

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 20 NUMBER 4
JULY-AUGUST 2021

**EVS & MORE EVS
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Kia EV6

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ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

news & features July-August 2021

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COVER: 2022 Kia EV6, one of four EVs in this issue, along with the Ford F-150 Lightning, Hyundai IONIQ 5 eCUV and Volkswagen ID.4 1st Edition. **Photo: Kia America**

Barrett-Jackson



Valerie Thompson Racing



ElectraMeccanica



Meagan Wristen



Teia Collier by Kevin McCauley



Ford Motor Company

As pandemic restrictions ease, auctions, shows, motorsports, destinations and people in general are all making up for lost time. The automotive manufacturing industry has had a challenging year and a half of developments delayed, launches postponed and model years impacted, due to many factors, from factory floor to supply chains to lack of those shows and first drive events. Whether you follow us in this bimonthly issue, via social media or both, you'll know there has been a flurry of new vehicle introductions—many with new technologies and commitments to considerable evolution.

The speed of all this is seen in this issue, with a number of significant vehicle reveals, many of them part of a greater migration into ever-expanding EV offerings, others basic evolution or growth of existing lineups. It's been notable to us, as we had to update several pieces while the ink was still drying. We had already speculated that Toyota Supra lineup's expansion might bleed into the Toyota 86 and vice versa, when, on the last day of our week with the GR Supra 2.0, Toyota announced a new boosted version of the 86, confirming our thinking. We'd had an in-depth dive with Honda about the unique positioning of the unibody Ridgeline pickup; then (the same week we had the Ridgeline), Ford revealed the long-rumored Maverick front-drive-based unibody pickup (plot twist!).

It all boils down to an old maxim: stay tuned!
 Vehicle shoppers always look at brands, styling and fuel mileage. Powertrain awareness is growing exponentially, and in this issue we have not only quite a few EVs, but light-weight and heavy-weight V8s, as well as a little three-banger that put a smile on our face.

A veritable trainwreck of events hits our calendar over the next several months, as postponed major international auto shows, rescheduled press association comparo drives, local shows and rallies, and the collector auction hobby-slash-industry all get back offline and into their respective live venues in the same stretch of time.

Enjoy the ride!
Joe Sage - Publisher/ Executive Editor

Torva

Fine Art of Fine Automobiles

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USMA.....United States Motorsports Association

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Taking a lap for Parkinson's Disease

Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center at Barrow Neurological Institute receives \$12k contribution

Drive Toward a Cure raises funds and awareness for Parkinson's Disease research and patient care. Inspired by the camaraderie found within the automotive culture, the organization's mission benefits equally from both enthusiast communities and industry professionals. Drive Toward a Cure events harness enthusiasm for cars and driving and turn that power into support for ongoing work to improve the lives of those living with Parkinson's, as well as the research that will hopefully one day lead to a cure. Since 2016, Drive Toward a Cure has raised more than a half million dollars to support both research and patient care.

When premier lifestyle automotive event Taste of Motorsports enlisted Drive Toward a Cure as its key beneficiary for the 2021 season, the only caveat from the charity foundation was that all funds raised stayed local, supporting regional Centers of Excellence for Parkinson's Disease. Having completed the first of three events together this spring in Arizona, including two separate fundraising endeavors, Drive Toward a Cure provided a matching donation that secured a \$12,000 gift to the Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center at Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix to support patient care.

Fundraising events included a spirited Saturday morning drive and a VIP charity/auction preview evening at the Otto Car Club in Scottsdale. The highlight of the weekend was a Sunday Taste of Motorsports finale at the Bondurant High Performance Driving School. Attendees had the opportunity within a festival atmosphere to test drive high-performance vehicles on track, view an enormous display of exotic cars including the newly launched Shelby Speedster, and to enjoy a full array of gourmet food all day long.

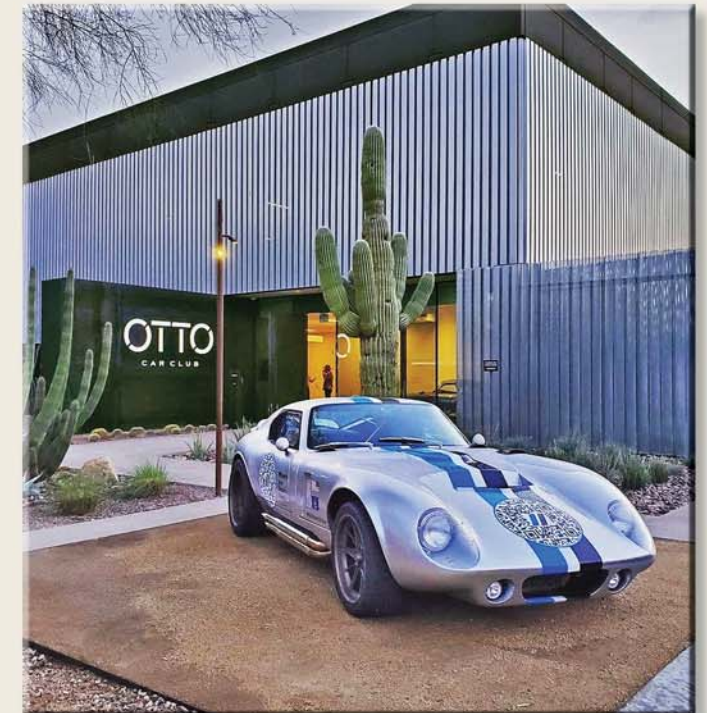
Drive Toward a Cure board member Derek Torry, who happens to be afflicted with early onset Parkinson's, was on hand for the entire Arizona weekend, having driven in from Southern California. He noted that the commonality of attendees, whether drivers or car enthusiasts, were very much in sync with Drive Toward a Cure's mantra of blending cars and camaraderie. "Since 2016 we've set out with one mission: combine the minds and hearts of individuals within the car community with a stronger awareness for Parkinson's disease—and find ways to channel their enthusiasm to raise funds." Drive Toward a Cure has successfully moved that mission to raise more than \$500,000 since its inception five years ago.

Last year, the Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center at Barrow Neurological Institute made nearly 25,000 connections with individuals with Parkinson's disease and their care partners through in-person clinic visits, tele-health visits and outreach efforts.

Drive Toward a Cure is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that supports beneficiaries including The Michael J. Fox Foundation, the Parkinson's Foundation and numerous Centers of Excellence for Parkinsons. For donations, sponsorship and event registration please visit www.drivetowardacure.org.

(Top right) Drive Toward a Cure board member Derek Torry (left) and Tom Floyd (right), head of Taste of Motorsports, kick off the charity drive.

(Center and bottom right) Automotive artist Dwight Knowlton of Carpe Gear/ Carpe Viam donated a 1-of-1 framed sketch of legendary Porsche-ophile Vasek Polak and his famous #88 Porsche 550 Spyder, during the VIP preview evening, held at the Otto Car Club in Scottsdale.



AUTOMOTIVE NEWS UPDATE



Sir Stirling Moss and the Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR "722"

▼ In honor of motorsports legend **Sir Stirling Moss**, who passed away last year at the age of 90, **Mercedes-Benz Classic** will present the original 300 SLR (W 196 S) in which he won the Mille Miglia in 1955—his most famous car—at exclusive appearances in England this summer. With starting number 722, the Stirling Moss/Denis Jenkinson team won the legendary event in a record time of just 10:07:48 to cover 1,000 miles from Brescia in northern Italy to Rome and back. The event was held until 1957, and their average speed of 97.96 mph was never surpassed. On display at the Goodwood Festival of Speed from July 8-11, the two-seater—powered by an enhanced 310-hp three-liter, eight-cylinder Grand Prix engine with a top speed above 186 mph—then returns to perform fast laps at the Goodwood Revival, September 17-19. In 1955, Moss participated in both the World Sports Car Championship and Formula One World Championship as a Mercedes-Benz works driver in the 300 SLR and the W 196 R. In six races comprising the World Sports Car Championship, Moss not only won the Mille Miglia, but also, together with John Fitch, the RAC Tourist Trophy in Northern Ireland and, with Peter Collins, the Targa Florio in Sicily. Moss secured the championship decisively, just ahead of Ferrari. The Formula One World Championship was his first of a total 16 Grand Prix victories in the British Grand Prix at Aintree in 1955, finishing second in both the Belgian and Dutch Grand Prix. Though never

crowned Formula One world champion, Moss in 1955, 1956, 1957 and 1958 was runner-up in Grand Prix, and each year from 1959 to 1961 he finished third. His career came to an end in April 1962, with an accident in a Lotus at the 100 Miles of Goodwood. He recovered to a large extent from severe head injuries, but his reaction time was reduced, so at 32 Moss decided to end his career as an active race driver, becoming a Mercedes-Benz brand ambas-



Lotus Evija EV

sador and driving his cars, now in the Mercedes-Benz Classic collection, at historic motorsport events into advanced age. Moss was born in London on September 17, 1929, was knighted in 2000 for his services to British motorsport, and passed away in London on April 12, 2020, at the age of 90. The Mille Miglia-winning 300 SLR will be accompanied at both Goodwood events by a Mercedes-Benz W 196 R

with exposed wheels, the model in which Juan Manuel Fangio won the Formula One World Championship in 1954 and 1955 and Stirling Moss was runner-up in 1955. The cars' UK visit will include the legendary "Blue Wonder" racing car transporter.

▼ The all-electric **Lotus Evija** hypercar has been named "The One to Watch" in *Top Gear's* second ever Electric Awards, as tested by editor Jack Rix on the track at Lotus HQ in Hethel, Norfolk UK. Rix calls the Evija not just a halo car for Lotus and "a signpost for the future of the company," but "a flagbearer for really fast electric vehicles as a whole." Billed as the world's most powerful car, the Evija goes into production later this year. With over 2,000 PS (1,972 hp) from its all-electric AWD powertrain, it can accelerate from 200 to 300 km/h (124 to 186 mph) in just three seconds, half what it takes a Bugatti Chiron to do the same. Rix drove an Evija prototype restricted to 1,600 PS (1,577 hp), proclaiming it "light on its feet, playful with the instant mash of acceleration even a naturally aspirated engine could only fan-

tasize about." Full of praise for the project development team, he says core Lotus DNA is obvious from the first corner: "Steering is superb, light and darty around the dead-ahead, then loading up according to wheel angle and speed." Lotus Cars managing director Matt Windle says validation work is proceeding well, with their world tour resuming last month. More people will get to see it in person in the coming weeks.

▼ The new **Bentley Continental GT Speed** Coupe and Convertible combine four chassis technologies to deliver high levels of agility, performance and ride quality. Bentley



Bentley Continental GT Speed Coupe

Dynamic Ride and three-chamber active air suspension with adaptive damping are key to the balance of the car and provide its foundation, bolstered by newly-developed optional carbon ceramic brakes, variable electronic stability control, all-wheel steering and an electronic limited slip differential. Drive modes include Bentley and Comfort, balancing overall grip between front and rear wheels, while Sport is calibrated with a more rear-biased torque split in all driving scenarios. The new carbon ceramic braking system boasts 440mm front discs with copper-free brake friction material and new ten-piston front calipers, the biggest Bentley brake ever and largest car brake in the world, while 73 pounds of unsprung weight lighter than an iron braking system and exceptionally fade resistant. With the ESC system engaged, the car provides stability over uneven surfaces, abnormal cambers or in inclement weather, while in Dynamic mode, the driver can alter cornering stance at their discretion. ESC can also be switched off, for a driver-focused experience previously only seen in Bentley's racing machines. Electronic all-wheel steering and an electronic limited slip differential (eLSD)—Bentley's first—let you balance throttle and steering for effortless progressive yaw angles on track.

▼ The **Aston Martin Racing Driver Academy** returns for 2021 as the British luxury sportscar manufacturer renews its search to uncover the next generation of GT endurance superstars. The initiative, designed

to fast-track talent within Aston Martin Racing's thriving customer team network, uncovered three rising stars early: Ross Gunn (GB), Tom Canning (GB) and 2020 graduate Valentin Hasse-Clot (FR). Another 15 candi-

dates have signed up from a range of championships around the world. A top platform for learning and development with an established manufacturer, the initiative is continuously fine-tuned to effectively coach drivers in the early stages of their careers. Drivers from ages 17 to 26 with Vantage GT3 and GT4 race programs in recognized championships are eligible. The reward for the successful graduate includes financial support toward their 2022



Aston Martin Racing Driver Academy

race program, as well as assistance and guidance from the factory, tailored to their season plans. Contestants are judged on a wide range of criteria including pace, consistency and technical feedback. The judging panel, which includes AMR president David King, managing director John Gaw, two-time 24 Hours of Le Mans winner Jonny Adam (GB), works star Ross Gunn (GB), and Hasse-Clot, will also evaluate

each driver's ability to manage the strategic, teamwork, commercial and public relations aspects of their role. Finally, the outstanding candidate will demonstrate the most potential to develop their talent for the future. The reigning GT4 European Series Silver Cup champion and GT World Challenge Europe Silver Cup race-winner Hasse-Clot emerged top of the class in the 2020 AMR Driver Academy. The 25-year-old, from Paris, who follows in the recent footsteps of British GT4 champions Gunn and Canning, is contesting the GTWC Europe Endurance Cup for Garage 59 as well as the FFSA GT Silver Cup with AGS Events where he leads the points standings after two rounds. Aston Martin Racing president King notes, "The Aston Martin Racing Driver Academy has proven itself a key indicator of talent in recent years, and we see it as a vital development tool. As Ross, Tom and now Valentin are proving, this initiative holds great value both to us and to the drivers who participate, as we seek to build on the talent that exists inside our network of customer teams. We intend to continue this tradition as we look to support our partners across the GT racing spectrum in every way that we can."

▼ The new **Ferrari 812 Competizione**

and its 812 Competizione A targa-top version are limited-edition special series cars with innovative technological concepts applied to the engine, vehicle dynamics and aerodynamics, aimed at a very exclusive group of collectors and enthusiasts. New independent four-wheel steering delivers exceptional agility and precision

KEEP RIGHT >>

in cornering. A naturally-aspirated 818-hp 6.5-liter V12, derived from the multiple-award-winning engine in the Ferrari 812 Superfast, with several areas significantly re-engineered to achieve a new record red



Ferrari 812 Competizione

line while optimizing fluid dynamics of the intake system and combustion, while reducing internal friction. Maximum revs are now 9,500 rpm, a result delivered by the meticulous redesign of key components including 40 percent lighter titanium connecting rods, diamond-like carbon (DLC) coated pistons and a rebalanced crankshaft (three percent lighter). Significant improvements to the distribution and cylinder heads include DLC-coated cams (which now feature DLC coating) and DLC-coated steel sliding finger followers, derived from Ferrari F1 and developed to provide a higher lift profile in this engine. Air intakes, a variable-displacement oil pump, direct fuel injection management, the ignition system and ECU are all newly engineered. A GPF (gasoline particulate filter) in the exhaust system ensures compliance with the latest emissions regulations, while a new exhaust tailpipe reinstates the traditional medium-high engine sound otherwise muffled by the use of the GPF. The 812 Competizione pair have a seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox with the same gear ratios as the 812 Superfast but shift times reduced by five percent. The car's body incorporates extensive new aerodynamic technology in each detail, as well as particular attention to making the car as light as possible, 84 pounds lighter than the 812 Superfast. A seven-year scheduled maintenance program for the first seven years of the car's life allows customers the certainty that their car is being kept at peak performance and safety over the

years (a special service also available to owners of pre-owned Ferraris).

▼ **Motul**, founded in 1853, has a new Classic Line of semi-synthetic lubricants

specifically formulated to meet the needs of both established and emerging collector car markets. With vintage vehicles in mind, Motul's Classic Line combines oils, detergents and additives engineered to enhance the performance and longevity of older powertrains in everything from classic hot rods to retro sports cars built from 1950 to 1999. All Motul Classic Line lubricants feature an additive package with high-zinc (ZDDP) and molybdenum



Motul Classic Line

(moly) for reduced friction and increased power. The synthetic base oils and adapted detergent levels of each Classic Line formula are further suited to the metals and gasket materials common to each era of vehicle manufacturing. Advanced additives ensure that all Motul Classic Line lubricants meet or exceed API standards. High-adhesion properties unique to the Classic Line also provide excellent cold flow

properties to prevent engine wear during start-ups and coat and protect engine internals and running gear during periods of prolonged storage that collector vehicles often experience. Motul optimized Modern Classic Eighties 10W40 meets the needs of forced induction engines common to the 1980s, while Modern Classic Nineties 10W30 meets the demands of high-revving engines with the more modern valvetrains of the following decade. Both Modern Classic oils are the first products to offer high ZDDP and moly for "rad" era collector cars from these two decades. A new 2100 Classic Oil 15W50 revised Motul's legendary 2100 oil to better lubricate and protect naturally aspirated and forced induction engines with flat tappet cams common to vehicles in the 1970s and beyond. Designed for hot rods, muscle cars and collector vehicles produced after 1950, Classic Oil 20W50 uses an additive package fortified with an ideal ~1,800 ppm of ZDDP for improved protection for flat tappet or high-lift cams and high-performance engines with tighter tolerances and older elastomer gaskets; its medium detergent level also makes this an appropriate break-in oil for newly refurbished engines. Straight-weight Classic Oil SAE 30 and SAE 50 are mineral monograde engine oils with low detergent

levels, blended specifically for gasoline or diesel four-stroke engines generally produced before 1950. All Motul Classic Line Lubricants come in heritage-inspired metal packaging, adding to the collector-oriented experience, while both Modern Classic oils feature Motul's contemporary logo with a unique typeface to reflect the style of each decade. For more information, visit www.motul.com. ■

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THIS YEAR ONLY!

Dodge//SRT's 710-hp Hellcat SUV. by Joe Sage

Dodge//SRT introduced three wondrous machines at once last summer in a quarantine-era online event, each with over 700 hp, each upping the game in its already over-the-top existing lineup (see our Sept-Oct 2020 issue). Included were the 807-hp 2020 Dodge Challenger SRT Super Stock, latest among a wideranging Challenger SRT set (a dragstrip-capable but more street- and/or tire-friendly replacement of sorts for the Demon); the 797-hp 2021 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye Widebody, one-upping the existing SRT Hellcat (see our drive in the March-April issue: "There are no words"); and the one we're driving here, the 710-hp 2021 Dodge Durango SRT Hellcat, a step beyond the existing Durango SRT. Each bears a mod-

el-specifically engineered build of the supercharged 6.2-liter HEMI® high-output Hellcat V8.

The gen-three Durango dates back to 2011, but has lost none of its appeal. Its development began during the DaimlerChrysler era, which has always prompted us to note that it bears much of the same R&D as a Mercedes GL (now GLS) at half the price. This Hellcat closes that price gap, but then again it takes its power and performance to a level not seen in its increasingly distant cousin.

