

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 22 NUMBER 3
MAY-JUNE 2023

**FINAL CHALLENGERS
F-150 RAPTOR R V8
TWO COMPARO EVENTS
AUCTION RESULTS
DEATH VALLEY OVERLAND
COPPER QUEEN HOTEL
ATLIS BECOMES NXU, INC.
BOAT & BIKE NEWS
AND MUCH MORE!**

*DODGE CHALLENGER R/T SCAT PACK WIDEBODY
SHAKEDOWN "LAST CALL" SPECIAL EDITION*

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





#BeOneInAMillion

Help us cross the \$1,000,000 line for Parkinson's

Since 2016, **Drive Toward a Cure™** has been on a mission to support Parkinson's Disease research AND patient care, with donations benefiting the **Michael J. Fox Foundation** and the **Parkinson's Foundation**. Most recently, we created our own 'Access to Care' fund that supports **Parkinson's Foundation Centers of Excellence** throughout the country, in areas including Atlanta, Phoenix, Boston, Denver, Houston, Nashville, New York City, Portland and San Diego. And we're not done growing!

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Join our **#BeOneInAMillion** campaign to help us foster even more programs for 2022 and beyond, and to keep the momentum going. We're going for the Checkered Flag and with your help, those challenged by Parkinson's can win this race, so **#BeOneInAMillion!**



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#BeOneInAMillion doesn't just mean making a donation. Ask us how you can organize an event like these...

Genau Autowerks (San Francisco) raised **over \$7,500** by inviting friends and customers to take part in a fun wine country drive to visit The Racers Group. With some key sponsors lined up, every penny of the registration fees went to support the UCSF Parkinson's Disease Clinic.



The **Peachstate Region** (Atlanta) of the **Porsche Club of America** raised **over \$5,300** simply by taking a regular club rally event and setting donation options for participants that included a "Gold Donor" level which 1 out of every 3 registrants opted for!



A rally to visit the 425 Magazine Northwest Idea House (Seattle) organized by **Lochwood-Lozier Custom Homes** and **Avants** raised **more than \$12,000** from registrations and generous donations in the days that followed.



Drive Toward a Cure is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.
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ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

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COVER: A tour de force in any trim, Dodge Challenger reaches special heights in this special edition: the 485-hp 2023 Dodge Challenger R/T Scat Pack Widebody Shakedown "Last Call"—as its name suggests, one of the last of these glorious internal combustion wondercars to be coming off the line. You're gonna miss 'em when they're gone, and so are we. **Photo: Joe Sage**



Tyson Hugie

William Dorée

Doug Berger

START YOUR ENGINES : FROM THE PUBLISHER

Though the automotive manufacturing industry likes to make sure you get exposed to their latest sheet metal and under-hood magic, our mission is broader, as reflected in the small line of type at the base of our cover, also including destinations, special events and attractions, Arizona business and technology, and of course people.

We bring plenty of all of the above in this issue. Regular contributor **Tyson Hugie** takes us on a road trip to historic Bisbee—and the historic Copper Queen Hotel—near the Mexican border. New contributor **Sandra Muñoz Dorée**, mastermind of Latinaology.com, joined by her husband **William Dorée** behind the lens, takes us on a very special episode of overlanding, this time in Death Valley National Park, locating some of the most well-known sites used in the filming of the original *Star Wars*. These are both trips you very well may want to duplicate. We also travel to Washington State's Olympic Peninsula for NWAPA's Mudfest on-off-road comparo event, as well as to north Texas for TAWA Auto Roundup, a track-based pavement comparo event. Both declare winners in a variety of vehicle categories.

Special events include two notable collector vehicle auctions—Mecum Glendale, a huge and exciting annual sale at the Cardinals' State Farm Stadium, and hometown auction leaders Barrett-Jackson's annual Palm Beach, Florida event.

Business news brings us a big change at Nxu, Inc., the company we've been following closely as Atlis Motor Vehicles. And special pages bearing our *Arizona Rider Magazine* and *Arizona Boater Magazine* mastheads broaden the scope in areas of interest to us all.

And have no fear—the sheet metal is here. From the one of the last Dodge Challengers, to the long-clamored-for F-150 Raptor R V8, to a wide range of luxury performance, EV, factory tuner, compact pickup and even daily SUV options, it's quite a collection.

Enjoy the ride!
Joe Sage
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ARIZONA DRIVER
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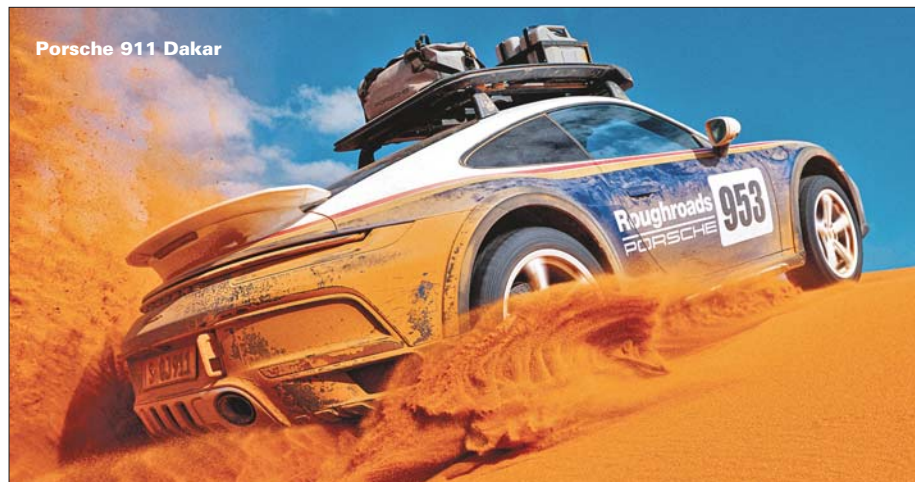
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AUTOMOTIVE NEWS UPDATE



Porsche 911 Dakar

▼ **Porsche** combines the off-road characteristics of an SUV with the agility of a sports car in the 911 Dakar. General project manager Achim Lamparter uses superlatives sparingly, preferring not to claim his car has the most versatile chassis in the world, then gets more specific, saying, “It’s the most versatile for a sports car, yes. The Dakar is definitely the vehicle with the broadest spread of capabilities in this segment.” Compared to a conventional 911, the 911 Dakar’s strut suspension raises the body 40mm, high-sidewall all-terrain tires a further 10mm, and a hydraulic lift system for both axles another 30mm, for maximum ground clearance of 191mm, on par with some SUVs. Yet, the 911 Dakar can handle the Nordschleife, mastering corners, top track speeds and changes in pace as expected from a 911. It doesn’t match the track-focused 911 GT3, but its lap time is on a par with a 996 GT3—despite its all-terrain tires and 240 km/h limited top track speed. The all-wheel drive vehicle has active suspension management, rear-axle steering, dynamic chassis control and torque vectoring-plus, with an electronic rear differential lock and fully variable torque distribution—engineered to optimize grip, performance and driving pleasure in any situation. Two new driving programs were developed for this 911—“Rally” for spirited driving on loose surfaces such as gravel and “Off-road” with the emphasis on traction with the lift system activated automatically to maximum ground clearance up to a track speed of

170 km/h, almost equalling the Cayenne. Mechanics behind the programs include a 50 percent reduction in spring rates; compression and extension increased to up to 14.5mm; and installation of more rigid engine mounts from the 911 GT3. Lamparter also raves about the car’s Pirelli Scorpion All Terrain Plus tires, which are impressive on asphalt, too. “On the circuit, this tire wears more slowly than some road tires,” he says. “That’s black magic,”



Aston Martin AMR23 110th Anniversary logo

he adds with a grin. Or it’s the result of engineering expertise. The result stakes its claim as the most versatile sports car chassis in the world.

▼ **Aston Martin** will celebrate throughout the 2023 FIA Formula One World Championship season with a special anniversary logo revealed today to mark their 110 years on the track. Unveiled for the first

time on the nose of the new AMR23 challenger to be raced this season by established driver Lance Stroll and two-time F1 World Champion Fernando Alonso, the “110 Iconic Years” crest features Aston Martin’s wings marque, as redesigned in 2022. The anniversary will be celebrated throughout 2023, with the automaker’s home Grand Prix at Silverstone holding a special celebration of their F1 campus at Silverstone, which will drive further technological collaboration between race and road in the future with the creation of a cutting-edge wind tunnel and simulator facility, to be completed at the end of 2024, with the potential to be utilized by Aston Martin Lagonda in developing its high performance products. Market research indicates that Formula 1 connects Aston Martin with an engaged audience and raises consideration of the brand in key markets, as over 89 percent of their customers globally are interested in Formula 1, and in the US, Aston Martin’s largest commercial market—which will host three Grand Prix races for the first time this season—the number jumps to 96 percent. Over 92

percent of customers feel the brand’s high-profile track presence amplifies its high-performance and technological credentials, as well as making driving an Aston Martin even more exciting.

▼ A survey by **Mini USA** shows customers think driving a manual transmission car is an art that many are still familiar with and enjoy, but few have the op-

portunity to practice today. Commissioned by Engine’s Caravan, key indicators in the survey validate the appeal of driving a manual transmission car, with an impressive 63 percent of all respondents



Lamborghini Huracán Sterrato

agreeing that learning how to drive a manual transmission is a rite of passage and an important life skill. Additionally, “fun to drive” was the top characteristic survey respondents most associated with a manual transmission vehicle. However, despite this, just 24 percent indicated they own a manual-equipped car. Nearly half of all Gen Z (49%) and 42 percent of women overall indicated they did not know how to drive a car with a manual transmission.



MINI manual transmission

When asked if they were willing to learn, more than half of all respondents (53%) indicated they are interested in learning. Impressively, two thirds (67%) of younger respondents aged 18-34 were most eager to learn to drive a manual. A manual shift option was announced late last year for Mini Cooper, Cooper S and John Cooper Works 2-Door Hardtops, now being joined by four additional models—Mini Cooper

and Cooper S Convertibles, and Cooper and Cooper S 4-Door Hardtops. In conjunction with the BMW Group Performance Center West in Thermal, California, the Mini Manual Driving School launched in

February. at a cost of \$499. The curriculum focuses on vehicle controls, finding the friction point, practicing smooth starts, stops and acceleration, and more. Participants are tested on a timed course to assess their knowledge. To learn more or register, visit bmwperformancecenter.com/mini/schools/.

▼ The **Lamborghini** Huracán Sterrato recently proved itself on snow and ice at



Isuzu D-Max pickup

an exclusive ski resort in the Italian Alps. Switching from its specifically-calibrated Strada and Sport road-driving modes to a Rally mode for dirt and loose surfaces including snow, the car’s permanent four-wheel drive setup conquered the low-grip winter surfaces. The Sterrato’s wider track and increased ride height assured success, along with Bridgestone Dueler AT002 run-flat tires, specially adapted for the all-ter-

rain Huracán and rated for its top speed of 260 km/h (161.6 mph). An aluminum front underbody, reinforced sills and rear diffuser, and enhanced wheel arches protect the Sterrato from icy obstacles, and emphasize its muscular power in the challenging winter sports environment, catching the eyes of skiers and vacationers along with its ice-cool winter white Bianco Phanes finish with details in Grigio Teleso and black carbon fiber including the reinforced wheel arches. New owners can create their own style from 350 external colors and more than 60 interior leather and Alcantara options. The Huracán Sterrato’s 5.2-liter V-10 engine delivers a maximum power output of 610 CV (601 hp) and 560 Nm (413 lb-ft) of torque, combined with 7-speed dual-clutch transmission and electronically controlled all-wheel drive with mechanical self-locking rear differential. Designed to offer optimum performance on loose surfaces, it accelerates from 0 to 62 mph in 3.4 seconds. Production of the 1,499 Huracán Sterrato units just began, with deliveries starting in early summer.

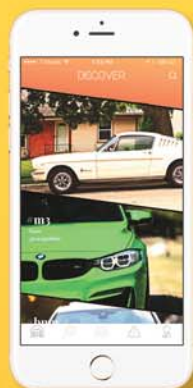
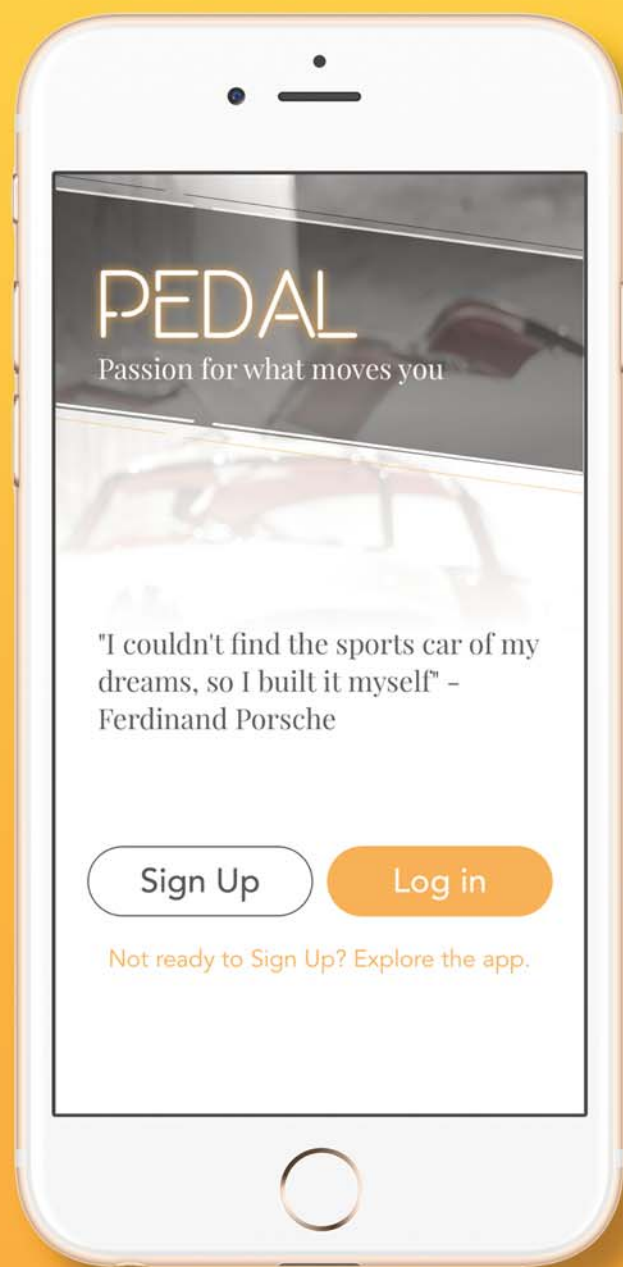
▼ Judged by an independent panel of industry professionals and automotive journalists, the **Isuzu** D-Max (sold everywhere in the world but here) has been awarded the Best Pickup for 2023 by UK

commercial vehicle specialist publication *Business Vans*, the fourth publication to grant Isuzu UK an award this year, on top of Pickup of the Year from *What Van?*, *Company Car and Van*, and *4x4 Magazine*, praising the truck’s capability, durability and versatility. The award’s deliberation process considered features including de-

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sign, functionality and price. Judges also expressed appreciation of Isuzu D-Max's many trim levels falling into Business, All-Purpose and Adventure categories. Judges noted that the D-Max comes in single and

among car enthusiasts. The new owner is invited to participate in Pagani's Arte in Pista program—an exclusive series of five track driving events across the US and Europe—during 2023—the automaker's



RM Sotheby's
2010 Pagani Zonda R Revolucion

double cab variants, is powered by a 1.9-liter turbodiesel, has the ability to tow 3.5 UK tonnes (about 7840 lb) and is backed by a 125,000-mile/5-year warranty. The model range runs from the entry Business through All-Purpose to Adventure. While Isuzu commercial trucks are available in the US today, they have been in and out of our market here for personal vehicles, some under their own name and some re-badged by General Motors, including the Chevy LUV during our small pickup era.

▼ **RM Sotheby's**, longtime official auction house of the Amelia Island (Florida) Concours, has bid the event a fond farewell with over \$70 million in sales, 92 percent of all lots sold, and \$1.2 million raised for Spina Bifida of Jacksonville during their final participation there this year. Top seller was a 2010 Pagani Zonda R Revolucion, at \$5,340,000. The supercar is called Horacio Pagani's tour de force, "a ferocious and spartan distillation of the marque's technological capabilities." The fifth of just 10 "R" examples produced between 2009 and 2011, it was upgraded to Revolucion specifications by the Pagani factory in December 2014. Powered by a 780-hp CLK GTR-derived 6.0-liter V-12 engine by AMG and paired with a six-speed sequential manual gearbox, the car has retained the legendary Nürburgring Nordschleife's fastest lap record for a non-series, production-based, gasoline-powered car since July 2010. Known for its looks, sound and build quality the car holds mythical status

25th anniversary. RM Sotheby's sends thanks to consignors, partners, bidders and buyers for their send-off at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, especially noting event founders Bill and Jane Warner as their partners for over 20 years, and to the Amelia Island community for their years of incredible hospitality. RM is planning to add South Florida to their 2024 calendar.

▼ Also not available on our shores is **MG**,



MG Motor UK
MG4 EV

which has also been grabbing notable awards in the UK, where the MG4 EV full-electric hatchback first won its category award as Best Family Car of 2023, in the broader UK Car of the Year Awards. Designed specifically for the UK car-buying public, the independent process is judged by a panel of 29 experts, including some of the most respected names in motoring journalism, such as Tom Ford of *BBC Top*

Gear. The judges noted the EV's combination of value for the money—priced from just £26,995 (\$32,595 at press time)—and high build quality. This win made the MG4 a finalist for the overall UK Car of the Year title among seven category winners, total. Here it proceeded to take the top trophy, as well, as "the best new car on sale in the UK today," ranking ahead of Dacia, Kia, Land Rover, Lotus and Toyota models. This marks the MG4 EV's fifteenth major win, including four overall Car of the Year titles, in just six months since its launch in September 2022, during which time it has also proven to be a huge hit with customers. MG Motor UK is the fastest growing car brand in the UK. The model has also received recognition from Euro NCAP, achieving the maximum five-star safety rating in a rigorous testing process.

▼ Also in UK news, there are now more **LEVC** (London Electric Vehicle Company) TX electric taxis on the streets of London than their diesel TX4s, as the capital's transition to a totally electric black cab fleet continues to accelerate. With the familiar look everyone knows and loves, LEVC's TX taxi now represents more than 40 percent of London's official black cabs, with over 6,000 vehicles operating. The TX taxi is an accessible and inclusive vehi-

cle for all, regardless of age or disability. With flexible space for up to six passengers, the TX has an integrated wheelchair ramp and can accommodate a forward-facing wheelchair, the only taxi of its kind to do so. LEVC's TX electric taxis have travelled more than 534 million miles globally, preventing 162,000 UK tonnes of CO2 being emitted into the atmosphere, since its introduction in 2018. ■

YOU'RE GONNA MISS ME WHEN I'M GONE

BY JOE SAGE

DODGE has done a great job keeping the fires lit through the 21st century to date, honing its popular performance portfolio in particular, including the two-door Dodge Challenger coupe lineup, itself embedded in admirable and desirable Detroit iron roots going back more than half a century. Through a combination of the company's wider new ownership as part of Stellantis, along with government mandates of the moment (both here and in other international markets that affect the entire industry), this is all about to change. Or evolve, rather (see sidebar on last page of this feature).

What you've known and loved so well is appropriately going out with a roar. Prominent in this effort are the "Last Call" series of special editions, seven total, introduced from late last summer through now (also see sidebar). Of those, the one we're driving here was the first "Last Call" introduced—Challenger Shakedown, for short, based on the R/T Scat Pack (regular or Widebody).

