this issue) at about \$1000 less than Platinum, and a new F-150-derived FX4 Off-Road package, which seems sure to broaden the appeal and positioning of the Expedition and the overall Ford truck brand itself. ■

MPG NOTES & ANECDOTES

We don't routinely keep track of fuel mileage. Other than with, say, an EV, ours are not hypermiling efforts. But this one caught our eye early on. For one thing, we had this vehicle for the week that included a race weekend at Phoenix Raceway, which would typically mean at least four 95-mile round trips. A 40-mpg car could do it in about 10 gallons, while a 10-mpg car would take 40 gallons—quite a difference in cost, and even adding refueling time to a busy weekend. The Expedition with EcoBoost V6 is rated at 22 mpg highway—with a 23.6-gallon tank, enough for almost 520 miles—though on aggressive Valley freeways, "your mileage may vary," and we certainly were not doing freeway miles only.

Our weekly vehicles generally travel about 30 miles en route to us, and we're not sure when or where they fill 'em up. With all vehicles more frugal than they used to be, we don't always even look, and we hadn't looked at this one.

As we hopped in to head out to the track the first time, we happened to notice we were down a quarter of a tank already (which would mean about six gallons consumed, out of about 24). We'd only run three or four to-the-corner-for-a-sandwich type errands, it seemed. But we found ourselves glancing down again in about 10 miles—wow, less than 5/8ths of a tank. We took an odo reading and checked delivery records later—our errands and these first freeway miles added up to 52 miles, or it was about 80 if they had filled it at their end. Hmm. If the latter, the gauge indicated those 80 miles had used about 9.5 gallons, a rate of about 8.4 MPG. That sounds horrid, but it's still just about 11 gallons per round trip to NASCAR, though with race traffic, other errands and so on, it's take more.

We checked all this another time or two, early on, but basically put one circular foot in front of the other and refilled as needed. At the end of our week, the vehicle's own readout (and these seem to be fairly reliable these days) indicated an average of 13.5 MPG for all our varied tasks combined.

That's not bragworthy in its own right, but then again, this is an almost three-ton machine with spacious seating for eight (the weight of whom would consume more fuel, of course). And it does use regular octane fuel.

The 375-hp V6 turbo (with 470 lb-ft of torque and healthy tow capacity) is the most popular engine in the F-150 and the only one available in the Expedition. Given the vehicle's power and performance, as well as its high level of build and its capacities, the whole deal seems reasonable. ■



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Diversity and overlap

BY JOE SAGE

There seem to be a few trends afoot in the world of SUVs and crossovers—one being an expansion of new products in sizes well beyond the old small-medium-large, and one being with more usage of the term SUV than crossover in describing many of them. Both have been especially notable at the smaller-than-small end, with terms like “Small SUV,” “Urban SUV,” and the one being used in this new model, “Entry SUV.”

Kia currently calls six vehicles SUVs/crossovers. Telluride, Sorento and Sportage are classic large-to-small utilities. They also put the one-of-a-kind Soul in the group. They include the alt-powertrain Niro. And number six is the new Seltos. This puts four out of six at the smaller end of the scale, where they vary considerably in some ways, overlap in others, and surely draw some of the same customers.

Echoing many Kia vehicles, Seltos comes in five models (also with some overlap)—some with a 146-hp 2.0L engine, others with a 175-hp 1.6L turbo. Turbos have a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission (DCT), while the two-liters have an IVT (intelligent variable) unit. Some trims are front-drivers, others AWD, and one offers both. Our top trim SX has the upper of each of those options: turbo, DCT and AWD. It weighs 7.5 percent more than the

base model, but has 20 percent more horsepower.

Seltos differs from Soul and Niro not only in style and shape, but also by its available all-wheel drive, plus decent ground clearance and approach/departure angles. Kia does not call Seltos an off-roader, instead just saying its ground clearance signals a “tough attitude and adventurous spirit.”

