

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 12 NUMBER 6
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2013

PROVING GROUNDS
FORD F-150 DURABILITY DRIVE
LAUNCHES

JEEP CHEROKEE | DODGE DURANGO | MAZDA3
MERCEDES-BENZ CLA 250 / CLA45 AMG | KIA SOUL

VEHICLE DRIVES
DODGE CHARGER POLICE PURSUIT PACKAGE
DODGE CHARGER SRT8 | TOYOTA HIGHLANDER

MOTORSPORTS
ARIZONA RACERS AT MONTEREY VINTAGE RACES
ARIZONA RACERS TAKE FIRST AT SCCA

EVENTS-ATTRACTIONS
LAS VEGAS AUCTION RESULTS
PEBBLE BEACH AND MONTEREY HIGHLIGHTS
JANUARY ARIZONA AUCTION WEEK INFO
BRENDA PRIDY PHOTO SHOW INFO

TECHNOLOGY
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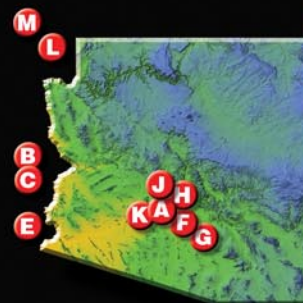
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COVER: Dodge Charger Pursuit package. In this issue is an in-depth review by law enforcement and safety driver training expert JP Molnar, plus a look at the Charger SRT8 you can own.



Photo: Brenda Priddy

Photo: Kimball Studios / Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance

START YOUR ENGINES : FROM THE PUBLISHER

Evoking a game of cat and mouse, in this issue we drive two Dodge Chargers you would love to get your hands on: the Dodge Charger SRT8, which can be yours for the right price, and the Dodge Charger Pursuit model, which is not yours at any price, unless you decide to become an officer of the law—and work for a department that’s cool enough to have this in the fleet. Law enforcement vehicle specialist **JP Molnar** brings us the details on the police version.

Racing and event correspondent **Tim Sharp**, along with co-photographer **Kristin Sharp**, handles Pebble Beach and Monterey duties, visiting the anchor Concours d’Elegance and related auctions, and racing in the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion, along with quite a few other high-speed Arizonans. Additional fast Arizonans are represented in these pages, as well, as not one, not two, but three Arizona racers take SCCA national titles. And king daddy of the racing Valley **Bob Bondurant** throws out a ceremonial pitch for the Arizona Diamondbacks. Stealthy Arizona automotive spy photographer **Brenda Priddy** announces a very public display of her less surreptitious work.

We bring you results from Las Vegas—Barrett-Jackson’s sixth annual auction plus Russo and Steele’s first—as well as fundamental information on the world renowned auctions coming up here in January, plus the inaugural Arizona Concours d’Elegance.

We also travel—to Los Angeles, San Diego, Ford’s Michigan Proving Grounds, Minnesota/Wisconsin, and Washington DC/Virginia/Maryland—to be among the first to drive the entirely new Jeep Cherokee, Dodge Durango, all-new Mazda3, Ford F-150 (and its competitors), Kia Soul and Mercedes-Benz CLA including its AMG variant, respectively. Enjoy the ride.

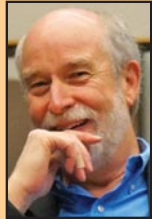


Photo: Brenda Priddy

Joe Sage
Publisher/ Executive Editor

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PUBLISHER / EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Joe Sage
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:
Becky Antioco David Boldt
Nick Calderone Larry Edsall
Stephanie Johnson JP Molnar
John Priddy Jim Prueter
Steve Purdy Barbara and Bill Schaffer
Tim and Kristin Sharp
Jan Wagner Kevin A Wilson

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:
Randall Bohl Christina Lawrie
Chris Marzoni Brenda Priddy
Jan Wagner