The 710-hp output of this Hellcat is well chosen and meticulously balanced, bringing you a three-row sport utility with the full meaning and impact of both of those words—sporty power and performance speaking for themselves, not intended to

be a rock crawler, yet perfectly capable of bringing you to your favorite dirt road fishing or picnic spot, all with utility that remarkably even maintains the model's category-topping 8700-lb tow capacity.

This Durango's many horses are precisely targeted through the power curve, delivered through a well-matched quick-shifting 8-speed automatic. While choosing its gears quickly and accurately at local speeds around town, the Hellcat consistently maintains its gently rich, throaty acoustics.

We had our Durango Hellcat scheduled for the week of the Texas Auto Roundup (also in this issue) and were pumped at the opportunity to perhaps make a road trip of it, as we had for the Texas Truck Rodeo last fall. As it turns out, the event and vehicle schedules both shifted a bit, and we ended up booking flights instead. But what a drive that might have been! Speaking of pumped, though, we'll never know what fuel mileage we might have

achieved on a long haul (and with prices climbing).

We did take it out for a few hours' run on two- and four-lane rural roads and highways here at home, zeroing the readout at start, not quite breaking 20 mpg. None of this really matters, of course, in the face of the Hellcat experience overall.

Our example was a bit of a sleeper, not bearing the available bold black stripes that would identify this model to just about anybody, but its soundtrack and the potency in the pedal beneath our foot tell the tale. (That cosmetic difference made it somewhat like having a NASCAR car in a civilian skin, reminding us of those commercials where an incognito Jeff Gordon surprises his riders.)

Even without those stripes, we found this was a major head-turner and thumbs-upper. Manageable as this muscular beast is, it does make you aware of its strength. A lot of people may buy this simply because it's a top dog model—for its badge honor and bragging rights. Like a musclebound bodybuilder, it may be more than some truly need to carry around all day every day just for show. But while the Durango Hellcat keeps its showoff factor fairly tame, its go factor knows few limits.

PRICING AS TESTED

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| BASE PRICE | \$80,995 |
| PREMIUM INTERIOR GRP: suede headliner, premium instrument panel, forged carbon fiber interior accents..... | 2495 |
| SEATS: high performance Laguna leather..... | 1595 |
| RED SEAT BELTS | 95 |
| HARMAN KARDON AUDIO: 825-watt amp, 19 amped speakers w subwoofer..... | 1085 |
| POWER SUNROOF | 1295 |
| 2ND ROW CONSOLE w armrest, storage, illum rear cupholders, 12v aux power outlet, USB charging port..... | 595 |
| REAR DVD ENT CNTR: rear seat video system with Blu-Ray compatible dual screen..... | 1995 |
| TRAILER TOW GROUP IV: Class IV receiver hitch, trailer brake controller, compact spare tire, 20x6.5 aluminum spare wheel..... | 1195 |
| TECHNOLOGY GRP: advanced brake assist, lane departure warning plus, full-spd fwd collision warning plus, adaptive cruise w stop..... | 2395 |
| BLIND SPOT & CROSS-PATH DETECT | 495 |
| DESTINATION CHARGE | 1495 |
| TOTAL | \$95,730 |

Note that you could shave about \$15 grand off our sticker total, though options and packages are, as always, reasonably priced. Our sample's interior finishes and tow options seem key for a final build appropriate to the vehicle's full character.

This very special Dodge Durango is a one-mod-year build only, so grab one if you can. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| ASSEMBLY | Jefferson Ave North, Detroit |
| ENGINE ASSEMBLY | Saltillo, Mexico |
| CONSTRUCTION | steel unibody |
| ROWS / SEATS | three / six (2/2/2) |
| ENGINE | 6.2L HEMI® supercharged V8 (376 cu.in), 16v pushrod OHV, sodium-filled exhaust valves, hollow stem intake valves, 16 conventional lifters all w roller tips; sequential multiport electronic returnless FI; deep-skirt cast iron block w cross-bolted main bearing caps, alum-alloy heads w hemispherical combustion chambers |
| HP/TORQUE | 710 hp / 645 lb-ft |
| COMPRESSION RATIO | 9.5:1 |
| TRANSMISSION | Torqueflite 8HP95 8-spd OD, driver-interactive manual control via steering wheel paddles and electronically modulated torque converter clutch |
| DRIVETRAIN | full-time AWD |
| TRANSFER CASE | MP3010 single-speed, electronic proportioning |
| AXLES | F: conventional differential, 7.7 dia ring gear, ratio 3.70:1; R: conventional differential, 9.1 dia ring gear, ratio 3.70:1 |
| TORQUE SPLIT (F/R) | Auto: 40/60 Snow and Tow: 50/50 Sport: 35/65 Track: 30/70 |
| EXHAUST | dual w crossover X-pipe and 4-in round nickel-chrome tips |
| ZERO-TO-60 MPH | 3.5 sec |
| QUARTER-MILE | NHRA certified 11.5 sec |
| TOP SPEED | 180 mph |
| SUSPENSION | F: SRT-tuned SLA indep w alum lower control arms, alum knuckle, alum clevis, coils, Bilstein adaptive damping w rebound control springs, upper & lower control arms, hollow stblzr bar; R: SRT-tuned multi-link, coils, Bilstein adaptive damping w rebound control springs, alum lower control arm, indep upper links (tension & camber) plus separate toe link, hollow stblzr bar |
| STEERING | 16.7:1 ratio, 3.2 lock to lock |
| BRAKES | F: 15.7x1.42 two-piece alum performance rotor hat, directionally slotted w Brembo six-piston 1.57 fixed caliper & ABS, 498 swept area; R: 13.78x1.10 disc, Brembo four-piston 1.34 fixed caliper, 316 swept area |
| WHEELS | 20x10 machined face, blk pockets |
| TIRES | P2925/45ZR20 Pirelli Scorpion Zero all-season performance (run-flat) |
| LENGTH / WHEELBASE | 201.0 / 119.8 in |
| TURNING CIRCLE | 41.0 ft |
| GROUND CLEARANCE | (3.6L w265/60R18) 8.1 in |
| APPR / BRKOVER / DEP | 18.5 / 17.3 / 20.2° |
| HEADROOM (F/2/3) | 39.9 / 39.8 / 37.8 in |
| LEGROOM (F/2/3) | 40.3 / 38.6 / 33.5 in |
| CARGO CAPACITY | 17.2 / 43.3 / 85.1 cu.ft |
| WEIGHT | 5710 lb |
| PAYLOAD | 1590 lb |
| TOW CAPACITY | 8700 lb |
| OIL / COOLANT CAPACITY | 8.3 / 14.7 qt |
| FUEL / CAPACITY | 91 oct prem req / 24.6 gal |
| MPG | 12/17/13 (city/hwy/comb) |

2021 DODGE DURANGO LINEUP

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| SXT / SXT Plus | 293-hp 3.6L V6..... | \$33,340 |
| GT / GT Plus | 293-hp 3.6L V6..... | 36,345 |
| Citadel | 3.6L V6 / opt 5.7L V8..... | 48,095 |
| R/T | 360-hp 5.7L V8..... | 45,595 |
| SRT 392 | 475-hp 6.4L V8..... | 64,245 |
| SRT Hellcat | 710-hp 6.2L s/c V8..... | 80,995 |

SXT through Citadel RWD or AWD; SRT AWD only



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SPECIAL EVENT : BARRETT-JACKSON LAS VEGAS 2021



**Barrett-Jackson
Las Vegas 2021**

Thursday-Saturday, June 17-19, 2021

Las Vegas Convention Center West Hall, Las Vegas NV 89109

BARRETT-JACKSON hosted another record-breaking live auction in Las Vegas in late June, held in the new West Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center, the first public event held there. Boasting a diverse 100 percent No Reserve docket, they sold more than 700 vehicles totaling over \$46 million, and \$775,000 was raised through the sale of four charity vehicles. Automobilia items totaling 284 pieces brought in over \$884,000.

Barrett-Jackson also became the first collector car company to sell four NFTs (block-chain non-fungible tokens) during a live, in-person auction, bringing in \$67,000.

Total auction sales were over \$48 million with a 100 percent sell-through rate. Among them were more than 65 world record auction sales.

The top 10 vehicles sold at the 2021 Barrett-Jackson Las Vegas Auction included:

1. 2015 McLaren P1(Lot #748).....\$1,567,500
2. 1957 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster.....(Lot #742).....\$1,045,000
3. 2019 Ford GT(Lot #749).....\$1,023,000
4. 1965 AC Cobra 289 Roadster CSX 2439.....(Lot #462).....\$907,500
5. 1994 Toyota Supra "Fast and Furious" Movie Car(Lot #744).....\$550,000
6. 1963 Chevrolet Corvette Split-Window Custom(Lot #763).....\$396,000
7. 1970 Chevrolet Camaro Custom Coupe "The Grinch"(Lot #770).....\$385,000

8. 2011 Porsche 911 Speedster(Lot #741).....\$385,000
9. Frank Sinatra's 1970 Maserati Ghibli(Lot #740).....\$330,000
10. Henry Ford II's 1966 Ford Mustang GT K-Code Conv(Lot #766).....\$330,000

Barrett-Jackson added \$775,000 to their more than \$133 million raised for charity to date with the sale of four collectible vehicles in Las Vegas, including:

- 2021 Ford Bronco 4-Door Badlands Raiders Edition (Lot #3002): \$275,000, benefitting Grant a Gift Autism Foundation and Raiders Foundation
- 2020 Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 Hertz/Hendrick Motorsports Edition (Lot #3003): \$250,000, benefitting Jack & Jill Late Stage Cancer Foundation
- 2021 Dodge Durango SRT Hellcat AWD (Lot #3000): \$180,000, benefitting Ronald McDonald House of Detroit
- 1956 Chevrolet 150 (Lot #3001): \$70,000, benefitting Honor Flight Network

The company's most successful non-Scottsdale automobilia auction to date included an animated 1940s Greyhound Bus neon sign (Lot #8298) at \$46,000 and a stunning Packard Automobiles neon sign from the 1930s (Lot #8295) at \$36,800.

Entertainment and sports celebrities, as well as titans of business and political leaders who attended this year's Barrett-Jackson auction included "Mr. Las Vegas" Wayne Newton, Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak, Las Vegas Raiders President Marc Badain, eight-time US Olympic gold medalist Apolo Ohno and Carroll Shelby's grandson Aaron Shelby.

Next for Barrett-Jackson is their inaugural Houston Auction, September 16-18 at the NRG Center. Then it's on to Scottsdale, January 22-30, 2022.

▼ www.barrett-jackson.com

Vehicle photos [2]: Barrett-Jackson Auctions



Dressed for success

BY JOE SAGE

It's been a few years now since Genesis broke off from parent brand Hyundai, a slow-going evolution till recently. Sedans—three now—had existed under Hyundai, badged solely as Genesis. The new dealer network has been slow to form, the lineup limited, and volume has been low.

That is all changing, one of the most prominent signs being a simultaneously subtle and dramatic restyling, followed by the emergence of an SUV lineup. Both have been well executed, and both are embodied in the GV80 utility we are driving here.

The “crest” grille is a stunner, building upon the character of its predecessor, highly distinctive, signaling luxury without being ostentatious, complemented by high-style LED quad headlights echoed in active light bars along the front fender flanks.

The powerful, silky smooth ride of their G70, G80 and flagship G90 sedans translates immediately to the SUV format. GV80 offers two powertrains, mirroring the G80 sedan: a 300-hp 2.5-liter four-cylinder turbo and the 375-hp 3.5-liter V6 twin-turbo in our top-trim model. As with the sedans, GV80 is

rear-drive-based, with inherent advantages in acceleration, handling and braking. The smaller engine comes with AWD or rear-drive; more powerful 3.5T trims are AWD-only, which suits us fine.

There are basically three trim levels: a nameless base model, Prestige and Advanced. With the larger 3.5T AWD, there is also Advanced+, which we are driving here, the only trim with a third row.

We fell for the GV80's driver experience within the first block. The cabin is top notch, full of pleasing feature and comfort design points. Infotainment and other functions are built into a very wide, not very tall screen interface with useful information at all levels (some of which we used to tamp down

ambitious driver assist). Shifting is via a rotary dial, one of the few alternative types we do generally like. Knurled cylindrical dials for audio and other functions are stylish and ergonomically friendly. (Downside: right where peripheral vision might expect the shifter is instead a feature controller, a circular pad with a prominent, bejeweled surround.)

The GV80 also passes the handsome beast test, in which you can't resist looking back one more time after parking, all the moreso with lights on.

All that, and it still tows 6000 pounds and is rated 23 mpg highway.

The GV80 lineup shows great value, starting under \$50 grand, the 3.5T under \$60, with another \$5 grand or so for that third row. (It will be interesting to see the upcoming GV70, due as a 2022 model and starting just over \$40 grand.)

We had an enjoyable week with this machine around town, not even thinking about drive modes, which we usually have to seek out pretty quickly to conquer any deficits. When we finally did try sport mode, the changes were subtle, which is how we prefer them—not because we don't want to be sporty, but because we prefer performance to al-

(cont'd)

SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| ROWS / SEATS | Advanced+ : three/seven |
| ASSEMBLY PLANT | Ulsan, S Korea |
| ENGINE / TRANSMISSION | S Korea |
| ENGINE | 3.5L twin-turbo GDI 24v V6 |
| HP/TORQUE | 375 hp / 391 lb-ft |
| DRIVETRAIN | AWD |
| TRANSMISSION | 8-spd automatic rotary dial / paddles |
| SUSPENSION | F/R: multi-link, gas shocks; electronically controlled w/ road preview; (opt not on ours: electronic limslip diff) |
| STEERING | elec rack-mounted motor-driven variable gear ratio steering rack |
| BRAKES | 4-wheel vented disc |
| WHEELS | 20x8.5J aluminum alloy |
| TIRES | P265/50R20 Michelin Primacy Tour all-season |
| LENGTH / WHEELBASE | 194.7 / 116.3 in |
| GROUND CLEARANCE | not stated |
| TURNING CIRCLE | 39.3 ft |
| HEADROOM (F/R) | not stated |
| LEGROOM (F/R) | not stated |
| CARGO CAPACITY | not stated |
| WEIGHT | (7-passenger) 4907-5104 lb |
| TOW CAPACITY | 6000 lb |
| FUEL / CAPACITY | premium / 21.1 gal |
| MPG | 18/23/20 (city/hwy/comb) |

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| BASE PRICE | \$65,050 |
| 3.5T ADVANCED+ AWD INCL | AWD Advanced features incl 20-in machine-finished metallic grey wheels, leather, 16-way power driver's seat w adjustable bolsters & cushion extension & 4-way power lumbar, heated 2nd row seats, and more—plus third row with 50/50 power split. |
| ADRIATIC BLUE PAINT | 400 |
| DESTINATION CHARGE | 1025 |
| TOTAL | \$66,475 |

2021² GENESIS LINEUP

SEDANS

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| G70 | 2.0T ... 252hp ... RWD | \$36,500 |
| | AWD | 38,500 |
| | 3.3T ... 365hp ... RWD | 46,700 |
| | AWD | 48,700 |
| G80 | 2.5T ... 300hp ... RWD | \$47,700 |
| | AWD | 50,850 |
| | 3.5T ... 375hp ... RWD | 59,100 |
| | AWD | 62,250 |
| Electrified G80 ² | | thd |
| G90 | 3.3T ... 365hp ... RWD | \$72,950 |
| | AWD | 75,450 |
| | 5.0 ... 420hp ... RWD | 76,700 |
| | AWD | 79,200 |

SUVS

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|----------|
| GV70 ² | 2.5T ... 300hp ... AWD | \$41,000 |
| | 3.5T ... 375hp ... AWD | 52,600 |
| GV80 | 2.5T ... 300hp ... RWD | \$48,900 |
| | AWD | 54,650 |
| | 3.5T ... 375hp ... AWD | 59,650 |

²2022 model

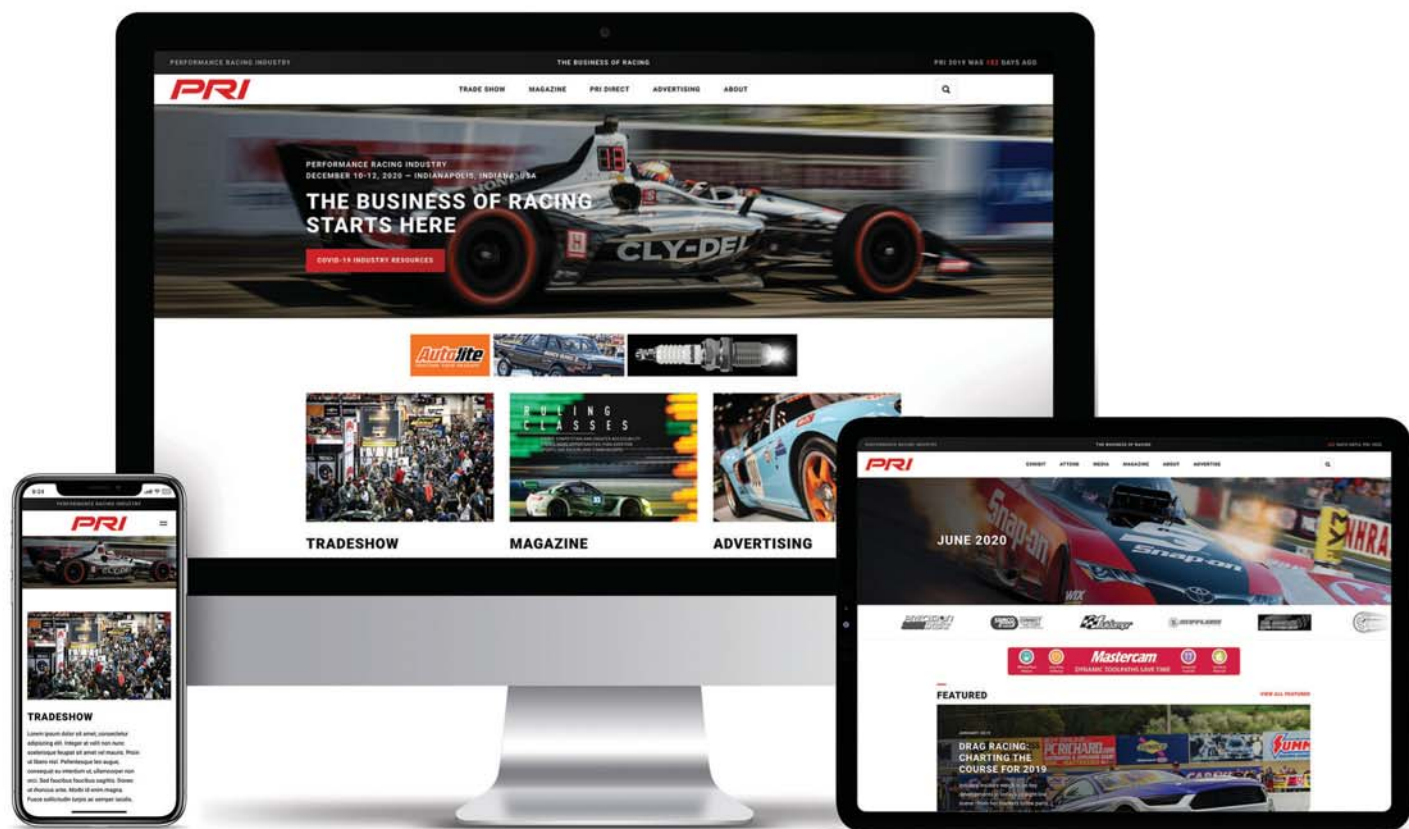
A wide contoured chrome band along the door sills, echoing front and rear, is an ongoing treat, reflecting the sky and trees even as the GV80 slips into evening light.