Confirming that their own promotional materials show Seltos ripping along gravel roads (and also feature two decidedly off-roadish concepts), we took it for a spin not off-road but off-pavement, a narrow gravel road with one steep, rutted climb. Its limits were easy to find, but it did quite well.

Most of our time in the Seltos was on metro freeways and streets, where we noted straight, solid tracking and a strong stance, with near-zero lag when accelerating up freeway ramps, plus two more tricks in the bag—sport mode and manual shifts. We did note instances when it could bog down on a righthand power turn in town, usually but not always solved with sport mode.

Fuel mileage is very close across the board—either 30 or 31 mpg highway with either engine and in any trim. If price allows, you’ll surely appreciate the extra power output of the turbo, and we’d go for the AWD. Figure on using sport mode—a lot—to get the most out of that power, a valuable tool even if it dings fuel your MPG a little.

Styling is all Kia, with the tiger nose grille evolving a bit more to incorporate additional air

SPECIFICATIONS

PLANT	Gwangju, South Korea
ENGINE	1.6L four-cylinder 16v aluminum GDI turbo
HP/TORQUE	195 hp / 175 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	AWD
TRANSMISSION	7-spd Quick-Shift DCT auto
SUSPENSION	F: MacPherson strut; R: multi-link; F/R: gas shocks
STEERING	elec power-assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 16" disc; R: 15" disc; single 10.5" booster
WHEELS / TIRES	18" alloy / P235/45R18
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	172.0 / 103.5 in
TURNING CIRCLE	34.8 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	7.3 in
APPROACH / DEPARTURE	28 / 28°
HEADROOM (F/R)	(w/o sunroof) 40.0 / 38.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.4 / 38.0 in
CARGO CAPACITY	26.6 / 62.8 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3317 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	13.2 gal
MPG	25/30/27 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE \$27,890

SX TURBO AWD INCL: LED heads/fogs, 7" LCD color instrument cluster, 10.25" display, UVO link w/nav, Bose premium audio, sound-connected lighting, Sofino seat trim, 10-way power driver's seat w lumbar, keyless entry/start, remote start, auto climate, illum visor mirror, LED interior lights, wireless phone charge, rear USB port, rear air vents, cargo cover, smart cruise w stop & go, highway drive assist, safe exit assist.

CLEAR WHITE / BLACK ROOF PAINT 345

CARPETED FLOOR MATS 130

DESTINATION CHARGE 1120

TOTAL \$29,485

intakes below, as well as integrated headlight clusters—clean and complex at the same time, elegant beyond its price point. ■



NASCAR ACCELERATORS UNVEILED

OFFICIAL HOST COMMITTEE OF THE 2020 NASCAR CHAMPIONSHIP IN ARIZONA

Announced during Spring Race Weekend at Phoenix Raceway in March was the formation of the NASCAR Accelerators, a host committee led by Co-Chairs Arizona Governor Doug Ducey and Aric Zion, CEO of Zion & Zion advertising and digital marketing agency, to support the NASCAR 2020 Championship event here this November.

The NASCAR Accelerators comprises community and business leaders who will serve as Arizona's ambassadors for NASCAR. With the NASCAR Championship and Arizona Accelerator Charities (a donor-advised fund of The NASCAR Foundation) as its platform, the NASCAR Accelerators are dedicated to "accelerating the community through motorsports" by promoting community investment.

"We are honored to announce this elite list of exceptional community leaders as local ambassadors for Phoenix Raceway, NASCAR and the 2020 NASCAR Championship Weekend," said Phoenix Raceway President Julie Giese. "The development of this group showcases the incredible support for NASCAR in Arizona and the unwavering commitment to making a difference for those in need within our community."

Throughout the year, Phoenix Raceway and the NASCAR Accelerators will plan events leading up to and during the week of the 2020 NASCAR Championship Weekend, November 6-8. The committee will also work to raise funds for Arizona Accelerator Charities while building anticipation in Arizona for the NASCAR Championship.