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www.arizonadrivermagazine.com
letters@arizonadrivermagazine.com
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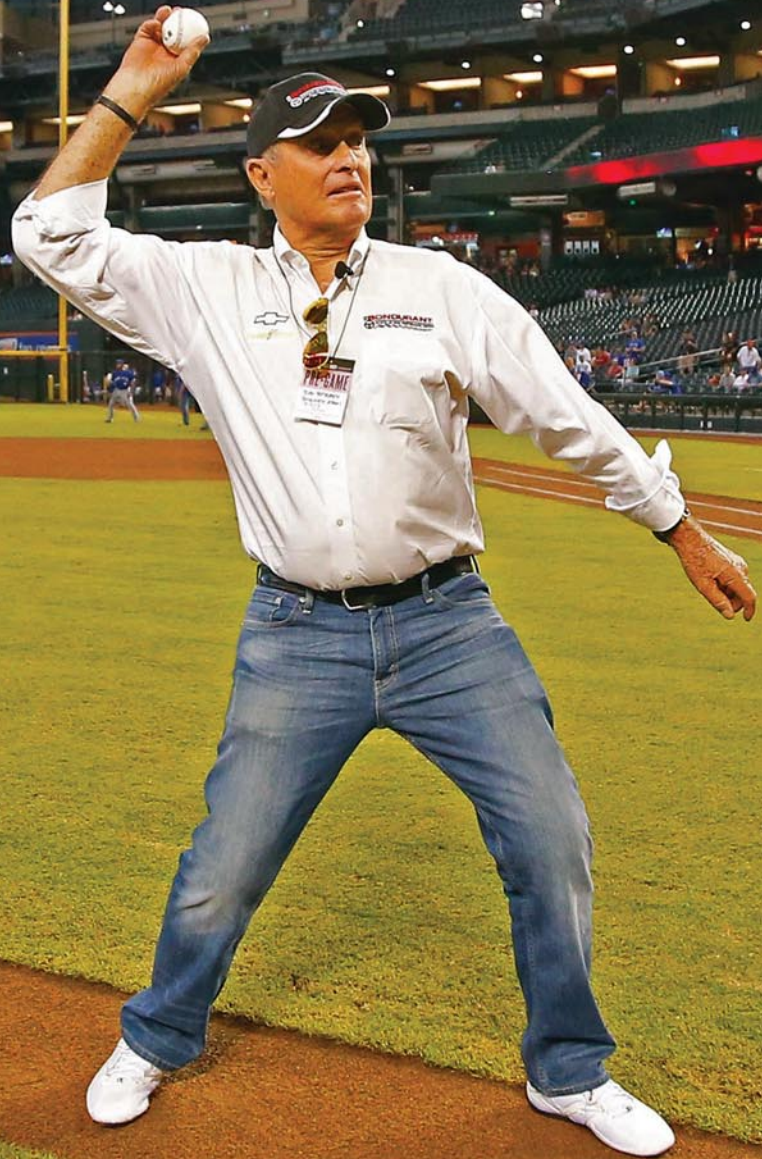
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Racer Bob Bondurant with Arizona Diamondbacks catcher Tuffy Gosewisch at Chase Field. Photos courtesy of L.M. Parr/Arizona Diamondbacks.

First pitch by first name in auto racing

Bob Bondurant, founder and CEO of the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Chandler—who turned 80 in April—threw out the ceremonial first pitch during Senior Day on September 4, prior to the D-backs vs Blue Jays game, which offered discounted tickets for fans ages 55 and over.

After competing with dirt bikes in Southern California in his teens, Bob raced Corvettes in the mid-'50s, winning the West Coast SCCA B Production National Championship in 1959 with 18 out of 20 wins. He then raced with the Shelby American team and participated in the 1965 World Manufacturers Championship, winning seven of 10 races in Cobras and Daytonas—to this day the only American team to achieve this title.

A half year after surviving a horrendous June 1967 racing accident at Watkins Glen, NY, Bob rebuilt his life by opening the Bondurant School, at Orange County International Raceway in Santa Ana. The school moved to its Arizona location in 1990. The only purpose-built facility of its kind in the world, the Bondurant School has trained nearly 500,000 people—professional racers, executives, law enforcement officers and military specialists, performance enthusiasts and day-to-day drivers—to become safer and more proficient at handling the challenges of track, street and highway driving.

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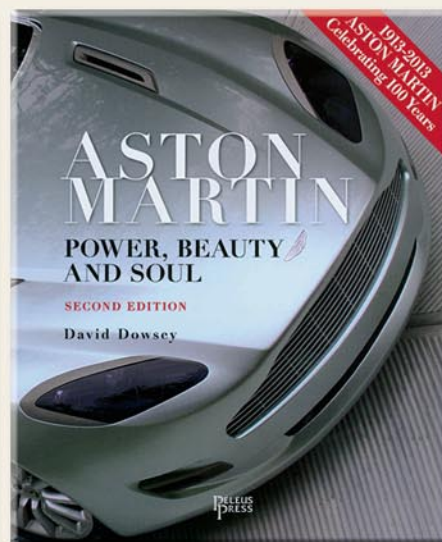
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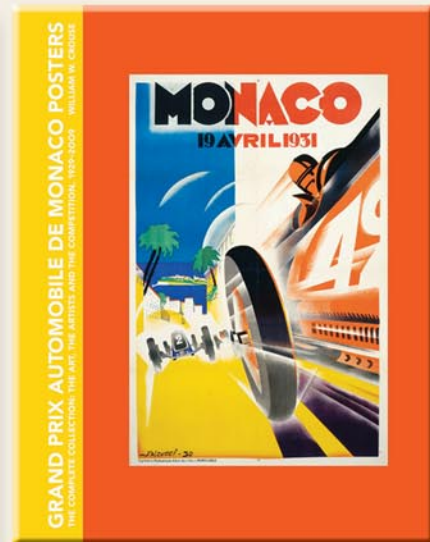
Bugatti: Carlo, Rembrandt, Ettore, Jean
Compiled by Amanda Dunsmore and John Payne
Publisher: The Images Publishing Group
9.75" x 11.5" - 108pp - Illus: 161 color, 26 b&w
\$20.00 - ISBN: 9781864703382

• This volume catalogs the first exhibition of the work of the extraordinary Bugatti family—furniture, silver, sculptures and cars produced by this family of talented and eccentric individuals, with common themes of truth to materials, love of natural form and originality of thought. Amanda Dunsmore and John Payne are curators of decorative arts at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), in Melbourne, Australia. In late 2006, NGV purchased its first work by a member of the Bugatti family, Carlo Bugatti's Throne chair, circa 1900. From this initial acquisition the idea of an exhibition grew, until the gallery staged Australia's first exhibition of the work of the Bugatti family in 2009, showcasing the work of three generations: furniture by Carlo Bugatti, animal sculptures by his son Rembrandt, and the legendary cars designed by Carlo's eldest son Ettore and Ettore's son, Jean. The Bugatti family represents a fascinating and unique story in the history of art, design and automobiles during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Aston Martin: Power, Beauty and Soul
David Dowsey
Publisher: The Images Publishing Group
9.25" x 11.75" - 352pp - Illus: 400 color
\$49.95 - ISBN: 9781864704242