We've long admired the Dodge lineup's price stair-stepping—it's remarkable what they do, offering such a variety of vehicles, within a relatively narrow price range, and the ways they distin-

guish each and keep them from overlapping are all very carefully calculated. As such, the R/T Scat Pack has always occupied a very sweet spot, with a 372-hp 345-cu.in. V8 at a midrange price. Adding Widebody, originally available only on pricier dedicated models, is a great shot in the arm, while still totaling some \$20 grand less expensive than the least expensive of the next-up SRT Hellcats. This miracle continues with the Shakedown "Last Call," juiced up to 485 hp with an SRT HEMI® 392 V8 and all that comes with it, yet still several thousand dollars less than the Hellcat starting point.

More is always more, while it's always debatable whether that is better, more desirable or just irresistible once you start shopping. But a very strong case is made for this Goldilocks build, espe-

cially amped up as a Shakedown and—in our case—also a Widebody.

In addition to its highly engineered engine (see specifications), the Shakedown includes other performance tweaks—cold-air-grabbing Mopar Shaker hood and intake, 20-by-11 Carbon Black Warp Speed wheels (on the Widebody) and red six-piston Brembo brakes. It's also immediately recognizable by a range of styling details—a Shaker underhood decal as well as a "Last Call" underhood plaque (as on the whole series), Shakedown spoiler graphic, stripes with red accent, a black Challenger grille badge, special R/T grille badge, red "392" fender graphics, an instrument panel Shakedown badge, premium black nappa/alcantara seats, red seatbelts and red stitching throughout. And it bears a variety of other features from the Plus Group, Technology Group, Navigation, Carbon/Suede and R/T Scat Pack Dynamics packages.

FULL OF LIFE

The car sits in a sweet spot—equal parts low key and over the top. One thing you can't forget, as you gaze over its shaker hood is that you are showing off (though this does not create as much shaking as the old classics). At the same time, the car's two paints—Destroyer Grey for the standard build or Pitch Black for the Widebody—keep things bold yet toned down. The Widebody's solid

(cont'd)



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Brampton Assembly, Ontario
ENGINE	SRT HEMI MDS 392 V8 (6.4L) 16v pushrod OHV, sodium-filled exhaust & hollow stem intake valves, 16 conventional lifters w roller tips, sequential multiport electronic returnless injection w fuel saver mode, deep-skirt cast iron block w cross-bolted main bearing caps, alum alloy heads w hemispherical combustion chambers
HP/TORQUE	485 hp / 475 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.9:1
TRANSMISSION	TorqueFlite 8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	RWD
SUSPENSION	F: Indep short-and long-arm w high upper A arm, lateral & diagonal lower links, Bilstein adaptive damping suspension (ADS) shocks, 34mm stblzr bar; R: five-link indep, Bilstein ADS, isolated suspension cradle, 22mm stblzr bar; SRT-tuned three-mode auto-sport-track
STEERING	elec pwr w multi-mode assist
BRAKES	Brembo high performance; F: 14.2x1.26 vented, 4-piston fixed monoblock aluminum; R: 13.8x1.10 vented, 4-piston fixed w aluminum housing
WHEELS	20x11 Carbon Black Warp-Speed
TIRES	305/35ZR20 Pirelli A/S Performance
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	197.5 / 116.0 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	5.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE	(Widebody) 38.7 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	39.3 / 37.1 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	42.0 / 33.1 in
CARGO CAPACITY	16.2 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIB	4303 lb / 55/45 %
FUEL / CAPACITY	prem 91 oct unl / 18.5 gal
MPG	15/24/18 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE (R/T Scat Pack Widebody)\$52,935

SHAKEDOWN SPECIAL EDITION PACKAGE:

Shakedown stripes and accents incl red 392 fender graphics, spoiler graphic & stripe w red accent, red Brembo brake calipers, instrument panel badge, red stitching on alcantara seats, 20x11 Carbon Black Warp-Speed wheels and Pirelli A/S performance tires2595

8-SPD AUTOMATIC1595

PLUS PACKAGE:

heated power mirrors w manual fold, HID headlamps, locking lug nuts, premium stitch dash panel, alcantara/nappa seats w Scat Pack logo.....3485

CARBON/SUEDE INTERIOR PACKAGE:

real carbon fiber interior accents, suede headliner1595

AUDIO: Harman Kardon audio group

w subwoofer, Uconnect 4C NAV1795

UCONNECT 4C NAVIGATION

.....995

MOPAR HOOD PIN KIT

.....425

SRT PERFORMANCE SPOILER

.....995

DESTINATION CHARGE

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TOTAL***\$68,010**

*(Note: no vehicle Monroney sticker provided; individual feature and package pricing based on current available information and details. See pricing chart, subject to change.)

2023 DODGE CHALLENGER LINEUP

	AWD	RWD
SXT	\$33,545	\$30,545
GT	37,240	33,940
R/T		39,480
R/T Scat Pack		46,940
R/T Scat Pack Widebody		▼ 52,935
SRT Hellcat Jailbreak		72,130
SRT Hellcat Widebody Jailbreak		78,530
SRT Hellcat Redeye Jailbreak		80,735
SRT Hellcat Redeye Widebody Jailbreak		87,135
SRT Super Stock		89,140

(Latest pricing, subject to change.)

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stance is a winner with purpose, housing an extra-wide staggered tire set, all the better to grip and grin.

Power is immediate. Drive modes never crossed our mind—this car is fabulous right out of the box. Brakes are equally fantastic. Rock solid power, rock solid brakes. The transmission is an automatic, but delivers the strong and consistent strength that shifting fans would expect from a manual, holding its power stem to stern through any variety of surface street shifts and turns—a locked-in drivetrain with no loss no hesitation. A magnificent beast. Put it all together, and once you fire it up, you simply can't put it back down.

LONG DRIVE NORTH

While chassis and steering are tops, we wondered at first whether the ultra-wide tires might work against us in wet conditions. Lo and behold, it started to rain just a little bit. We switched on the intermittent wipers, which also reflect the car's firm and decisive approach to build and interface overall, with distinct clicks through the range—tactile and satisfying, as well as useful.

We always seem to keep one eye on our vehicle schedule and the other on the weather map, knowing the mountain highways running north out of the Valley are great for a road car, while the potential for high country snow might offer some additional adventure. In the interest of raw performance, we headed up the Beeline Highway as the rain picked up. With snow predicted at any time as we gained elevation, we figured we'd be turning around at some point. But we just couldn't. And didn't need to.

It was a fantastic drive. We went all the way to Payson, cruised around town as the rain turned to snow, grabbed a bite and headed back down. (Bonus: not only did the heated seats come on by themselves, so did the heated steering wheel, and best of all, unlike pretty much any other we've driven, it has no cold spots. Nice!) As for our drive through the curves and climbs at highway speeds in slick conditions—from relatively light flurries, to a little spit of rain and on through the occasional downpour—our powerful beast remained smooth and solid as it devoured it all. This was a made-to-order day full of Arizona's highly varied terrain and weather, and a great display of the Challenger Shakedown's highly varied powers and skills. A-plus all the way.

LONG DRIVE SOUTH

You might look at a car like this and think it's going to be a bone-shaking hand-ful. It's not. So well balanced and smooth, you could drive this anywhere for long hours, with power to spare and in perfect control and comfort.

We took the luxury of another full day and headed south, through Maricopa, across two-lane AZ 238 to Gila Bend, then back up AZ 85 to I-10, over to the Loop 303 and around the west side of the Valley to the north end. It was a great drive, though it wasn't till the end that our passenger noted we'd had so much fun just open road cruising, we hadn't given her the thrills of powering through corners on the surface streets. True, although we had done that plenty during

(cont'd)



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the rest of the week. Out of time, we vowed to follow up on this later.

This powerful Challenger does all that it does with decent fuel mileage, too—rated 24 MPG highway—thanks to cylinder deactivation (electronic injection fuel saver mode), which lets the big V8 cruise along on four cylinders when you won't even notice—and with the other four still immediately on tap.

WHERE IT'S ALL HEADED

There's no question Dodge is at the top of their game with these cars. So why can't everybody do this? and why would these guys ever stop?

We had a magnificent week with the Challenger Shakedown. Yet we know it marks the end of the line or at least of the era. It has been noted many times that Dodge has not made fundamental changes to their core models in some time—and that's the core reason they're so perfect. Besides the fact that they do everything so well, their reliability ratings have shot right up to the top, attributable to the fact that they do what many industries have sought to do for decades—they perform continuous improvement. Always fine tuning.

It all makes for sort of a sad celebration. While the core Stellantis brands—Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram Trucks—have been building these fundamentally flawless vehicles, a rebirth or replacement is also in the cards, largely through outside requirements. They've made significant strides in electrification, with a number of key models notably redeveloped as highly successful plug-in hybrids. Surely they can do something else based on this track record in progress—as they turn their attention to developing full battery-EVs.

So far, we've seen a solid, gorgeous and futuristic show truck in the Ram REV BEV battery-electric pickup, with Ram's treasured styling cues and functional roots still intact, as displayed at the recent Chicago Auto Show. And we've seen an equally solid, gorgeous and futuristic Charger EV concept, also with style and roots intact (see sidebar at right). It seems they've been saving up some major advances for when this big EV lane change would fall due.

When the production version of the Ram REV BEV was announced a day or two later, it bore a more familiar look overall, though still easily distinguished, nicely juiced up with modern EV cues in its lighting and other style points.

What we've been wondering (industrywide, really) is this: are seasoned powertrain engineers branching out and relearning their fundamental craft, all modified for new directions and technologies? Or are they headed out to pasture? Or is it (most likely) a combination of the two, as the process does take time, and there's always turnover and new blood in any such endeavor. Here, it's the culture that matters, and that has been very strong with Stellantis.

LIMITED PRODUCTION

As for our 2023 Dodge Challenger R/T Scat Pack Shakedown "Last Call", only 1,000 units are planned for production—500 non-Widebody in Destroyer Grey and 500 Widebody in Pitch Black (like our sample driven here)—all of which are allocated to specific dealerships. Want one? Better jump on it fast. ■



ONE MORE "LAST CALL": CHALLENGER SRT DEMON 170

Dodge unveiled the seventh and final "Last Call" special-edition model at Las Vegas Motor Speedway in March. The world's fastest, quickest and most powerful muscle car ever produced, the 2023 Dodge Challenger SRT Demon 170 pulls the highest acceleration of any production car at 2.004 g's and hits 60 mph in 1.66 seconds. With 1,025 hp and 945 lb-ft of torque on E85 fuel, the SRT Demon 170 did the quarter-mile in an NHRA-certified 8.91 seconds at 151.17 mph. Production is limited to 3,300 (3,000 US, 300 Canada), or less depending upon capacity and component availability. MSRP is \$96,666. All customer sold orders for Challenger SRT Demon and notarized customer acknowledgment letter must be received before May 15, 2023. Customer orders certified sold at MSRP (without markup) will receive priority scheduling. See dealer allocations at DodgeGarage.com. ■



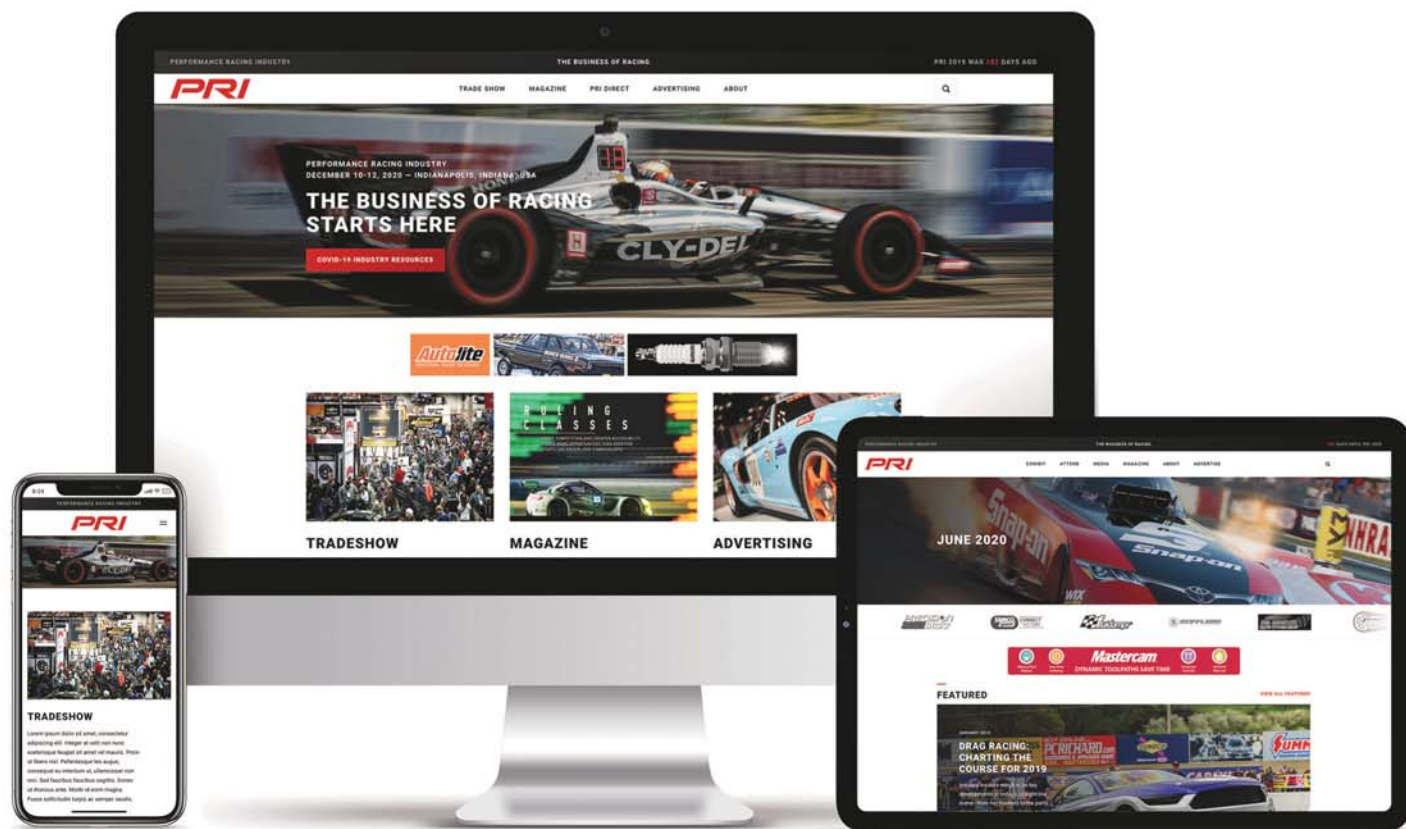
WHAT'S NEXT? CHARGER DAYTONA SRT EV CONCEPT

The first Dodge electric muscle car concept—making its way through the auto show circuit—bears the Charger name, a natural for an EV, while returning the Charger badge to its two-door roots. Three features make up the core of the Charger Daytona SRT EV Concept: an aerodynamic front R-Wing for efficient aerodynamics while retaining the Dodge profile; a Fratzonic Chambered Exhaust system (an industry first for an EV), for a performance sound evoking the SRT Hellcat; and an eRupt electro-mechanical multi-speed transmission for a familiar Dodge performance shifting experience. The car is powered by a new 800V Banshee propulsion system. "Dodge isn't going to shy away as we develop the next generation of muscle car—one that just happens to be fully electric," says Stellantis Dodge brand CEO Tim Kuniskis. "We're demonstrating how old school hot-rodding will thrive in an electrified muscle car future." ■



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Refocusing its powers

Atlis Motor Vehicles has noted for some time that, as intriguing as their battery electric pickup truck prototype is, it has been perhaps most useful as a platform for a number of the company's breakthrough features overall. Key among those has been development of their advanced high-capacity fast-charging battery technology, not only for their own plans, but for the wider world.

Rebranded as Nxu, Inc. (pronounced 'new'), the company will focus on building energy solutions that enable a faster transition to an electric future.

The company's original charter and bylaws were set up when Atlis Motor Vehicles was a smaller, privately held company. The rebranding is part of a proposed corporate reorganization to a holding company structure, pending stockholder approval, whereby Atlis will

become an operating subsidiary of Nxu. As we go to press, a Special Meeting to vote on the reorganization and equity compensation plan is scheduled for the morning of May 9.

The company will be governed by the new charter and corporate bylaws of Nxu.

A holding company structure allows greater flexibility in managing and controlling subsidiary companies and can have a board of directors and officers who oversee the operations of the subsidiaries in line with the holding company's overall strategy and objectives. This structure can also make it easier to acquire or sell subsidiary companies.

We visited Nxu headquarters in Mesa in late April, where a team of very talented and busy employees is now approaching 200 people. Nxu is also looking into a second or a new single location in the region for greatly enlarged, high-powered development and fabrication expansion.

Modular Qcell with Brand Nxu™ technology—harnessing increased energy density, packaging efficiency, NMC chemistry and

advanced thermodynamics—is engineered to make 15-minute charge times possible for the most demanding equipment and vehicle applications. All this is expandable to much wider electrification challenges.

The stated goal is to develop resilient, reliable, readily available energy-as-a-service, with off-grid storage, for commercial and residential storage solutions designed to set the market free from the constraints of today's energy infrastructure.

Company founder and CEO Mark Hanchett gives us an interesting perspective, reminding us that while we all now take it for granted that our computer systems and mobile devices generally offer unlimited data, on tap at all times and in all places, it was just a few years ago that we all had to carefully choose our plans and watch our usage, to avoid exceeding data caps and incurring notable additional charges. He and company president Annie Pratt see a parallel opportunity and future for the overall electricity grid.

We'll be following with great interest. ■



Radical, responsive and ready to rock

by Joe Sage

The new 2023 Ford F-150 Raptor R delivers something Raptor fans have clamored for, for years—this mega-popular dune-running off-road supertruck is now available with a V8.

Fitting a V8 under the hood of a Ford F-Series is easy—you see it every day. But Ford Performance had reasons for building the original Raptor with a high output EcoBoost V6 for its prime directive. Anyone in Arizona knows it's some distance to the best-of-the-best dunes. Any dune-runner seeks the thrills of catching some air. And a day in the middle of nowhere can tend to drain a tank. All these factors were addressed by a lighter-weight V6.

Nonetheless, Raptor became immediately and

predictably popular as a top dog daily driver, and as a top dog, a V8 could only make it moreso.

Meet the F-150 Raptor R, revealed last summer, with production starting late last year. The entire truck required extensive reengineering, and it got it. The fastest and most powerful F-150 ever bears a new supercharged 5.2-liter V8 cranking out 700 hp and 640 lb-ft of torque—compared to 450 hp and 510 lb-ft in the twin-turbo 3.5L high output EcoBoost V6 Raptor. Upgrades also include electronically controlled long-travel FOX Live Valve shocks, specially tuned for the truck's added power, and 37-inch tires as standard, for best-in-class ground clearance. Style points include a beefy power dome on the hood, R-spe-

cific graphics, and a black premium interior bearing genuine carbon fiber streaked with signature Ford Performance Code Orange accents.

Derived from the Mustang Shelby GT500, the V8 is recalibrated and optimized for off-road performance, with increased low-end and mid-range torque; exhaust manifolds upgraded to cast stainless steel; oil cooler, filter and a deeper oil pan all model-specific; and air intake volume increased 66 percent via a wider intake and higher-flow filter. A new front axle has a higher-strength carrier cast-

ing and aluminum-ribbed structural cover to manage added torque, and the truck has its own large-diameter aluminum driveshaft. The transmission and torque converter are also upgraded, as is the exhaust—a dual system with true pass-through muffler and active valve system, with modes for Normal, Sport, Quiet and Baja. Five-link rear suspension has extra-long trailing arms to better maintain axle position on rough terrain, a Panhard rod and 24-inch coil springs, all optimized for stability in desert terrain at high speeds. Wheel travel is 13 inches in front, 14.1 in the rear.