Arizona Accelerator Charities has identified

four nonprofit organizations—which must align with The NASCAR Foundation's mission of supporting military, education, health care or family enrichment programs in Arizona—to receive Accelerator Awards, major gifts presented by the NASCAR Accelerators: The 100 Club of Arizona, Teach for America Phoenix, Veteran Tickets Foundation (Vet Tix) and Phoenix Children's.

"Arizona has a long and proud history of hosting premier sports championships, and we're honored to have NASCAR join that esteemed list," said Governor Ducey. "I welcome this opportunity to support the NASCAR Accelerators, who will play a key role in promoting our beautiful state to motorsports fans from around the world and ensure that our own local charities benefit as well."

Active founding members of the NASCAR Accelerators represent a wide range of profes-

sions from across Arizona, including sports, business, the nonprofit sector and media. These members include Co-Chair Aric Zion, Nikki Balich, Latasha Causey, Mark Clifford, Todd Davis, Gregg Edgar, Larry Ferguson, Angela Harrolle, Sintra Hoffman, Brian Hogan, Debbie Johnson, John Levin, Linda Little, Michelle Major, Casey Mears, Scott Pasmore, Anita Petersen, Robbie Petty, Monique Porras, Eddie Rausch, Kim Sabow, Ray Schey, Bobbi Sparrow and Adam Walter.

In addition to Governor Ducey, honorary founding members of the NASCAR Accelerators include State Senator Lupe Contreras, State Representative Diego Espinoza, Maricopa County Supervisor Steve Gallardo, Arizona Republic Contributor Michael Knight, U.S. Senator Jon Kyl, State Representative Lorenzo Sierra, and City of Avondale Mayor Kenn Weise. ■



(Top) Phoenix Raceway President Julie Giese and Arizona Governor Doug Ducey at last year's announcement of Phoenix as home to this year's season finale NASCAR Championship Weekend in November. // (lower) City of Avondale Mayor Kenn Weise, Julie Giese and former US Senator Jon Kyl speak about NASCAR Accelerators in March 2020.

NASCAR FINAL CHAMPIONSHIP WEEKEND IN PHOENIX

NOVEMBER 6-7-8 2020: TICKETS ON SALE

Phoenix Raceway has brought premier motorsports events to the Southwest since 1964 and has long hosted two NASCAR race weekends each year. The 2020 season kicked off with FanShield 500 Speed Fest Weekend, March 6-8, featuring the NASCAR Cup Series, NASCAR Xfinity Series and a new addition, the ARCA Menards Series. In November, there is a big change.

Fall race weekend, long the penultimate race of the NASCAR season, will this year, for the first time in the history of the sport, host the final events of the season—NASCAR Championship Weekend—from November 6-8. Over a three-day weekend, champions will be crowned in the NASCAR Cup Series, NASCAR Xfinity Series, NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series, and the ARCA Menards Series West. This exciting development was announced in a press conference at the facility in spring 2019, with track president Julie Giese, NASCAR Vice Chairman Mike Helton and Arizona Governor Doug Ducey.

"It's difficult to put into words the level of excitement we feel here at Phoenix Raceway and across the entire community for this NASCAR season and what is to come between now and November 8," said Phoenix Raceway President Julie Giese. "I'm incredibly proud that our facility, and the State of Arizona, will be hosting this year's NASCAR Championship Weekend."

As part of the championship weekend, fans will have the opportunity to take in all the excitement at the event, including the midway experience, featuring merchandise haulers and interactive displays from sponsors and vendors. Fans will also have the opportunity to purchase the INfield Experience, providing unprecedented access to their favorite drivers and teams throughout the entire weekend in the NASCAR Cup Series garages, Drivers Meeting Walks, driver introductions and postrace championship celebrations.