• 2013 marked a significant milestone for Aston Martin—their 100th anniversary. For a century, the Aston Martin name has been synonymous with performance, style and sophistication—possessing a mystique and charisma that have established it as a cultural icon. Yet the brand's survival has not always been assured. That Aston Martins are still being produced today is testament to the power of the name worldwide. In *Aston Martin: Power, Beauty and Soul*, author David Dowsey explores the colorful history of Aston Martin, from its humble beginnings in a London garage in 1913, to its takeover by the Ford Motor Company in 1987 and sale in 2007, to the latest models. People intimately involved at various stages of the car's history offer fascinating insights into Aston Martin development, with amusing behind-the-scenes anecdotes. With lush photography and detailed illustrations, comprehensive specifications of every model from the early DB to the V8 Vantage Roadster, production statistics and racing results, this is an indispensable reference for enthusiasts—a book that truly does justice to the Aston Martin name.

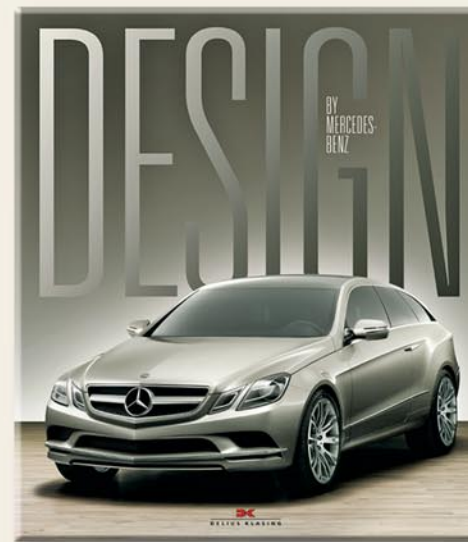


Grand Prix Automobile de Monaco Posters: The Complete Collection: The Art, The Artists and the Competition, 1929-2009
William W. Crouse
Publisher: Hudson Hills Press
9" x 11" - 120pp - Illus: 88 color, 15 b&w
\$50.00 - ISBN: 9781555953379

• This book presents every Grand Prix de Monaco poster ever published—from 1929 to 2009—a distinctive perspective on the history and tradition of the one of the world's most famous sporting events. Mediterranean coastal views, steep cliffs and hairpin turns have made the Grand Prix de Monaco one of the most legendary automobile races, drawing thousands to watch Bugatti, Ferrari, Maserati, Mercedes-Benz and others take to the narrow winding streets of the race course through Monaco. Capturing the glamor and excitement are the posters that were produced annually over its 80-year history. Shown together for the first time, this complete collection of the Grand Prix de Monaco posters offers insight into the race's historic rivalries, tragedies and highlights and into the evolution of style and design of the 20th century. With a history of each race to accompany the posters, this publication is the first to fully explore this celebrated race and its art.

The Schuco Saga: 100 Years Replete with Marvels
Andreas A. Berse
Publisher: Delius Klasing Verlag
8.25" x 9.5" - 160pp - Illus: 170 color, 65 b&w
\$39.99 - ISBN: 9783768835541

• For collectors and fans, the Schuco name evokes fascinating, high-quality model cars. Schreyer & Co was world famous for their Schuco toys in the 1920s. The legendary brand has emerged today as part of the Simba Dickie Group, one of the biggest toy manufacturers in the world. *The Schuco Saga: 100 Years Replete with Marvels* looks back on a century of success and



Design by Mercedes-Benz
Edited by Markus Bolsinger
Publisher: Delius Klasing Verlag
10.75" x 12" - 256pp - Illus: 16 color, 11 b&w
\$99.99 - ISBN: 9783768825375

Home Alone
Tim Maxeiner
Publisher: Delius Klasing
9.5" x 7" - 144pp - Illus: 99 color
\$32.99 - ISBN: 9783768835978

• No other brand has launched as many dream machines—many of which have become style icons—as Mercedes-Benz. This book is a visual tour through over 120 years of Mercedes automotive design history. Superb photographs of exemplary cars bring alive the annals of automotive design—a tour that reveals the huge contribution of great stylists and designers. Also available: Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG - ISBN 9783768833707

The Schuco Saga: 100 Years Replete with Marvels
Andreas A. Berse
Publisher: Delius Klasing Verlag
8.25" x 9.5" - 160pp - Illus: 170 color, 65 b&w
\$39.99 - ISBN: 9783768835541

• This lovingly-created photo book presents 99 photographs of many automobile classics, from the Cadillac Eldorado to the VW Bug. Painters arrange flowers and fruit to create compositions for their paintings. Photographer and author Tim Maxeiner does this with cars and houses, resulting in contemporary American still lifes. These organic unions of houses and cars were photographed mainly in the port district of his adopted home, California.