All that, and the Raptor R is still nimble while jumping the dunes, about the only thing we didn't have an opportunity to try during our week.

When the truck was delivered to our offices, all

we were going to do was move it to a different parking spot, but one thing led to another, and we were soon in the high country, climbing at speed on four-lane highways, continuing on two-lanes through curves, hills and canyons, then heading into our first quick session in the dirt.

Once started, it's definitely hard to stop. Enjoyment of this truck hits you on every level.

Raptor R is powerful beast, clearly. It's highly capable, suited to its specialized duties, while also providing an edge in any routine use. It's a tall drink of water, set atop its 37-inchers (which first appeared on the V6 Raptor 37 Performance Package, which we drove a year ago, a factory adaptation that may sound like a straightforward wheel swap, but involved reengineering the frame and bed to the point that it has its own assembly line.

That build foreshadowed much of the Raptor R, as had our time spent with it, which echoed as we again did lots of Valley freeway time (both were

(cont'd)



PICKUP TRUCK OF THE YEAR: Ford F-150 Raptor R just won 2023 Pickup Truck of the Year at NWAPA (Northwest Automotive Press Association) "Mudfest," the NW Outdoor Activity Vehicle of the Year Awards (also in this issue). Our sample is in Carbonized Gray Metallic.

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Dearborn Truck Plant, Michigan
ENGINE BUILD	Dearborn, Michigan
CAB / BED / WB	SuperCrew / 5.5-ft / 145-in
BUILD	high-strength aluminum frame, aluminum cab and bed
ENGINE	high-output 5.2L (315 cu.in.) supercharged, intercooled 90° OHC V8, cast alum block and head w plasma transfer wire arc cyl liners, DOHC 24v, port fuel inj w twin high-flow fuel pumps, twin indep var camshaft timing, forged alum pistons
BORE X STROKE	3.70 in x 3.66 in
ALTERNATOR	standard single 240A
IGNITION SYS	distributorless coil-on-plug
ENGINE CONTROL	Ford powertrain module
OIL	11.5 qt 5W50 full synthetic w filter
COOLANT	12.0L engine + 1.3L supercharger
HP/TORQUE	700 hp / 640 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.5:1
TRANSMISSION	10-spd automatic, warm-up unit w thermostatic fin cooler
DRIVETRAIN	2-spd torque on-demand 4x4 w mech lock, electr rear diff w 4.10 axles
SUSPENSION	F: Indep dbl-wishbone w coil-over shock & cast alum lower control arm, high-output gas-press, electr contr contin variable compression damping FOX Racing Shox, 3.1-in damper, 1.0-in rod dia on Raptor R; R: five-link coil w Panhard rod, high-output gas-press, electr contr contin var compression damping FOX Racing Shox, 3.1-in damper, 0.875-in rod dia;
SUSP TRAV	w 37-in tires: F: 13.0-in; R: 14.1-in
STEERING	elec pwr-asst
BRAKES	power antilock vented disc, elect control brake boost, Nitro Tough iron: F: 350x34mm, 2x 51mm sliding caliper; R: 336x20mm, 1x 54mm sliding eiPB
WHEELS	17x8.5-in forged alum beadlock-capabl, Matte Black 10 painted w Magnetic painted ring, (Code Orange ring avail)
TIRES	L37x12.50R17LT BFGoodrich All-Terrain T/A K02 (full-size matching spare)
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	232.6 / 145.4 in
WIDTH	(w / w/o mirrors) 96.0 / 87.0 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	13.1 in
OPEN TAILGATE TO GROUND	37.8 in
APPRCH / DEPART / BRKVER	33.1 / 24.9 / 24.4°
TURNING CIRCLE	w 37-in tires: 50.0 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	40.8 / 40.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	43.9 / 43.6 in
BED LENGTH AT FLOOR	67.1 in
PAYLOAD	1400 lb
TOW CAPACITY	8700 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.91 prem unl / 36 gal
MPG	TBD

BASE PRICE (Raptor V6)\$76,775

EQUIPMENT GROUP 802Aincl

RAPTOR R EQUIPMENT GROUP:
5.2L Supercharged V8, 17-in forged aluminum beadlock-capable wheels, Raptor R grille with "R" badge, Raptor R hood vent with "R" badge, Code Orange tow hooks, Raptor R badge on tailgate appliqué, Raptor R exterior graphics, black exterior accents, black alcantara suede and leather Recaro® seats, carbon fiber interior appliqué, Code Orange stitching on doors and instrument panel, Code Orange Raptor R interior badging\$30,575

PARTITIONED LOCKABLE STORAGEincl

7450-LB GVWR PKGincl

BEDLINER: ToughBed spray-in ACOYincl

TOWING: Class IV hitchincl

DESTINATION CHARGE1895

TOTAL\$109,245

(Per information available to date.)



with us for NASCAR race weekend commutes), similarly irresistible country highway runs, and more than an average amount of time off-pavement, in multiple sessions each.

And as with any best-of-the-best wheels, you just can't wait to get back in and go some more.

The interior is purpose-built, understated and luxurious, all in one—exemplified by everything from black alcantara suede and leather Recaro seats to Raptor's trademark red leather marker at top dead center of the steering wheel (stylish as well as useful in challenging maneuvers).

As on any F-Series, tech features abound, augmented by a thorough set of camera views (and the drive modes to take you where they're handy).

As with the 37-inch V6 Raptor, the Raptor R is 6.7 inches wider than a base F-150, filling the lane in town or on the freeway, yet always tracking true. And it's surprisingly maneuverable—we had to shake our heads at its stated 50-foot turning circle, as we easily handled tight spots in town.

On our off-highway trails, the truck proved so capable, we didn't even do the normal first step—putting it in four-wheel drive. We had it in 4Auto from the get-go, forgoing hand-selecting 2HI on the road or 4HI in the dirt. And in our extensive trials, including climbs, crawls and descents, we also never needed 4LO—as hard as we pushed it,

2023 FORD F-150 LINEUP

	RWD	4X4
XL	\$34,445	39,600
XLT	42,800	44,550
Lariat	57,480	61,270
King Ranch	63,005	66,805
Platinum	64,695	68,490
Limited	---	84,910
Tremor	---	\$ 60,970
Raptor	---	76,775
Raptor R	---	▼ 107,350
EV (Dual eMotor)	Standard Range	Extended Range
Lightning PRO	\$55,974	---
Lightning XLT	63,474	80,974
Lightning Lariat	74,474	85,974
Lightning Platinum	---	96,874

there's still plenty more headroom. Equally welcome was the Raptor R's mastery of the narrowest, winding-est, cliff-hangingest dirt and gravel trails at speed. It is a dune-runner at its core, after all, but without the elbow room of a dune field, its accuracy and control are impressive.

When we're driving someone else's \$109,000 truck, we park it well away from the crowd (as we pretty much do with everything). Nonetheless, many curious enthusiasts came out of their way to see it at the far corner of the Phoenix Raceway lot, and we had many thumbs-ups on the streets and freeways. Whether knowledgeable fans full of anticipation for this truck, or those who just recognized it as extra cool, the Raptor R proved to be a real crowd-pleaser.

When you occupy the throne—as Ford F-Series has for decades—you're bound to keep upping your game. Humble roots of the 4x4 as a practical tool have in turn spawned the FX4, Raptor, Tremor, Raptor 37 Package and so on—each an expansion and tweak to the F-Series lineup, in several cases now also applied to their other trucks and SUVs, though never at the expense of the rest of the ever wider lineup. One thing for certain—Ford has been responsive to its buyers hopes and dreams.

We would likely upgrade its audio, which is nowhere near as intense as the truck itself (although this was a preproduction unit, while the whole industry is still battling computer chip supply constraints, so it may not have been final.)

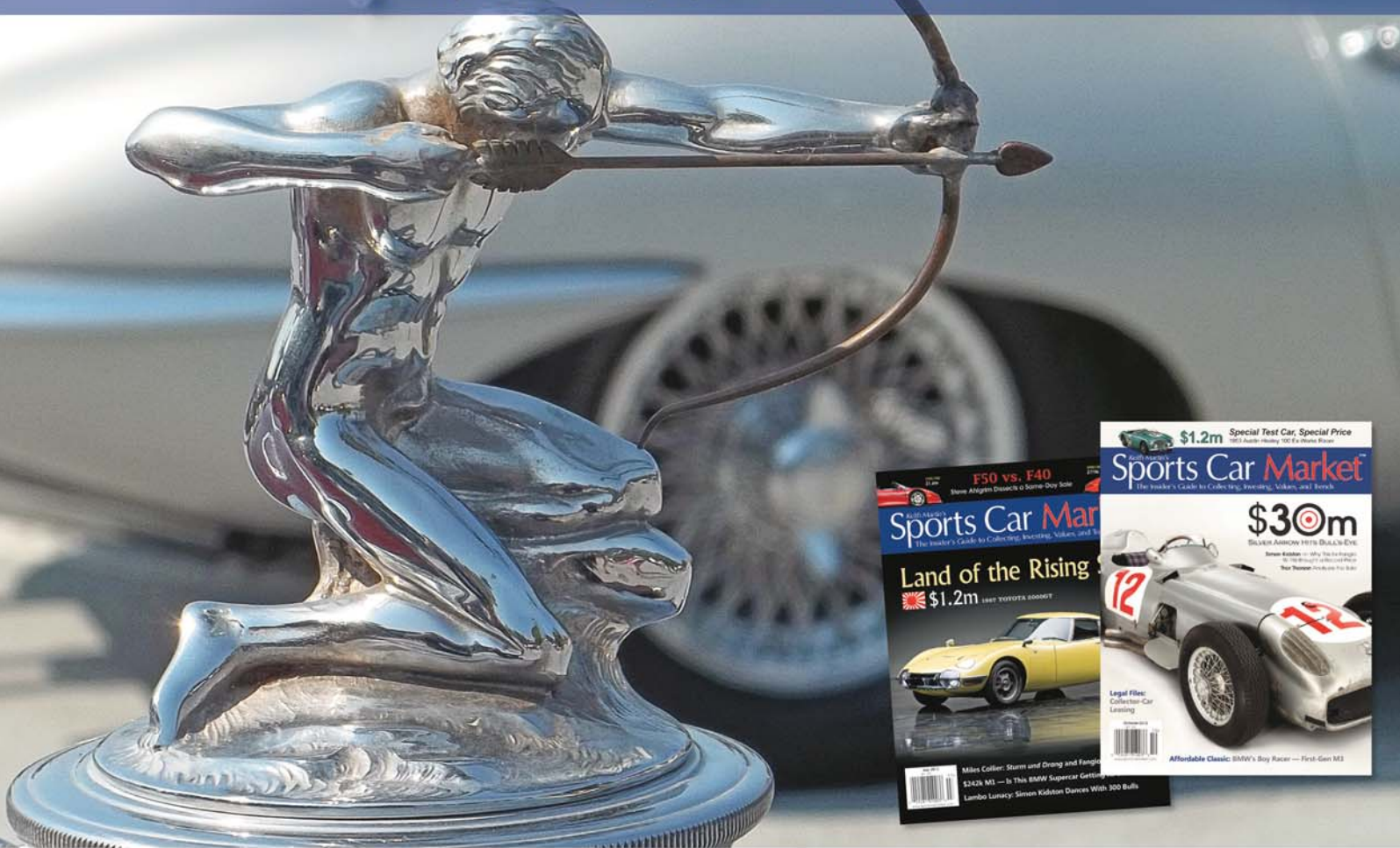
If there's one thing anybody might change, but everybody knows you can't do much about if you want everything this truck is and does, it's the fuel mileage. We make no attempt to hypermile, certainly not in a vehicle like this, but couldn't miss the readout, staying right around 9.5 MPG through all our highly mixed usage. So yes, it's thirsty, but that's something you just happily live with.

Raptor R is a top dollar unit to purchase and to fuel, but this is an absolutely top notch truck in all circumstances and all regards. Handsome, too. All you need is the price of entry and care and feeding. If you get your hands on one, it's a keeper. ■



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SPECIAL EVENT : MECUM AUCTION GLENDALE 2023 : RESULTS



**Mecum Auction
 Mecum Auction Glendale 2023
 Tuesday March 28 through Saturday April 1 2023**

State Farm Stadium, 1 Cardinals Drive, Glendale AZ 85305

The **MECUM AUCTION** Glendale 2023 classic and collector car event, held March 28-April 1 at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, reached \$56 million in total overall sales as 1,266 lots hammered sold. With a total 1,667 lots offered throughout the five-day auction, a sell-through rate of 76 percent was achieved, with individual sales led by a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing (Lot S132) that brought \$1.815 million.

A diverse selection of available classic and collector cars in Glendale resulted in a similarly varied top 10 sellers list, with a wide selection of both American-built beauties and coveted imports from across the pond making the cut. The auction-leading Gullwing, dressed in rarely seen Mittelgrün green, had undergone a meticulous restoration by the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum in the late 2000s, after which it was displayed periodically from 2015-2020, a combination of pedigree and provenance that made it an especially desirable classic. A 2018 Porsche 911 GT2 RS (Lot S114.1) grabbed seat No. 2, bringing \$605,000, and a 2022 Mercedes-Benz AMG G63 4X4 Squared (Lot S158) grabbed seat No. 3 with a sale price of \$489,500.

While everything from prewar antiques to nearly new supercars and more were on scene, six of the top 10 seller spots were claimed by an exceptional cross-sampling of American muscle and sports cars, including a 1963 Chevrolet Corvette Z06 Split Window Coupe (Lot F135) that sold for \$390,500, a 2005 Ford GT (Lot S98.1) at \$374,000, a pair of Yenkos that each exceeded \$350,000—a 1969 Chevrolet Yenko Camaro (Lot S142) and

a 1968 Chevrolet Yenko Camaro RS/SS (Lot F168)—and two Corvettes that spanned the decades, a 1959 and a 2023 Z06 70th Anniversary Convertible, each above \$300,000.

Collections were another highlight of the Glendale auction lineup, and the headlining Mile High Collection was exceptionally well received with all 19 of its vehicles selling, for an overall total of \$1.78 million.

The Premier Corvette Pace Car Collection also saw a warm reception from bidders with 12 of its vehicle offerings selling for more than \$1 million in total.

The complete top 10 collector vehicle sales at Mecum Glendale 2023 include:

1955 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing.....Lot S132	\$1,815,000
2018 Porsche 911 GT2 RS.....Lot S114.1	\$605,000
2022 Mercedes-Benz AMG G63 4x4 Squared.....Lot S158	\$489,500
1963 Chevrolet Corvette Z06 Split Window Coupe.....Lot F135	\$390,500
2005 Ford GT.....Lot S98.1	\$374,000
1969 Chevrolet Yenko Camaro.....Lot S142	\$363,000
1968 Chevrolet Yenko Camaro RS/SS.....Lot F168	\$357,500
1959 Chevrolet Corvette Convertible.....Lot S215.1	\$308,000
2023 Chevrolet Corvette Z06 70th Anniversary Convertible.....Lot S87	\$302,500
2020 McLaren 720S Spider.....Lot S144	\$302,500

Mecum's busy schedule saw them head to Houston next, in mid-April, to be followed by nine more live auction events this year, including Indy and Tulsa in May and June, Monterey in August and Las Vegas in November, along with others across the East, South, Midwest and Texas. For more details on upcoming auctions, or to consign a vehicle or register as a bidder, visit online or call Mecum headquarters in Walworth, Wisconsin at 262-275-5050.

▼ www.mecum.com ■



Named and styled like the compacts, compares well with Escalade *by Joe Sage*

Cadillac sedans come in two sizes, utilities in four. Escalade has been established for 25 years as the biggest, while others have evolved, now unified as XT4, XT5 and XT6. (All have platform cousins across the GM family.)

XT6 holds a strong place in this lineup. Smaller crossovers are hot sellers in the general market, but for a Cadillac buyer who has set aside Escalade as being too big, XT6 is the biggest of the rest, still suiting the brand's personality well.

Of three trim levels, one has a 235-hp turbo-four, the other two a 310-hp V6, all offer enhanced

AWD, with the lower two also available as front-drivers. Top trim Sport, our sample, has the V6 and AWD-only. Those red Brembo performance brakes up front are a key differentiator for Sport, which also has real-time damping suspension, plus Sport Control and left-right twin-clutch AWD. Inside, its proud owner enjoy semi-aniline leather.

The XT6 with V6 has almost as potent a power-to-weight ratio as Escalade, though torque is much higher in the Escalade, trailering about double.

We were content from the moment we entered the XT6. Its presentation suggested everything

would work well, and it did (currently far less common than it should be). A \$2350 technology package on ours includes a digital rearview mirror camera, a feature we dislike and turn off, as it requires constant refocusing between distance and close.

XT6 offers four drive modes: Tour, AWD, Sport and Off-Road. We weren't likely to go off-road in someone else's luxury utility with 20-inch wheels, and Tour turns it into a front-driver, leaving AWD or Sport, as we'd always choose the distribution and grip of all-wheel. Any are fed through a conventional nine-speed automatic.

The powertrain quickly struck us as potent, the handling precise, cornering smooth and, if wanted, aggressive, with very effective brakes to back it all up—though front-drive-biased torque steer would

reveal itself in certain occasional conditions. Its V6 puts out acoustics almost as satisfying as a V8.

On a run up I-17, the automatic transmission became surprisingly active through Black Canyon to Sunset Point—a curvy two-lane, but generally a steady pace and steady climb. Paddle shift time.

Interstate traffic was fast and very steady at our turnaround to head back south, net result accelerating from dead standstill to full highway speed near-instantly. Here, power was still quite good, arguably all you need, but not a speck more.

Fuel economy as delivered sat at 19.7 mpg. In town use, it dropped into the 17s and stayed there up I-17. Then, after our descent, it had moved back up into the 19s. This seems pretty solid for a three-row luxury SUV, though we recently hit the 30s for a week in a similar-size-and-weight hybrid.

One other note: it was only in the 70s in early spring when we had this, yet the cabin was quite

stuffy and warm. Turning the fan up manually improved it, but we are curious whether this gets moreso in summer heat, or perhaps works harder.

GM is applying much focus to its electric future, but they are clearly still doing internal combustion powertrains right, and we're pleased to have this handsome, capable model still fresh in the market.

XT6 was new in 2019, as a 2020, basically taking the spot of the former wagon-like SRX after a few years' absence. XT6 styling, particularly from the rear, does not bear as distinctive a Cadillac look as XT4 and XT5, and its arrival may have been somewhat lost in these unusual pandemic years.

SRX had become Cadillac's biggest seller, at around 60,000 units a year in the US, almost hitting 70,000 in 2015. XT6 is now selling only about 20,000 in the US, though almost another 40,000 in China. That demand should keep it in our market long enough to get better noticed. Give it a look. ■

Our sample's Radiant Red Tintcoat is one of three new colors for XT6 this year. Cadillac's smallest crossover, the subcompact XT4, has already revealed a restyled face for model year 2024. Expect the same on XT5 and XT6 soon, too.