Tickets and INfield access for the 2020 NASCAR Championship Weekend are available at PhoenixRaceway.com, by phone at 1-866-408-RACE (7223), or in person at the ISM Raceway ticket office.

Phoenix Raceway also hosts a variety of events throughout the year, including corporate meetings and conferences, charity events, holiday events, sport and endurance competitions, driving schools and Segway tours. ■



BOWMAN eNASCAR WIN

ARIZONA NATIVE TAKES PODIUM IN OVERTIME FINISH AT VIRTUAL TALLADEGA

Like many NASCAR drivers, Tucson native Alex Bowman has kept busy during the coronavirus lockdown and suspended race schedule developing new skills. He's getting the hang of it too, winning the eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series race on Sunday, April 26.

The GEICO 70 at virtual Talladega Superspeedway was the fifth race of the simulation series, created in March in an effort to fill the sports-viewing void created by real-world racing being on hold because of the pandemic.

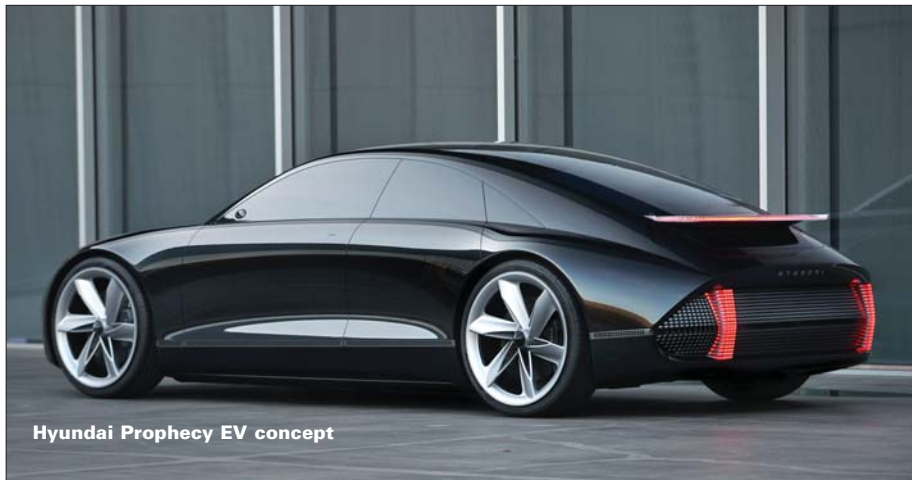
Bowman wasn't sure if he had enough fuel left for an overtime finish, but it turns out he had plenty and then some. He led on the overtime restart and raced side by side with Ty Dillon's GEICO Chevrolet around the final turn, but Dillon crashed and Bowman charged ahead to a dramatic first victory in the series.

Pole-starter Corey LaJoie grabbed second place, with Ryan Preece a close third. Jeff Gordon, in his eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series debut, finished 38th in a 39-car field after a pair of crashes. The first, on Lap 16, catapulted his throwback No. 24 Chevrolet into the catch fencing, forcing him to use a repair reset to continue. The four-time NASCAR champion also added commentary to the broadcast through his usual role as a FOX Sports analyst, along with guest analyst Clint Bowyer.

Virtual pre-race festivities were loaded with star power, headlined by Randy Owen of legendary country group Alabama singing the national anthem, with actor Tim Allen giving the command to start virtual engines on FOX, FS1 and the FOX Sports App.

The stars of the NASCAR Cup Series were scheduled to compete the following Sunday, May 3, on the virtual Monster Mile at Dover International Speedway. ■





Hyundai Prophecy EV concept

▼ **Hyundai** recently revealed a new concept EV, “Prophecy,” the latest to embody a new Sensuous Sportiness design direction. In sharp contrast to its predecessor, the “45” EV, Prophecy features smooth curves and flowing lines, with virtually no sharp angles or hard edges to break the flow. Its neoclassic shape is a nod to luxury cars of the 1920s and ’30s, while features such as pixelated lighting and aerodynamic wheels have an eye toward the future. The car’s silhouette consists of one streamlined curve sweeping from front to rear, as smooth as a weathered stone on the beach. The concept signals an intuitive driver interface, zero-emissions powertrain and unique air filtration system. Hyundai calls their guiding design philosophy “Optimistic Futurism,” which is certainly the best kind.