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GLA-Class: the first Mercedes-Benz compact SUV

Promising performance capabilities that are “effortless” for daily driving yet “robust enough for off-road,” Mercedes-Benz will begin delivering the 2015 GLA-Class to US dealerships in fall 2014. With the GLA, Mercedes’ SUV lineup expands into the premium compact segment, for a total of five, joining the G, GL, GLK and ML. We like what we see so far, depending upon a buyer’s needs and tastes—more fluid than the GLK, more maneuverable than the ML. The 2015 GLA-Class will be the first Mercedes-Benz SUV to have new-generation 4MATIC permanent all-wheel drive with fully variable torque distribution. ▼



2015 Mercedes-Benz GLA-Class



2014 Ford Focus ST



FORD FOCUS WORLD’S BEST SELLER

▲ The Ford Focus has retained its ranking as the best-selling vehicle nameplate in the world, with global vehicle registrations up 18 percent in the first quarter of 2013 compared to the same period in 2012. Based on analysis of Polk’s global registrations, 288,724 Focus vehicles were registered in the quarter ending March 31—the most recent figures available for that study. Strong demand in key markets such as China and Brazil fueled the growth. Focus registrations in China reached 104,065 vehicles, up 153 percent compared to the first quarter of 2012. In Brazil, demand rose 18 percent, with 7,227 vehicles registered during the period. To meet growing demand, Ford has ramped up Focus capacity worldwide. In July, the company’s plant in Pacheco, Argentina, became the latest to produce Focus on a global platform. Focus is now built in nine plants on four continents. Factories in the US, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Russia, Germany and Argentina have a combined capacity to produce more than 1.5 million Focus vehicles annually at a rate of more than two vehicles per minute. Focus is available in a range of models depending on market, including sedan, hatchback, wagon, an electric-powered model and the high-performance Focus ST.

INSIDE THE MIND OF TEENAGE DRIVERS

Fewer teens are wanting to drive (only 28 percent of 16-year-olds had their driver’s license in 2010, an 18 percent decline since 1983). Yet, there has been a surge in teen driving deaths. A new nationwide study by Driving-Tests.org reveals new insights into what’s going on inside the minds of teenage drivers. Motor vehicle fatalities are the leading cause of death for teens and represent over one-third of all accidental deaths in the US. Young, inexperienced drivers are overrepresented in motor vehicle crashes for both men and women, and 75 percent of all teen crashes are due to driver error. Summer is especially deadly, with eight teens dying in traffic accidents every day from the Memorial Day to Labor Day weekends. This study suggests that not only are teenage drivers aware of the dangers involved in driving a motor vehicle, they are surprisingly insecure about the limits of their own ability to manage those risks. Texting, talking on a cellphone and driving under the influence were cited by 85 percent of teens as the three most dangerous things a person can do while driving. Fear—of being in an accident and of other drivers—is the primary concern of 50 percent of the teens surveyed. Any decline in apparent interest in driving, among teens, has often been attributed to

the rise of social networking and/or the increased costs due to higher gas prices. Yet, in fact, zero percent of teens surveyed cited cost as a deterrent to driving; 15 percent indicated emotional pressure and fear of driving; and 28 percent indicated a struggle to grasp advanced driving skills such as highway driving, being in close proximity to trucks, turning and parallel parking. While 79 percent of teens cited texting or using a cell phone as the most dangerous thing a person can do while driving a motor vehicle, only 9 percent identified drinking and driving as a critical risk—despite evidence that over 22 percent of all teenage fatalities involve alcohol. Parental influence is credited with making a positive difference in teenage driving behavior, though the example being set by some parents might raise eyebrows. At least 56 percent of teens have observed parents texting or talking on their phones; 18 percent cited interior distractions—applying makeup, smoking, adjusting controls, eating—as limiting their parents’ focus on the road; 12 percent of teens witnessed “dangerous driving habits” such as not wearing a seatbelt and driving with their knees; and eight percent of teens cited their parents engaging in aggressive driving. Parents

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are urged to lead by example by wearing a seatbelt, putting their cell phones away and focusing on the road; to talk to teenagers about responsible driving, emphasizing the risks of distracted driving along with the dangers of drinking and driving; to sign their teens up for a defensive driving class; and to allocate additional time to highway driving in traffic, at higher speeds and around trucks.

VW GOLF R: MORE HP, BETTER MPG

▲ The first six months of 2013 saw the European debuts of the new Volkswagen Golf GTI, Golf GTD, Golf Variant, and Golf TDI BlueMotion. Volkswagen continues its Golf product offensive with its flagship in the model series—a new Golf R. The sports machine in the lineup is powered by a newly designed 296-hp TSI engine, which is 30 hp stronger, but up to 18 per cent more fuel efficient than the engine in the previous Golf R. As with all three previous Golf R models, the new model also sends its turbocharged power to the pavement via permanent all-wheel drive—in this case, the latest version of Volkswagen’s 4MOTION system with fifth-generation Haldex coupling. Chassis dynamics benefit from a new sport suspension, progressive variable-ratio steering system and ESC Sport stability control—which can now be deactivated

for track driving—as well as an optional DCC dynamic chassis control system with Race mode. This year, the Golf R will make everybody happy, with a choice of two transmissions. Equipped with a manual, the Golf R hits 0-to-62 mph in 5.3 seconds, 0.4 seconds faster than the previous Golf R. With the DSG dual-clutch automatic, the time is just 4.9 seconds. The Golf R’s top speed is electronically limited to 155 mph. Despite the car’s exceptional handling and extra power, fuel consumption of the manual Golf R was reduced from 28 to 33 MPG. Equipped with a stop-start system, battery regeneration and the optional DSG transmission, the car has an EC Combined figure of 34 MPG.