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ready be complete, straight out of the box. Shift points are no doubt tightened up in sport, and the engine note grows to a light, satisfying growl.

But we had one more potential analytical point—that 23 mpg highway mileage rating. We usually don't get into hypermiling in depth, but that had us curious. After all, it weighs some 5000 pounds, as you would expect, and carries seven people.

We had received the GV80 with an average fuel mileage already in the gauges, and who knows for how long or in what kind of driving. Add a few days with us in town, and it was reading 11.3 mpg. If we really wanted to hypermile, we'd probably drive 65 mph steady for a couple of hours on I-10 in either direction. But we prefer something more real-worldy and, with 375 horses underfoot, more aggressive. So it was off to the Beeline Highway, AZ 87, for a drive up to a late breakfast in Payson.

We pulled in reading 12.2 mpg at the Chevron station opposite We-Ko-Pa Resort east of Fountain Hills—and zeroed out. Ahead would be a combination of highway speeds, light traffic, significant climbs, curves and descents—good conditions for a meaningful number. Or fairly good. We would, after all, be climbing 3500 feet en route. We also popped it back into sport while parked, discovering that this also firms up the seat bolsters. Other modes include eco and snow. Knowing we weren't likely to see snow, we popped it into eco—which we do far less than average—and headed out.

Starting to climb only slightly at highway speed, we felt no loss of power or control in eco, and our mileage was climbing, hitting 17.8 within just a couple of miles. We noted the vehicle was so comfortable, it would be easy to stay behind the wheel and drive from here to Maine, if so inclined.

One of our favorite features of the Beeline is the stretch where the two directions cross paths—preserving natural terrain, while offering an optimal drive—full of curves and climbs, basically a mountain two-lane with no oncoming traffic. We entered this stretch at 19.6, dropping to 17.2 mpg by the end of that sporty segment. We were soon back up to 19.2 and realizing we'd sure like to at least hit 20 mpg. But after the final climb to the top, we were at 17.4.

Most vehicles set drive modes back to normal when shut off, but this was still in eco after breakfast, so we stayed with that. We'd experienced no performance penalty, and it probably helped our mileage mission. But wait—on the return, we'd be descending 3500 feet. We could reset at the top, read both directions and average those—or not reset and, knowing the uphill mileage and the total at the end, calculate the downhill leg based on that. Same diff, as we all learned in algebra.

Back at the Fountain Hills turnoff, even with a photo stop at Bush Highway, we were at exactly 20 mpg. Nice! As for the average: 17.4 uphill plus “x” downhill, divided by two, equals our known 20 mpg overall. This resolves to 22.6 mpg on the drive back, which rounds off to 23, their stated highway mileage. Given all our spirited driving and the varied terrain, that's admirable.

Starting with a strong foundation, the Genesis GV80 covers a lot of bases: it's their first SUV; it's a superb execution of the brand's style evolution; it provides a generous experience for the price; it delivers 375 well-trained horses in any mode; it tows 6000 pounds; and it gets over 20 mpg.

First impressions are important. Lasting impressions are, too. This is a beauty inside and out. ■



THE LATEST FROM GENESIS

THE LATEST IN LAW ENFORCEMENT: The Dubai Police General Command has added the Genesis GV80 to its fleet of luxury patrol cars, sourced from exclusive UAE Genesis distributor Juma Al Majid EST.

THE LATEST IN GENESIS SUVs: Down one size from our GV80 is the upcoming 2022 Genesis GV70, which will be offered in the US with a 2.5L turbo four and 3.5L twin-turbo V6. (And we'll be watching for a GV90.)

THE LATEST IN GENESIS POWERTRAINS: Genesis revealed its first-ever EV model, the Electrified G80, to the global market at Auto Shanghai 2021 (the Shanghai International Automobile Industry Exhibition). Estimated maximum range is more than 500 km (311 miles) based on the Korean EV certification system or 427 km (265 miles) per the company's estimates. 350 kW rapid charging goes from 10 to 80 percent in 22 minutes. The Electrified G80 has standard AWD and 0-to-60 time of 4.9 seconds in sport mode.



VALERIE THOMPSON UPDATE

"AMERICA'S QUEEN OF SPEED" HEADING BACK TO BONNEVILLE



WHILE 2020 sidelined most racers due to Covid-19-related event cancellations, the world's fastest female motorcycle racer —Scottsdale resident Valerie Thompson —was busy planning her newest endeavors, on and off the track.

Thompson started 2021 in typical fashion and according to plan, piloting the Team Turbo Tiger Kawasaki at the ECTA Arkansas Mile Spring Fling in May to two new records in the half-mile and two kilometers, with a top speed of 216.035 mph (348.181 km/h). She's the newest member of ECTA's 200 MPH Club and will be the designated co-driver for Team Turbo Tiger at SCTA Speedweek competition in August.

Valerie is also the designated driver of the famed BUB 7 motorcycle streamliner, a proven record-setting vehicle designed by AMA Hall of Fame member Denis Manning. This American-built streamliner has held the motorcycle land-speed record

twice, from 2006 to 2008 and again from 2009 to 2010.

Racing the BUB 7 at the 2018 Dry Lake Racers Association Speed Week competition, Thompson set a new record with a mind-blowing top speed of 328.467 mph. Just days later, she experienced a horrific crash at over 360 mph during the World Speed Trials. Valerie walked away from the catastrophe, which scattered wreckage for over a mile, with only minor injuries.

After a three-year rebuilding process, the BUB 7 team returns to Bonneville this year for a private test session and to compete in the August Bonneville Motorcycle Speed Trials.

In fact, Valerie will be doing double duty at BMST, racing both the BUB 7 Streamliner and the Team Turbo Kawasaki.

Thompson's relentless quest to become the world's fastest motorcycle racer (male or female) by breaking the current world record of 376.363 mph is the focus of the upcoming racing documentary film *Rockets and Titans*. (You can find a teaser trailer on YouTube.)

Seeking a distraction from racing, Val-



erie started playing Pickleball in February of this year. What started as a new element of her fitness regime has led to playing four-plus times a week, taking professional lessons and attending training camps. She started construction on a private backyard court after just eight games, with possible plans for new career as a Pickleball pro. Look for the August issue of *Pickleball Magazine*, where you'll see America's Queen of Speed on the cover.

Whether on the track or the courts, Valerie Thompson is always seeking the winner's circle. ■



Valerie is an independent racer seeking sponsorship. You can help the all-volunteer BUB 7 team rewrite racing history. Visit ValerieThompsonRacing.com for details.





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ARIZONA RIDER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE ON TWO WHEELS

Arizonan Deborah Butitta to be inducted into Sturgis Hall of Fame Class of 2021

The Sturgis Motorcycle Museum & Hall of Fame congratulates and welcomes Deb Butitta at the 2021 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in August.

Deborah, of Flagstaff, was born and raised in Rockford, Illinois, to a modest family who owned and operated a large radiator and air conditioning repair business. From a very young age, her mother would drop her off at the shop, where engines roared from the motorcycles that lined Madison Street each Saturday. By the time Deborah was in high school, she was comfortable riding on the back of her boyfriend's motorcycle.

Over the years, Deborah became a member of

various organizations including Modified Motorcycle Association of Arizona, ABATE of Colorado, Freedom of the Road Riders in Missouri, American Motorcycle Association and Motorcycle Rider Foundation—all while remaining a member of her home Chapter of ABATE of AZ.

In ABATE of AZ, Deborah has held various positions at chapter and state level, including Chapter Political Action Coordinator for 14 years, and overall Chapter Coordinator, and Deborah currently sits on the ABATE of AZ Board of Directors.

Deborah is also currently on the Motorcycle Riders Foundation Board of Directors, and she is the Chairman for the Motorcycle Riders Foundation Awareness and Education Board of Directors which she, Chuck Coulter and Carol Downs founded in 2008. She still belongs to various state organizations as well.

The Sturgis Motorcycle Museum & Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will be held on Wednesday, August 11, from 830 am until 11230 pm (MDT) in Deadwood, South Dakota. For ticket info, visit www.sturgismuseum.com/hof. ■



Deceptively potent 3-banger

BY JOE SAGE

The new Chevrolet Trailblazer derives its name from two sources: an earlier Trailblazer; and of course Chevy Blazer past and current, though the Blazer name had taken longer to come back to life.

Chevy Blazer had started out big-pickup-based, then was joined by a smaller S-10 sibling, which ultimately had become the only Blazer, as the bigger one became the Tahoe. The earlier Trailblazer had joined the lineup bigger than the S-10 Blazer.

The Trailblazer name is back, this time as a new small SUV, the hottest trend of the moment, arriving a year after a new bigger Blazer. The new Trailblazer slots above Chevy's smallest offering, the diminutive Trax, and below the next-up Equinox.

The new Trailblazer compares with sister brand Buick's new Encore GX (see our May-June issue). They share the same bones and build to a great degree, though the boxier Chevy Trailblazer has a bit more length and a slightly longer wheelbase. Turning circles are the same, while other variables are a mix, with the sleeker Buick surprisingly hav-

ing more rear headroom, yet less front headroom and less rear legroom than the boxier Chevrolet.

Lineup-wise, Trailblazer is to the tiny Chevy Trax as the new Encore GX is to the tiny Buick Encore. It's their badging and branding that have taken an inverse approach. While Encore GX picks up style and name cues from the smaller Encore, Trailblazer takes its visual cues and name from a larger utility, the Blazer. How a shopper sees these will depend whether they're shopping multiple sizes within one brand, cross-shopping one size between the two, or some of both. Most may not notice the relationships at all, but they add good perspective.

Trailblazer, at \$19,000, starts at a lower price point than the tiny Trax (\$21,400), though it ranges up to \$27,000 against Trax's \$23,200 top end. Trailblazer's high end offers something especially useful. Many a vehicle lineup has one premium trim by price, but another with off-road or sport-performance emphasis at a different price, confusing for anyone who goes straight to the top price to see which is "best." Chevy eliminates this emotional

tug by pricing two top Trailblazer trims the same—ACTIV, with more of a weekend adventure personality, and RS, the one we're driving here, with more of an urban flavor—a welcome approach that frees you to decide based on attributes alone.

Differences between ACTIV and RS are largely cosmetic—with RS bearing plentiful black trim, a mesh grille, dual chrome exhaust tips and such. We considered taking our RS out to blaze some trails, as its name suggests—photos on the consumer website indeed show drivers happily pounding along on dirt roads. But doublechecking differences in specs, ground clearance was not yet stated, and approach/departure/breakover weren't even on the charts. An owner's willingness to subject one trim versus another to gravel chips and cactus scrapes aside, the biggest build difference between ACTIV and RS seems to be the stylish 18-inch wheels and all-season tires on our RS, versus 17-inch wheels and sport terrains on the ACTIV. A shallow sidewall fitment can be more vulnerable

to abuse when blazing trails far from home, so we let that whole idea slide. We concluded those website photos must be the ACTIV model.

Available in five trim levels (see chart at lower right)—all but the base model with optional all-wheel drive—one key variable is the engine, with a 137-hp 1.2-liter turbo on lower-to-mid front-drivers, and a 155-hp 1.3-liter three-cylinder turbo as you work your way up. There are also two transmissions, a CVT or a 9-speed automatic. It looks complex at first, but it's pretty simple—if you want the bigger engine with front-wheel drive, you're shopping the top models. But you can get the bigger engine affordably by opting for AWD on all but the base L. Any with AWD have the bigger engine and the 9-speed automatic. Fuel mileage, by the way, is highest on the front-drive 1.3-liter.

Even in top trim, controls and interfaces—mirrors, climate, infotainment—tend toward the simpler side, but their simplicity offers quick, streamlined operation with less distraction than average.

We were mightily impressed with all aspects of this little guy with a 1.3-liter turbo—remarkably quick and responsive, with its 9-speed automatic extremely well matched. If you've yet to try a three-cylinder, give it a try and expect a surprise—this thing is a blast to drive. ■



FAMILY ORIENTATION, at left: (1) the little Chevy Trax; (2) Buick Encore GX, Buick's Trailblazer sibling; (3) earlier Trailblazer; and (4) the current new Chevy Blazer.
 • The new Trailblazer (lead photo) is a size larger than Trax or than Buick Encore (not shown), the same size as Encore GX.
 • Larger than Trailblazer are Chevy Equinox (not shown), Blazer and Traverse (not shown, which replaced the old Trailblazer in 2009). Larger still in size (though in some cases overlapping in passenger count) are Tahoe (the most direct descendant of the original full-size Blazer) and Suburban.

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLYBupyeong Gu, South Korea
ENGINE/TRANSMISSIONMexico
ENGINEECOTEC 1.3L 3-cylinder turbo, DOHC alum/alum dir injection
HP/TORQUE155 hp / 174 lb-ft
DRIVETRAINopt AWD
TRANSMISSION9-sp'd automatic (1.3T FWD and all 1.2T models have a CVT)
SUSPENSIONF: MacPherson strut; R: compound crank, Watts link (w AWD)
STEERINGelec pwr-assist rack & pinion
BRAKESelec 4-whl disc, Duralife rotors
WHEELS(RS) 18-in aluminum
TIRES225/55R18 all-season (note: ACTIV has 225/60R17 sport terrain)
LENGTH / WHEELBASE173.5 / 103.9 in
GROUND CLEARANCEtdb
TURNING CIRCLE36.8 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)(w snrf) 38.3 / 36.8 in (note: w/o snrf 40.0 / 38.4 in)
LEGROOM (F/R)40.9 / 39.4 in
CARGO CAPACITY25.3 / 54.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIBtdb
TOW CAPACITYw accessory hitch 1000 lb
FUEL CAPACITYtdb
MPG26/30/28 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE (RS AWD)\$27,000
TECHNOLOGY PKG: Infotainment 3 Plus, 8" color touchscreen, Bluetooth audio streaming w phone, voice command to phone, wireless charge, adaptive cruise, memory card port, LED headlamps, HD radio, 4.2" multi-color driver info center, Bose premium 7-sprkr audio, HD rear camera1620
CONVENIENCE PKG: single zone auto AC, auto dim mirror, illuminated sliding vanity mirror visors, 120v power outlet, SiriusXM capable, rear A&C USB charge-only ports620
DRIVER CONFIDENCE PKG: rear park assist, rear cross traffic alert, lane change alert w side blind zone alert345
ALL-WEATHER FLOOR MATS150
DESTINATION CHARGE965
TOTAL\$30,730

2021 CHEVY TRAILBLAZER LINEUP

L1.2T...137hpfwd**\$19,000**
LS1.2T...137hpfwd**\$21,600**
1.3T...155hpAWD**23,600**
LT1.2T...137hpfwd**\$23,700**
1.3T...155hpAWD**25,700**
ACTIV1.3T...155hpfwd**\$25,500**
".....".....AWD**27,000**
RS1.3T...155hpfwd**\$25,500**
".....".....AWD**27,000**



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ElectraMeccanica groundbreaking

Start of construction at new assembly and tech center in Mesa

Electric vehicle builder ElectraMeccanica Vehicles Corp. recently commemorated the start of construction for its new US Assembly and Engineering Technical Center in Mesa.

In attendance for the mid-May groundbreaking were more than 50 invited guests, company board members and local dignitaries. Arizona Commerce Authority president Sandra Watson kicked off the event with a keynote address, joined at the podium by president and CEO of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council Chris Camacho, Mesa Mayor John Giles and ElectraMeccanica's president and CEO Paul Rivera.

Underway is a 235,000-square-foot facility on 18 acres of land adjacent to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. When complete, it will include an assembly and manufacturing plant, a research center, 22,000 square feet of office space and 19,000 square feet of lab space.

"Today is a momentous day for ElectraMeccanica and the State of Arizona," said Watson. "Our electric vehicle industry is booming, with three manufacturing groundbreakings in just the last 16 months and additional suppliers setting up shop. We're grateful to ElectraMeccanica for choosing Arizona as the home of their first US-based facili-

ty and look forward to supporting them long into the future."

In line with ElectraMeccanica's asset-light business model, the complex will be leased from its developer, Marwest Enterprises LLC. The building is designed by architectural firm Ware Malcomb and engineered by Hunter Engineering, with Willmeng Construction acting as general Contractor.

"Today's groundbreaking marks a notable achievement for ElectraMeccanica," added Rivera. "The new engineering technical center and assembly facility will be a showcase for our vehicle lineup and afford us with the physical and human capital we need to provide the US retail and fleet market with a 'made in the USA' SOLO EV. We are thrilled to become an integral part of the vibrant Mesa community, the greater Phoenix Metropolitan Area and Arizona as a whole. We are looking forward to expanding our team and building a new culture with our future employees and their families."

When operational, the facility will have a production capacity of up to 20,000 vehicles per year and employ upwards of 200 to 500 people. Completion is currently slated for spring 2022.

"ElectraMeccanica breaking ground on its US base of operations solidifies Greater Phoenix as

America's new EV manufacturing hub," said Camacho. "There is no better place to scale, innovate, manufacture and find skilled talent to meet the demand of advanced industry. We look forward to watching ElectraMeccanica's continued success and working with Governor Ducey, the Arizona Commerce Authority and City of Mesa to support the company's expansion."

SOLO is a purpose-built three-wheeled, all-electric urban environment vehicle. Engineered for a single occupant, it offers a unique driving experience for the environmentally conscious consumer. SOLO has a range of 100 miles and a top speed of 80 mph, making it safe for highways. SOLO features front and rear crumple zones, side impact protection, roll bar and torque-limiting control, as well as power steering, power brakes, air conditioning and a Bluetooth entertainment system.