▼ Global electrical and optical connectivity supplier **Huber + Suhner** has developed a new off-the-shelf High Voltage Distribution solution for every type of electric vehicle (EV). Their modular High Voltage Distribution Unit (mHVDU) manages up to 800 volts DC, engineered for extreme usage in harsh environments. Its configurable nature is a great benefit to automotive manufacturers, with the box able to fit perfectly into the OEM development process thanks to a compatible fuse configuration and complete interoperability. Designed and equipped with a wide range of standardized components, it can be configured to meet individual requirements of

all types of EVs—land, water or air—in which high voltage needs to be distributed. Benefits to automotive manufacturers range from validation to international automotive standards and specifications, to space, weight and cost savings through its simplified housing design and standardized components, while ensuring the highest standards of performance in commercial and special EVs.



▼ To improve plant efficiency and reduce production costs, **Volkswagen** Group is integrating its plants into the Volkswagen Industrial Cloud. In 2019, the Group initially started with the Volkswagen Passenger Cars’ Chemnitz, Wolfsburg and Polkowice (Poland) plants. “We are now forcing the pace and taking the Industrial Cloud to a large number of plants,” says head of VW group production Gerd Walker. This

year, up to 15 more plants from the Audi, Seat, Skoda, VW Passenger Cars, VW Commercial Vehicles, Porsche and Components brands are to be connected, including Brunswick, Emden, Hanover, Ingolstadt, Kassel, Leipzig, Neckarsulm, Salzgitter, Zuffenhausen and Zwickau (all in Germany), Martorell (Spain), Palmela (Portugal), Győr (Hungary), and Mladá Boleslav and Vrchlabi (Czech Republic). The Group first defined 15 different applications which are now being made available as standardized apps for all plants. Primary focuses include predictive maintenance of machines and reduction of reworking on vehicles through artificial intelligence (AI). Implementation of the first 15 apps alone is already expected to bring cost savings of about 200 million euros up to the end of 2025. The first three plants were already linked up in 2019. “Work on the project also continued consistently while production was suspended during the coronavirus crisis. We are making good progress and significantly forcing the pace,” says Roy Sauer, head of enterprise and platform architecture for VW Group.

From 2016 to 2025, Volkswagen intends to boost productivity of its plants by 30 percent. “Our Industrial Cloud will be a key lever for achieving this objective,” says Walker. All in all, the Group expects cost savings of several billion euros once data of all 124 plants can be evaluated in a standardized way. The Industrial Cloud is built on Amazon Web Services (AWS), and Siemens is the integration partner.

▼ With a range of up to 57 miles and speed up to 30 knots (50 nautical miles at 23 knots), the foiling **Candela** Seven is the longest-range electric speedboat ever



Candela Seven flying electric speedboat

produced. And now, along with yachting specialist Denison Yachting, Swedish electric boat builder Candela is launching their long-range, high-speed, 25-foot electric Candela Seven bowrider—the first electric foiling boat in serial production—in the US. Thanks to a lightweight carbon fiber hull and foils (i.e. wings under the water), the Seven boasts longer range and higher speed than any electric boat before it—comparable to gasoline-powered boats and boasting two to three times better endurance than other electric boats currently on the market. The foils also enable superior seakeeping in moderate seas, as the Seven simply flies over the waves instead of smashing through them—smooth and stable even in strong side winds and waves. Performance is optimized through an array of sensors measuring wave height, along with a custom-designed flight controller with 90,000 lines of code. Designed and built by an international engineering team in Stockholm, Sweden, the craft’s serial production is ramping up this year with the goal of making Candela Seven the largest e-boat builder in Europe. The Seven is for sale through a partnership with Denison Yachting, which has 22 brick-and-mortar offices across the US.