ARIZONA IS 6TH MOST EXPENSIVE

Arizona is the sixth-most expensive state to operate a motor vehicle, at \$3,886 per year, according to a new Bankrate.com report—more than 21 percent higher than the national average of \$3,201. The report accounted for the costs of gasoline, insurance, repairs, taxes and fees in each state. Georgia is the most expensive state in which to operate a motor vehicle, while Oregon is the least expensive. In Georgia, a typical driver spends \$4,233 per year to operate his or her vehicle. That is almost double the cost in Oregon (\$2,204). Geor-

gians spend a lot of time in their cars thanks in part to Atlanta’s sprawling communities and a lack of public transportation. Long commutes lead to above-average fuel costs and insurance rates. And Georgia has the highest state automobile taxes and fees in the nation. Oregonians benefit from absence of a state sales tax, relatively low insurance costs, and driving 16 percent fewer miles than the national average. For more details on methodology and findings for all 50 states, visit www.bankrate.com/finance/auto/car-ownership-costs-by-state.aspx

AUCTIONS AMERICA ADDS CALIFORNIA

Auctions America by RM added a new sale in Southern California this year, held in August. “Auctions America California” is part of the company’s national expansion strategy into key markets. Held at the Los Angeles Marriott Burbank Airport hotel, a short drive from the Bob Hope International (Burbank) Airport, the multi-day collector car auction featured more than 400 collector cars, including American and European classics and sports cars, Detroit muscle, hot rods, and customs. From entry-level collectibles to motor cars perfectly matched to the veteran collector, the offering catered to a



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Nissan NV200-based NYC Taxi



broad range of automotive tastes and budgets. Highlights included 42 automobiles from the Jim Carr Barn Find Collection of Napa Valley, offered at no reserve, joined by select offerings from two additional private automotive collections. Results and other information are available online at auctionsamerica.com.

NISSAN TAXI OF TOMORROW, TODAY

▲ Nissan's "Taxi of Tomorrow"—based on the NV200 compact cargo van and specifically designed to suit the specific needs of taxi drivers and the more than 600,000 people who ride in New York City taxicabs every day, will be ready to hit the streets of New York this fall. Production began in late August at the company's Cuernavaca, Mexico assembly plant (50 miles south of Mexico City). The vehicle springs from a two-year competitive selection process completed in 2011, in which the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) of New York City selected the Nissan NV200 as the exclusive taxi for the city. The Nissan taxi will roll off the line "looking as if it's ready to be hailed," says Nissan. Preparations for manufacture included modifying the Cuernavaca production line to integrate exclusive taxi characteristics without affecting production volumes and while maintaining award-winning quality

records. The paint shop added the exclusive New York taxi yellow color and new elements for a perfect under-floor seal. The plant also added an exclusive afterline to complete taxi-specific manufacturing processes such as bodylines, side door windows and the vehicle's panoramic roof. Nissan created a "New York Avenue" at its Arizona proving grounds to replicate harsh conditions of New York City streets, rigorously testing and tuning the NV200 taxi suspension specifically to NYC road conditions. Additionally, Nissan hired New York City cab drivers to drive test vehicles around the city, collecting data which was then used to refine the vehicle. In total, these drivers logged more than 155,000 miles—enough to cover every street in Manhattan more than 300 times.

VINTAGE BIKES ARE TOPS AT DEL MAR

The MidAmerica inaugural motorcycle auction, during the Del Mar Concours in September, saw five rare vintage pieces take top billing. Headlining antique bikes garnering top dollar were a 1916 Harley-Davidson Board Track Racer at \$47,500; a 1929 Indian Scout 101 at \$35,000; a 1947 Indian Roadmaster at \$30,000; a 1924 Indian Scout V-Twin at \$27,750; and a 1927 AJS V-Twin at \$25,250. Over 100 Japanese, British, European and

American two-wheelers were selected for the Del Mar event by their pedigree and significance to the history of the motorcycle.

NEW ERA OF HIGH MPG FROM TOYOTA

Promising continued gains in fuel economy, Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) managing officer Satoshi Ogiso outlined the launch of a new era in hybrid technology with the arrival of the next-generation Prius, while Toyota Motor Sales (TMS) senior VP of sales Bob Carter issued a challenge for the industry to significantly step up its commitment to hybrids as a core technology. As a backdrop to their announcements, Toyota for the first time gathered the entire Toyota and Lexus global hybrid lineup in one place (Ypsilanti, Michigan). The company has sold more than 5 million Toyota and Lexus hybrids worldwide, for an estimated 34 million ton reduction in CO₂—equivalent to taking 4.8 million vehicles off the road. "I would like to see us—as an industry—accomplish the same thing in the US," said Carter. "That is... 5 million hybrids, cumulatively, in the US by close of business 2016. That results in 3 billion gallons of gasoline saved—more than enough gas for the entire

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population of the US to drive from San Francisco to Los Angeles in a Prius. It's doable. And I think we will do it." By the end of 2015, Toyota plans to introduce 15 new or redesigned hybrid vehicles globally. Ogiso said the performance of this new generation of powertrains will reflect significant advances in battery, electric motor and gas engine technologies that are part of Toyota's larger strategy towards the electrification of the automobile through hybrid, battery electric and fuel cell technologies.