Blending a modern look with safety features at an accessible price point of \$18,500, the SOLO is currently available for pre-orders via the company's website: www.electrameccanica.com.



DIALED UP

BY JOE SAGE

ONE OF JUST 60 IN THE WORLD

Take a precision Japanese 2+2 luxury coupe like the Lexus RC (based on the IS sedan, but renamed standing for Radical Coupe), replace its engine with a 472-hp 5.0-liter V8, add all the performance bits that support that, and you have the Lexus RC F, the only full F model currently in the Lexus lineup (running \$65,875 against the base RC 300's \$42,120 or RC 350's \$45,050).

Imagine a rainy day exercise in the lab, where the RC's top engineers put their heads together and said, the RC F is pretty perfect already... best power-to-weight ratio in its class. What else could we do with it? It's only \$60-something grand, so we have headroom, but heck, it already hits 60 in four seconds. Hmm. We could lightweight it... replace some steel with carbon fiber—the hood, a rear wing, other bits—that would not only make it

lighter but lower the center of gravity, and those parts can boost aerodynamics and handling, too. Of course we can't resist upgrading brakes and exhaust from that point. Having done all that, we've already added quite a bit of distinctive style, so let's see what we can do with the interior. Maybe sport seats in red leather? And so on. Just a rainy afternoon daydream, that has now come to life.

The F in an F model's name already derives from Fuji Speedway, the manufacturer's test bed. But on this model, they spell it out: this is the Lexus RC F Fuji Speedway Edition—or RC F Fuji SE, or just RC F Fuji, for short. And special it is: there are only 60 of these in the world, including the one we recently had in our grip for a week.

Echoing the general looks of the Lexus RC F GT3 race car, the RC F Fuji loses an unspec-

ified amount of weight via its carbon fiber, and upgrades to Brembo carbon ceramic brakes (manufactured specifically for Lexus) and titanium exhaust dial up the experience. There does turn out to be a little speed boost, with the RC F Fuji hitting 60 in 3.96 versus the unmodified RC F's 4.0 seconds.

As a limited edition, the RC F Fuji comes in just two colors, Arctic Blast Satin or Cloudburst Gray (per their materials, although our vehicle sticker calls ours grey Sonic Chrome). Arctic Blast Satin is an extra-cost carwash-friendly semi-matte white running \$1875. The interior on all is Circuit Red leather with Alcantara accents, with red carbon fiber trim details added throughout. It's just the right balance of red and black—red seats, reasonable amounts on door panels, console, the bottom of the steering wheel, and a red leather arc atop the binacle cluster we thought was especially well done, just enough to remind you of



its sporting nature without overkill (and suggesting a red steering wheel when seen from outside).

The interior is very rich, a blend of luxury and spartan performance cues. Styling and design details are the kind you appreciate more every day.

They have consumed that pricing headroom effectively, creating a new machine sitting at about \$100 grand, give or take depending upon minimal options—totally in line with all it offers against its competitive set, and underscoring again what a bargain the regular RC F is.

As an amped-up supercar, the RC F Fuji is a surprisingly friendly driver around town—not overly noisy, just right, not awkward to handle, a swift and sure shifter (one of its more impressive traits) with precise, responsive steering, powerful brakes

and a firm but completely comfortable ride, from its suspension to those red sport seats.

The RC F itself is already a very strong performer, so the Fuji Edition doesn't add weight and muscle and noise to up its performance, as some superbuids do—rather, it lightens up and tightens up. It's the kind of car that can make even a traffic circle a welcome highlight of your daily drive.



The RC F Fuji, though, is begging for the open road, so we gave it one good shakedown cruise in the hilly, curvy two-lanes beyond far northeast metro Phoenix, and another run up I-17 to Black Canyon City and the Rock Springs Café—the type of drives you could enjoy all day every day.

As we departed for the
(cont'd)

SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ASSEMBLY | Tahara, Aichi, Japan |
| SEATING CAPACITY | four |
| ENGINE | 5.0L V8, 32v DOHC, alum/alum, VVT-iE variable-intelligent elec intake cam, VVT-i variable-intelligent exhaust cam |
| HP/TORQUE | 472 hp / 395 lb-ft |
| COMPRESSION RATIO | 12.3:1 |
| DRIVETRAIN | RWD |
| TRANSMISSION | 8-spd Sport Direct Shift auto w manual mode & paddles |
| REAR DIFFERENTIAL | Torsen limited slip (optional torque vectoring avail) |
| ZERO-TO-60 / TOP SPEED | 3.96 sec / 168 mph |
| SUSPENSION | F: adaptive variable suspension, dbl wishbone w high-mount upper arms, high-rate coils w/ bound stop, ZF Sachs shocks, large-dia hollow stblzr bar; R: adaptive variable suspension; multilink w low-mount upper arms, high-rate coils w/ bound stop, ZF Sachs shocks, large-dia stblzr bar |
| STEERING | speed-sensitive elec power coaxial rack & pinion, F sport mode adjust |
| BRAKES | four-wheel power-assist disc (Brembo manuf for Lexus) w ABS, EBD and brake assist; F: 15.0 vented w 6-piston opposed alum calipers, high-friction pads; R: 13.6 vented w 4-piston opposed alum calipers, high-friction pads |
| WHEELS | F: 19x9; R: 19x10 BBS forged alum manufactured for Lexus |
| TIRES | F: 255/35R19 93Y; R: 275/35R19 96Y developed for RC F |
| LENGTH / WHEELBASE | 185.4 / 107.4 in |
| TURNING CIRCLE | 35.4 ft |
| HEADROOM (F/R) | 36.5 / 34.6 in |
| LEGROOM (F/R) | 45.4 / 27.3 in |
| CARGO CAPACITY | 10.1 cu.ft |
| GROUND CLEARANCE | 5.1 in |
| WEIGHT / DISTRIBUTION | (RC F) 3946 lb / 55/45 |
| FUEL / CAPACITY | prem 91 octane / 17.4 gal |
| MPG | 16/24/19 (city/hwy/comb) |
| BASE PRICE | \$97,100 |
| HEADLAMPS | premium triple-beam LED |
| NAV/AUDIO | 10.3" color display, 17-spkr 835 watt Mark Levinson audio w Clari-Fi tech, Lexus Enform destination assist, Dynamic Navigation & Dynamic Voice Command |
| INTUITIVE PARKING ASSIST | 500 |
| DESTINATION CHARGE | 1025 |
| TOTAL | \$102,510 |

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I-17 run, we realized we hadn't been using the drive modes around town—usually, we get into these to boost a deficit, but there is no need when base performance is so good—so we decided to give 'em a try on the longer run. A spring-loaded three-position knob pops you successively into sport or sport-plus to the right, with normal in the center (customizable with a push of the knob). To the left is eco mode, uncommon in such a car. We tried them all, finding the incremental changes seemed minimal, which to us is a good (and relatively rare) sign that normal mode isn't taking anything away and sport modes are not essential for the originally engineered experience. Modes other than normal basically fine-tune the shift map, producing subtle boosts to the exhaust note, but still none radical enough to get you banished from the neighborhood. Even eco mode surprised us with healthy shift points and great acoustics.

The inherent sporty coupe styling of the RC is a solid starting point, and the Fuji Special Edition's prominent carbon fiber hood and rear spoiler—quick ways you can hope to spot one in the wild—only make it moreso. Even if you're not the world's biggest wing fan, you'll likely admit this car looks perfect bearing one, especially when you think of its GT3 racing roots—it's not just for show, but adds to the car's extremely sure-footed go.

As with the non-Fuji RC F, this is a DSG direct-shift, rear-drive-only build—a powerful performer, tempered by precision engineering (notably including its Torsen limited-slip rear differential).

As a lightweighting exercise, the car forgoes such niceties as heated and cooled seats or dri-



ver's seat memory, though it has a full complement of tech features, from high-speed radar cruise to launch control. The car does add standard features new to all RC models for 2021, including blind spot monitor with rear cross traffic alert, heated mirrors, Apple and Android compatibility and more.

Interested? You'd better hustle. With only 60 units arriving worldwide, you're not likely to see an average of even one per state. As Lexus notes, these will be *Gone in 60 Units*. ■

ROCK SPRINGS CAFÉ

Just a half hour or so north of the I-17 and Loop 101 interchange—or you can take New River Road from the fringes of Cave Creek or Lake Pleasant much of the way, if you prefer some two-lane back road driving fun—is a spot that has welcomed travelers on the Black Canyon Trail since the 1800s.

First a military bivouac, then a stagecoach stop, the location became home to the Rock Springs Hotel and General Merchandise store, developed between 1917 and 1924 from a canvas-covered structure to the hardy building you'll find there today.

Take exit 242, Rock Springs / Black Canyon City, and double back on the west side of I-17 to find today's Rock Springs Café, serving homestyle breakfast, lunch and dinner, featuring omelettes, steak, chicken, barbecue, soups, salads and sandwiches—and more kinds of homemade pie than you knew existed—fruit pies, cream pies, nut pies, specialty pies, even take'n'bake pies to finish at home.

Everything on the menu was tempting (and we've sure been there before), but we took the waitress's advice and had "the best meal in the house," their pulled-pork version of a Reuben sandwich. She may have been right, too! The only downside was that there was no room left for pie.

That made it tempting to drive another hour and a half to Flagstaff, as long as we were out, grabbing dessert on the way back. Maybe next time. •



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GRANDSTANDS TO BE FULLY OPEN

There will be no restrictions on the number of fans allowed to watch the action from the grandstands and hillside when NASCAR returns to Phoenix Raceway to crown four Series champions during NASCAR Championship Weekend, November 5-7, 2021.

This is the second consecutive year hosting four championship celebrations over three days, with events in the NASCAR Cup Series, NASCAR Xfinity Series, NASCAR Camping World Truck Series and ARCA Menards Series West.

"Our loyal and passionate fans have shown tremendous support for Phoenix Raceway and our entire sport throughout the pandemic, including

the inaugural NASCAR Championship Weekend at our facility last November," said Phoenix Raceway President Julie Giese. "We are ecstatic to have the opportunity to celebrate the crowning of four champions in front of a packed grandstand and to showcase to the world what this community of race fans in Arizona is all about."

Fans will once again have the option to upgrade to the Infield Experience—an opportunity to experience NASCAR Championship Weekend with amazing access to the garage walkways, pre-race festivities, victory lane and post-race championship celebrations

Camping restrictions will also be lifted.

NASCAR and Phoenix Raceway will continue to work closely with local and state government and health officials throughout the year on any necessary health and safety protocols and adjustments to ensure a safe environment for fans, competitors, employees and the community, as their top priority for NASCAR Championship Weekend. Any updates can be found at PhoenixRaceway.com.

TICKETS & INFO: Tickets for November's NASCAR Championship Weekend are available online at PhoenixRaceway.com, or by calling the Phoenix Raceway ticket office at 866-408-RACE (7223).

For the full 2021 NASCAR Cup Series schedule and other tickets, visit nascar.com/tickets.

FALL NASCAR CHAMPIONSHIP WEEKEND

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5
NASCAR CAMPING WORLD TRUCK SERIES: LUCAS OIL 150
5:00 pm

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6
ARCA MENARDS SERIES WEST: ARIZONA LOTTERY 100
12:00 noon
NASCAR XFINITY SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP RACE
5:30 pm

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7
NASCAR CUP SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP RACE
1:00 pm

Details subject to change



International Female Ride Day comes to Sedona

by Meagan Wristen
www.mommytravels.net
Instagram/Twitter:
@MommyTravels, @HerAutoExpert

Every year, International Female Ride Day is celebrated around the world. This year, Polaris Adventures joined in on the fun. Polaris Adventures is an easy way for families to find adventures around the United States. With locations nationwide, they offer a variety of outdoor fun including off-roading adventures. One of those locations is Sedona ATV Rentals in Sedona, Arizona. When Polaris Adventures called me to see if I could attend the event, I jumped at the chance. I could have attended the event a bit closer to my Dallas

home, in Houston, but I thought off-roading in Sedona sounded like more fun. And it turns out I was right.

With the increased demand to travel within the United States, I couldn't get a flight in to Flagstaff, so I opted for a flight to Phoenix and drove up to Sedona. I ended up arriving quite late at the Residence Inn by Marriott. Nonetheless, I was up early for the event. I grabbed a quick breakfast at the hotel—and then it was off to Sedona ATV Rentals to gear up and head out. They provided me with a hel-

met and water. Because it was a special event, they also provided a buff—Sedona is dusty so you will want your mouth covered. Since it was just me, they put me in a Polaris RZR RS1 that only seats one. I had never seen these before and was stoked to try it out. I typically always have the kids with me and we end up in a four-person RZR. My machine was super peppy, and it flew around the trails no problem. The only downside was the lack of storage. I had quite a bit of camera equipment with me, and I had to keep it on the floor of the RZR. Those riding tandem had storage in the back.

The trails around Sedona just about blew my mind. It was some of the best off-roading I've done. At times, it was so

(cont'd)



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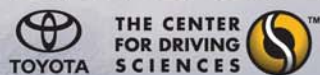
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intense I was a little surprised they just let you take it out. At one point I guess I was having a little bit too much fun, and I lost the entire group.

After four or five hours, my back was tired, and I decided to call it a day. During that time, I was able to experience a lot of the available trails in Sedona, but certainly not all of them. Based on all the trails I could see on the map, I think you could off-road around Sedona for days.

If you and your family want to try off-

roading, do not be intimidated. Polaris Adventures includes everything you need to participate, including a helmet and explaining how everything works.

They even give you an iPad that has a map of the trails on it to help you know where you are at all times. (When I did a Polaris Adventure in Bend, Oregon, I was also provided with this.) In addition to this, Sedona ATV also had a little direction book that helps you find the trails from town. ■



POLARIS RZR RS1 SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE999cc 4-stroke liquid-cooled EFI DOHC twin cylinder
HORSEPOWER110 hp
ENGINE BRAKING SYSTEM (EBS).....na
DRIVE SYSTEM.....Isolated Xtreme Performance true on-demand AWD/2WD
TRANS / FINAL DRIVE.....auto PVT P/R/N/L/H
SUSPENSIONF: 2" Walker Evans needle shocks w 16-position adjustable clickers; dual A-arm w stblzr bar & 21" usable travel, 16" wheel travel; R: 2.5" Walker Evans needle shocks w 16-position adjustable clickers; trailing arm w stblzr bar & 21" usable travel, 18" wheel travel
(Usable travel measured w vehicle in full droop, from bottom of tire to bottom of skid plate.)
STEERINGelectronic pwr / quick turn rack
BRAKESF/R: 4-wheel hydraulic disc w dual-bore calipers; parking brake in-transmission
WHEELScast aluminum
TIRESradial: F: 29 x 9-14; R: 29 x 11-14
GROUND CLEARANCE13 in
LENGTH / WHEELBASE112 / 83 in
WIDTH / HEIGHT64 / 73.75 in
BED BOX (LxWxH)20.5 x 23 x 4.1 in
BOX CAPACITY50 lb
DRY WEIGHTest 1383 lb
PAYLOAD CAPACITY300 lb
HITCH / TOWINGna
FUEL CAPACITY9.5 gal

COLORIndy Red
DOORSLH door
INSTRUMENTATION: dual-sweep analog dials w/ 4" LCD rider information center: user selectable blue/red backlighting & brightness, programmable service intervals, speedometer, tachometer, odometer, tripmeter, clock, hour meter, gear indicator, fuel gauge, coolant temperature, voltmeter, service indicator and codes, seat belt reminder light, DC outlet
LIGHTING: ...signature blacked out white LED low/high & red LED tail/brake lights
SEAT TYPE:.....bolstered bucket seat w seat slider & rear height adjustable seat belt

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Back in the saddle again

By Joe Sage / photos by Kevin McCauley (and Greg Riley as noted)

We belong to a number of regional media associations around the country, most of which have vehicle comparo award events. We've participated in a number of them and wouldn't mind doing them all, but we pretty much never miss the ones in Texas. Texas has much in common with Arizona, from simultaneously deeply historic and ultramodern sunbelt cities, to beautiful two-lanes through the hills, to wide open Interstates—generating very similar vehicle tastes. They may not have our snowy high elevations, but a Texan will generally head there, too, at the drop of a ten-gallon hat. These affinities make their events especially useful to us, and to you.

The Texas AutoWriters' Association (TAWA) has been presenting two primary events over its quarter-century of existence: the Texas Truck Rodeo in the fall and Texas Auto Roundup each spring.

For years, the split between the two events was simple: trucks for Truck Rodeo, cars for Auto Roundup. But as in the vehicle marketplace writ large, there has been evolution in these events. It was a

natural to add the first body-on-frame SUVs to the Texas Truck Rodeo. Then came crossovers, and as that category evolved, undeniable debate grew about their truckiness. The decision was made a couple of years ago that crossovers would thus be moved to Auto Roundup in the spring, with SUVs remaining part of Texas Truck Rodeo. This surely would leave room for more debate, but overall it was a clear and useful change.

Because Auto Roundup comes first, in spring, we had wondered whether all the manufacturers would get the memo, expecting Truck Rodeo to roll around in the fall with some of them ready to enter crossovers, as in the past. That'd be an unfortunate time to learn things had changed, as their opportunity to enter crossovers in Auto Roundup would have slipped by. Could this all take hold?

Enter a rare pandemic bonus: Auto Roundup for spring 2020 was cancelled, so when fall rolled around and it was time for Truck Rodeo, someone whose crossover was turned away wouldn't suffer the anguish of having missed their chance in spring.

We may be among the few to see this as a benefit or solution, but it made for a smooth transition.

Another pandemic factor has been whether the manufacturers would or could enter at all. New model release delays were a huge factor last year, as well as the pandemic's direct impacts. All the details of participating in such an event aside, those big players had many levels of consideration and restriction corporate-wide. Without a good variety of vehicles, there's no comparo. But come fall 2020, Truck Rodeo did come to life, during a brief bubble when some of the manufacturers starting sticking their toes back in the water, as far as auto shows, new model launch drives, and indeed comparos. Some of these started up again, cautiously, but then things tightened back up.

Conditions had kept manufacturer participation a bit narrow for last fall's Truck Rodeo. The manufacturers had pretty well mastered online launches and had largely brought their model year cycles back in line. Now the big auto shows, cancelled or postponed, are coming back to life. New vehicle launch drives are starting to happen live and in person. Come springtime, things were opening up again, notably in Texas, and comparo participation began expanding again with Auto Roundup.