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY.....	Spring Hill, Tennessee
ENGINE/TRANS BUILD.....	US / US
PARTS CONTENT.....	US/Can 39% / Mex 24%
ROWS / SEATS.....	three / six
ENGINE.....	3.6L V6 DOHC 24v, contin VVT w dir inj, cast alum block w iron bore liners, cast alum heads
HP/TORQUE.....	310 hp / 271 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO.....	na
TRANSMISSION.....	9-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN.....	AWD
SUSPENSION.....	F: MacPherson strut w direct-acting stblzr bar, contin damping control (on Sport trim); R: five-link indep, coils w stblzr bar, contin damping control (on Sport trim)
STEERING.....	var-asst rack & pinion w rack-mounted belt-driven elec assist
BRAKES.....	F: 12.6x1.9; R: 12.4x0.9
WHEELS.....	20-in alum alloy
TIRES.....	P235/55R20
LENGTH / WHEELBASE.....	198.5 / 112.7 in
GROUND CLEARANCE.....	6.65 in
TURNING CIRCLE.....	38.7 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3).....	(snrf) 39.8 / 39.1 / 37.2 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3).....	41.2 / 39.1 / 29.5 in
CARGO CAPACITY.....	12.6 / 43.1 / 78.7 cu.ft
WEIGHT.....	4690 lb
TOW CAPACITY.....	(V6) 4000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY.....	premium rec / 22 gal
MPG.....	18/25/21 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE.....	\$60,095
RADIANT RED TINTCOAT.....	1225
PLATINUM PKG: semi-aniline leather seating w chevron-perforated inserts all rows, French stitched leather-wrap horn pad cover, Modena leather-wrap wheel, leather-wrap instrument panel, console and door trim, premium floor mats front/rear.....	3800
SUPER CRUISE™ (subscrip req'd).....	2500
TECHNOLOGY PKG: HD surround vision and recorder, 8-in color gauge cluster w driver personalization, rear camera mirror w washer, heads-up display, rear pedestrian alert, auto park assist w braking.....	2350
NIGHT VISION.....	2000
DRIVER ASSIST PKG: auto seatbelt tighten, reverse auto braking, enhanced auto emergency braking, adaptive cruise.....	1300
SIX-PASSENGER SEATING.....	800
PREMIUM HEADLAMP SYSTEM.....	700
CARGO SECURITY SHADE.....	150
DESTINATION CHARGE.....	1395

TOTAL..... **\$76,315**

2023 CADILLAC XT6 LINEUP

	FWD	AWD
Luxury.....	4-cyl \$48,595	\$50,595
Premium Luxury.....	V6 \$54,795	\$56,795
Sport.....	V6	▼ 60,095

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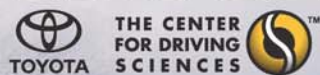
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IN MEMORIAM : CRAIG BREEDLOVE 1937-2023

RIP, Craig Breedlove

American five-time World Record setter Norman Craig Breedlove Sr, 86, the first person to surpass speed marks faster than 400, 500 and 600 miles per hour, died peacefully in his sleep surrounded by family Tuesday, April 4, 2023 in Rio Vista, California.

"He was an American treasure," said wife Yadira Breedlove. "Our hearts are heavy letting him go, but we also acknowledge Craig's courage and bravery seeking motorsports honors for the United States of America. For decades, his deeds touched many, many people around the world."

Son Norman credits his father with demonstrating how to shepherd dreams forward. "What I admired most about dad was his tenaciousness," he said. "He simply would not accept rejection and repeatedly went back to people and companies until he got a 'yes'." Equally important was his father's exceptionally high quality of workmanship. "He built things as if they were pieces of art," recalled Breedlove junior. "He taught me to always 'give it my best,' reminding me that 'if you are going to build it, build it to last'."

Breedlove's humble hunt for speed began in his teens, spending four years rebuilding a junked three-window '34 Ford Coupe. In 1955, at age 18 and without any fanfare, he collected his first time slip on the Bonneville Salt Flats at 152.80 mph in Class Coupe and Sedan.

Inspired deeply by the line from JFK's 1961 Inauguration Speech "Ask what you can do for your country," Breedlove put the words into jet-powered action reclaiming world honors for the USA on August 5, 1963, with a 407 mph mark. Dethroning Britain's John Cobb, it was the first time an American's name was on top since 1928, when Ray Keech posted a 207.552 mph record driving his *White Triplex*. "It was the most patriotic thing I could think of," Breedlove often recalled. "I wanted a name every American could be proud of, and *Spirit of America* seemed like a natural."

This ushered in years of record-setting swaps with brothers Art Arfons, Tom Green and Walt Arfons driving their *Green Monster* jet cars. "Their rivalry made each other," offered Tim Arfons, son of Breedlove's long-time rival Art Arfons. "Without each other, I think they might have ended up a historical footnote instead of splashing the front pages of newspapers worldwide."

Breedlove's astonishing accomplishments inspired The Beach Boys to include the song "Spirit of America" as a tribute to him on their 1963 *Little Deuce Coupe* album. All Breedlove's jet-powered cars carried the *Spirit of America* name through his 60-year racing career.

Blue Flame rocket car driver Gary Gabelich ended Breedlove's hold on the absolute World Record when he clocked a 622 mph record in 1970, but it did nothing to weaken their bond. In his 1971 book, *Spirit of America, Winning the World's Land Speed Record*, Breedlove inscribed: "To Gary, With my admiration and sincere gratitude for your friendship and help. Always."

Breedlove has been voted into Motorsports Hall of Fame of America (1993), Dry Lakes Racing Hall of Fame (1995), International Motorsports Hall of Fame (2000) and Automotive Hall of Fame (2009). He earned life membership in the Bonneville 200 MPH Club in 1963. ■

—"LandSpeed" Louise Ann Noeth



Spirit of America III - Sonic Arrow 1997



Spirit of America II - Sonic I 1965



Spirit of America I 1963

Feel like royalty

Historic Copper Queen Hotel 10 miles from Mexico

By Tyson Hugie



The mining boomtowns of rural Arizona gave rise to some of our state's richest culture. Our November-December issue showcased a recent trip to Oatman in the northwest part of the state. Prospectors in the 1860s discovered gold there, and even though the mining industry has since phased out, the town lives on as a tourism destination.

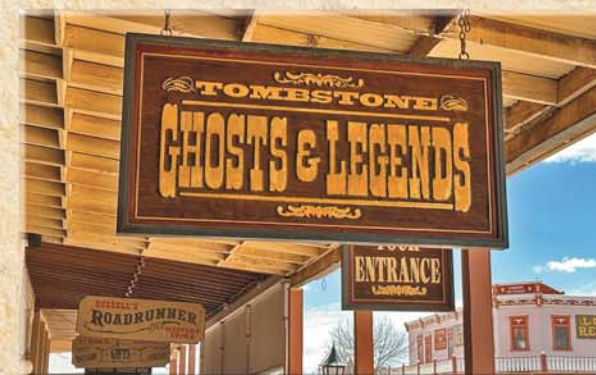
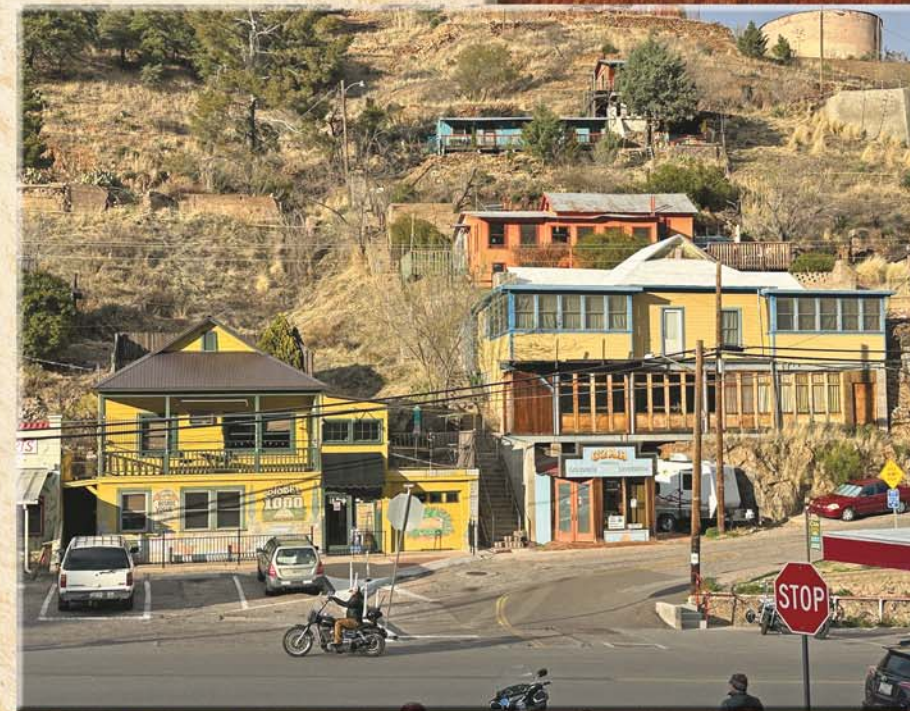
This time, we look at a parallel town at the opposite end of the state: Bisbee is located just ten miles north of the Mexican border in the Mule Mountains of southeastern Arizona. The area was initially settled in 1880 as a home base for the gold, silver, and copper extraction activities going on nearby.

Over 120 years later, Bisbee is still alive and well, even though mining operations have scaled back. There are only 5,000 residents who call Bisbee home now, but the town plays host to many annual events that bring thousands more to visit.

Ten years ago, I met a like-minded road-tripper named Jason from southern New Mexico and we took our first "joint" (coordinated) road trip involving a lunch meet-up in Bisbee. In the ensuing years, we've taken over 20 other trips together—some involving multi-day drives to far-away places like the Arctic Circle in Alaska and Death Valley in California. It seemed only fitting that we would commemorate our ten years of travels by returning to the place where it all started, and with that, Bisbee made its way onto our travel calendars in mid-March.

I made the roughly three-and-a-half-hour trek from Phoenix in a tried and trusty 1994 Acura Legend (the same vehicle, incidentally, that I drove to Bisbee in 2013). My route took me through Tombstone where I happened to catch the tail end of a parade before grabbing a taco salad at the Crystal Palace Saloon. By the time I arrived in Bis-

(cont'd)





have on-site parking, and the streets were packed when we had arrived in town, so we had been forced to stash our cars in a \$30-per-night lot about a half mile up the road. While easy to use via web-based payments, the overnight permit expired at 6:00 in the morning, which made for a very early wake-up call.

That wake-up call turned out to be a blessing in disguise: When we walked up to get the cars at 5:45 am, we noticed that the city was pin-drop quiet and there was virtually no activity going on. This opened the door for us to do some exploration on our own, including staging some early-light photos with my Acura and Jason's 2004 Mazda6 parked right in the middle of Tombstone Canyon Road. That's not something you can do at rush hour!

Just two miles down the road is the Bisbee Breakfast Club (BBC) in Lowell, and Jason and I decided to hit that up for a bite before parting ways. Lowell is not much more than just a single street lined with vintage cars and old buildings, but it felt like something out of a mid-20th century movie set. I ordered a California omelet, which hit the spot. One of the highlights of the trip was discovering that a local artist had made an image from our 2013 Bisbee trip (pulled from my travel blog) into an abstract painting, which was hanging on the wall above the BBC counter. The staff members got a kick out of it when we showed them the original photo.

Whether for a copper mine tour, for seeking paranormal activity at a historic landmark hotel—yes, it has long been reported that the Copper Queen Hotel is haunted—or for just enjoying a trip back in time, Bisbee is a prime spot and only a 200-mile jaunt from the Phoenix area. Maybe we'll make another trip in the future to participate in that 1,000-stair climb. I need to work off the calories from that omelet, anyway. ■



Dream machine BY JOE SAGE

One very long yet very quick quarter-century ago, there were three Japanese rice rockets: Type R, Evo and STI—factory tuner rally cars from Honda, Mitsubishi and Subaru, the latter two all-wheel-drivers and the Honda a front-driver. Each has its own detailed history, with international variables, gaps here and there and the other two departing production over the past decade. But, based on the gen-eleven Civic new for 2021, the latest Type R survives, entering in 2022 as new for 2023. We last had a 2020 Type R in early 2021, with more aggressive body styling—bigger vents and wing, bolder all around, a Storm Trooper look. The new 2023 Type R closes the gap between a halo vehicle with a dramatic cutting edge boy racer persona and a tamer one with wider appeal, dependent more on its specs than its spectacle. This may

matter more to the smaller edgier customer block, so it remains to be seen what the impacts of this evolution may be, if any. Being radical enough to please the extreme set, while mainstream enough to sell well enough to support the whole effort, may seem like conflicting goals, but making things work both ways is where the magic happens. Be glad the car is still being refined and produced.

The Honda Civic Type R has not only survived, but is doing very well indeed. It's the most powerful Honda production vehicle ever sold in the US, recently setting a new track record at Nürburgring that eclipses even the prior Type R's record at Suzuka Circuit (see sidebar).

Civic Type R is a huge part pure Japanese Domestic (though lefthand drive)—built at the Yorii Plant in Japan—and a key part all-American, with

its engine from Honda's Anna Engine Plant in Ohio.

At home beneath a vented aluminum hood is a 315-hp 2.0-liter four-cylinder turbo, an even more powerful version of Honda's award-winning K20C1 engine, fed exclusively through a 6-speed manual. Upgrades include a redesigned turbocharger, increased air intake flow rate and a new straight-through exhaust system with active exhaust valve for enhanced engine acoustics. The grille, radiator and fan have all been upsized, ensuring sustained, optimal cooling during extreme driving.

Body rigidity is increased, its wheelbase has grown 1.4 inches, and track has grown front and rear by up to an inch. Retuned suspension improves straight-line stability and steering feel, while two-piece front brake rotors reduce unsprung weight; brake boosting and cooling are also upgraded.

All this is wrapped in sheet metal arguably less extreme than before, in the name of aerodynamics

and downforce. The Type R's defining element, the new rear wing is fully effective—count on that—while a little more low-key, not even visible in the rear view mirror. And take heart in the unmistakable presence of those Type R tailpipes.

The interior is also extensively reworked, from ergonomics to features and finishes.

Driving performance is superior, shedding that bouncy skateboard feeling of earlier entries in this class, including itself—smooth as can be over seams and imperfections in pavement. You don't really notice that it's a front-driver, though we could still get a little chirp from the front tires in a routinely aggressive turn or shift—but that's all pleasure and no pain. The shifter and clutch are accurate, easy and well-spaced. The car remains extreme, but driving it is a dream.

There's new rev-matching in this powertrain, generally not our favorite thing—aimed mostly at drivers who aren't particularly experienced with shifting a manual. Better to master that, a skill you can bring to vehicles without it. We turned this off.

Cruising in town, you can stay in one gear much of the time, anyway—power curves are broad, with acceleration and deceleration right on tap and immediate torque up and down the range.

Drive modes include comfort, sport and R+, plus an Individual Mode allowing you to set the best of all of the above for engine, steering, suspension, even powertrain sound. Switching among them is via a simple toggle on the console.

Though appearance is dialed back, take heart in the fact that the cognoscenti still recognize the Type R—this car will draw out the boy racer set on the freeway. (Other Type Rs or STIs don't react, but a run of the mill Civic with pink wheels and decals may try to show you how much skill those added.)

Type R is fabulous as a daily driver, with very smooth shifts and great maneuverability. On the freeway, it's a hoot—dead accurate in every way.

We never found its fuel mileage readout, but its ratings are great for this powerhouse—and that's not what you buy it for, anyway. That's just yet another bonus. ■

The new Type R was voted Motor Authority BEST CAR TO BUY 2023.

Named one of Car and Driver's 10BEST CARS FOR 2023, the car also went on to win their Editor's Choice award for 2023 SPORT COMPACT CAR.



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY.....	Yorii-Machi, Saitama, Japan
ENGINE / TRANSMISSION.....	USA / Japan
ROWS / SEATS.....	two / four
ENGINE.....	2.0L turbocharged 4-cylinder, 16v DOHC VTEC, 23.3 boost
HP/TORQUE.....	315 hp / 310 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO.....	9.8:1
TRANSMISSION.....	6-spd manual: high-capacity w rev matching
DRIVETRAIN.....	FWD
DIFFERENTIAL.....	helical limited slip
SUSPENSION.....	adaptive damper system:
	F: dual-axis MacPherson strut, 29.0x5.0 tubular stblzr bar;
	R: multilink, 20.5 solid stblzr bar
STEERING.....	dual-pinion, var ratio elec power
BRAKES.....	F: 13.8x1.05 two-piece vented, Brembo four-piston alum calipers;
	R: 12.0x0.361 solid
WHEELS.....	19x9.5J matte black alloy
TIRES.....	265/30 / ZZR19 93Y Michelin Pilot Sport 4S high-performance summer
LENGTH / WHEELBASE.....	180.9 / 107.7 in
GROUND CLEARANCE.....	4.8 in
APPROACH / DEPART.....	10.9 / 15.1°
TURNING CIRCLE.....	39.9 ft
HEADROOM (F/R).....	39.3 / 37.1 in
LEGROOM (F/R).....	42.3 / 37.4 in
CARGO CAPACITY.....	24.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIB.....	3188 lb / 62/38%
FUEL / CAPACITY.....	reg (prem rec) / 12.4 gal
MPG.....	22/28/24 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE.....	\$42,895
PAINT: Championship White.....	395
DESTINATION CHARGE.....	1095
TOTAL.....	\$44,385

(Note: prices have increased; see chart.)

2023 CIVIC TYPE R LINEUP

Type R / 6MT ▼ \$43,295

NEW NÜRBURGRING RECORD: The all-new 2023 Honda Civic Type R has followed up its lap record at Suzuka Circuit in Japan with a new front-wheel-drive record on the 20.8-km Nürburgring Nordschleife in Germany—considered the most challenging road circuit ever devised—during testing and performance evaluation, with an official lap time of 7 minutes 44.881 seconds. Six years ago, the record was set by the previous-generation Civic Type R (FK8).

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**Barrett-Jackson
Barrett-Jackson Palm Beach 2023
Thursday-Saturday April 13-15 2023**

South Florida Fairgrounds, 9067 Southern Blvd, West Palm Beach FL 33441

BARRETT-JACKSON celebrated two decades of bringing their high-octane automotive lifestyle event to Palm Beach, Florida, during their annual auction held at the South Florida Fairgrounds, April 13-15, 2023, where 622 vehicles were sold at auction, all with No Reserve, for \$43.6 million. Additionally, Barrett-Jackson sold 263 pieces of authentic automobilia for more than \$745,000, bringing total auction sales to \$44.4 million, with a 100-percent sell-through rate and over 40 world record auction sales. Top auction sales were led by a 2020 Ford GT Heritage Edition (Lot #740), which sold for \$1,457,500.

The top 10 non-charity vehicles that sold at Palm Beach 2023 included:

1. 2020 Ford GT Heritage Edition	Lot #740	\$1,457,500
2. 2020 Ford GT	Lot #725	\$990,000
3. 2005 Ford GT	Lot #725.1	\$440,000
4. 2018 Porsche 911 GT2 RS	Lot #744	\$434,500
5. 1962 Chevrolet Corvette Custom Convertible	Lot #722	\$401,500
6. 2019 Porsche Speedster	Lot #745	\$396,000
7. 2018 Rolls-Royce Phantom	Lot #739	\$363,000
8. 2018 Porsche 911 GT2 RS	Lot #748.1	\$346,500
9. 2017 Ferrari 488 Spider	Lot #737	\$330,000
10. 1965 Ferrari 212 Barchetta Roadster Re-Creation	Lot #735	\$297,000

During the three-day event, Barrett-Jackson hosted US Congressman Brian Mast,

industry titans including Chip Foose and Rita and Shawn Shelby (grandson of Carroll Shelby), and actor Chuck Zito.