F-TYPE HEADS 2014 JAGUAR LINEUP

▲ A highlight of the 2014 Jaguar North American lineup is the all-new F-TYPE sports car, a continuation of a bloodline stretching back over 75 years through some of the most desirable sports cars ever built. With a lightweight aluminum architecture, the Jaguar F-TYPE represents a return to the company's historical core: a two-seat convertible sports car focused on performance, agility and driver involvement. The F-TYPE combines a lightweight chassis, advanced aerodynamics, and significant power (340, 380 and 495-hp versions) all with eight-speed automatic transmission and console-mounted SportShift gear selector or steering wheel paddles for manual shifts. Three models range from the base

3.0L supercharged V6 F-TYPE at a base price of \$69,000, through a 380-hp F-TYPE S with an enhanced version of the same engine at \$81,000, to a range-topping F-TYPE S V8, with 5.0L supercharged 495-hp V8 and a \$92,000 sticker. The convertible top folds in 12 seconds at speeds up to 30 mph. Also for 2014, the XJ flagship sedan range adds a 550-hp XJR model; the 550-hp XFR-S sedan is limited to 100 units for the model year; and the XK adds an ultra-performance XKR-S GT with just 25 units in the US (and five for Canada).

CASH FOR CLUNKERS ALUMNI NOTES

Cash For Clunker cars are about to turn four years old, with many now past their three-year manufacturer warranty lifecycle. The Car Allowance Rebate System (CARS) incentivized drivers to trade in older vehicles for new, more fuel-efficient models. Over 690,000 new vehicles were sold during the program, in July and August, 2009. A majority are now estimated to have between 40,000 and 50,000 miles of use. Vehicle service contract provider ForeverCar.com says this is a prime spot in a vehicle's lifespan, when drivers look to secure additional vehicle service coverage following their OEM warranty. Exhaust system, brakes, suspension joints, engine and electronic sys-

tems are areas that are often looked at as a vehicle reaches 45,000 miles, and the first major tuneup is right around the corner at 60,000 miles.

FORD PLUG-IN VEHICLE DATA FINDINGS

Ford plug-in hybrids are being driven about 203,000 electric miles every day—enough electric-only miles every day to drive around the earth nearly eight times, or more than 8,400 miles every hour. This information comes from aggregated data collected through MyFord Mobile, available on the plug-in hybrid Fusion Energi, plug-in hybrid C-MAX Energi, and Focus Electric. The data provide Ford planners with a real world picture of how vehicles are used and how they are performing. A recent analysis shows that there are 20,000 charge stations accessible through the Ford system; the average number of trips between charges is four; owners charge their vehicles an average of 6.3 times per week; 70 percent of Ford plug-in hybrids use level one charging stations; and 83 percent of one-way trips cover distances of 20 miles or less. Ford makes it clear that they do not collect information on individual drivers, but rather aggregate group data. After six months, nearly 30 percent of all trips are gas-free compared with about 20 percent at the beginning of vehicle ownership. ■



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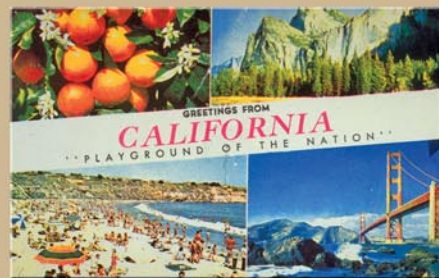


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IF LOOKS COULD KILL

The new Jeep® Cherokee has cutting edge styling built atop an absolutely do-anything foundation

By Joe Sage



Many people were initially startled by the new Jeep Cherokee. When it was still in the rumor sketch and spy photo stage, we were. But it has grown on us remarkably fast. That's the first test of a restyling: does the prior model (or, for a new vehicle like this, the staid alternative) quickly become dated, and this one fresh? The new Jeep Cherokee passes this test, in our opinion. The second test is whether a forward-looking design will still look good after a few years of use and abuse. Time will tell. So far, we know it does look good dirty.

We now actually like the front quite a bit. In fact, it doesn't deviate as completely wildly as you may think: in the mid-1970s, the grille on a full-size Jeep Cherokee had a similar dynamic kink. The new one just has the added benefit of contributing to this compact Jeep's admirably high fuel mileage. We actually may be more critical of the rear sheetmetal—not that it is offensive, but it's just too similar to too many other vehicles. Look at a Jeep Wrangler from the back (or any other angle, inside or out) and its "Jeepness" will always come through. We'd like to see that here.

But enough about styling. This little Jeep is big news. What has Jeep given us to drive here?

When we drove the 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee at launch last spring, in Texas, we were enormously impressed with its ability to do anything a Wrangler can do, despite its comfort, polish and size. The off-road course set up for us outside Westlake Village, California to torture and test the new smaller and more economical Jeep Cherokee was no more forgiving. And the new Cherokee was no less capable. In fact, we were blown away by what this little Jeep can do.

This vehicle replaces the Liberty in Jeep's lineup, going toe-to-toe in the marketplace with other compact SUVs such as the Ford Escape, Toyota RAV4 and many more. But—as always—Jeep has more than a full deck of cards up its sleeve.

The new Cherokee replaces the upright, boxy Liberty with a character and capability arguably more evocative of the flagship Grand Cherokee.



The mid-'70s Jeep Cherokee (above)—a sportier two-door derivative of the full-size Jeep Wagoneer—proves the angular grille of the new Cherokee bears Jeep heritage. The new Cherokee's grille may even beat that old model's Jeepworthiness by featuring the brand's current trademark seven bars. The 2014 Cherokee looks modern, clean and fresh.