▼ The **Petersen Automotive Museum** in LA is compiling digital vehicle submissions for its virtual Global Cars & Coffee events, being aired on the museum’s YouTube channel every two weeks during restrictions on live gatherings due to the

coronavirus pandemic. The first aired live on April 26, with 140 vehicles from enthusiasts in France, Germany, Australia, England, Canada, UAE, South America and all over the US, garnering over 1,000 live

views, more than 10,000 views in the first 24 hours and over 2,000 hours watched. Participation takes three easy steps: record a short video of your car (20 to 30 seconds of exterior, interior, engine and start-up), using your phone in landscape format; upload to Dropbox, Google Drive or YouTube; and fill out a form online. A poll will determine a People’s Choice Award from the series. For information and the form, visit www.petersen.org/cars-and-coffee-online.



▼ A year-long study commissioned by **DeepGreen** titled *Where Should Metals for the Green Transition Come From?* explores environmental, social and economic costs of different sources of base metals needed to manufacture EV batteries. Demand for certain EV battery metals is projected to increase eleven-fold by 2050, according to the World Bank, with shortages of nickel,

cobalt and copper predicted to emerge as soon as 2025. Using a lifecycle sustainability analysis (LCSA) framework and standard lifecycle analysis (LCA) methodology, the first-of-its-kind study provides an in-depth look at the extraction, processing and refining impacts of producing metals to produce battery cathodes and wiring for EVs from land ores as compared with polymetallic nodules collected from the deep seafloor of the Pacific Ocean—both sources of the nickel, cobalt, copper and manganese required to build one billion EV batteries—on a range of categories including greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration, ecosystem services, non-living resources and habitats, biodiversity, human health, and economics. The findings suggest that ocean nodules, compared to mining the land, can deliver 70% less CO₂e direct emissions, 94% less stored carbon at risk, a 90% reduction in SO_x and NO_x emissions, a 100% reduction in solid waste, 94% less land use and 93% less wildlife at risk. Polymetallic nodules are made of almost 100 percent usable minerals and contain no toxic levels of deleterious elements, compared to ores mined from the land, which have increasingly low yields (often below 1 percent) and often do contain toxic levels of elements. Producing metals from nodules

thus has the potential to generate almost zero solid waste and no toxic tailings, as opposed to terrestrial mining processes which produce billions of tons of waste and can leak deadly toxins into soil and water resources. While the deep seabed has little biomass, DeepGreen is now undertaking a deeper, multi-year environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA with over 100 separate studies. ■

UPCOMING FEATURES

Ford Bronco launch



2020 Toyota 86 Hakone Edition



Valerie Thompson world record update



TAWA Texas Truck Rodeo, NWAPA Mudfest comparos



2020 Mazda CX-30



2020 Genesis G90



K1 Speed indoor kart racing



Big Willy Jeep mutant project



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Shown: Vintage Iron Speed Shop Clock / SKU: 09-BKG-VI

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All-Steel Toolboxes

The Greasemonkeys have the feeling their full line of durable all-steel portable toolboxes with lift-out tray and a variety of the most cool car guy graphics (five styles now and more coming!) just may be too good to stash tools in—we may have to call them "deco-boxes"!

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— Many thanks! Jackie B.

♥ I just had the most wonderful buying experience! I only hope my father asks for something from The Busted Knuckle Garage for Christmas so I can do business with such a wonderful company once more.
— Cheers! Michelle

♥ My husband just loves everything, especially me for getting him such cool stuff. I'd have to say we will be lifetime customers, oh ya!! Thank you, Greasemonkeys.
— Sincerely, Pam

♥ First, let me be the one thanking you! I honestly cannot remember such extraordinary customer service.
— Thanks again, "JR" Jean



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