On Super Saturday, Barrett-Jackson raised \$1.3 million for charity with two vehicles; 2024 Chevrolet Corvette E-Ray 3LZ First Retail Production VIN 001 (Lot #3000) sold for \$1.1 million, with 100 percent of the hammer price benefiting DonorsChoose, with philanthropist Michelle Mauzy donating an additional \$50,000 for a total of \$1.15 million; and Lee Iacocca's 2009 Ford Mustang Iacocca 45th Anniversary Edition (Lot #3001)—one of only 45 built—sold for \$150,000 to benefit the Ellis Island Honors Society, with a painting of the car included that was created during the event. To date, Barrett-Jackson has helped raise over \$153 million for charity.

"For 20 years, we've called Palm Beach our second home, and during that time we've created wonderful memories and celebrated countless milestones with our collector car family," said Barrett-Jackson chairman and CEO Craig Jackson. "Like our Scottsdale event, this year's Palm Beach Auction demonstrated that the collector car hobby continues to be a vibrant marketplace where enthusiasts are snatching up the hottest vehicles."

"The diversity of the market and the passion that drives it are thriving," added Barrett-Jackson president Steve Davis. "Demand for everything from European supercars to ampicars was incredible. The crowd responded to our No Reserve docket, which was also filled with the finest Shelys, classics, SUVs and muscle cars. Even during uncertain times on Wall Street, interest in collector cars continues to be strong and is attracting many new people to the hobby."

Next up for Barrett-Jackson is the 2023 Las Vegas Auction, June 22-24; and during Palm Beach, they announced the dates for a new event, the New Orleans Auction, September 28-30, 2023. For information, tickets, to consign or register to bed, visit:

▼ www.barrett-jackson.com ■



Overlanding in a galaxy far, far away

BY SANDRA MUÑOZ DORÉE
PHOTOS BY WILLIAM DORÉE



That galaxy far, far away isn't that far at all. It is in Death Valley National Park, where, in 1977, a young George Lucas directed one of the most iconic science-fiction movies of all time, *Star Wars IV: A New Hope*. It's also where we spent five incredible days overlanding with our Off Grid Trailer, powered by our spec'd-out Ford F-150 pickup. Our goal was to find the picturesque locations where some of the movie's most iconic scenes were filmed. Stargazing the Milky Way with the naked eye was an absolute bonus.

The adventure began driving through a dry lakebed and entering the Old Spanish trail road that leads to Sperry Wash. It's here we found ourselves in a pickle of galactic proportions, stuck in a v-gap. Thanks to the kindness of fellow overlanders and our new Warn winch on the F-150, we pulled the truck and trailer out in a blink of an eye, and without damage.

After some hairy twists and turns, we made it to Dumont Dunes, where we set up camp for the night. We had driven 400 miles from our home to the campsite. Thank goodness, setting up our trailer is fast and easy. We were tucked inside for the night, before the gushing, howling winds picked up. In the morning, we packed up, with coffee in hand, ready to face Sperry Wash. It's a route that will test your off-road nerves with river crossings, rolls, and an endless rocky road leading to grand sand dunes. From there, it was

smooth sailing to the park's entrance.

We made a quick stop in Furnace Creek, where Park Rangers were extremely helpful and gave us loads of useful information. Stop in for a park map and a *Star Wars* film location guide. There is no wild camping inside the park. But that's okay. Our ranger was instrumental in helping us find a lovely campground.

Before overlanding purists clutch at their pearls and bracelets and shake their collective heads, saying "no, no, no, that's not overlanding," be aware of this: The campsites at the park are secluded with natural

(cont'd)





surroundings. This campsite is a first come, first served campground at an elevation of 1,800 feet. It's nestled in desert mountains with geological features and is very close to Ubehebe Crater. It's a perfect campsite for adventures in the northern part of the park. Each site has an immaculately clean and level fire grate and picnic table.

Another bonus is the cost for an overnight stay at a park-operated campsite is a very affordable \$14. A private campsite such as Panamint Springs charges \$33 per night, but showers are included with the site fee.

With route information in hand and programmed in our Garmin tablet, we unhitched our Off Grid Trailer and safely left it at the Texas Spring camp. At that point, we headed out to find the first filming site on our list, Artists Palette. It was the location for the R2D2 solo trek.

Our next site visit was to the Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes. The location of Tatooine Dunes, we walked among the grains where R2D2 and C3PO landed their escape pod after fleeing from Darth Vader. And last on our list was Desolation Canyon, where we took a small hike up the canyon to the scene of *A New Hope's* Tusken Raider Attack. There are other sites, but they came with length restrictions of 25 feet or less.

We arrived back at camp just in time for dinner. It was also the time the wind picked up. When using an outdoor mini kitchen, take care starting your gas stove on a win-

dy day. We managed to make it work, and a delicious Salisbury steak dinner with gravy and peas was the result. It was delicious as it was comforting, but it wasn't a night until we joined our fellow camp mates for a desert of ice cream sandwiches and adult beverages.

Once the winds calmed down; it was time to light a campfire and share our epic adventures with fellow campers. As the fire dimmed, we took in the entire scene. As we gazed in awe, looking starward, a certain theme song played in my head. Maybe it wasn't so long ago, in a galaxy far, far away ... ■





Candela C-8 CC center console hydrofoil

Center console e-hydrofoil

Center consoles are the most popular recreational vessels in the US for fishing, families and watersports, with about 50,000 sold annually, but they are also known for their appetite for fuel. Swedish tech firm **Candela** aims to electrify this segment with their C-8 CC, the world's first center console hydrofoiling boat, offering unprecedented electric speed, range and energy efficiency that is several times higher than traditional gasoline boats.

The electric Candela C-POD motor efficiently converts electricity stored in its batteries (by Swedish performance automaker Polestar) into thrust, combining with Candela's hydrofoils—underwater wings—for unmatched efficiency.

While 28/29-foot deep-vee boats often have a pair of 400-hp outboards, the C-8 CC's single 100-hp pod motor is enough to take off with eight people on board, at a cost of less than 10 dollars for a full battery charge. Once foil-borne at 16 knots, the vessel's C-POD direct-drive pod motor is near-silent, and the craft is stabilized by a flight control computer, which continually adjusts the hydrofoils to ensure a steady, bump-free ride. The motor requires no maintenance for 3,000 hours.

Soaring above chop and wake, the craft uses 80 percent less energy than conventional vee hulls, with a range of 65 miles at a cruising speed of 22 knots (25 mph), some three times longer than other electric boats on the market. For mooring, the

foils retract into the hull via a button on the touchscreen. With its hydrofoils retracted, the Candela C-8 CC can be easily trailered, beached or stored.

At anchor, Candela C-8 CC offers passengers an open bow with seating, a wet-bar, sofas for up to six passengers around a table, an enclosed head, sunbed, extended swimming platform with shower, 6-speaker in-hull audio system, and rod holders and depth sounder for anglers.



GoSun Elcat Inflatable solar electric catamaran

Anglers will find other advantages, too, including no wake, thus not disturbing other boaters or marine life, and the completely silent C-POD motor can be seamlessly adjusted down to 0.2 knots, ideal for sneaking up on the big catch.

Made from 100 percent carbon fiber, the C-8 CC starts at \$390,000, including a 15.4-inch navigational screen and free over-the-air updates of the user interface



LENGTH.....	8.89 m / 29 ft
BEAM.....	2.50 m / 8.20 ft
WEIGHT.....	1,700 kg / 3700 lb
BATTERY.....	.69 kWh, by electric car maker Polestar
CHARGING.....	Type 2 AC charging; or DC Fast Charge up to 135 kW (35 min from 10 to 80 percent)
RANGE.....	57 nautical mi / 65 mi at 22 knots / 25 mph
TOP SPEED.....	30 knots / 35 mph

and flight controller, to unlock new features over the boat's lifetime.

Deliveries are targeted for summer 2024. To learn more, visit Candela.com.

Solar-electric catamaran

The fuel-free, all-electric **GoSun Elcat** catamaran is one of the world's most energy efficient boats, affordable, simple to maintain, and easily transported and stored. Lightweight (just 264 lb), the craft is built to last, made with durable drop-stitched, double-walled, structurally laminated PVC, like a whitewater raft or Navy tender boat.



LENGTH.....	15 ft
WIDTH.....	8 ft
WEIGHT.....	264 lb
ELECTRIC BATTERY / MOTOR.....	lithium ion / 1.3 kW
SOLAR POWER.....	200 watts
TOP SPEED.....	6 mph

Six lightweight air chambers zip together to form a durable vessel that floats on two pontoons with an elevated deck.

Charged from the grid or the sun, Elcat's electric motor is powered by a 1.3 kW lithium ion battery, with range extended by up to 200 watts via solar power. Three accurate data streams from its battery monitor help you determine how long you can stay out—typically all day at trolling speeds and even further on solar.

Including its upper deck, Elcat carries up to six adults, with a capacity of over 1,300 pounds, yet it can be easily packed up—unzip, deflate and fold for space saving—and taken on the go in just 20 minutes, carried in a van, truck or SUV.

The Elcat Solar Electric Boat is made in Europe and bears the CE test certification mark. Its price of \$12,750 includes two side panels, rooftop section, floor plus two thwarts, motor and battery, two solar panels, solar charge controller, swim ladder, motor transom and two air pumps.

GoSun also offers a range of solar appliances for other critical needs like keeping drinks cold, purifying water, cooking dinner or running the party into the night.

GoSun covers the Elcat with a one-year warranty backed by their award winning customer service. For more information, visit gosun.co. ■

THE BUSTED KNUCKLE GARAGE AN AUTOMOTIVE GIFT SHOP

Garage Comfort Mats

Our Garage Comfort Mats all have a 3/4" Energy-Return foam core. Standing or kneeling on them reduces all discomfort and fatigue.

Whether you're an automotive do-it-yourselfer or seasoned professional, you're bound to deal with foot, leg, knee or lower back fatigue.

It comes with the territory but don't let it rob you of your joy in the shop.

- 20" x 32"
- Slip-Resistant Bottom Surface
- Stain Resistant, Waterproof Top Surface
- Beveled, Curl-Free Edges Reduce Tripping
- Won't Bottom Out or Lose Their Bounce Over Time
- Reduces Discomfort Brought On by Standing On Hard Surfaces
- And They Just Feel & Look Great!
- Must Have for Every Garage!



Lost 10mm Anti-Fatigue Garage Comfort Mat (shown) / SKU: xxxxxxxx

Found it! Your 10mm socket is right on the corner of this mat. Ask your friend to pick it up and hand it to you. The background is a well used concrete that will probably blend right into your own garage floor.

Repeating Wrench Anti-Fatigue Garage Comfort Mat / SKU: xxxxxx

Show you've paid your dues by sporting the Busted Knuckle Garage logo front and center! A subtle repeating wrench pattern wallpapers the background.

\$49.95 each / Free ground shipping in the lower 48 states!



Furnishings | Clothing | Signs | Barware | And More!

FREE FedEx SmartPost Ground Shipping over \$99.99!



Check us out on Facebook and Instagram!

www.bustedknucklegarage.com

Need a volume discount for your shop or business? Call us: 928-708-0987



A beauty and a beast BY JOE SAGE

The Lexus LC offers a compelling lineup in just three variations—a completely reengineered convertible for 2023 and a coupe, the sexy streamlined shape you see here, tip to tail, with either of two drivetrains. All are rear-wheel-drive.

The conventional 471-hp LC 500 with 5.0-liter V8 in the LC 500 Coupe has fuel economy ratings of 16/25/19 mpg (city/hwy/combined), 15/25/18 in an LC 500 Convertible, while an LC 500h with a 3.5-liter V6-based series/parallel hybrid system has lower horsepower, 354 combined, but significantly higher fuel mileage at 26/34/29. Each has absolute advantages—you can't go wrong.

The Lexus LC 500 is a glorious machine—gorgeous, powerful, smooth and accurate. But it can also be a very frustrating user experience. Its user

interface details can be difficult to set up and unsteady to adjust. There are indications that Lexus is starting to realize this and, even more belatedly, has started to do something about it.

Updated binnacle instruments and steering wheel controls (along with a few key features via instrument panel buttons) are well done. Most are digital, while many look analog, and core dials slide mechanically to change menu interfaces.

The main screen is another matter, suffering from uncertain layering with key features buried deeply, while its console controller has more room for improvement. We're pretty sure Lexus has been aware, for years, that this interface has been problematic, correcting it just discreetly and incrementally, perhaps hoping we wouldn't notice there

had been a problem. They started years ago with an uncertain joystick on the console that generated unpredictable reactions on the screen, darting hither and yon as frustration built from an inability to aim accurately or land anywhere reliably. They finally replaced this with an almost equally finicky console touchpad, but it still had a long way to go. The good news is, the whole area has evolved a bit more in some other Lexus models we've driven recently. But it has not, yet, in the LC. Presumably this is due to the LC's lower volume, but given its high price, it should get more attention.

Our setup time was lengthy, repeated, distract-ed and highly frustrating. Our drive time, however, was magnificent. Once in motion, it was hard to not just keep going and going, which is exactly what we did, in multiple long sessions.

Optional rear wheel steering is a complex bit of

engineering that provides its subtle improvements transparently, as any good magic trick should.

Drive mode options, accessible via stylish cylindrical controllers to either side of the binnacle, amused us with three categories: powertrain and chassis, as you'd expect, but what else, brakes, you might think? No, climate. We stuck with normal for power, changed to sport for chassis, and stuck with normal for climate, as energy-saving eco is rarely a good climate choice in Arizona.

We wanted to adjust overly active lane keeping, which took some digging, then only offering two levels, but no off. We went with the lesser. Another was a bit of a power-blip effect, which we could not find specifically, thus seeming to be part of the drive mode algorithm. One oddity we had in driving performance from this came as we crossed two very familiar pronounced rain troughs on a major boulevard, giving it a little goose to keep the nose up, as we have ten thousand times before,

with the system failing to respond—until after we had already crossed, at which point it overreacted.

But when we drove long country highway and two-lane miles, just focused on the drive, it was all pretty great. Our drives were spirited, yet our fuel mileage was well above 20 mpg over our whole combination of local and highway driving.

It's a nominal four-seater, but as is typical in such performance coupes, the rear seats are of little practical use. We used the trunk for groceries and gear without realizing it is just 5.4 cubic feet.

Ours was almost \$107,000 with upgrades, and we couldn't help but wonder how much it would be for just the basic car and driving experience, with all those frustratingly implemented layers removed. But good news. Rumor has it there will be a vastly improved interface in the next iteration. We hope they make a clean sweep of it, and soon. Then this car would be a superstar at this price. And if none of that bothers you, then it's already a superstar now. ■



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Toyota, Aichi, Japan
BUILD	.....unitized steel body w steel front & rear subframes
ROWS / SEATS	.....two / four
ENGINE	.....5.0L V8, 32v DOHC, EFI, dir inj 4-stroke gasoline Superior, dual VVT-i (variable valve timing w intell), alum/alum
HP/TORQUE	.....471 hp / 398 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....12.3:1
TRANSMISSION	.....10-spd Sport Direct Shift auto w paddle shift & manual mode
DRIVETRAIN	.....RWD
REAR DIFFERENTIAL	.....Torsen Limited Slip
0-100 MPH	.....4.4 sec
TOP SPEED	.....(mfg est; elect lim) 168 mph
SUSPENSION	.....F: double joint multilink; R: multilink
STEERING	.....elec power, vehicle speed-sensing coaxial rack & pinion
BRAKES	.....F: 15.7 vented, six-piston opposed alum calipers, high-friction brake pads; R: 14.1 vented, four-piston opposed alum calipers, high-friction brake pads
WHEELS	.....(pkg) 21-in forged alloy w polished finish & gloss black accents
TIRES	.....F: 245/40RF21; R: 275/35RF21
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....187.4 / 113.0 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....5.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....(w active rear steer) 34.8 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....(w/carbon rf) 36.8 / 32.2 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....42.0 / 32.5 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....5.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIB	.....4340 lb / 54/46%
COEFFICIENT OF DRAG	.....(Cd) 0.33
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....premium unl / 21.7 gal
MPG	.....16/25/19 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$93,450
PREMIUM PAINT: Cadmium Orange	.....595
AUDIO: Mark Levinson 13-speaker Reference Surround Sound system	.....1220
HEADS-UP DISPLAY	.....900
DYNAMIC HANDLING PKG: 21-in forged alloy wheels w polished finish & gloss black accents, Torsen limited slip differential, active rear steering, variable gear-ratio steering, speed-activated rear wing, intuitive parking assist, alcantara sport seats, alcantara headliner, carbon fiber roof, carbon fiber door scuff plate	.....9570
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1150
TOTAL	.....\$106,885

(Note: prices have increased; see chart.)

2023 LEXUS LC 500 LINEUP

LC 500	.....▼ \$ 94,600
LC 500h Hybrid	.....100,600
LC 500 Convertible	.....102,650

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

Southwest Media Communications
602-892-4766 - info@southwestmedia.net



AMSAF distracted driving fundraiser

Arizona Motorcycle Safety & Awareness Foundation (AMSAF)—the leader in voicing critical awareness about the urgent need to reduce distracted driving and to provide discounted motorcycle training—will hold a distracted driving fundraiser known as Share the Road & Riding for the Long Haul on Saturday, May 6, 2023 from 5:00 till 9:30 pm at El Zaribah Auditorium, located at 552 N 40th Street, Phoenix 85008.

The annual fundraiser will feature a Mardi Gras theme and a brand new fundraiser format. During the event, guests will enjoy dinner, music, live and silent auctions, raffles, mystery bag raffles, a contest for best-dressed Mardi Gras character and a fast-talking auctioneer.

"AMSAF has added a hot new auction item, a HiSun Sector off-road vehicle made primarily for recreational driving," says Mick Degn, AMSAF executive director. "With all the activity that is planned, guests will have plenty of ways they can donate to reduce distracted driving while having a great time."

The 2023 Share the Road & Riding for the Long Haul experience will be celebrated during AMSAF's 11th year, as the organization continues to inform the public about the need to respectfully share the road and to reduce and hopefully eliminate distracted driving. Along with small businesses and individuals, representatives from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, the health-care community, ADOT and businesses representing insurance, legal, local community organizations and others will be present to promote safety and help reduce crashes and fatalities.

In addition to motorcycle training and its distracted driving campaign efforts, AMSAF is an innovator for the DOT-quality pilot helmet program and in promoting accident scene management whereby people can learn what to do at the scene of an accident.

"AMSAF plans this event to promote safety and to educate the drivers and riders," says Degn. "This is but one reason why support of Share the Road to reduce distracted driving is so critical. Businesses and individuals also can help by serving as a sponsor, purchasing a table or donating to this important cause. The money we raise from this event goes to promote safety and awareness and to help reduce crashes and fatalities in our great state. In addition to marketing campaigns, AMSAF also provides scholarships for discounted motorcycle training. Year to date, we've helped more than 6000 individuals receive defensive motorcycle training statewide."

Find out more at www.amsaf.org/RFTLH. ■



Beyond the city limits BY JOE SAGE

Ford Maverick—a unibody on the same platform as Ford Escape, which originated with the Ford Focus sedan and is also used for Bronco Sport—inevitably gets positioned relative to the great many variants of conventional cab-and-bed-on-frame F-Series and Ranger pickups. Here’s a new build that will help close the mental gap.

Tremor is an “Off-Road Plus Appearance” package available on the upper two of three Maverick trim levels (XLT and Lariat, not XL) and only with the EcoBoost engine, 8-speed automatic and AWD drivetrain (not with the hybrid powertrain and not with a FWD EcoBoost or XL AWD EcoBoost).

The build involves a \$2200 AWD package, then the \$4490 Tremor Package, which brought our XLT from about a \$24k base to \$34k with a few options, a sweet price for an enhanced capability pickup. (We’d move to the Lariat for \$3500 more if budget

allowed, for keyless start and dual-zone climate.)