The growth of crossovers is noticeable in this event's vehicle entries and categories. But lest we draw too broad a conclusion from that, remember that the Detroit, Chicago, Geneva, New York and other shows have been moved to later this year, which may still skew what new models have been released to date. Some manufacturers will presumably hold back from a comparo when they know what they can enter today is not their latest.

Texas Auto Roundup also seized the opportunity for a welcome change in venue this year—a heroic effort among shifting pandemic limitations—back to Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, a big oval Formula One and IndyCar track containing an excellent road course track within—surrounded by the venue's own roads, then public roads and highways in the immediate vicinity. This was the location the first few times we drove in the event. Then a few years ago, it moved to Circuit of the Americas outside Austin, a magnificent track, but so large it took longer to get through the list of vehicles—and get through it we must. Next, it moved to Eagles Canyon Raceway, a smaller club track outside Denton, which proved to be a great course, right-sized for getting the job done. It was then held in the streets of Denton, on the premise that this is how most people drive the vehicles, but a lot of magic is lost that way. We were very glad to be back at TMS.

(cont'd)



Photo: Greg Riley / GarageDix (1)





It all leads to this: vehicle categories are created, manufacturers are invited to put their best foot forward in any or all, a bit of back-and-forth generally adapts final categories to final entries and vice versa, everybody shows up, and each person drives every vehicle. Mental, written, photographic and/or video notes are taken, and tally sheets are carefully filled out for each competing vehicle. Trim level of vehicles entered varies—some manufacturers choose to enter their top model, while some choose to compete with lower prices and/or a trim/price value equation. Specific trim level information is provided here to the degree it was available to us. All are 2021 models unless otherwise noted.

CATEGORY AWARDS

Drivers-judges award points to each vehicle for a variety of attributes, with cumulative tallies determining winner(s) of each group. (Attributes votes are also broken out for Calculated Awards, below.)

Compact Vehicle

NOTES: Originally set to be a compact car category and a compact CUV category, there turned out to be four CUV entries and two car entries, one of which (Hyundai Venue) was entered in both. For the sake of statistical usefulness, the two groups were combined, putting the Mazda3 in with crossovers, which was deemed to be appropriate enough, as a hatchback. And surprise—though the only “car”-only entry among the original two sets, it was the top point achiever and crossover-heavy category winner.

Buick Encore
Hyundai Venue Denim
Mazda CX-30 Turbo Premium Plus
Mazda Mazda3 Hatch Turbo Premium Plus
Nissan Kicks SR

WINNER: Mazda Mazda3 Hatch
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$33,750 / 35,415
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)23/31/26

Midsized Car

NOTES: The top-selling vehicle category for years, until just a couple of years ago, this group was very light this year—just two entries—as manufacturers chose to present more crossovers and SUVs.

Honda Accord Hybrid Touring
Volkswagen Arteon
WINNER: Volkswagen Arteon
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$36,995 / na
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)22/32/25

Luxury Car

NOTES: These were not broken down by size category, but were broken into two price tiers, as in the past—for the entry list, but for the winner tallies—though the break point was bumped up from \$60,000 to \$65,000 this year. This split reflects base price, as you will note that the winner in the lower price group happens to have had a higher-than-\$65k price as equipped.

Genesis G80
Lexus LC 500 Convertible
Lexus RC 350 F Sport Blackline Edition
Lexus RC F Fuji Speedway Special Edition

WINNERS:
To \$65k: Genesis G80
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$62,250 / 69,075
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)18/26/21

Above \$65k: Lexus LC 500 Convertible
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$101,000 / 112,700
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)15/25/18

Performance Coupe

NOTES: Performance vehicles remain a mainstay of the Texas Auto Roundup—it is held at a major racetrack, after all! Performance Coupe, Performance Sedan and Performance SUV collectively vie for the Performance Vehicle of Texas Title Award.

Dodge Challenger R/T Scat Pack Widebody
Toyota GR Supra 3.0
WINNER: Toyota GR Supra 3.0
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$54,490 / 58,250
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)22/30/25

Performance Sedan

Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye Widebody
Lexus IS 350 F Sport
WINNER: Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$69,995 / 90,560
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)12/21/15

Minivan

NOTES: Minivans vied for a tabulated Category Award, while Family Vehicles (below) went straight to subjective Family Vehicle Title Award competition, which folded in the Minivans again, as well. With two manufacturers each entering two sibling vehicles, there were five to drive, but voting was based on three.

Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid Pinnacle
Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid Pinnacle AWD
Honda Odyssey Elite
Toyota Sienna Platinum
Toyota Sienna XSE
WINNER: Chrysler Pacifica
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$50,845 / 50,845
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)PHEV: over 80 MPGe

Midsized CUV

Nissan Rogue Platinum AWD
Toyota Highlander XSE
Toyota Venza
WINNER: Nissan Rogue
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$36,930 / 39,685
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)25/32/28

Luxury CUV

Acura MDX A-Spec SH-AWD (2022)
Genesis GV80
WINNER: Genesis GV80
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$59,150 / 65,775
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)18/23/20

The following three groups did not have Category Awards, going straight to Title Award competition.

Performance SUV

Dodge Durango SRT Hellcat
(combined with Performance Coupe and Performance Sedan vying for Performance Vehicle Title Award)

Green Vehicle

Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid Pinnacle
Honda Accord Hybrid Touring
Toyota RAV4 Prime
Volkswagen ID.4
(see Green Vehicle of Texas Title Award)

Family Vehicle

Buick Encore
Cadillac Escalade
Volkswagen Arteon
Volkswagen ID.4
(see Family Vehicle of Texas Title Award)

UNICORNS

These manufacturers brought out something special, without seeking the glory of the trophies.

DISPLAY ONLY
Karma GS-6 Special Edition
Lexus IS 500 F Sport (2022)

DEMO DRIVE, NOT COMPETING
Rolls-Royce Ghost

CALCULATED AWARDS

Many of the subset attributes used to calculate the above Category Awards are also broken out or cross-tabulated individually, as follows.

BEST INTERIOR
 Lexus LC 500 Convertible
BEST EXTERIOR
 Lexus LC 500 Convertible
BEST PERFORMANCE
 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye Widebody
BEST VALUE (tie)
 Dodge Challenger R/T Scat Pack
 Lexus IS 350 F Sport
HIGHEST PERSONAL APPEAL
 Lexus LC 500 Convertible

FEATURE AWARDS

Contenders for these are displayed separately and voted for subjectively, apart from the vehicle-by-vehicle Category Awards tabulation and voting.

BEST NEW FEATURE
 Chrysler FamCAM Interior Camera
BEST NEW INTERIOR
 Chrysler Pacifica Pinnacle Interior

TITLE AWARDS

The event's biggest trophies are determined by a separate vote from among all vehicles, each judge ranking a top three subjectively rather than by points, simply thinking about overall impressions and going with their gut, which may or may not cast things in a different light in some cases.

PERFORMANCE VEHICLE OF TEXAS
Toyota GR Supra
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$54,490 / 58,250
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)22/30/25

LUXURY VEHICLE OF TEXAS
Lexus LC 500
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$101,000 / 112,700
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)15/25/18

GREEN VEHICLE OF TEXAS
Volkswagen ID.4
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$39,995 / na
 RANGE (estimated)250 miles

FAMILY VEHICLE OF TEXAS
Chrysler Pacifica
 PRICE (Starting / as equipped)\$50,845 / 50,845
 MPG (city/hwy/comb)PHEV: over 80 MPGe

The awards from these events add perspective for anyone shopping these categories, though they are certainly not the last word.

Experience has shown that while some of the mathematical calculations, including our own, can surprise ourselves versus some of our gut expectations, final results generally fall well into line.

We never reveal our own votes, a policy that continues to hold up as long as we never call 'em all or miss 'em all. As always, not everything here is as we may have chosen, but as always there was not a bad apple in the well-chosen barrel. ■

PERFORMANCE VEHICLE OF TEXAS ★ Toyota GR Supra



LUXURY VEHICLE OF TEXAS ★ Lexus LC 500



GREEN VEHICLE OF TEXAS ★ Volkswagen ID.4



FAMILY VEHICLE OF TEXAS ★ Chrysler Pacifica



TRAVEL SITES TO BE SEEN



sedona.net
flagstaff.com
prescott.com
thecanyon.com
grandcanyon.net
oakcreekcabins.com

Hotels, Resorts and Lodging
 Bed & Breakfasts - Inns - Cabins/Cottages
 What To Do
 Real Estate and Relocation
 Spas - Galleries - Artists
 Restaurants - Shopping
 FAQs - Resources
 Special Offers - 11th Hour Getaways

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NEW VEHICLE REVEAL : 2022 KIA EV6

New name and new direction

Kia, while experiencing huge market growth overall, has gone fairly light on alternative powertrains to date, offering a couple of hybrid adaptations of existing models at times, also introducing the hybrid-only Niro in 2017, notable for making its hybrid status an assumed part of its identity, not a tacked-on descriptor. Their first full battery electric, the Niro EV, arrived two years later.

Now, like many other manufacturers, they are diving into the EV realm head-on.

The reveal of the Kia EV6 was immediately preceded by a corporate name adjustment: much as Apple dropped "Computer" from their name almost 15 years ago as their focus broadened, Kia Motors America has followed a parallel global corporate lead, rechristening itself simply "Kia America." It's part of what they call Plan S or Plan Shift, a stated \$25 billion plan for new transport solutions. (All the stated elements so far seem to still incorporate motors, so we'll be curious what else they may have up their sleeves that killed off the M word.)

Niro was their first dedicated hybrid, but its EV version was derivative of that. Thus, the new EV6 is their first dedicated EV.

Built on a new Kia Electric-Global Modular Platform (E-GMP), the EV6 is long, low and sleek, evok-

ing their European shooting brake models, but in the US being called a "low-profile crossover." Its 114.2-inch-wheelbase—equal to the three-row Kia Telluride—provides generous cabin space and a low center of gravity for sure-footed handling; aerodynamics also benefit.

Kia moves to a rear-drive basis for the EV6, with a two-motor all-wheel drive system available, and uses a lithium ion polymer battery with a nickel-rich cathode and graphite anode.

There are four builds as of now: two RWD, two AWD. Three have a 77.4 kWh battery (with a 58.0 available for RWD). Three have a 160 kW rear motor (adding a 70 kW front motor on the base AWD, or moving 160 kW to the front and replacing the rear with 270 kW on the top-performing AWD).

EV6 claims the world's first 800V multi-charging architecture, for ultra-fast DC charging from ten to 80 percent charge in less than 18 minutes (enough for 210 miles of range out of a targeted 300 total).

As is the newest trend, Kia turns range anxiety and recharging on their heads with a Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) function that turns your EV6 into a mobile power source for computers, camping, tailgating or backup home power.

Pricing and availability dates will follow. ■

| DRIVETRAIN | MOTOR(S) | Battery | HP | 0-to-60 mph |
|------------|----------------------------|----------|--------|---------------|
| RWD | 160 kW rear | 58.0 kWh | 167 hp | na |
| | 160 kW rear | 77.4 kWh | 218 hp | na |
| AWD | 70 kW front + 160 kW rear | 77.4 kWh | 313 hp | est 5.1 sec |
| | 160 kW front + 270 kW rear | 77.4 kWh | 576 hp | est < 3.5 sec |



New reference point by Joe Sage

For the past two years, it's been hard to drive a Toyota 86—or a GR Supra 3.0—without contemplating how one compared to the other at half—or twice—the price. For some shoppers, this could be an epiphany, while it could leave others stumped about a gap and, worse still for Toyota, thinking about other brands. Well, problem solved.

In spring 2020, upcoming new GR Supra models were announced both above and below the original 3.0—a straight-to-racetrack 430-hp GR Supra GT4; and a GR Supra 2.0 with a 255-hp turbo-four. They would also bump the existing GR Supra 3.0 from 335 up to 382 hp, not only for a better Supra 3.0 in its own right, but creating a more balanced

stairstep among three Supras. We've heard nothing further about the GT4, but the 86 is now suddenly closer to the Supra family's power and price and part of the comparative conversation, as well.

Given the significance of Supra's original devotion to its lifetime lineage of inline-sixes—a commitment so important to tradition, the 3.0's engine was codeveloped with BMW, who had a head start on such a powerplant—the four-cylinder Supra 2.0 has inevitably triggered discussion (as had that six). For product positioning—and what it means to the 86—it seems a clever move by Toyota.

The Supra 2.0 vs 3.0 comparison is akin to, say, Cayman and Cayman S, as an example from Supra's originally stated competitive set (and still at lower

cost). That set had also specified only the 370Z NISMO, but now Supra also tackles the regular Z. Many sports cars have a base model with a boosted model added above it, sort of an engineering exercise in “great car, what could we do to create a juiced-up version?” Supra has turned this on its head, with the 3.0 coming first, making the 2.0 more of an exercise in “great car, what could we do to create a more affordable version?”

The GR Supra 2.0's most notable distinction is its 2.0-liter engine—a four-cylinder powertrain as well-developed as the six, with quick performance and a healthy soundtrack—which also makes it lighter than the 3.0 by over 200 pounds, in turn giving it 0.2 inches additional ground clearance and height (though ingress/egress dimensions remain the same—extremely tight for a tall person).

The GR Supra 2.0 has correspondingly smaller brakes, forgoes the 3.0's new-this-year aluminum strut-tower-to-radiator braces, and bears cast alu-

minum instead of forged aluminum wheels.

Supra 2.0 is a very peppy little performer. It became routine to turn on sport mode, since it's right next to auto start-stop defeat. Handling and steering are tight and precise (once we turned off automated systems that were surprisingly opinionated about lines on the pavement). Suspension is firm. Really firm. Harsh at times, likely addressable with different tires (the car has staggered fitment and no room for a spare, so it has run-flats and a patch kit; you might prefer other tires and the risk of a roadside stranding). But in the curves or from the line, the car has great power, grip and control.

There is no “better or worse” between the 2.0 and 3.0 Supras—decisions will be made for the usual reasons. And if the Toyota 86 is in your mix, one other difference of note is that it's a 2+2, while the Supra is a two-seater—though legroom is ample in the front of both and limited in the back of the 86, as is typical for the type.

We have wondered for awhile whether Toyota might decide to rebadge the 86 as a Supra 86, as much a part of the equation as it may be, and for which it's easy to make a marketing and branding



case. As it turns out, on the same day we turned in the Supra 2.0, they announced something similar—for 2022, there will be a Toyota GR 86, with a horsepower boost (see sidebar chart).

The only thing that's missing is a roadster in the 86/Supra family. Could that be in the cards as this sporty lineup grows and grows? ■

SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| ASSEMBLY |Graz, Austria |
| SEATING CAPACITY |two |
| ENGINE |2.0L twin-scroll turbo inline-4 16v DOHC, chain drive, VVT |
| HP/TORQUE |255 hp / 295 lb-ft |
| COMPRESSION RATIO |10.2:1 |
| DRIVETRAIN |RWD |
| TRANSMISSION |8-spd auto |
| SUSPENSION |F: dbl-joint type MacPherson strut, 23.5 mm stblzr bar; R: multi-link w 5-arm construction, 18.0 mm stblzr bar |
| STEERING |electric power steering |
| BRAKES |F/R: 13.0 vented, 1-piston floating caliper |
| WHEELS |cast alum F: 18x9.0; R: 18x10.0 |
| TIRES |F: 255/40 ZR18; R: 275/40 ZR18 |
| LENGTH / WHEELBASE |172.5 / 97.2 in |
| HEIGHT |51.1 in |
| TURNING CIRCLE |34.1 ft |
| HEADROOM |38.3 in |
| LEGROOM |42.2 in |
| CARGO CAPACITY |10.2 cu.ft |
| GROUND CLEARANCE |4.7 in |
| WEIGHT |3181 lb |
| FUEL / CAPACITY |premium req'd / 13.7 gal |
| MPG |25/32/28 (city/hwy/comb) |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| BASE PRICE | \$42,990 |
| SAFETY & TECHNOLOGY PKG: | 8.8" touchscreen w nav, 12-sprk 500W JBL audio, touchpad rotary controller, wireless Apple/Android, dynamic radar cruise, blind spot, rear cross traffic, park sensors w emergency braking, connected services w 4-yr trial3485 |
| CARPET CARGO MAT |80 |
| WHEEL LOCKS |65 |
| DESTINATION CHARGE |995 |
| TOTAL | \$47,615 |

TOYOTA 86 & GR SUPRA LINEUP

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| 86 ¹ |2.0T |205 hp |\$27,060 |
| GR 86 ² |2.4T |228 hp | tha |
| GR Supra 2.0 |2.0T |255 hp |42,990 |
| GR Supra 3.0 |3.0T |382 hp |50,990 |
| GR Supra GT4 [?] |3.0T |430 hp |est \$195k |

¹ 2021 model; ² 2022 model
[?] previously announced; no new info

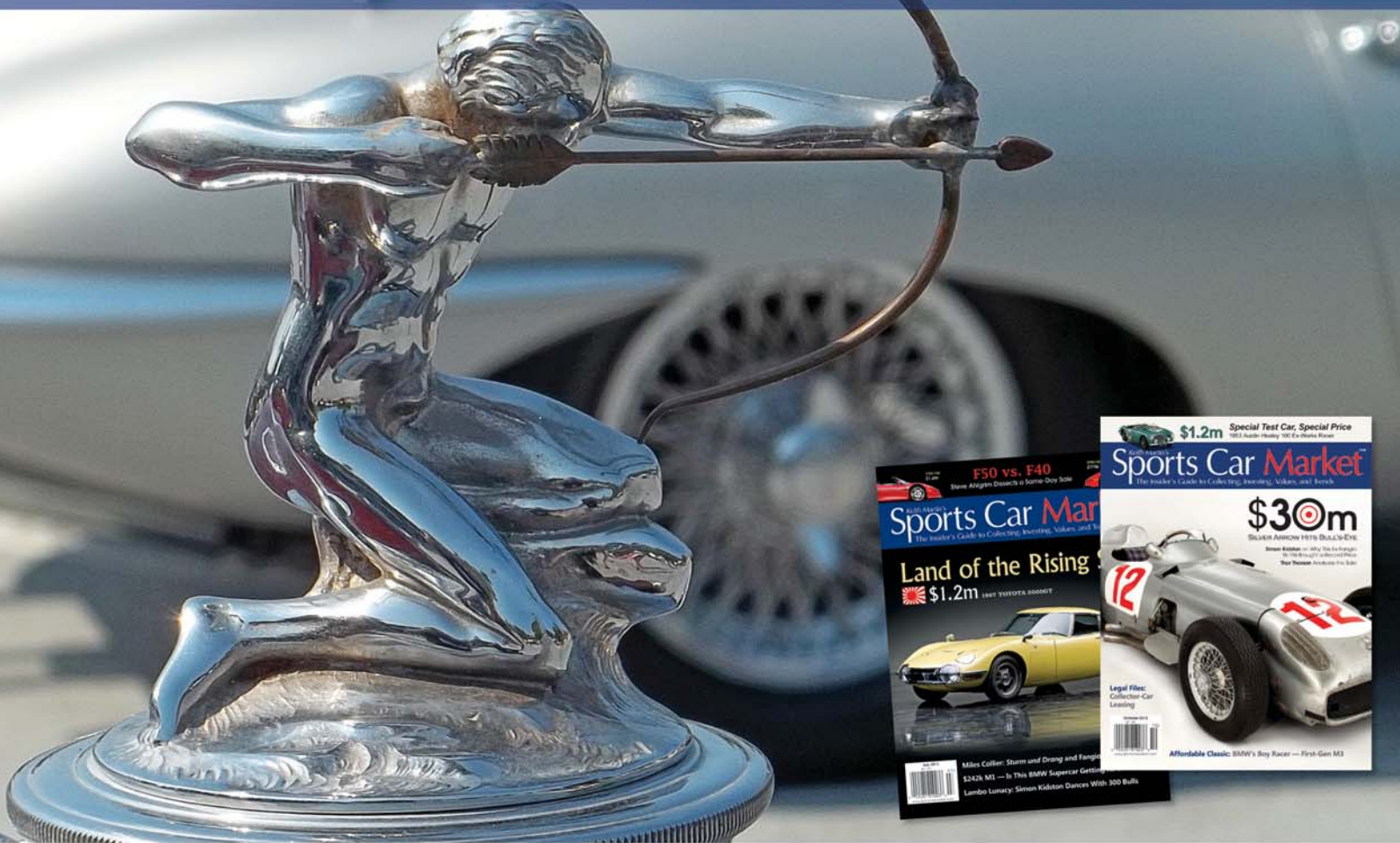


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SPECIAL EVENTS : MONTEREY AND PEBBLE BEACH 2021

To mark its 70th Celebration, postponed last year, the 2021 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance will feature a wide array of past Best of Show cars and all past overall Road Race winners. Featured class is Carrozzeria Pininfarina, and the Tour will showcase these designs in motion. Additional features include Talbot-Lago Grand Sport, Porsche 917, Early Electric Cars, Iso Rivolta, Miller and La Carrera Panamericana—and another surprise or two.