Jeep holds the number one spot for SUVs in the US, and last year, Jeep sold over 700,000 units worldwide, a record. They aim to do it all again this year, despite having had the Liberty out of the mix for a few months while awaiting this replacement. The Cherokee clearly has its work cut out for it, but Jeep is bullish about its potential.

The goal was to produce an all-new vehicle that was "absolutely a true Jeep." The first look at its new styling reminded a few people of the Isuzu VehiCROSS from the '90s, kind of a trivia question and not exactly Rubicon Trail material. Forget that. Our time behind the wheel—which matched the top-ranked Grand Cherokee's Rubicon widths, 60-degree descents, mud, rocks and all the rest from earlier this year, but now in California instead of Texas—revealed supreme competence, for what looks superficially like any of a number of other small-to-midsize SUVs and CUVs. Highway time was no less impressive. We spent a whole day with the Cherokee, running the two-lane twisties of the Santa Monica Mountains, boulevards and freeways around Westlake Village, and an off-road course that only the bravest vehicles would attempt. It was tops, all around.

A Cherokee with 2.4-liter 16-valve Tigershark four-cylinder and nine-speed automatic is rated as high as 31 MPG highway, if you buy it in 4x2 form. (4x2? In the realm of pure Jeep-hood, a two-wheel-drive version bugs us a little, brand-wise. And this is actually front-wheel-drive as a 4x2. For our personal garage it would be a 4x4, problem solved. But we do understand the need for volume sales—and we also see its broad appeal.)

That nine-speed automatic is the first for this segment (and among the first at all). Our launch event received pretty wide mention for an uncharacteristic last-minute delay of a few weeks—as they decided the transmission needed more work. Word was that it would simply be a software fix, and new sales would remain on schedule, with an early September press launch (instead of August)



and Cherokees on the dealers' showroom floors by the end of that September, to fill the Liberty sales gap as soon as possible. Would it be done? We had no idea. Could it indeed just be a software patch? With Jeep's first-ever Fiat-generated chassis, a front-drive layout, that new nine-speed, a new rear-axle disconnect design and so many other innovations, we weren't sure. But fast forward just a few weeks, and there we were—driving hard, fast, steep, slow, smooth, rough and sure in the mountains of Southern California, with this thing shifting like a dream. They did it.

Engines include the aforementioned 2.4L MultiAir2 Tigershark inline-four (184 hp, 171 lb-ft) and a 3.2-liter Pentastar V6 (271 hp, 239 lb-ft). The four-cylinder can get up to 31 MPG, with a range of almost 500 miles on a tank of gas,

while the six-cylinder can tow 4500 pounds.

Meet three new 4x4 systems: Active Drive I, Active Drive II and Active Drive Lock. Active Drive I is an on-the-fly automatic system. Active Drive II has more aggressive gearing and locking systems for more serious off-roading. And Active Drive Lock is fully trail-rated, with a locking rear differential for the most serious rock crawling and off-roading. (And we can attest to its utter and complete capability at this.) Crawl ratios are as low as 56:1 with the 2.4L four and 47.8:1 with the 3.2L V6—up to 90 percent better than the Liberty this vehicle more than replaces.

One reason the new Cherokee's fuel economy ratings are as much as 45 percent higher than the outgoing Liberty's is another new innovation: a