Tremor’s FX4-based advanced AWD system includes a twin-clutch rear-drive unit with differential lock; five drive modes including Trail Control (off-road cruise that handles throttle and brakes so you focus on your path); an inch of height added from upgraded springs and shocks; a heavy-duty transmission cooler; and upgraded half-shafts.

Visual cues include a new grille, blacked-out Ford logos, black headlamps and taillights, Tremor Orange tow hooks, updated fender vents, and, on ours, patterned stripes on hood and lower doors.

In town, the Maverick provides great maneuverable, satisfying acceleration, solid cornering, a power burst in a pinch—in any extreme situations maybe with not much to spare, but all we needed.

To take a better look at what the Tremor brings to the game, we headed out of town. Our paved

miles on a narrow, winding, often empty, sometimes cliff-hanging two-lane, was punctuated by various UTVs, big trucks and sports cars coming the other way. This stretch was a great test of its tidy size, as well as handling, agility and sometimes brakes, and the truck did extremely well.

We headed off-pavement to a favorite test spot, a near-U-turn at gravel speeds, then up a steep and rugged dirt trail rich with rocks and gullies.

As we barreled up it, still in default 4WD, the drivetrain adjusted its grip to conditions until it could go no farther. That seemed disappointing, so we carefully backed down to the start and played with our pushbutton options. As usual, some drive modes weren’t applicable, such as snow or tow-haul, and applicable ones were open to interpretation—mud-ruts or sand, always a tough choice, as our conditions are usually a bit of all of the above. We chose sand, also locking in the rear differential for good measure; we were already in 4WD. And

this time, we drove right up to the top, as intended, like magic. The system is impressively engineered, and we aced it with our first guesses.

Our high spot requires a familiar seven- or nine-point turn on the cliff-hanging head of a pin. We get out to visually check repeatedly, always, while this truck’s rear camera was also a gem. (One oddity was that our rear camera stayed on-screen after putting the truck back in drive. With plenty to keep an eye on besides the screen, and scenery similar in all directions, this seemed highly dangerous, in this case showing us about 12 feet behind us when we had about two feet out front. We highly recommend they reprogram this.)

Back at the bottom, we popped back out of special modes, unlocked the rear diff, and headed to the paved road and toward town. It was a great session, all receiving an A grade, once you know your buttons and screen. And through all of the above, every time we stepped out of the truck and every time we hopped back in, we found ourselves saying, man, this is a nice truck.

Our final run was to the airport, mostly rush

hour-ish freeway. This truck was a pre-production unit (which could be a factor in our camera story), and fuel mileage numbers were not yet available. Based on our known stats, we figure we achieved 18-20 mpg in our highly mixed usage.

It may be true what some urban colleagues say: no matter how much you love big trucks, unless you have specific need for one, for many people this unibody compact could arguably be all you truly need. As an adventuring platform, with the new Tremor build, it may be just getting started.

We’ve seen F-150 introduce the breakthrough Raptor, then add Tremor, then Raptor R; Ranger has a Tremor now but not a Raptor; Bronco has a Raptor now but not a Tremor. And Maverick now has a Tremor but not a Raptor. It’s fun to read these tea leaves and speculate. A Maverick Raptor may or may not be unlikely. (Bronco is built on Ranger’s truck frame.) But Ford Performance engineers do seem to love tackling a challenge as much as their fan base loves clamoring for the next big thing. It may just boil down to whether Ford is too tied up with EV evolution to even deal with it. ■

Ford Maverick just won 2023 TRUCK OF THE YEAR in the Rocky Mountain Automotive Press (RMAP) Vehicle of the Year Awards.



As usual, we contemplated whether this compact truck could ever have a bed long enough to sleep in (if not an eight-footer, rare even in big trucks), while considering the structural qualities of a unibody and how that requires longer cab structure for overall rigidity.

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico
ENGINE MFG	.....Cleveland or Valencia, Spain
BUILD	.....unibody SuperCrew pickup, high-strength steel frame, mild steel body
ENGINE	.....(opt) 2.0: EcoBoost 4-cyl DOHC Ti-VCT alum/alum, powder forged rods
HP/TORQUE	.....250 hp / 277 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....9.3:1
TRANSMISSION	.....8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	.....advanced AWD w 4WD lock
SUSPENSION	.....F: indep MacPherson strut-type w coils, twin-tube hydraulic gas shocks, stblzr bars, alum lower control arm, steel subframe, cast knuckle; Tremor adds off-road-tuned suspension w increased ride height; R: (AWD) indep multi-link trailing arm w twin-tube hydraulic gas dampers, coils, stblzr bar, steel subframe, cast knuckle; Tremor adds off-road-tuned suspension w increased ride height
STEERING	.....electronic pwr-assist
BRAKES	.....F: 325x27mm; R: 302x11mm
WHEELS	.....(Tremor) 17-in machined dk alum
TIRES	.....(Tremor) 235/65R17 A/T
TURNING CIRCLE	.....40.0 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....9.4 in
APPR/DEP/BRKVR	.....(Tremor) 30.7 / 22.2 / 19.0°
OVERHANG (F/R)	.....34.6 / 45.1 in
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....200.7 / 121.1 in
WIDTH	.....(incl mirrors or folded) 83.5 / 77.9 in
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....40.3 / 39.6 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....42.8 / 36.9 in
BED LENGTH	.....54.4 in
BED WIDTH AT WHEEL HOUSE	.....42.6 in
CURB WEIGHT	.....3807 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....2000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....87 min 91 rec oct / 16.5 gal
MPG	.....t.b.d.
BASE PRICE	.....\$24,455
EQUIPMENT GROUP 300A: (AWD for XLT)	.....2220
TREMOR OFF-ROAD PLUS APP PKG	.....4490
FORD CO-PILOT 360	.....650
SPLASH GUARDS	.....180
KEYLESS ENTRY FOB (1)	.....242
BEDLINER SPRAY-IN	.....495
(4G WIFI HOTSPOT: removed)	.....(20)
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1495
TOTAL	.....\$34,247

(Note: prices have increased; see below. Note also: Ford says “due to high demand, the current model year is no longer available; contact your dealer for more information.”)

2023 FORD MAVERICK LINEUP

2.5L hybrid	FWD		
XL	.....	\$22,595	
XLT	.....	24,855	
Lariat	.....	28,355	
2.0L EcoBoost	FWD	AWD	4WD*
XL	.....	\$22,595	\$24,815
XLT	.....	24,855	27,075 ▼ 27,075
Lariat	.....	30,575	30,575

*Advanced AWD w 4WD lock (also referred to as Advanced 4WD) is required for Tremor Off-Road Packages, available on XLT and Lariat trims



THE BUSTED KNUCKLE GARAGE AN AUTOMOTIVE GIFT SHOP

Commercial Strength Shop Stools

Heavy duty garage counter shop stool with full swivel seat & great vintage look! Built in the USA, this shop stool is an industrial/restaurant grade counter stool built for long lasting durability, comfort and strength. Available in 36 designs!

- 30" standard counter height to seat • Vinyl covered seat is 14" wide
- Full 360 degree swivel seat • Industrial strength chrome plated legs
- 1600 lb weight capacity (vs imports rated at 300 lb) • Backrest option available • Built to order, allow 10-15 work days for delivery
- Minor assembly required • Tables to match—please inquire

Miracle Car Repair Shop Stool / SKU: 09-BKG-MCR

Gas, Oil & Toil Shop Stool / SKU: 09-BKG-TOIL

Were \$179.95 - Now \$159.95 each

Free ground shipping in the lower 48 states!

Neon Garage Clocks

USA Made Neon Automotive Garage Clocks with old school vintage car guy looks for your man cave. No disappointments. Highest Quality & Reliability available.

- Features a spun aluminum black case, glass face and a separate on/off switch for the white neon lamp. (100,000 hours of neon, that's 11 years continuous running!)
- Measures a large 20" in diameter and 5" deep • 8' Power Cord, Chain Pull for Lamp • Limited warranty against defects in material and workmanship; runs on 110 Volt AC • Several Car Guy Styles to Choose From...Check 'Em All Out!
- We've been selling these clocks for over 15 years; Never a Return, Never a Complaint, you have our word on it • Looking for something smaller? Check out our BKG-76600 for a 12" alternative

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

Were \$399 - Now \$349 / Free shipping on this item!

All-Steel Toolboxes

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

- Rugged all steel end cap construction • Powder coated, rust resistant • Heavy-duty stainless steel handle • Nickel-plated steel latch and hinge for added security • Full length lift-out tote tray
- Cool car guy quality color graphics • 6 lbs • 16" x 7" x 7.5"

Wrench-In-Hand Steel Tool Box / SKU: 10-BKG-WCL

Vintage Pickup Truck Steel Tool Box / SKU: 10-BKG-VT

\$49 each / Eligible for free shipping!

♥ Not only are your products awesome, but the service and the people are too! I very much intend to pass the word along about how great it is to do business with the Busted Knuckle Garage.
— Many thanks! Jackie B.

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



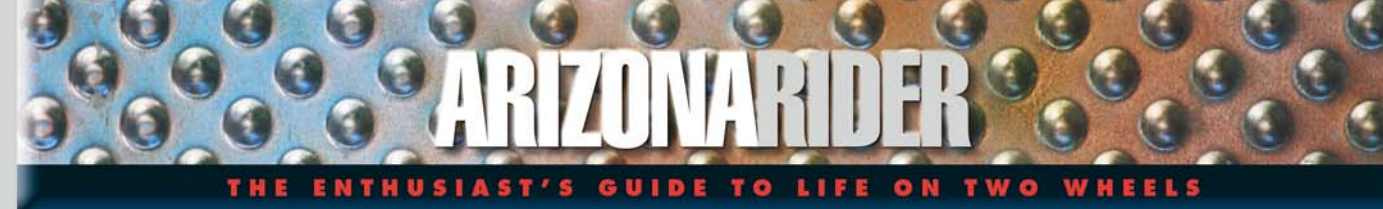
♥ I just had the most wonderful buying experience! I only hope my father asks for something from The Busted Knuckle Garage for Christmas so I can do business with such a wonderful company once more.
— Cheers! Michelle

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

Furnishings | Clothing | Signs | Barware | And More!

FREE FedEx SmartPost Ground Shipping over \$99.99!

Check us out on Facebook and Instagram! / www.bustedknucklegarage.com
Need a volume discount for your shop or business? Call us: 928-708-0987



THRILLS, RECORDS AND MILESTONES

Arizona Bike Week 2023 reported its highest attendance ever, as 85,000 visitors turned out at WestWorld in Scottsdale for the five-day motorcycle rally and music fest—10,000 more than the previous year and its largest crowds to date. More than 40 percent of attendees were from out of town, including many international visitors.

"This was our first year as an all-woman-owned bike rally, and we are incredibly proud to have reached this milestone," said Lisa Cyr, organizer and part-owner of the event.

The action-packed week included aerial and freestyle stunt shows, demo rides, live music from local bands, and huge blockbuster concerts by headliners Billy Idol, Staind, Megadeth and Texas Hippie Coalition.

The PowerYard offered non-stop entertainment at two huge bar tents all week. One, the HandleBar Saloon, provided live music all day and evening from the best local area music scene. The other, the Kickstand Bar & Grill, offered entertainment and events, including three different bike shows in the PowerYard, one just for women riders.

The most highly attended day was Saturday, which featured a custom bike show and Staind performing in the RockYard that night.

Five charity rides during the event raised thousands of dollars for various charities, from children's hospitals to cancer foundations.

On Sunday, the final day of Arizona Bike Week, organizers turned the HandleBar stage over to the incredibly talented young musicians from Alice Cooper's Solid Rock Teen Centers. Bike Week also made a \$5,000 donation to Solid Rock, supporting the Teen Centers, which offer free music, dance and art lessons to teens, and providing a paycheck to the performing bands that day.

For info on 2024, visit Arizonabikeweek.com. ■



FROZEN MIX & A HOT LINEUP

By Joe Sage / Photos by Doug Berger for NWAPA

The Pacific Northwest has a fair amount of commonality with Arizona ... wild elevation changes, volcanos and rivers, lava fields, grassy plains ... cities, small towns, ranches and mines ... and both have a notable variety of weather. Our annual trek to the Northwest Automotive Press Association's (NWAPA's) Outdoor Vehicle of the Year Awards—better known as “Mudfest”—takes us to Washington State's lower Olympic Peninsula in springtime, all the better to deliver the kind of weather that gives Mudfest its name. And the weatherman did not let us down—lows in the 30s, highs in the 40s, rain and showers, snow not long before our arrival, and lots of that intriguingly vague forecast, “frozen mix.” With plenty of rain, occasional hints of blue, and even a fairly brief swath of borderline hail, everything was perfect for the task at hand.

The event was held for the seventh time at The Ridge Motorsports Park, near Shelton, north of Olympia. This 170-acre facility features a 2.47-mile, 16-turn track with 300-foot elevation changes (which we don't use); a kart track (which we do use) that's a one-sixth-scale replica of the big track; and motocross acreage modified or specially built for our off-road purposes.

NWAPA was founded in 1991 and started this annual event not long after, evolving in parallel to the vehicle marketplace, through

a handful of body-on-frame SUVs joining the pickups, to today's broad range of crossovers and utilities of every shape and size—all accompanied by tremendous growth in these vehicles as daily drivers, as well as related increases in outdoor activities, thanks to their go-anywhere abilities. Accordingly, Mudfest has for some years been expanded to include both on-pavement and off-pavement components, each of those now a full day.

Day one's paved circuit includes a coned chicane, a long stretch engineered for maximum acceleration and full force braking, more coned areas for turning circle and handling experiences, then on to the kart track for a full range of evaluation.

Day two is all off-road, with dirt and gravel straightaways, embankments, mild climbs and mud ruts—a full range of challenges for every entry. Vehicles designated for an Extreme Capability subcategory add more dramatic climbs and descents, water hazard fording, wheel articulation, log crawling, and other elements to push approach-breakover-departure angles toward their limits.

The event typically draws about two dozen vehicle entrants (and about the same number of media driver-analysts, or about half the group's membership). Every vehicle is driven on each of the two days, amounting to three or four vehicles per hour, with time to meet and greet, along with time to score and annotate, making this a good volume of vehicles, especially with NWAPA's firm diligence in ensuring that every driver drives every vehicle.

This year, we had 22 vehicles and 24 drivers—which might sound as though it would leave someone standing in the rain, but worked out just fine, giving flexibility for photos, coffee breaks or chit-chat in between.

With vehicles not only split into trucks and SUVs, but also potentially by size (which now hits a half-dozen or more from many brands, from smaller than subcompact to larger than full-size), then also by luxury subsets, perhaps electrification, perhaps price range, you could end up with more categories than vehicles, or categories with just one or two vehicles in them—as happens at some other comparos—and yet this is an awards event. NWAPA simplified it all this year, with just three SUV categories—two- or three-row and luxury (of mixed sizes)—plus one for pickups. This led to a solid six or seven SUVs per category and meaningful competition.

From those four categories, qualifying electrified and extreme capability vehicles were regrouped and evaluated again, and the entire stable was also evaluated for a separate ranking by value.

On all vehicles in all groupings, drivers used worksheets to score powertrain; paved ride, handling and braking; off-road handling and capability; exterior styling; interior comfort and functionality; application of technology; and a subjective value consideration. (About the only thing not specifically tested is towing, which the vehicles all offered, over a wide range of capacities.)

Each judging driver votes a first and second choice in each of the vehicle categories and subsets—with one full set of tallies and votes on each of the two days. The results of both are incorporated into final category and specialty subset wins.

And ultimately, a best-of-the-best title winner is chosen.

This year's vehicles included four from two US automakers, three from Europe, ten from a full variety of Japanese brands, and five from Korea. Full information on entries and results follows, with low and high end of the range noted for price, horsepower, torque and highway fuel mileage within each category, to help you gauge where the winners fall. All are 2023 models except for one 2022 and one 2024 as noted.

(cont'd)



Geez, Dad, can we take them all home? Like a kid at the puppy store, we didn't find a bad one in the bunch, from the \$29,685 Subaru to the \$452,725 Rolls-Royce. From the paved slalom to the muddiest ruts, they all did superbly well. Whether engineered to be casual, dramatic or snappy, they all have notably high skills. Acceleration varies, as you would expect, while in near-panic stops from 60 to zero, this proves to be a golden era for brakes.



2023 NWAPA MUDFEST CATEGORY WINNERS

TWO-ROW FAMILY SUV

Honda CR-V Hybrid AWD Sport Touring
 Jeep Compass Trailhawk 4x4
 Jeep Wrangler 4xe 20th Anniversary Rubicon
 Kia Sportage X-Pro Prestige AWD
 Mazda CX-50 Meridian Edition
 Subaru Crosstrek Premium (2024)
 Volkswagen Tiguan 2.0T SEL R-Line

PRICE RANGE	\$29,685 Subaru	>	\$81,150 Jeep
POWER RANGE	HP...152 HP Subaru	>	375 HP Jeep
	TORQUE...145 LBFT Subaru	>	470 LBFT Jeep
TOW CAPACITY RANGE	1000 LB Honda	>	3500 LB Jeep/Mazda
COMB MPG RANGE	25 MPG Kia/Mazda	>	37 MPG Honda (49 MPGe Jeep)

WINNER: 2023 Jeep Wrangler 4xe 20th Anniversary Rubicon ▼

375 HP, 470 LBFT, 3500 LB towing, 20 MPG or 49 MPGe comb, \$81,150 as tested

Runner-up: 2023 Kia Sportage X-Pro Prestige AWD

ANALYSIS: Sometimes a middle-attributes Goldilocks factor emerges; other times a value equation dominates (especially in this category); but here the pricey and powerful Jeep won top prize, while runner-up Kia stands between the low end and middle on most attributes.

THREE-ROW FAMILY SUV

Honda Pilot TrailSport AWD
 Hyundai Palisade XRT AWD
 Kia Telluride SX-Prestige X-Pro V6 AWD
 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV SEL S-AWC
 Nissan Pathfinder Rock Creek
 Toyota Sequoia TRD Pro

PRICE RANGE	\$44,060 Hyundai	>	\$80,291 Toyota
POWER RANGE	HP...221 HP Mitsubishi	>	437 HP Toyota
	TORQUE...262 LBFT Hyundai/Kia	>	583 LBFT Toyota
TOW CAPACITY RANGE	1500 LB Mitsubishi	>	9020 LB Toyota
COMB MPG RANGE	20 MPG Honda	>	52 MPG or 64 MPGe Mitsubishi

WINNER: 2023 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV ▼

221 HP, 332 LBFT, 1500 LB towing, 52 MPG or 64 MPGe comb, \$50,880 as tested

Runner-up: 2023 Toyota Sequoia TRD Pro

ANALYSIS: Goldilocks showed up in this category's winner, while the priciest and most powerful Sequoia displayed its heft by pulling into second place, with the added twist that the Sequoia TRD Pro runs about \$25-35,000 higher than any of the others.

LUXURY SUV

Acura RDX SH-AWD A-Spec w/Advance (2022)
 BMW X7 M60i
 Genesis Electrified GV70 Prestige
 Lexus RX 500h F Sport
 Rolls-Royce Cullinan
 Wagoneer Series II 4x4

PRICE RANGE	\$52,845 Acura	>	\$452,725 Rolls-Royce
POWER RANGE	HP...272 HP Acura	>	563 HP Rolls-Royce
	TORQUE...280 LBFT Acura	>	627 LBFT Rolls-Royce
TOW CAPACITY RANGE	1230 LB BMW	>	9750 LB Wagoneer
COMB MPG RANGE	14 MPG Rolls-Royce	>	27 Lexus / 91 MPGe Genesis

WINNER: 2023 Genesis Electrified GV70 ▼

483 HP, 516 LBFT, 3500 LB towing, 91 MPGe comb, \$74,350 as tested

Runner-up: 2023 Wagoneer Series II 4x4

ANALYSIS: While the price range is dramatic, most were about \$70-80,000 (though BMW ran \$122,545). The winning full-EV Genesis is mainstream for price, and its high horsepower is surprisingly average in this potent group; but it knocks the socks off for fuel-equivalent economy.