As always, it's a busy week or two. Note a few postponements. Here are dates (as of now)* for related events:

MONDAY, AUGUST 2 - WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11
Pebble Beach Motoring Classic

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6
Monterey Car Week Kick-Off

SUNDAY-MONDAY, AUGUST 8-9
Monterey Pre-Reunion

MONDAY, AUGUST 9
The Porsche Monterey Classic

MONDAY-THURSDAY, AUGUST 9-12
Worldwide Auctioneers

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10
Classic Motorsports Kickoff Cruise-In
Concours on the Avenue

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11
McCall's Motorworks Revival
Little Car Show
Prancing Ponies Car Show

THURSDAY, AUGUST 12
Pebble Beach Tour d'Elegance Pres. by Rolex

THURSDAY-SATURDAY, AUGUST 12-14
Pebble Beach Classic Car Forum
Russo and Steele

Mecum Auto Auctions: Muscle Cars & More

THURSDAY-SUNDAY, AUGUST 12-15
Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion
Pebble Beach RetroAuto

FRIDAY, AUGUST 13
The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering
Bonhams Quail Lodge Auction
Legends of the Autobahn
Pacific Grove Rotary Concours Auto Rally
Werks Reunion

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, AUGUST 13-14
Gooding & Company Pebble Beach Auctions
RM Sotheby's Monterey

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14
Concorso Italiano
Concours d'LeMons
Annual Ferrari Owners Club Gathering

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15
Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance

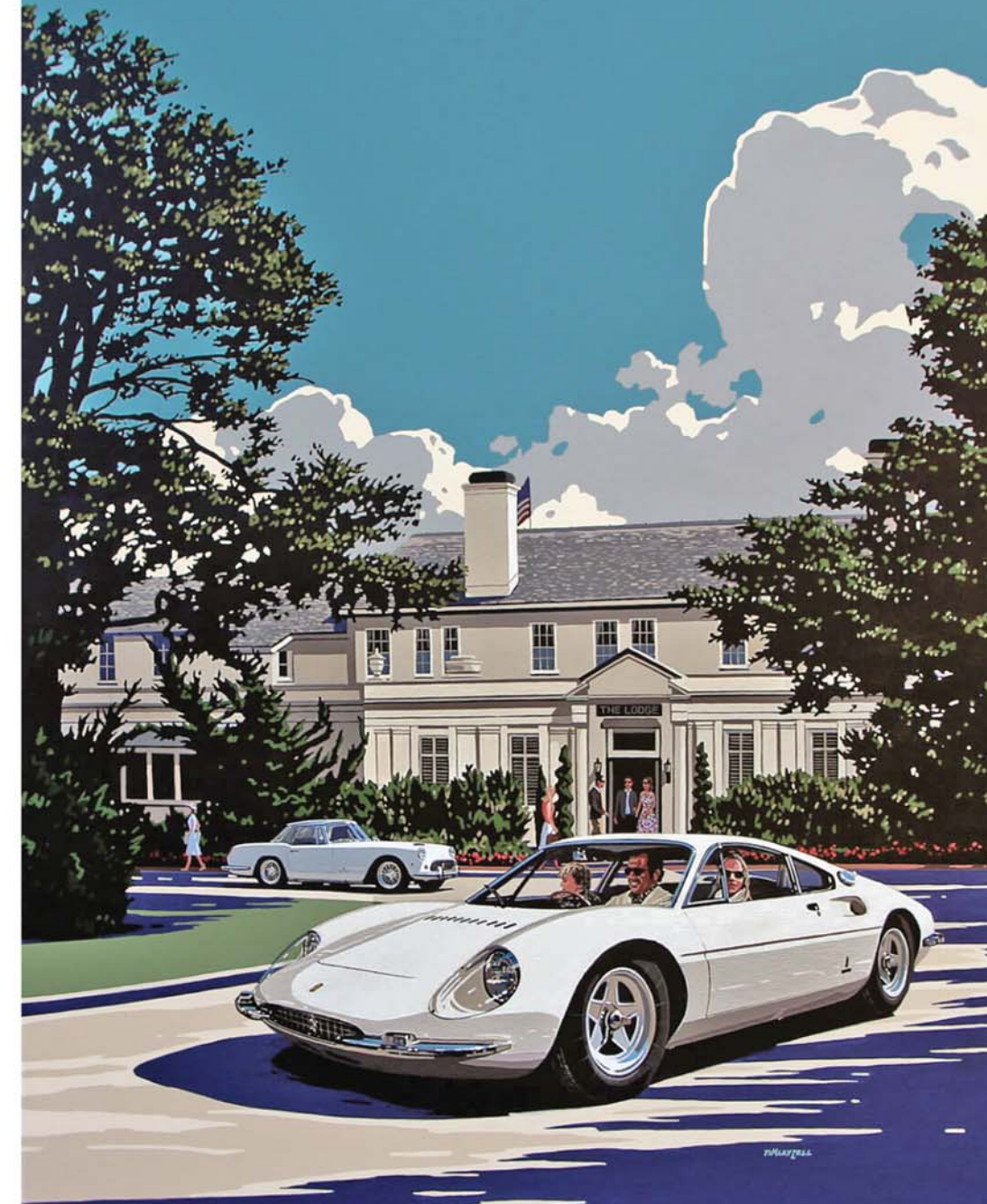
POSTPONED:
Carmel Mission Classic **TO AUG 10 2022**
Exotics on Broadway **TO AUG 13 2022**
Automobilia Monterey Expo **TO AUG 15-17 2022**

*To confirm the most current dates and to find the latest general information, visit:

www.pebblebeachconcours.net
www.whatsupmonterey.com ■

70th Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance and Monterey Car Week

The 2021 Pebble Beach Tour d'Elegance poster, painted by Tim Layzell, features the innovative Ferrari 365 P "Tre Posti," in celebration of the 2021 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance featured class, 90-plus years of Carrozzeria Pininfarina.



The exception that redefines the rules

BY JOE SAGE

Honda Ridgeline has always played in a tough league, tackling one of the most popular and well-established vehicle categories there is. They'd be the first to tell you they're doing things differently—"reinventing the pickup" was Ridgeline's mantra when new in 2006—building a truck with unibody construction and a front-drive basis.

Ridgeline has shared its bones with Honda Pilot (and Acura MDX) since birth, first on that dedicated platform, now on a universal platform shared also with Honda Passport and Odyssey. Calling it a

unibody on Ridgeline, though, is an oversimplification—the pickup is built on a proprietary Honda Advanced Compatibility Engineering (ACE) body structure, with fully boxed frame members for the body sides, and a rear tailgate frame with truss-style inner construction. The resulting overall body rigidity is a plus for tough terrain and load capacities, while also enabling Ridgeline's fully independent suspension, rare in a conventional pickup.

Honda brought the first version to us on its original reveal tour in 2005, and gen two, introduced in 2016, has been a regular at the Texas Truck Rodeo (which we drive and vote in), where the group granted its rear bed trunk and audio system a Best Technology award. We've also had the current generation for weeklong drives here. It felt as though

we'd become familiar with the truck, but it turns out there was more to experience and learn.

The 2021 Ridgeline looks all new, but it's the same gen-two truck—with totally revamped styling from the firewall forward. This eliminates a prior challenge in the broader pickup market—it had looked more like its close cousin the Honda Pilot SUV than like other pickups. It's a significant change, well done. The unibody build, suspension and front-drive basis remain the same, though all Ridgelines are currently all-wheel-drive-only.

The HPD treatment

Priced at \$36,490, the Sport model driven here is the base level of four trims. As is typical for Honda, ours adds no options or packages other than its

extra-charge paint—with one exception. New this year is an HPD package, with input from Honda Performance Development (see Baja sidebar).

Add-ons are cosmetic—a stylish, rugged grille, black fender flares, HPD decals, and distinctive bronze-hued wheels—and available on any trim level for \$2800. Of this, wheel and tire size is the same on all trims, so these are just for looks. The grille is also available as a standalone for just \$395. We could take or leave the decals, but we do like the fender flares, which add to its truck persona and are not available as a standalone.

The HPD package brings a Sport close in cost to an RTL (which has leather, heated seats and other significant upgrades), creating a potential buying conundrum that continues on up the lineup.

Picking up the groceries and kids

The cab feels spacious, with seating position, legroom and headroom (enough for a cowboy hat) on a perceptual par with many a bigger truck.

Size and weight are very similar to more conventional entries in the growing midsize pickup category. Its construction delivers a tradeoff: a bit less tow capacity but a fair amount more payload—boosted by the fact that Ridgeline's 5-foot-4



bed is longer than its prime competitors.

Power and acceleration feel and sound strong, with a satisfying subtle growl from its V6. Handling is tight and accurate, enticing us to even give it some enjoyable throttle through urban curves (it's not a sports car, but its suspension is for greater things). We're not fans of the Acura-pioneered shift interface—a collection of circles, squares and trapezoids you push or pull, pretty much guar-

(cont'd)

A popular—and award-winning—feature on Honda Ridgeline is its 7.3-cu.ft. In-Bed Trunk®, lockable, drainable and secured by a closed tailgate. Our Sport model has a decent 215-watt 7-speaker audio system, while upper trims have a 540-watt system with truck-bed audio. Equal parts utility and party center, Ridgeline's bed is key to your work or fun weekend.

SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| ASSEMBLY | Lincoln, Alabama |
| ENGINE/TRANSMISSION | USA/USA |
| BUILD / SEATING | unibody / five |
| ENGINE | 3.5L V6, 24v SOHC i-VTEC |
| HP/TORQUE | 280 hp / 262 lb-ft |
| COMPRESSION RATIO | 11.5:1 |
| DRIVETRAIN | i-VTM4 intelligent AWD |
| TRANSMISSION | 9-spd auto, shift-by-wire |
| SUSPENSION | F: MacPherson strut, 25.0mm solid stblzr bar; R: multi-link, 26.5mm stblzr bar |
| STEERING | elec pwr-assist rack & pinion |
| BRAKES | power assist; F: 12.6 vented; R: 13.0 solid |
| WHEELS | (standard) 18" shark gray alloys |
| TIRES | 245/60 R18 105H a/s |
| LENGTH / WHEELBASE | 210.2 / 125.2 in |
| TURNING CIRCLE | 43.4 ft |
| APPRCH / BRKOVRR / DEPART | 20.4 / 19.6 / 19.6° |
| HEADROOM (F/R) | 40.1 / 38.8 in |
| LEGROOM (F/R) | 40.9 / 36.7 in |
| BED LENGTH | 64.0 in |
| BED WIDTH | at wheel wells 50.0 in |
| IN-BED TRUNK CAPACITY | 7.3 cu.ft |
| 2ND ROW UNDER-SEAT STORAGE | 2.9 cu.ft |
| GROUND CLEARANCE | 7.64 in |
| PAYLOAD CAPACITY | 1583 lb |
| GVWR | 6019 lb |
| TOW CAPACITY | 5000 lb |
| WEIGHT | 4436 lb |
| WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION | 57.1 / 42.9% |
| FUEL / CAPACITY | reg unl / 19.5 gal |
| MPG | 18/24/21 (city/hwy/comb) |

2021 HONDA RIDGELINE LINEUP

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Sport | \$36,490 |
| RTL | 39,470 |
| RTL-E | 42,420 |
| Black Edition | 43,920 |

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| BASE PRICE | \$36,490 |
| PLATINUM WHITE PAINT | 395 |
| HPD PKG: fender flares, 18" HPD alloy wheels, HPD grille, HPD decals/emblem | 2800 |
| DESTINATION CHARGE | 1175 |
| TOTAL | \$40,860 |



anteering you have to take your eyes off the road at critical moments (it saves no space, so seems to us purely a gimmick). Quick and responsive, Ridgeline nimbly conquers the usual high-speed game of multi-lane Tetris on the freeway. All in all, this truck provides a very positive experience as a daily driver in town.

Off-pavement time

While all Ridgelines share the same basic build, the rugged look of our Sport with HPD package especially demanded we give it a rugged run, and 30 miles off-pavement was another big eye-opener.

We headed north out of the Valley, considering either Boulders Off-Highway Vehicle Park or Castle Hot Springs Road. A great drive north on freeways, Interstate and wide open paved two-lanes must have inspired us to stick with the open road, simply transferring to Castle Hot Springs and gravel.

Once the pavement ended, we decided to check out drive modes (intelligent traction management) which include snow, mud and sand. It was a dry summer day, so neither snow nor mud sounded right, though for sand, we envision the Glamis Dunes. But we tried sand. An instrument warning reminded us they all shut off full traction control, so, figuring our gravel conditions at speed were more consistent, we switched back to normal.

As much fun as the road is, it's some of the pull-

offs that are most enlightening. The gravel flood plain in our lead photo looks harmless enough, but was as loose, soft and deep as the lunar surface. We churned our way in, then revisited the drive modes for a better exit. Again, snow, mud or sand. This spot had grip and softness issues comparable to degrees of any of those, but then again it was clearly none of those. We opted for sand again, because if nothing else, it was hot and dry, though we suspect any would work similarly here.

There's a berm between the road and this river bed, created by road graders over time, so we had to burn our way through the deep gravel, then crawl over the berm, two moves at odds with each other. But this rig handled both superbly. All that berm-climbing and tight turning gave us an appreciation for the unibody build of this midsize truck. Suspension is firm and strong, with great degrees of travel from independent front and rear. The Ridgeline handles tight crawls or hammers along on open gravel equally well—nice and tough, nice and firm, nice and smooth.

At one point, we decided to double back in a canyon section with no pull-offs, necessitating a five-point turn. Easy enough in theory, you can get a high-speed surprise quickly from either direction—a scenario aggravated by that shift interface and having to look down to either read the markings or identify the shapes to shift.

Fuel mileage

We don't hypermile our weekly drives (with the exception of some alternative drivetrain experiment). We find real world driving to be more useful to our perceptions and to you. Though not checking regularly, late in our week we noted a readout of 15.3 mpg, average for all our time with the truck to that point—town, highway, off-pavement, off-road—in line with many a familiar 4x4 pickup.

As for the nine-speed automatic, we realized late in the week that (other than its shifter) we had never really thought about it. In all sorts of conditions, aside from shifting between forward and reverse, we had never noticed its shift points and power curves. That's a positive: it was unusually responsive and did its job well, delivering power smoothly and largely transparently.

Conventional pickup comparo

Diehard pickup drivers that we've long been (with an equal appreciation of off-road SUVs), we found ourselves repeatedly contemplating the spot this unibody truck occupies. It's easy to visualize a new Honda Ridgeline owner heading out on a similar drive for the weekend with some friends, some in pickups, some in utilities, to tackle these same trails. And it's not hard to imagine thinking, you know, I wasn't sure whether to get a pickup or an SUV, and this thing does a damn good job at both.

We understand the benefits of cab-bed-ladder frame, rear-drive build, the appeal of a huge V8, an 8-foot bed, and a big mechanical transfer case. Some people specifically need the load, volume and tow capacities of these trucks, and others certainly just want them. But if you don't specifically need those differences, the Ridgeline is a great contender. And if you do specifically need those differences, you'll still get a kick out of giving it a try. You may even reassess some of those needs.

Offering a large percentage of what most mid-size pickups do, a large percentage of what most SUVs do, and a decent bag of tricks all its own, Honda Ridgeline might be perceived as appealing to a narrow group—or to two wider groups. We once may have thought the former. But after more quality time in it, we lean toward the latter. This truck can appeal to more people than the sum of its parts, not fewer.

Trying to be all things to all people is an approach that often just displeases everybody. That's not the case here, as the Honda Ridgeline does a good job at so many things—it hits more targets than it misses for a wide variety of buyers.

That's surely how Honda hopes you look at it, and we've concluded they are on to something here. Could it convert a pickup buyer who adds it to their comparative shopping list? Surely some. Probably quite a few. ■

MOTORSPORTS : RIDGELINE WINS BAJA 500 AND MORE

Ridgeline Off-Road Racing racks up wins

The first-generation Honda Ridgeline was raced in a Stock Mini Truck class by the California Race and Rally team with success in 2008-10. The current racing program with Jeff Proctor's Honda Off-Road Racing Team began in 2015, originally in Class 2 for "Limited 4-wheel, two-seat open wheel vehicles with 3.5-liter forced air induction engine, maximum 105 inch wheelbase and minimum weight of 2000 pounds." The team and truck later moved to Class 7 for "Unlimited V6 race trucks," where it competes very successfully in both SCORE and other off-road racing events. The Honda Ridgeline Baja Race Truck features Honda Performance Development's 3.5-liter HR35TT V6 with the same block and cylinder heads as a production Honda Ridgeline, tweaked to 550 hp. Additional custom powertrain elements include an HPD-designed intake plenum and custom ECU programming.