PICKUP TRUCK

Ford F-150 Raptor 4x4 SuperCrew
 Hyundai Santa Cruz Limited AWD
 Toyota Tundra TRD Pro

PRICE RANGE	\$41,825 Hyundai	>	\$111,935 Ford
POWER RANGE	HP...281 HP Hyundai	>	700 HP Ford
	TORQUE...311 LBFT Hyundai	>	640 LBFT Ford
TOW CAPACITY RANGE	5000 LB Hyundai	>	11,175 LB Toyota
COMB MPG RANGE	12 MPG Ford	>	22 MPG Hyundai

WINNER: 2023 Ford F-150 Raptor 4x4 SuperCrew ▼

700 HP, 640 LBFT, 8,200 LB towing, 12 MPG comb, \$111,935 as tested

Runner-up: 2023 Hyundai Santa Cruz

ANALYSIS: These three were entered last year (though Tundra in a luxe trim), along with Nissan Frontier, and Santa Cruz (which Hyundai has entered in some comparos as an SUV) won. Votes here split away from Tundra, a fine truck in the middle, to the most potent, then most frugal.

2023 NWAPA MUDFEST SUBSET WINNERS

ELECTRIFIED UTILITY VEHICLE

These vehicles are from any of the four categories, as long as they had either a PHEV (plug-in hybrid) or full EV (a.k.a. BEV, battery electric) powertrain.

Genesis Electrified GV70 Prestige
 Jeep Wrangler 4xe 20th Anniversary Rubicon
 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV SEL S-AWD

PRICE RANGE	\$50,880 Mitsubishi	>	\$81,150 Jeep
POWER RANGE	HP...221 HP Mitsubishi	>	483 HP Genesis
	TORQUE...332 LBFT Mitsubishi	>	516 LBFT Genesis
TOW CAPACITY RANGE	1500 LB Mitsubishi	>	3500 LB Jeep/Genesis
COMB MPG RANGE	49 MPGe Jeep	>	91 MPGe Genesis

WINNER: 2023 Genesis Electrified GV70 ▼

483 HP, 516 LBFT, 3500 LB towing, 91 MPGe comb, \$74,350 as tested

Runner-up: 2023 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV

ANALYSIS: "Electrified" is used in various ways in an evolving industry, widely applied to hybrids and plug-in hybrids, while Genesis uses it to name their full BEVs. While this gives this small group great variety, it all makes sense as you parse the balance of power, price and economy.

EXTREME CAPABILITY VEHICLE

This subset comprising four contenders also comes from any category, as long as they qualified to be evaluated on an engineered extreme course with additional obstacles.

Ford F-150 Raptor
 Jeep Wrangler 4xe 20th Anniversary Rubicon
 Toyota Sequoia TRD Pro
 Toyota Tundra TRD Pro

WINNER: 2023 Jeep Wrangler 4xe 20th Anniversary Rubicon ▼

375 HP, 470 LBFT, 3500 LB towing, 20 MPG or 49 MPGe comb, \$81,150 as tested

Runner-up: 2023 Ford F-150 Raptor R

ANALYSIS: Buyers may get the most emotionally invested in this category, making vote winners generally well noted, but few people's final word. With two SUVs and two pickups here, this result could suggest a win for SUVs over pickups, as much as the four-up comparison itself.

BEST VALUE

This award is also a separate vote among all entries, based on that one very subjective attribute, value—generally an overall balance among price, performance and content.

WINNER: 2024 Subaru Crosstrek Premium ▼

152 HP, 145 LBFT, 1500 LB towing, 29 MPG comb, \$29,685 as tested

Runner-up: 2023 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV

ANALYSIS: Despite the above definition of value—in which the Rolls-Royce at \$452,725 should have as fair a shot as any—human nature so often seems to lead toward equating value with low price, and thus we have the least expensive and lowest-powered vehicle taking top spot.

2023 NWAPA MUDFEST OVERALL TITLE WINNER

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY VEHICLE OF THE YEAR

The top trophy for this event is determined not by a formula involving each vehicle's point-by-point ratings, nor playoff brackets based on the category and subset winners, but rather by a simple, separate and more subjective vote for first and second choice.

WINNER: 2023 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV ▼

221 HP, 332 LBFT, 1500 LB towing, 52 MPG or 64 MPGe comb, \$50,880 as tested

Runner-up: 2023 Genesis Electrified GV70

ANALYSIS: The analytical detail and spreadsheets developed in the course of putting each vehicle through its paces could be fed through a highly-engineered algorithm to produce what might seem like a mathematically pure final winner. But as with anyone's personal buying experience, at the end of much analysis often comes that moment alone with your thoughts, where you say, "All things considered, I just really liked that one." The winner and runner-up—both SUVs, both electrified (in different ways), both solid premium class vehicles around town yet far tougher than that may suggest off-road, and both in a reasonable price range that's equal parts accessible and aspirational—represent a snapshot of the market as a whole, just as they should.

We never reveal our own votes, but would note that we had a few favorites that didn't achieve majority vote victories, others we may have picked as second that came in first or vice versa. This was a fine selection, truly not a bad one in the bunch, for function, style, performance and value. Our special thanks go out to the hard-working fleet personnel, The Ridge Motorsports Park, the manufacturers, who sent their most capable vehicles and the smiling faces to support them, and to our friends and colleagues in NWAPA for one of the best-executed events in the business. ■



The power of lust

Is the gotta-have-it factor everything? Maybe! by Joe Sage

While we were in Washington State for the NWAPA Mudfest comparo (also in this issue), we shuttled between the airport, lodging and driving facility in a craft perfect for the mission, the 2023 Toyota Tacoma TRD Pro. It fits nicely between a 4Runner TRD Pro we had at home in Arizona a few months ago and the bigger Tundra TRD Pro entered in Mudfest, not to mention the new Tacoma SR5 Trail Edition we had for a week last summer. And it stands on its own—out of a whopping 32 basic Tacoma builds, with varying cabs, beds, engines, trim levels and drivetrains, TRD Pro is the absolute top dog. This, in turn, is right in line with its tackle-anything mission.

As we've noted before, both the Tacoma and its fraternal twin, the body-on-frame 4Runner, are consistently noted by both their unshakeable fans and a handful of detractors for the same thing—they never change (much). We have tended toward the "don't change a thing" camp, appreciating its clas-

sic burliness, as well as any number of specific features, such as beefy physical knobs you can operate with your gloves on.

But there is one thing. Tacoma TRD Pro is not weak or powerless. It's just geared for grunt. On a steep hill on the Olympic Peninsula's two-lanes or even a more gradual incline on a grade-limited Interstate, we might groan at maximum effort. (The transmission, by the way, is quite good through any and all of this.) Tacoma is powerful and tough, but it's built for strength. For some, this may lead to shopping the bigger Tundra. But Tacoma is a truck you love to love and can't wait to drive again. You just may wish it had a bigger engine.

Or perhaps bigger is not the key word. The full-size Tundra changed engines a couple of years ago, moving its powertrains from two V8s to two i-FORCE V6 engines, regular or a light hybrid twin-turbo i-FORCE MAX. And those are both 3.5-liter V6s, same as Tacoma, though delivering either 389

or 479 hp, compared to Tacoma's 278. What's more, the move increased Tundra's fuel economy ratings by five or six points across the board with the i-FORCE engines. Same displacement doesn't necessarily mean same physical dimensions, but surely these could fit under the Tacoma's hood.

Power is one comparative between Tacoma and Tundra (and 4Runner and Sequoia). Size is another, and this will sort itself out for most buyers. But then there's cost. Might the high-tech i-FORCE engine push Tacoma's prices too high, or close enough to Tundra to complicate the comparison? It seems Tacoma has enough sales volume to build versions of both for awhile, to see how that goes.

But longstanding lust for the Tacoma should rule the day—it has always had that gotta-have-it factor and most likely always will. You just can't wait to get your hands on it and on (or off) the road again. It may be craving more power, yet you're always craving more time with it, just as it is.

Well, good news—just a couple of weeks after this issue publishes, we expect Toyota to reveal exactly what many have wished for—i-FORCE for the Tacoma lineup. Stay tuned! ■

Our Tacoma TRD Pro in Washington State was the same great color as our 4Runner TRD Pro here recently—its stunning current showpiece, Solar Orange.



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Guanajuato, Mexico
ENGINE	.....3.5L V6 D-4S direct & port injection Atkinson Cycle engine w/ VVT-iW (var valve timing, intelligent, wider) intake & VVT-i exhaust
HP/TORQUE	.....278 hp / 265 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	.....6-spd ECT automatic
DRIVETRAIN	.....4x4 w/ part-time 4WD
DIFFERENTIAL RATIO	.....3.909
SUSPENSION	.....F: dbl-wishbone w/ stblzr bar, TRD-tuned off-road susp w/ 2.5-in FOX internal bypass coil-overs; R: leaf-spring w/ staggered outboard gas shocks, TRD Pro w/ rear remote reservoir shocks
STEERING	.....power rack & pinion
BRAKES	.....F: 10.75 vented; R: 10.0 drum
WHEELS	.....16-in TRD black alloy
TIRES	.....P265/70R16 all-season
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....212.3 / 127.4 in
WIDTH / HEIGHT	.....(w/ overfenders) 75.2 / 71.6 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....9.4 in
APPROACH / DEPART / BRKOVER	.....36.4 / 24.7 / 26.6°
TURNING CIRCLE	.....40.8 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....39.7 / 38.3 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....42.9 / 32.6 in
INSIDE BED LENGTH	.....60.5 in
BTWN WHEEL WELLS	.....41.5 in
WEIGHT	.....4550 lb
PAYLOAD	.....1155 lb
TOW CAPACITY(with opt V6 tow prep pkg) 6400 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY87 reg unl or higher / 21.1 gal
MPG18/22/20 (city/hwy/comb)
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are then covered with a polymer top sheet.

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but impact the performance of a panel.)

Sunflare XPLOR panels also perform better in partial shading. Traditional silicon panels have a bypass diode per string or per two strings, so if one cell is shaded, a whole string is knocked out. Depending on where shade falls—for example, if a branch casts a shadow across a row—an entire panel could be totally knocked out. Sunflare panels have bypass diodes at every cell, so if one cell is shaded, that's the only cell that turns off.

Sunflare XPLOR solar panels are available in three sizes for recreational installations: 180 watts, 126 watts and 105 watts.

For more info, visit sunflareexplor.com.



TALLEST IN THE SADDLE

By Joe Sage / Photos by Kevin McCauley of Capturing the Machine

A can't-miss drive event on our schedule—which we nonetheless missed this year due to airline issues—is the Texas Auto Writers' Association (TAWA) Texas Auto Roundup, a pavement-oriented comparison of sedans, coupes, sports cars, crossovers and SUVs.

Other than a lack of snowy high country—or major elevation changes in general—Texas driving has a lot in common with Arizona, from wide open terrain and smooth pavement, to hot temperatures and wild weather, to customer markets and vehicle preferences in general. Results of these events are useful back home, plus it's a neighborly bunch to spend a few days with over there.

In all comparos—as with elections or other popularity contests—you can't win if you don't play. Manufacturers entering their wares this year included 24 vehicle entries from ten manufacturers, if you count Toyota and Lexus separately. Just one American manufacturer participated—Stellantis—though their four vehicles (or five, if you count two variants of Dodge Hornet, which was one category entry) bore the badges of three brands, including Alfa Romeo, which could be counted as domestic or as European, as well as three samples of two Dodges and a Chrysler. Fully European entries were three, two from Volkswagen and one

from Volvo. The Koreans had entered just one vehicle at first, but ended up entering a second, both Genesis. And Japan sent all the rest, a total of 15, seven from Toyota-Lexus (two Lexus, five Toyota), four from Honda, two from Mazda and one each from Nissan and Subaru.

Categories were many—basically 13 for those 24 vehicles, resulting in a few categories with just two or even just one entry. Odds of a win were, uh, very good in those. Others—crossovers, green vehicles and electric—had quite a few more entries. An individual vehicle was often entered in more than one category, such as a certain size sedan or crossover also entering as a luxury vehicle, green vehicle or electric, while others entered those specialized categories only—manufacturers had that kind of latitude in choosing where they thought they would best compete.

Category Awards are determined by media driver-judges' tallies of each vehicle as charted per a wide variety of attributes.

For Calculated Awards, pertinent numbers are isolated from category votes to calculate which cumulatively scored best in certain attributes.

Ultimately, the top Vehicle of the Year Title Awards are determined by a new and separate subjective vote, independent of the complex math

in the original Category Award tallies.

All were 2023 models except the Alfa Romeo, a 2022 as noted. Categories below show how many entries were in each. Winners are as follows:

CATEGORY AWARDS

Luxury Vehicle \$50,000-\$75,000 (2 ENTRIES)
2023 Lexus RX 500h F Sport Performance AWD

Luxury Vehicle \$75,000+ (2 ENTRIES)
2023 Genesis G90 3.5T E-Supercharger AWD

Performance Coupe (2 ENTRIES)
2023 Toyota GR Supra 3.0 Premium

Performance Sedan (1 SOLO ENTRY)
2023 Genesis Electrified G80 AWD

Performance Hatchback (1 SOLO ENTRY)
2023 Honda Civic Type R

Midsize Vehicle (2 ENTRIES)
2023 Toyota Prius Limited

Full-Size Vehicle (1 SOLO ENTRY)
2023 Toyota Crown Platinum

Compact CUV (5 ENTRIES)
2023 Mazda CX-50

Midsize CUV (5 ENTRIES)
2022 Alfa Romeo Stelvio Veloce

Luxury CUV (1 SOLO ENTRY)
2023 Lexus RX 500h F Sport Performance AWD

Minivan (1 SOLO ENTRY)
2023 Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid Pinnacle

Green Vehicle (7 ENTRIES)
2023 Lexus RX 500h F Sport Performance AWD

Electric Vehicle (4 ENTRIES)
2023 Genesis Electrified G80 AWD

CALCULATED AWARDS

Best InteriorGenesis G90 3.5T
Best ExteriorGenesis G90 3.5T
Best PerformanceDodge Challenger SRT
Best ValueHonda Civic
Highest Personal Appeal .Toyota GR Supra 3.0

TITLE AWARDS

(photos at right)

Vehicle of the YearGenesis G90 3.5T
Performance VehicleDodge Challenger SRT
Crossover Utility VehicleDodge Hornet
Electric VehicleNissan Ariya

Luxury, Green and Electric Category votes can always potentially produce different winners from the more general categories.

More interestingly, both the Calculated Awards and the Title Awards, determined by different processes than the Category Awards, can produce their own anomalies. Examples are Dodge Challenger having lost both the Performance Coupe category and Highest Personal Appeal score to the Toyota GR Supra 3.0, yet winning this year's Performance Vehicle of the Year top title; Genesis winning the EV category award but losing to Nissan for the EV of the Year top title; and Dodge Hornet having lost to Mazda in the Compact CUV category, but winning the Crossover of the Year top title. This type of situation is not that common, but it's also not that hard for such things to happen, statistically, especially with small categories.

Some similar events have moved toward fewer categories with more vehicles in each, as "car" volume has shifted toward crossovers and SUVs for some years now, and all are drifting toward Green and/or Electric categories. We might expect to see this evolve here next year. Or not. ■



VEHICLE OF THE YEAR : GENESIS G90 3.5T



PERFORMANCE VEHICLE OF THE YEAR : DODGE CHALLENGER SRT



CROSSOVER UTILITY VEHICLE OF THE YEAR : DODGE HORNET



ELECTRIC VEHICLE OF THE YEAR : NISSAN ARIYA

This year's TAWA Texas Auto Roundup was held at Eagles Canyon Raceway, a private FIA Spec club and event facility with a 2.7-mile road course, 15 total turns, over 200 feet of elevation change and a 2200-foot-long back straight, about 13 miles outside Decatur, Texas.

Transformed

BY JOE SAGE

Hybrid pioneer is back on the cutting edge

After a quarter-century during which the category-defining Prius, the original and enduring high-volume hybrid, has been joined by many other hybrids, Toyota is turning the page in a big way—new everything, notably a wildly improved new look and greatly increased power. Joining our fleet would be the 2023 Toyota Prius Limited, the top of three hybrid grades (though a front-driver, so not quite the top version, as each is also available with all-wheel drive). MPG ratings are all above 50 (as high as 57) except for the top trim AWD at 49. In the face of EV-everything, Toyota makes it clear the hybrid's original mission remains solid, and we were definitely excited to have it coming in.

The new car is sharp, its highly aerodynamic form evoking near-future concepts and prototypes

many have lusted after, and it's here today. While generally smooth and slippery, its side sheet metal has an especially cool detail, a firm crease running from the rocker panel upward to the rear, that line continuing to the seam between bumper and quarter panel. Styling continuity holds up from stem to stern, no more a clunky combination of elements, yet still with the overall persona of the prior Prius.

The new larger engine and upgraded hybrid system put out a whopping 60 percent more combined system horsepower than the old Prius, and, whereas we have considerable time separating this from our last Prius drive, it is clearly plentiful. What's more, the powertrain does not hesitate—its electronically controlled continuously variable transmission (CVT) is always solid, holding power

through turns while providing the feel of very light simulated shifts. Job well done in all regards.

Regenerative braking was noticeable at first, almost a boat anchor feel when doing its thing, but this awareness quickly fades away.

The turning circle is quite tight (and note that it's even a foot tighter in the base trim with 17-inch wheels—see sidebar).

There were times our sample's front-drive basis made itself known, not via torque steer, but by letting out a notable chirp as power was applied either from a full stop or upon sudden acceleration.

Our biggest beef with driving was a tendency, really more of a compulsion, for driver assist systems to forcefully yank the car not away from painted lines (common enough and bad enough in many systems), but toward them. We have no explanation for this, but we were finally able to turn it off, though this had to be done again upon restarts.

We're also not nuts about the whirring sci-fi

sound effects when in reverse (and to a lesser degree when driving forward). Intended as a safety feature to alert pedestrians and kids when running in pure EV mode, it's not used universally, and even most modern IC engines are very quiet now, anyway. Maybe you can get used to it, but we have one in our neighborhood and never have.

Most of the instruments are very well organized, though a few functions are ill-placed (e.g. heated seats and heated steering wheel controls are in no way related by layout), and a few critical issues remained elusive for the duration, notably insufficient interior lighting—despite playing with entry-exit settings repeatedly, we ultimately had to pull out our phone as a flashlight many times.

Speaking of visibility, here's another caveat: the windshield is of such a shallow slope, the A-pillar running at such an extreme angle, with small fixed windows filling its forward area, that some critical visibility is lost, especially in righthand turns. This could be more dangerous for those neighborhood kids at play than the quiet e-powertrain (for which they were compelled to add that whirring).

One interesting phenomenon was aggressive behavior from a number of other drivers—tailgating, attempts to incite racing and so on. Perhaps it was just a response to our Texas manufacturer's plates, but we're thinking it's a sign that, despite such a complete redesign, lingering Prius detractors still recognize it. (This could be helped by the large Prius lettering on the rear deck lid.) But fans will recognize it, too, and that's all to the plus.