Honda Ridgeline SCORE Baja wins

| | | |
|------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 2008 |Baja 1000 |Stock Mini Class winner |
| 2010 |Baja 1000 |Stock Mini Class winner |
| 2015 |Baja 1000 |Class 7 winner |
| 2016 |Baja 500 |Class 7 winner |
| 2016 |Baja 1000 |Class 7 winner |
| 2018 |Baja 500 |Class 7 winner |
| 2019 |Baja 500 |Class 7 winner |
| 2020 |Baja 500 |Class 7 winner |
| 2021 |San Felipe 250 |Class 7 winner |
| 2021 |Baja 500 |Class 7 winner |

Recent SCORE Baja wins (2020-2021):

Baja 500 : September 2020

Following pandemic delays and an August Vegas to Reno run, the team resumed its string of Baja 500 successes last September with a Class 7 victory at the Baja 500.

San Felipe 250 : April 2021

Driver Jeff Proctor and navigator Evan Weller built an early lead along the rough 280-mile loop course starting and ending at the Gulf of California town of San Felipe. Despite two stops to replace cut tires, sand washes, ruts and jumps, they built a 35-mile lead with 20 miles remaining, cruising to the team's first SCORE win of 2021, and the sixth Class 7 Ridgeline victory in Baja.

Baja 500 : June 2021

The team continued its string of SCORE Baja Class 7 successes with a victory in June in this year's 25th running of the Baja 500, in a field of 243 entries—their fourth

consecutive class win in this event in the Ridgeline Baja Race Truck, and the fifth for the Honda Ridgeline overall in the last six years. Owner/driver Jeff Proctor and Pat Dailey conquered a single-loop course of 466 miles, starting and ending in the Pacific Coast town of Ensenada.

Additional Honda Ridgeline US wins

| | | |
|------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 2018 |Vegas to Reno |Class winner |
| 2019 |Parker 425 |Class winner |
| 2019 |Mint 400 |Class winner |

Recent US podium finishes (2020-2021):

Mint 400 : March 2020

First run in 1968, the Mint 400 is the oldest off-road race in the US and one of the toughest. As pandemic lockdowns loomed last year, organizers moved Class 7 entries, including the Ridgeline Baja Race Truck, from Limited to the Unlimited category, now just behind bigger, heavier, higher horsepower Unlimited trucks at the start—Class 1 purpose-built racers with larger tires, creating massive dust, enlarging holes and exposing rocks. The team's strategy—to preserve equipment and tires through the grueling event—paid off with a solid lead for two-thirds of the race, till suspension damage in the third lap. Reducing speed to ensure a finish, the team placed second.

Vegas to Reno : August 2020

After a five-month pandemic delay, the Honda Off-Road Racing Team resumed its 2020 season with a second place finish in the "7200" class for unlimited V6-powered trucks in the General Tire Casey Folks Vegas to Reno off-road race. ■





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NEW VEHICLE REVEAL : 2022 HYUNDAI IONIQ 5

A new tool in a new toolbox

Hyundai is no stranger to alternative powertrains. In addition to several hybrid variants of regular models, their credentials include a couple of items of special note. They are one of very few manufacturers (you can count them on half a hand) who have built and sold fuel cell electric vehicles commercially for years (in select markets, notably next door in California). And their original IONIQ broke new ground in 2017 as a dedicated electrified powertrain lineup with not just one but three versions at launch—a hybrid, plug-in hybrid and full battery electric EV.

As the broader marketplace amps up for an increasingly electric future, Hyundai is heading down two more big forks in the road: they have a new global platform specific to the task; and they are doing a subtle migration of the IONIQ name from model lineup to brand status. These both come together in their recent reveal of the IONIQ 5.

A clean-sheet design BEV-specific flat-floored Electric-Global Modular Platform (E-GMP) underpins the new vehicle. Its elongated-wheelbase proportions provide multiple bonuses, optimizing interior and cargo space, lowering center of gravity, and creating a distinctive style and stance.

With ultra-fast 400 V and 800 V multi-charging, IONIQ 5 can charge from 10 percent to 80 percent in just 18 minutes or can take on 100 km (62 miles) of range in just five minutes. A Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) function can turn the vehicle's charge into an external power source—a charger on wheels.

The absence of familiar internal combustion

vehicle structure and hardware (conventional radiator and grille) needed in multi-powertrain design makes the IONIQ 5's clamshell hood—a style direction we expect to see more of—not only feasible, but aerodynamically optimal.

Combining eyes on the future with a nod to the past, IONIQ 5's styling evokes the Hyundai EV 45 Concept of 2019, as well as the company's very first car (and South Korea's), the Hyundai Pony of 1975, especially noticeable in the roofline.

Clever lighting technology gives a nod to the digital imaging era through incorporation of pixel lighting clusters throughout—a satisfying effect both at a distance and up close—while the V-shaped bumper below the front clamshell incorporates DRLs, a further development of the lighting-concealed-in-body effects in the newest Sonata.

Other details combine ultra-modern aesthetics with fuel-saving and handling-enhancing aerodynamics, from flush automatic door handles to angular "Parametric Dynamics" body styling first seen on the all-new Tucson (see our previous issue).

Eco-friendly materials (and natural colors) dress the interior, also defined by an innovative Universal Island console-workstation-playcenter, again made possible by the flat floor. ■

| BATTERY: | 72.6 kWh Long Range | 58 kWh Standard |
|----------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| POWER: | AWD (front-rear)225 kW |173 kW |
| | 2WD (rear).....160 kW |125 kW |
| TORQUE: | AWD605 Nm |605 Nm |
| | 2WD350 Nm |350 Nm |
| 0-TO-60: | AWD5.2 sec |6.1 sec |
| | 2WD7.4 sec |8.5 sec |



Idiosyncratic by Joe Sage

Electric vehicles are at an inflection point. They are still a small percentage of the vehicles we drive, a smaller percentage for the general public, and we suspect a great many have not even ridden in one yet. Yet everybody has heard about them—a lot. And the VW ID.4 has received plenty of buzz.

It may seem it will take awhile for EVs to become utterly common, but one manufacturer after another has announced a death date for internal combustion engines—including Volkswagen.

EV attributes do little to differentiate one from another—rapid acceleration, low center of gravity, the adventures of recharging. The ID.4's cross-over form is also basically universal—cargo capacity, a higher-than-a-sedan viewpoint and so on.

So let's see what's specific to the ID.4.

Royale With Cheese. If you've ever seen the film classic *Pulp Fiction*, you may remember a scene in which hitman Vincent asks hitman Jules whether he's ever been to Amsterdam. No, he has not. Well, says Vincent, they have all the same stuff as here, it's just... everything is a little different. We were reminded of this many times in the ID.4, which

seems to have gone out of its way to be different, in feature after feature, style point after style point, from door handles to its oddball shifter. It's a noteworthy effort overall, for a low-volume vehicle.

Power player. A point of bemusement was the "engine start-stop" switch, labeled as such, since the industry makes a concerted effort to clarify that EVs have a motor, not an engine. Perhaps this is a parts bin item, something they had plenty of sitting around already. There's irony in this, in a vehicle in which everything else is purposely different.

Interest in the wording on the button was soon eclipsed by its function—if it has one. There can be a fine line between intuition and ambiguity. VW seems to have sought an intuitive "ready when you are, and done when you're done" approach to turning the ID.4 on and off (something not noticed during the nonstop-swap Texas Auto Roundup, also in this issue, where it won an award). As with most such things, you'll likely get used to it over time. But we found it confusing to figure out whether that "engine" button did much, on or off, or whether it could just be ignored. It seems you

can just hop in, put your foot on the brake pedal and be ready to go without it. But at the end of a drive, it was disturbing (and time consuming) to try to figure out whether the car was off before walking away from it. Instruments would often read the same before or after hitting that button, though not always. There's no drivetrain noise, regardless. And we'd have the key with us. But was it off? It was a consistently uncomfortable experience.

Checking the screens didn't help much, often overtaken by a persistent backup camera, even if the shifter was not in R, but rather Park or Drive.

Go mode. The ID.4 is a rear-driver (an all-wheel-drive version arrives later this year; see sidebar). There is just one forward gear, with the same ratio as reverse (2.96). Once you figure out—or simply go with the flow of—the start-stop button and/or procedure, it's time to get in motion.

Though the shift controller is largely hidden from sight behind the steering wheel, a readout in the binnacle screen, once you're oriented, helps you (mostly) get along by feel and that confirmation.

There are two layers of drive modes in the ID.4. As with most current vehicles, it offers more conventional drive modes—eco, comfort, sport, custom. More distinctively, it also offers a significant

option that overlays or underlies all the rest.

Besides Park and Reverse, the shifter gives you a D/B selection (also referred to as drive modes in documentation). D-as-in-Drive, the default, comes with a visual delight, a band of light flashing across the width of the car below the windshield.

As in any EV (and some hybrids and others), a regenerative braking system captures waste energy used in stopping, feeding it back to the battery. The D setting allows coasting when you take your foot off the accelerator pedal, generally the feeling you are familiar with (including the drive motor's inertia giving you a feel of slight deceleration, and the rear wheels maintaining enough grip for control). When you hit the brakes, you may feel just a subtle difference as force is redirected to charge.

B-as-in-Brake is your other option (to go, not to brake), in this position applying immediate and stronger deceleration, somewhat akin to driving a golf cart or other familiar full-electric. It does not, however, bring you to a complete stop, as some do—you still need to apply the full brakes. B mode is especially useful in a situation such as stop-go-zipper-merge traffic, as we had for a lane closure.

Controlwise, you can switch between D and B as freely as you want, though their behaviors are different enough that you probably won't want to—you'll try both, but each has its place.

Brakes are already commonly part of most vehi-

cles' electronic stability control (ESC) or dynamic handling systems. Volkswagen has a new system—Vehicle Dynamics Manager (which debuted last year on the European Mk 8 Golf GTI, due to arrive here this year)—in which brake-involved stability systems are integrated into an EV's regenerative braking. The ID.4 includes this system as standard.

Together, ESC and regenerative braking take control of wheel-selective brake interventions via an XDS electronic transverse differential lock with a digital target model to achieve optimum driving and steering behavior. As soon as you turn into a corner, steering is electronically optimized to be spontaneous, linear and accurate.

We can confirm this works well—a righthand surface street corner with a rain trough will make many an automatic pause noticeably as you slow, turn, dip and accelerate, but the ID.4 remained strong and responsive throughout, benefiting from the combination of this system and advanced independent suspension front and rear.

Despite its 4559-lb weight, this EV has excellently balanced handling even on hills and twisties. (It also has an exceptionally tight turning circle.) Absorbing road surfaces is a different story, transmitting the sound of every pavement imperfection, due to its quiet running, but also quite harsh on parking lot speedbumps.

(cont'd)



SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| ASSEMBLY |Zwickau-Mosel plant, Germany |
| CONSTRUCTION |unitary / steel |
| CLASS / SEATS |small SUV / five |
| MOTOR |PSM permanent magnet |
| HP/TORQUE |201 hp / 229 lb-ft |
| BATTERY |lithium-ion 82 kWh / 77 kWh net; voltage 240-400V; weight 1087 lb |
| ELECTRICAL |onboard max rate 11 kW; DC fast charge max rate 125 kW |
| DRIVETRAIN |RWD |
| TRANSMISSION |automatic (1st/reverse) |
| SUSPENSION |F: Strut-type w lower control arms, coils, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar; R: multi-link w coils, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar |
| STEERING |single-pinion elec pwr |
| BRAKES |F: 13.4 x 1.1-in vented; R: 11.0 x 2.0-in rear drums |
| WHEELS |(1st Edition) F: 8J x 20 alum alloy; R: 9J x 20 alum alloy (standard) 8J x 19 alum alloy |
| TIRES |(1st Edition) F: 255/50 R20; R: 255/45 R20 a/s (standard) F: 235/50 R19; R: 255/50 R19 a/s |
| LENGTH / WHEELBASE |180.5 / 108.9 in |
| TURNING CIRCLE |33.56 ft |
| HEADROOM (F/R) |41.1 / 38.4 in |
| LEGROOM (F/R) |41.1 / 37.6 in |
| CARGO CAPACITY |30.3 / 64.2 cu.ft |
| APPR / DEPART / BRKOVER |17.5 / 21.2 / 17.1 ^o |
| TOW CAPACITY |(braked/not) 2200/1650 lb |
| WEIGHT |4559 lb |
| RANGE |260 miles |
| MPGe |107/91/99 (city/hwy/comb) |
| BASE PRICE |\$43,995 |
| DESTINATION CHARGE |1195 |
| TOTAL |\$45,190 |

2021 VOLKSWAGEN ID.4 LINEUP

| | | |
|--------------------|----------|---------------|
| Pro |RWD |\$39,995 |
| |AWD |43,675 |
| Pro S |RWD |\$44,495 |
| |AWD |48,175 |
| 1st Edition |RWD |\$43,995 |
| DESTINATION CHARGE | |1195 |

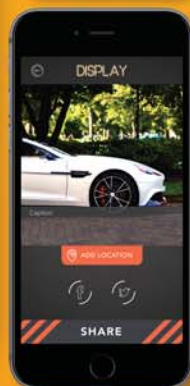
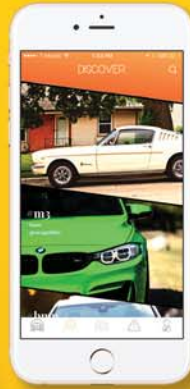
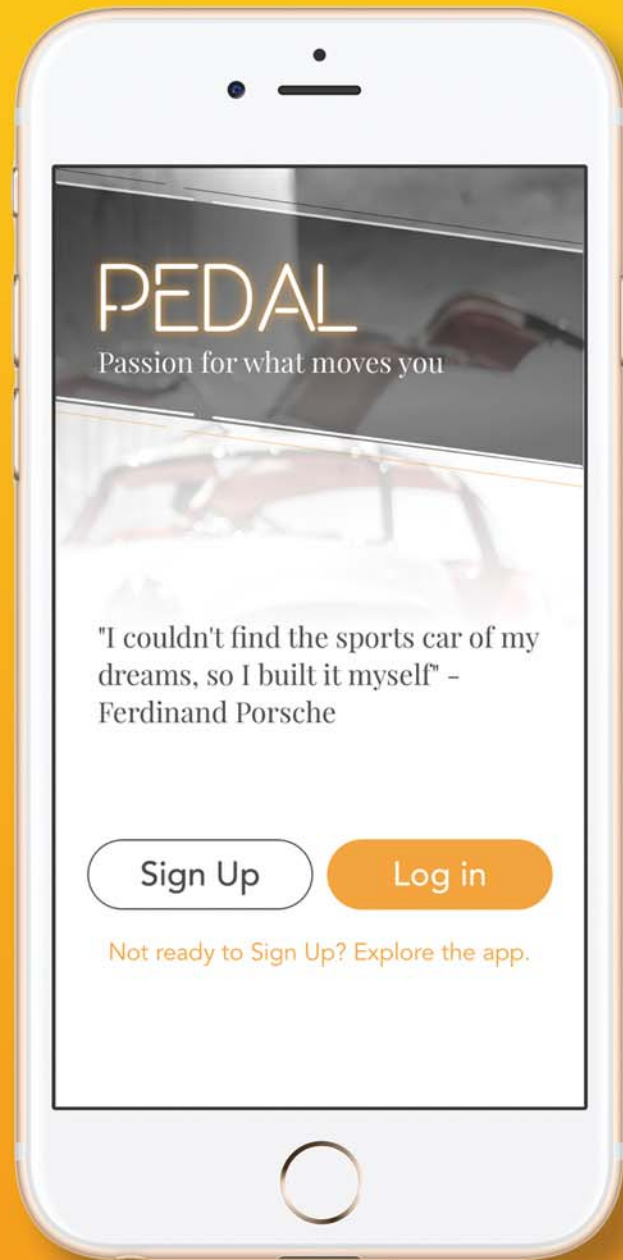


"MOST AFFORDABLE AWD EV"

Expected to arrive at dealers in the fourth quarter of 2021, the Volkswagen ID.4 AWD stakes a claim as of now as the most affordable all-wheel-drive electric vehicle on sale in the US, starting at an MSRP of \$43,675. The ID.4 AWD is a dual-motor setup with 295 hp, a zero-to-60 time of 5.7 seconds, and an EPA-estimated range of 249 miles for the AWD Pro, 240 miles for the AWD Pro S. Tow capacity is 20 percent higher than the ID.4 RWD 1st Edition we are driving here, at 2700 lb when using a braked trailer. Reservations can be made at vw.com/id4.



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PEDAL
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Ours was a 1st Edition, a limited run for the first year, with white badging (especially neat against our white paint) and the whitest white-on-white interior imaginable (you won't want to eat or get a paper cut in this one). Virtually every control and interface (wheel and pedals aside) is virtual. "Make it touch... let's make it ALL touch!" must have been a design mantra. It's reminiscent of a SpaceX Dragon Capsule. The pedals pick up a design cue from consumer electronics—brake and accelerator (on the 1st Edition, anyway) are prominently marked with "pause" and "play" icons.

Not unique to this car is the need to deep-dive into the screen for too many things—including climate control (which offers remote and prescheduled possibilities), and oddly even including the odometer (you can see your range at all times, but if you want to do the usual cumulative or comparative math, you have to dig). The remaining range does seem to be fairly accurate. Whatever way the information is presented, people can handle it—all in all, it's little different from keeping an eye on your fuel tank in an internal combustion vehicle.

The car is rife with artificial intelligence or its stylistic or functional equivalent. An ongoing point of interest was whether it was calculating key needs or just assuming them. You will no doubt learn to conquer the mysteries of turning the vehicle on and off (and/or knowing you have), but we always question an operational interface that can't be immediately understood by a borrower.

It's an interesting mix of simplicity and complexity—for all its capabilities, touchpoints are few. We were surprised that a car with electric everything, and the top-of-the-line model at that,

did not have memory for its mirrors and seat. Even the console, which would feature various controls and connectivity points in most vehicles, is devoid of anything other than its cupholders.

Not all our experiments were 100 percent repeatable, which brings elements of its intuitive layers back into play. The uncertainty of whether the vehicle is truly off when it's time to walk away is inversely echoed by the AC cutting off even if you just step outside for a moment (which is a moment too long; it was 115-120° while we had the ID.4). There is, however, a quick cooling feature (with debatable effect in our extreme climate, but again that issue is not unique to this).

Tackling features can be an adventure—we made an unusually voluminous 59 voice memos during our week with this, totaling an hour and a half. To sum them up, an owner is likely to treat this vehicle as a bit of a hobby, sort of like their first computer—challenging, sometimes frustrating, but almost always fun. The bigger portion of time actually driving is the best part of the ID.4.

Everything being relative, VW is not the earliest adopter of an EV powertrain, but they're right on the wave of stating a broad electric future. "It did take us awhile to catch up with the trends," VW told us in a zoom conference. We were surrounded in traffic by a lot of early adopters who have in most cases spent a lot more for their vehicles. It's a pretty self-satisfied feeling being in this more affordable one. Volkswagen's timing seems good, not too early not too late. They currently anticipate the ID.4 to be seven to eight percent of sales this year and just announced that by 2035, their lineup will be 100 percent battery electric. ■





NORRA MEXICAN 1000 - BAJA VW ID.4 is first production-based EV to finish

A specially prepared Volkswagen ID.4 electric SUV completed the NORRA Mexican 1000 race in Baja, one of 64 out of 90 cars and trucks entered that finished the entirety of the event.

Driven by pro racer Tanner Foust and managed by Tanner Foust Racing, the Rhys Millen Racing modified rear-wheel-drive ID.4 1st Edition model ran its stock 201-hp electric motor, 82 kWh battery pack and drive systems.

The interior was stripped and modified with a roll cage, racing seats and supplemental screens for key data like battery temperature. Suspension was thoroughly reworked with rally-style coil-over struts at all four wheels, tubular lower control arms in the front and boxed lower rear links. The radiator was raised several inches to improve approach angles and cooling capacity, and additional 3/8-inch steel skid plates were added to the undercarriage. With stages from 33 to 167 miles, the ID.4 was able to recharge mostly from a



portable biofuel-powered generator connected to a 50 kW flat charger.

In a couple of instances where the ID.4 was ready to transit to the next stage but the charger was not available, the team flat-towed it behind a chase vehicle for a short distance, with regenerative braking adding range. The only damage suffered by the ID.4 in the tough Baja wilderness was some cosmetic injury to the rear bumper. All key power, battery and control systems performed as expected. The ID.4 was raced mostly in "B" level battery regeneration mode with stock traction control turned on. Foust drove most of the race, with writer and off-road racer Emme Hall completing two stages.



NORRA MEXICAN 1000 - BAJA Stock Ford Bronco Badlands 4-door has podium finish

Two lead engineers piloting an all-new, fully stock 2021 Ford Bronco Badlands four-door SUV across the harsh terrain of Mexico's Baja California peninsula landed a podium finish in the National Off-Road Racing Association (NORRA) Mexican 1000 five-day off-road rally near the port city of Ensenada, with a third-place finish in the Pre-Runner Truck class.

Bronco engineering manager Jamie Groves and fellow Bronco engineer Seth Goslawski drove the majority of the 1,141-mile race. Brad Lovell, three-time NORRA winner and member of the Bronco advisory panel, helped navigate and drove one stage on day one.

The rally tracked across Baja through dirt, silt, dry lake beds and salt flats, with miles of ruts and rocks in between. With the exception of a safety roll cage, harnesses, seats and fire equipment, the fully stock Bronco ran with a factory 2.7L race-proven available EcoBoost V6 engine, available



10-speed Ford SelectShift transmission and advanced new 4x4 with automatic on-demand transfer case, plus High-Performance Off-Road Stability Suspension System (H.O.S.S.) featuring long-travel coil-over Bilstein position-sensitive dampers.

The Bronco ran on its stock 33-inch BFGoodrich all-terrain tires, with Dana 44 AdvanTEK M220 rear axle and M210 independent front suspension with Spicer Performa-Trak electronic lockers.

The Badlands series includes front swaybar disconnect with medium tradition utility class-exclusive design and Terrain Management System with G.O.A.T. (Goes Over Any Type of Terrain) modes. ■

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Lightning strikes in a new spot

Pickups are the biggest selling segment in the nation, and full battery electric vehicles have been getting all the buzz. It seems natural to combine the two. Many a new startup has begun from scratch, and existing players of all sizes promise to be delivering EV pickups soon—many very pricey.

Ford sits atop the F-150, the single best selling vehicle of all, so rather than invent something all-new, their approach is to electrify their top known entity. After a couple of years of high profile teases—remember the prototype towing a million-plus-pound train two years ago?—here it is.

Bringing a name from their performance pickup past, Ford introduces the F-150 Lightning. With 563 hp from dual in-board motors, this beast has 775 lb-ft of torque (the most ever in an F-150), a zero-to-60 time in the mid-4s, and up to 2,000 pounds of payload and 10,000 pounds tow capacity. 4x4 is standard. The frame is all new, built with the strongest steel ever used in an F-150 frame, and the truck has a new independent rear suspension—all together promising the familiar durability and tough-terrain capability people expect.

Driving range is estimated at 230 miles standard or 300 with an extended-range battery. Ford seeks to turn any range anxiety questions on their head, by promoting that the F-150 Lightning has

power to spare—a high-tech front trunk (frunk) with four 120-volt outlets and two USB chargers, promising enough on-the-spot output to power your home for three days in a blackout—or to fire up a massive tailgate party (the frunk also has a drainable floor).

Along with power comes connectivity: over-the-air software updates; a FordPass app for remote vehicle controls and charging station access; available BlueCruise for hands-free driving on the highway; and enhanced Pro Power Onboard to power your tools or toys at the jobsite or campsite.

The lineup starts with the work-oriented F-150 Lightning Pro at \$39,974 (before any applicable tax credits). A mid-series XLT starts at \$52,974, with Lariat and Platinum grades above that.

The F-150's big presence comes with a burden of expectations. Ford seems to have tackled this by moving beyond the simple question, "can you make this electric?" to "what can we do with this, special, *because* it's electric?" The answer is: a lot.

This approach has led to pre-order sales passing the 100,000 mark in just the first few weeks.

The F-150 Lightning, built in a new high-tech, sustainable practices factory at Ford's River Rouge complex in Dearborn, joins Mustang Mach-E and Ford Transit in the growing Ford EV family. ■



Small truck category is reborn

Many said it couldn't be done. Compact pickups were a much-beloved vehicle segment some decades back—part of the original Japanese "invasion." Then they started growing bigger (many of today's midsize pickups are their direct descendents). Partly, this reflected market tastes and demand, but the growth in airbag, side impact, rollover and other safety requirements led to inevitable evolutionary growth in size.

Ford has now clean-sheet revisited the idea, and here it is—the Maverick compact pickup.

Unlike those little trucks of half a century ago, Maverick has a unibody build and is front-drive-based. And unlike those classics' 100-or-so horsepower, you have either 191 total horsepower from a 2.5-liter hybrid system (it's the first pickup in the US with a hybrid as its standard powertrain) or 250 hp from an optional 2.0-liter EcoBoost engine.

Many are quick to call this a "city truck," for its maneuverability and parking ease. But its sturdy build and ample ground clearance make it great for back road camping, fishing and exploring, and it can tow. With room for five adults and innovative cargo and storage space, Maverick can handle the groceries or outdoor gear equally capably. Under-seat storage is rugged enough for work tools, spacious enough for basketballs. ■

The four-and-a-half-foot bed boasts a Flexbed™ system with up to 12 anchor points, a multi-position tailgate and recesses to place boards as dividers or platforms for cargo (including 4x8 building materials flat above the wheel wells). Two 12-volt 20-amp plus two available 110-volt outlets in the back can power your tools, laptop or tailgate party.

Dimensions and specifications for both powerplants are generally the same, and both have a 1500-lb payload capacity (equal to thirty-seven 40-pound bags of concrete mix or mulch). The hybrid has a 2,000-pound tow capacity (good for dirt bikes or personal watercraft); the EcoBoost truck tows the same, or up to 4,000 pounds with a package, enough for about a 23-foot camper trailer.

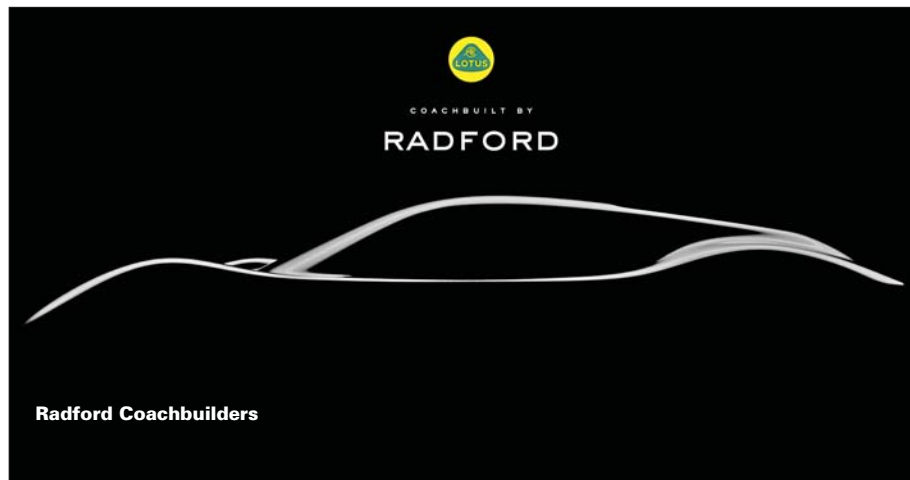
Fuel capacity is smaller on the Hybrid (13.8 gal versus 16.5 gal on the EcoBoost), presumably making room for battery and other hybrid mechanicals, though the Hybrid makes up for that with an anticipated 40 MPG city fuel mileage (to be confirmed).

Both the Hybrid and EcoBoost come in XL, XLT and Lariat trims, any and all as front-drivers or with all-wheel drive optional.

The Ford Maverick is being built at the company's Hermosillo Assembly Plant, just south of us in Sonora, Mexico. Detailed pricing information and anticipated dealer arrival will be forthcoming. ■



THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS



▼ **Radford**, the coachbuilding sibling to Phoenix-based Radford Racing School (formerly Bondurant) and Radford Track, has announced their first bespoke car, to be built in collaboration with Lotus Engineering. Radford and the legendary sports car manufacturer were both founded in the UK in the same year, 1948. Radford draws on the heritage of bespoke vehicle builder Harold Radford, to offer customers opulent, personalized coachbuilt cars. The operation has been revitalized by designer Mark Stubbs, broadcast motor specialist Ant Anstead, former FIA Formula One World Champion Jenson Button and leading business adviser and lawyer Roger Behle. Radford is creating on-trend vehicles based on classic timeless designs. The new partnership provides Radford use of Lotus technology as the starting point from which the coachbuilder will craft a new limited-edition bespoke Radford model. “Our first car will be totally new and something very special,” says Stubbs, “a Radford, through and through. And that means it will be unique—the body will be sleek and elegant, the interior will be cossetting and luxurious, and the drive will be out of this world. Everything about it will be totally bespoke to Radford.” Button explains further: “The driving experience will be different and very special. It’s going to be truly analog and thoroughly engaging, but with all the refinements that you would expect from a Radford. It will drive like nothing else. There is a purity to driving that is lost in many cars of today. I will

ensure we create a driver’s car, a trait that is embedded within the DNA of all Lotus cars.” Already in advanced development, full details of the first Radford car will be revealed later in 2021, with Radford to soon begin taking deposits on vehicles.

▼ **Rossmönster** is launching The Baja, the inaugural model in a new Rossmönster Overland truck camper sub-brand. Built on half-, three-quarter- and one-ton chassis,

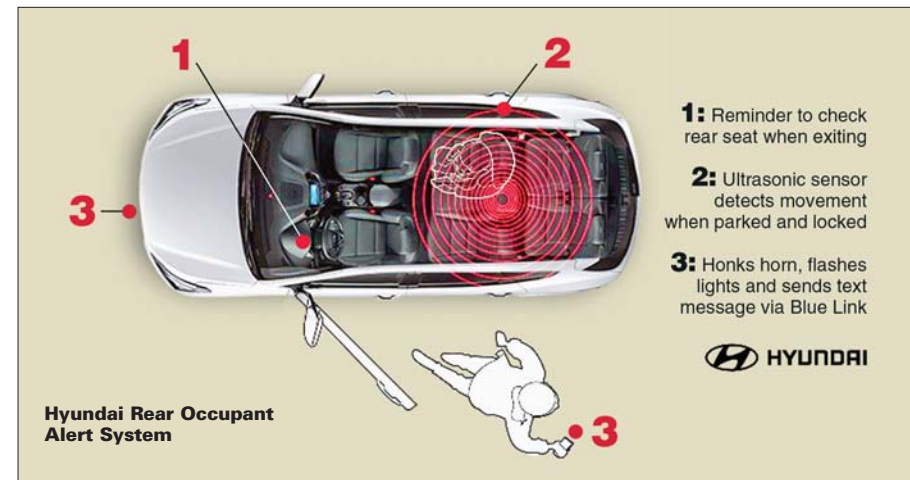


these vehicles are engineered to be lighter and more compact than other expedition vehicles without compromising on luxury camping aesthetics or comfort. Rossmönster Vans started in 2015 as a group of custom woodworkers, engineers and electricians with a passion for the outdoors, building custom vans out of their shop in Longmont, Colorado. One day, they decided there was a better way to do truck

campers—with ultimate off-grid and off-road capability, compact enough to get to places others can’t, while still housing an interior that would highlight a dedication to craftsmanship and design—and to look cool, too. After years building and exploring in vans, they felt the need to build a truck camper on top of our existing van offerings. After all, some people are just truck people, they reasoned. The Baja was born. Trucks are more compact and have greater off-road capability with increased ground clearance, locking differentials and a smaller overall footprint. Their truck campers are designed with an actuating hard shell top that can be lowered while the vehicle is driving, achieving better fuel economy and generally more nimble handling than other expedition vehicles. Once in camp, the hard shell is articulated, creating over a foot of additional height, to deliver the same luxury camping experience their vans have offered for years. The camper area can be entered via a rear door or through a pass-through from the cab. While driving, an insulated partition seals off the camper to greatly minimize

noise from the camper. The cab is largely untouched, leaving four factory seats intact for a comfortable ride in any of them. The Baja has an introductory base price of \$175,000 (subject to upgrades, desired vehicle trim package and truck model). The Baja is currently available on Ford F150, F250, Ram 2500 and Chevy or GMC 2500 trucks with 6.5-foot beds, 2019 or newer. Visit rossmonsteroverland.com.

▼ **Hyundai** proactively addresses the issues of pediatric heatstroke and potential fatalities from children being left unattended in vehicles, especially during the hot-



ter months, with thirteen vehicles now including Rear Occupant Alert (ROA) systems as standard or optional—the only manufacturer offering a sophisticated sensing-based alert including flashing the vehicle’s lights, honking the horn and sending a text message via the Blue Link connected car system, directing you to immediately check the back seat if you have departed and locked the vehicle with a child inside. Hyundai Palisade, Santa Fe and Santa Fe HEV, Sonata and Sonata HEV, Elantra and Elantra HEV and the all-new 2022 Tucson (ICE, HEV, PHEV, N-Line) include a door-logic system as standard, which detects if a rear door was opened or closed when the car was started, then reminds the driver to check the rear seat via a message on the center cluster when exiting the vehicle. An optional Ultrasonic Rear Occupant Alert or similar sensor-based system is available on Palisade, Santa Fe and the 2022 Tucson—SUVs often driven by families with young children—in addition to Genesis GV80 and G80. Ultrasonic ROA has the door-logic technology plus an ultrasonic sensor to detect movements of children and pets in the second-row seats. If the system detects this movement after the driver leaves the vehicle and locks the doors, it will honk the horn and send an alert to the driver’s smartphone via Hyundai’s Blue Link connected car system (if equipped and the service activated). The National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Department of Transportation (DOT) recently

launched an annual Pediatric Heatstroke prevention and public awareness program, *Look Before You Lock* recognizing a child’s sensitivity to heat: a car’s interior temperature can rise about 20 degrees in 10 min-

utes (even at an outside temperature as low as 70 degrees, the temperature inside your car can reach over 115 degrees). A child can die when his or her body temperature reaches 107 degrees. Hyundai reminds you also that if someone else is driving your child, or your daily routine has been altered, always check to make sure your child has arrived safely at their destination.

▼ Forget about buying an Eleanor Mus-



tang—how about building your own? Now, you can make a 1:8 scale model of the iconic car from Denise Shakarian Halicki’s 2000 hit remake of *Gone in 60 Seconds*, based on HB “Toby” Halicki’s 1974 film of the same name. **EagleMoss Collections’ Die-Cast Club** works closely with licensors and partners every step of the way to create, research and market their products. Their Eleanor is a 22.9-inch-long dis-

play piece with working lights, sound effects, and moving parts, all film-accurate and made of the highest-quality die-cast metal, ABS, rubber and GPPS, with the car’s striking Pepper Gray paintwork, air scoops in the doors, and distinctive stripe running across the hood, roof, and trunk. Surface details include hood pins, studded fuel cap and the “LYN 274” custom license plate. Its intricate dashboard incorporates a rev counter, fuel gauge and nitrous oxide system (NOS) switch, while the gearshift is topped with the memorable “Go Baby Go” insignia. The wood-effect steering wheel turns the front tires, and the horn blares when you press its center. The headlights work too, and you can further turn on the taillights by pressing the brake pedal. Press the accelerator pedal to hear Eleanor’s engine roar. The engine is based on the original Ford 351-cu.in small-block racing engine from *Gone in 60 Seconds*. It takes ten issues to build the engine alone. Open the trunk to find the engine tank, which provides the car’s extra kick in the film. Each shipment consists of four kits of parts and a 32-page magazine featuring step-by-step instructions (with color-coded 3D illustrations) on assembling your model, along with profiles on the other cars featured in the movie, the history of Mustangs and a deep-dive into

Eleanor’s creation and development. The Die-Cast Club catalog includes the Mercedes 300 SL Gullwing, Nissan GT-R, Willys MB Jeep and Rally Podium Set Collection. EagleMoss is also known for the sci-fi, fantasy and comics-focused Hero Collector, and Creacrafts, producing baking and knitting accessories for popular brands like Disney. For more information, visit www.diecastclub.com. ■

UPCOMING FEATURES

2021 Ford Mustang Mach I



Upcoming track, on- and off-road comparo events



2021 Nissan Armada



Upcoming Detroit, New York and LA Auto Shows



Specialty and personalized plates primer



How freeway interchanges and HOV lanes evolve



Global YouTube sensation Sarah-n-Tuned of Tucson



K1 Speed indoor kart racing



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