All in all, Prius has put its dorky days behind it, while carrying the best of its brand equity into a new era. And Toyota has reaffirmed the magic and market appeal of its leading edge hybrid engineering—you can drive this almost 600 miles (or the LE almost 650) before needing a quick refueling, range and speed EVs are nowhere near touching. And three PHEV versions joining the mix next (not yet fuel mileage rated) will surely be even moreso.

The all-new 2023 Toyota Prius brings equal parts moderately radical change and brand continuity. It affirms that the hybrid has not lost its significance. The best of the Prius persona persists. This car should prove to have incredible appeal. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Toyota, Aichi, Japan
ENGINE	M20A-FXS Atkinson cycle 2.0-liter 4-cyl alum/alum DOHC 16v VVT-8
HP/TORQUE	(engine) 150 hp (hybrid net, FWD) 194 hp / 139 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	14.0:1
TRANSMISSION	electronic CVT (eCVT)
DRIVETRAIN	FWD
SUSPENSION	F: indep MacPherson strut, stblzr bar; R: multi-link, stblzr bar
STEERING	elec pwr-asst rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 11.1 vented; R: 11.0 solid
WHEELS / TIRES	19-in alloy / 195/50R19 a/s
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	181.1 / 108.3 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	6.0 in
TURNING CIRCLE	35.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	38.0 / 36.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	43.2 / 34.8 in
CARGO CAPACITY	20.3 cu.ft
WEIGHT	3219 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 11.3 gal
MPG	52/52/52 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$34,465
DIGITAL REARVIEW MIRROR	200
LIMITED PREMIUM PKG: advanced park, panoramic view monitor	1085
HEATED REAR SEATS	350
CARPETED FLOOR/CARGO MATS	299
DESTINATION CHARGE	1095
TOTAL	\$37,494

2023 TOYOTA PRIUS LINEUP

Prius Liftback (hybrid)	FWD	AWD
LE	\$27,450	\$28,850
XLE	30,895	32,295
Limited	34,465	35,865
Prius Prime (PHEV)	FWD	
SE	\$32,350	
XSE	35,600	
XSE Premium	39,170	

While it's easy to gravitate to a top trim, it's worth noting that the top-top Limited and even the mid-grade XLE are not necessarily tops at everything. The base LE grade offers a number of advantages, in addition to its price—turning circle is a foot tighter (thanks to its 17-inch wheels versus 19s on the higher grades), cargo volume is a whopping 3.5 cu.ft larger (for reasons unexplained), and it's considerably lighter with the same powertrain, all combining for staggeringly high fuel mileage ratings of 57/56/57 for an LE with front-wheel drive. Only its ground clearance is a little less.

The new Toyota Prius just won MIDSIZE VEHICLE OF THE YEAR at the Texas Auto Writers' Association's Texas Auto Roundup.



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ARIZONA RIDER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE ON TWO WHEELS

The is the one: The 1

Curtiss Motorcycle Co. Inc. of Leeds, Alabama aims for a new golden age combining true sustainability and American hyper-luxury by designing and crafting fine electric motorcycles scratch-built from the inside-out to last forever.

The company was originally founded in 1902 by motorcycle and aviation pioneer Glenn Hammond Curtiss, inventor of the all-American V-twin. Reborn in 2016 by Matt Chambers and a small team of passionate American road bike experts, and heavily inspired by Mr. Curtiss and his accomplishments, Curtiss Motorcycle's mission is to reinvent luxury motoring through advanced design and superior innovation.

Wrapping up manufacture of gasoline-powered motorcycles and heading to all-electric, Curtiss is celebrating its 120th anniversary with a luxury motorcycle simply known as The 1, a debut electric flagship with a limited edition collection of 120 units. The company has received a Notice of Allowance for its patented Axis-Centered Design operating system, which, for the first time ever, makes a motorcycle entirely and completely symmetrical, offering both new and experienced riders a perfectly balanced, easy, smooth ride, along with ideal proportion and hyper-luxury, hassle-free control. This design will first be used in The 1.

To back up its target position as the first luxury electric motorcycle brand, The 1 introduces seven "firsts" to the industry:

- First to feature perfectly centered construction
- First to ever be truly designed and built from the inside-out
- First with geometric and ergonomic adjustability
- First to be precision-machined from aircraft-grade billet aluminum and titanium
- First to feature a full immersion, liquid-cooled battery pack
- First proprietary battery/radiator/backbone singularity
- First to be designed for radical scale

"The 1 turns heads everywhere it rides," says Chambers. "Its patented, modular proprietary platform architecture will serve as the basis for every future Curtiss motorcycle."

PRE-ORDER: Enthusiasts eager to pre-order the \$120,000 masterpiece can make a deposit at *Reserve The 1 by Curtiss—120 Collection* online at curtissmotorcycles.com.

INVEST: Motorcycle, luxury, sustainability and EV fans alike can take part in the company's journey, as Curtiss has also announced a ground floor opportunity for investors to own the motorcycle brand of the future through an ongoing direct-to-investor offer. Key reasons include:

- Curtiss' valuation relative to others makes this a true ground floor opportunity
 - Curtiss' patent protected Axis-Centered Design is the future of motorcycle architecture
 - This protected platform is modular, radically scalable and will be used on every future Curtiss motorcycle
 - Like Tesla, Curtiss is starting at the top, with the smallest-viable audience, and will work its way down the market, always staying luxury relative to others
 - Curtiss is the first, and only, luxury brand in the space
 - Like Tesla's entry into the electric automotive market, Curtiss enters the market for the electric motorcycle at a time when there is no market leader, nor awareness, by any other brand
 - Like Tesla, Curtiss enters its market with a clear advantage on technology and design
 - Curtiss' thermal management technology yields best-in-industry efficiency with application to all forms of battery-based electrification
- More information is at *Invest—Curtiss Motorcycle Co.*, also online at curtissmotorcycles.com.

CMOT is an OTC stock. Learn more at curtissmotorcycles.com or at otcmot.com/stock/CMOT. ■



We drove the new Kia EV6 last summer, as it was new to market and knocking down key awards on many fronts—styling, user experience, interior, charging times. Our sample then was a mid-trim (Wind) rear-driver, second up out of five, but priced closer to the top GT-Line than the base RWD-only Light. It was worth it, for almost 35 percent more power—225 vs 167 hp on the Light.

We drove that one in town and on the freeways and took it for a long drive up Apache Trail, an enjoyable spin in its one-pedal mode (i-pedal). That would have been a great road for all-wheel drive, but between electronic handling and general balance and performance, the rear-driver was in no way lacking. A bigger difference in the all-wheel-driver, though, is that its second motor for the other

axle also adds over 42 percent again more power—320 vs 225 hp on ours, now almost double the base Light version.

It's the faster versions that identified the model, and for 2023, the lower-powered, rear-drive-only Light model departs the lineup, Wind and GT-Line remain, either RWD or AWD, and an even more powerful AWD-only GT enters at the top. (The presence of both GT-Line and GT might be equal parts confusing and clarifying.)

The new GT delivers a whopping 576 hp—80 percent more than the other AWDs. Aimed squarely at the performance market, the EV6 GT boasts a

zero-to-60 time of just 3.4 seconds, a top speed of 161 mph, and recorded acceleration wins over Ferrari Roma and Lamborghini Huracán Evo.

This will sound thrilling to some, perhaps off-putting to others, but out of the box, the car provides a very normal experience. Its special powers are accessible through several somewhat parallel sets of options. Drive modes include eco, normal and sport. A MyDriveMode customized combination of attributes is available via one button. One-pedal mode is activated via the paddle shifters. And on top of all that, GT Mode is available via a neon green button on the wheel (style-coordinated with the GT's neon brake calipers).

As with many drive mode setups, you may wonder why its maximum (GT) attributes are a special setup rather than default, but, as with many other setups, they've chosen to put that in a special path—not a bad decision here, as it's more for a thrill factor than constant use, for most daily drivers. If you live where traffic has a high thrill factor on a daily basis, you'll find it always immediately accessible. You can drive quite normally one minute

and respond to a supercar challenge the next.

All our positive notes for the week were about performance; any negatives were about features. We had issues with seat positions (surprisingly a manual setup), never successfully comfortable, and with the complexity of changing our climate control temperature, among others. And as much as we love road connectedness, we found the ride to be quite harsh in multiple ways.

Despite all its added juice, the EV6 GT is still well faster than most when it's time to recharge.

All in all, the Kia EV6 GT's reputation precedes it, and its differences are clearly defined. Best of all, the purchase price differential for this massive uptick in power and performance is irresistible. And it's extremely reasonable for a vehicle inhabiting supercar performance territory. ■

A new level of woo-hooo!

BY JOE SAGE

Kia EV6 GT won 2023 WORLD PERFORMANCE CAR OF THE YEAR at the World Car Awards, announced the same day we received ours.

Kia EV6 GT also just won 2023 E-VEHICLE OF THE YEAR in the Rocky Mountain Automotive Press (RMAP) Vehicle of the Year Awards.



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Hwasung, South Korea
ENGINE / TRANS	.....SKorea / SKorea
CONTENT	.....SKorea 95% / US-Canada 1%
MOTOR	.....AC Synch Perm Magnet
HP/TORQUE	.....576 hp (430 kW) / 545 lb-ft
BATTERY PACK	.....high voltage lithium ion
BATTERY WEIGHT	.....1073 lb
TRANSMISSION	.....gear reduction unit
DRIVETRAIN	.....AWD
FINAL GEAR RATIO	.....10.65:1
MAX SPEED / 0-TO-60 MPH	.....161 mph / 3.4 sec
BRAKING 62.1-TO-0 MPH	.....141.0 ft
SUSPENSION	.....ECS (electronically controlled susp); F: MacPherson type w inclined strut bearing, strut ring, multi (dual) lower arm type; R: 5 multi-link
STEERING	.....rack-mounted elec pwr
BRAKES	.....regenerative: F: 15.0 vented; R: 14.2 vented - regen
WHEELS / TIRES	.....8.5Jx21 alloy / 255/40R201
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....184.8 / 114.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....6.1 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.2 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....w sunroof 36.8 / 38.0 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....42.4 / 39.6 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....24.4 / 50.2 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....4795 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....(with brake) 2300 lb
CHARGING:	.....max input power: DC Fast Charge 240 kW AC normal w ICCB (230V/12A) 68 hrs AC normal w 11kW EVSE (EV supply equip) 7h 10m DC Fast Charge w 50kW EVSE (max 125A) 73 min DC Fast Charge w 350kW EVSE (max 200A) 18 min
RANGE	.....206 miles
MPG	.....85/74/79 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	.....\$61,400
CARPETED FLOOR MATS, GT	.....170
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1295
TOTAL	.....\$62,865

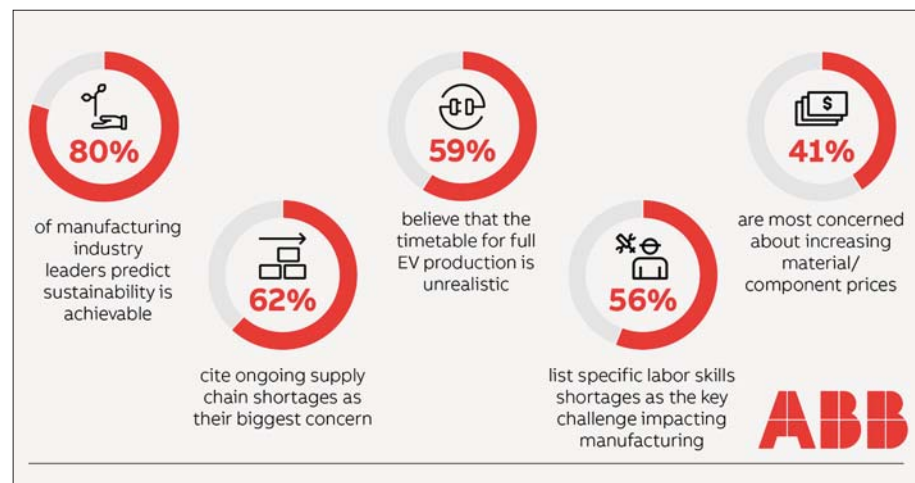
2023 KIA EV6 LINEUP

Wind	.....225 hp 258 lb-ft RWD	.....\$48,500
	.....320 hp 446 lb-ft AWD	.....52,400
GT-Line	.....225 hp 258 lb-ft RWD	.....52,700
	.....320 hp 446 lb-ft AWD	.....57,400
GT	.....576 hp 545 lb-ft AWD	.....61,400



▼ **Porsche Classic** now offers magnesium crankcases from the factory for classic 911 models built between 1968 and 1976. Until now, repairs for these parts have either had to involve trying to weld minor cracks or resorting to re-using secondhand parts from old engines. The reissue is for vehicles of the F and G series with 2.0, 2.2, 2.4 and 2.7 liter engines, including the legendary 911 Carrera RS 2.7, which turned 50 last year. Porsche Classic is already working on replicas of crankcases for other generations of the 911. For the past two years, aluminum crankcases have been available again for larger-engined 911 models from the 1990s. For production, blanks were taken from stock. The data set required for machining them was obtained by reproducing the Group C racing engine of the Porsche 962. As old engine drawings with production-related data were not entirely decipherable, Porsche Classic experts also sifted through parts lists and technical information in the company archive and interviewed former and current staff about design details. The reissued magnesium component now also benefits from these data sets for the aluminum crankcases. In the case of such replicas, Porsche Classic bases its work on the latest and most mature version of the series production part at the time. All crankcases bear a blank number that indicates this design version. The replicas are also marked with the purchase part number. Based on CAD data, a supplier casts the crankcase using the sand casting

method. First, the appropriate molds are produced in a plant, and the cores are made from sand bonded with resin. After casting, these cores are destroyed to free up the cast part. The blanks are then machined on a five-axis CNC machine. More than 50 different cutting, drilling and milling tools are used. Very little material is removed—for the milled surfaces, it is only about three to four hundredths of a millimeter. Series production



is accompanied by extensive quality control. The machined housings are measured individually using 3D measuring probes. A comparison with the machining data is also made on a 3D coordinate measuring machine. The full measurement includes over 1,300 control dimensions. For component approval in accordance with the strict Porsche Classic quality specifications, a prototype engine also

underwent an extensive test bench run lasting several weeks, using the most powerful derivative of the time, the 2.7 liter engine of the 911 Carrera RS 2.7, fitted with multiple measuring sensors. The test program included endurance runs with precisely defined load conditions and different engine speeds; taking oil samples and analyzing them for suspended particles and foreign substances; and after the test runs, disassembling the prototype engine down to the last bolt to inspect every part, with special attention paid to the two crankcase halves. These were separately inspected and examined again at the Porsche Development Center in Weissach, where testing and measuring methods were applied similar to those used for series components for production release.

▼ New global research commissioned by **ABB Robotics** and leading industry publication *Automotive Manufacturing Solutions* reveals that more than half (59%) of respondents believe the shift to pure electric vehicle production is not achievable within current legislative timelines. Respon-

dents surveyed highlighted challenges in adapting to a new battery supply chain, concerns over high levels of capital investment required, shortages of raw materials, suitable infrastructure and lack of grid capacity. Although 28% thought the deadlines were achievable, they also indicated there would be significant challenges, while 18% believed the present targets would never be met. Only 11% believed

that all regional targets for EV adoption by 2030-2040 were realistic. The survey also highlighted challenges in adapting to a new battery supply chain, cited as a key barrier by 19% of respondents, while



16% had concerns over the high levels of capital investment required. Shortages of raw materials, suitable infrastructure, and lack of grid capacity were also high on the list of issues yet to be resolved. Elsewhere, the lack of charging infrastructure was quoted as the single biggest constraint to EV adoption by over a quarter (26%), while 17% highlighted high vehicle prices as the principal barrier to EV growth. When questioned about delivering sustainable manufacturing, industry leaders were more positive, with 80% predicting sustainability is achievable. Only 4% felt it would not be possible. Almost a quarter (24%) of all respondents suggested the high capital expenditure required was the primary challenge to sustainable manufacturing, while ABB Robotics sees replacing human workers with automation will be the key enabler in the delivery of sustainable manufacturing. The ABB survey includes close to 600 global industry experts, from vehicle manufacturers, and suppliers at all levels of management, engineering and other key professionals throughout the automotive world.

▼ The new **Mercedes-Benz Operating System (MB.OS)** is a purpose-built chip-to-cloud architecture intended to be central to every future product from the automaker, promising exceptional software capabilities and ease of use. A new strategic collaboration gives Mercedes-Benz customers embedded access to Google features and maps, with further partnerships

in the works with other key players in tech hardware and software, toward rapid scaling of the system's development. Region-specific content including music, video, gaming and productivity will be integrat-

ed, with advanced smartphone mirroring via full width screen, immersive sound and voice control activation. As for driving, the system has SAE Level 2 autonomous functions tailored to urban use, ultimately with Level 3 at speeds of up to 80 mph, all powered by the NVIDIA Drive platform and machine learning. Fully connectable vehicles will be able to upgrade rapidly by sharing data over time via OTA updates. Customers will be offered new



features via app, web or car. Mercedes-Benz expects this all to be lucrative, too, with software-enabled revenues hitting the "high single-digit billions" (euro) by the end of the decade. MB.OS is designed and developed in-house in Sunnyvale, California, vowing to retain full control over the customer relationship, ensure data privacy and to leverage the unique integration of all car functions.

▼ **BMW Group** and **AirConsole** have a competition underway to develop games tailored to the in-car experience, with the two companies tapping into the potential of the global game developer community by inviting developers to pioneer the field of in-car gaming. BMW Group chose nDream—the company behind the AirConsole brand—as a partner to bring casual gaming into the car through the BMW Startup Garage program. The two companies jointly promoted the competition at the Game Developer Conference (GDC) in San Francisco in late March, and developers can submit their ideas and concepts online. From among submitted concepts, the best four games will be chosen as winners, each receiving 5,000 euros for development of a prototype. If the prototype proves promising, AirConsole will fully fund development of the game to then be included on the AirConsole platform. Winners will also be invited to BMW Group headquarters in Munich to see the result in action. Stefan Butz, VP of BMW Group development for entertainment and apps, says, "We want to offer our customers a first-class entertainment experience, and gaming is all about joy." Antti Makkonen, director of games at AirConsole, adds, "Game makers need to start

creating games for the car use-case, not just bring games to the car. Using phones as controllers inside the car makes playing accessible and fun for everyone, especially when considering that not everybody will own a game controller, or that playing directly on the car touch screen makes your arm tire quite fast." To submit concepts through June 8, visit the competition website: airconsole.com/in-car-contest. ■

UPCOMING FEATURES

Range Rover 3.0L I6 PHEV 434 hp



Mercedes-AMG SL 63 Roadster 4.0L V8 biturbo 577 hp



Sally McNulty - racer and race car builder



Lucretia Torva mural at Cascio Motors



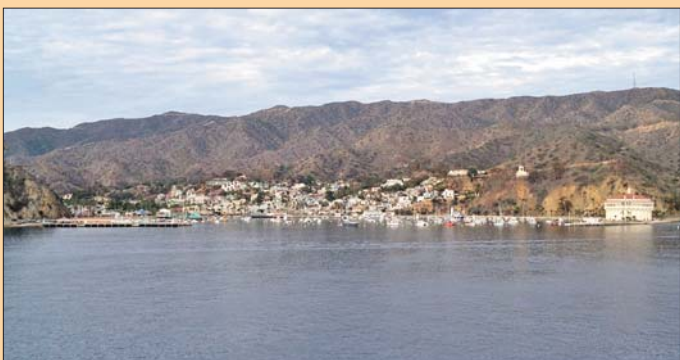
Nissan Ariya e-4orce Evolve+ EV



Ford Bronco Sport Heritage Limited 4x4



Catalina Island summer events



Radical Volks rally



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