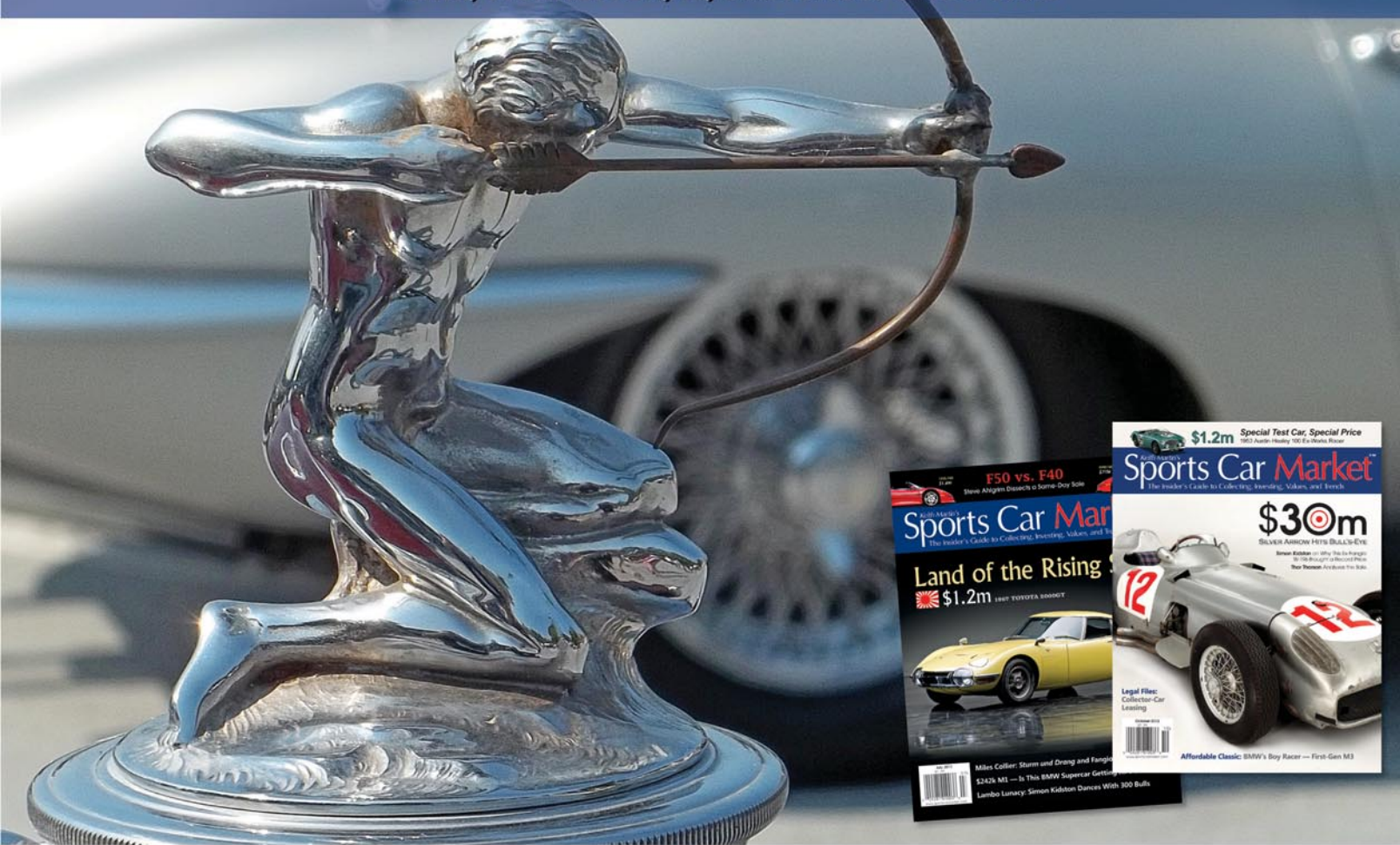
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Tough on the outside and tough to beat on the inside: we enjoyed both aspects of the Cherokee, on the boulevards and on heavily beaten trails.

rear-axle disconnect system on 4x4s that reduces drag while in two-wheel-drive situations (on the highway or around town in non-slip weather).

Tech features abound: adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning, forward collision warning, blind spot monitor, rear cross path detection, 8.5-inch Uconnect touchscreen system plus 7-inch TFT instrument cluster, dynamic backup camera, parallel and perpendicular park assist and even a wireless charging pad for your own devices.

The 2014 Jeep Cherokee is available in four models: Sport, Latitude, Limited and a Trail Rated Jeep Cherokee Trailhawk. Interiors reflect the high-end style, material and exotic color schemes introduced with the new Grand Cherokee. Inside and out, it's quite a package, in total.

We became so used to the Cherokee's styling, so fast—not just adjusting to it, but admiring it—that we're hard-pressed to remember why we were commenting on it at first. But we know it did take an adjustment.

During the press drive in California, we passed a Wrangler at one point, exiting a two-lane tunnel as we entered it. We contemplated what he might be thinking, seeing this for the first time. Did he more likely feel that this was a travesty, or that this was the future, and he was slipping behind? No worries—Jeep has made room for both approaches, and both carry the full DNA.

It definitely compares well with the Liberty. There's little question we're in a downsizing (and fuel-economy-boosting) era, and as the Jeep team has applied their skills to the new Cherokee, they have accomplished that benchmark of redesign: yesterday's model (the Liberty) looks immediately like yesterday's news.

We've heard other manufacturers state a goal of being recognizable from a considerable distance down the road—sort of a rearview mirror test. We'd say there's no question that this is recognizable as a Jeep, at a glance (from the front).

Overall, our experience with the new Jeep Cherokee is summed up by that relatively rare but oh so telling realization: we want one. This vehicle quickly went to our short list. We could even see owning two of them—one on the urban style side, and a Trailhawk on the hardcore side.

Part of the appeal of the Jeep Cherokee is its affordability—the lineup starts at \$22,995, just \$4500 more than the entry level Compass. It's very possible for you to build an economical take-home model, as all the fundamentals are sound throughout the line, complete with core Jeep capabilities. We would personally add four-wheel



OUR TEST CHEROKEES

COMMON TO BOTH:

ENGINE3.2L Pentastar V6
TRANSMISSION9-speed automatic
POWER/TORQUE271 hp, 239 lb-ft torque
DRIVETRAIN4x4
FUEL MPG.....19/27 city/hwy, 22 comb
SUSPENSION:

(front) McPherson strut, long travel coil spring; (rear) four-link with trailing arm.

2014 JEEP CHEROKEE LIMITED 4X4:

WHEELS18 x 7.0 polished aluminum
BASE PRICE\$29,995
TESTED PRICE\$37,030

2014 JEEP CHEROKEE TRAILHAWK 4X4:

WHEELS17 x 7.5 polished aluminum
BASE PRICE\$29,495
TESTED PRICE\$36,120



Dodge Durango: Daimler Dividend

The fundamentals of a Mercedes-Benz GL at a fraction of the price? By Joe Sage

It has been a surprisingly long time since Daimler and Chrysler split up. Their sometimes stormy marriage lasted from 1998 through 2007. But its impacts live on. Many platforms and technologies were shared or swapped during their time together. Friends and family alike only whisper about some of this, and much is never fully confirmed. Take for instance the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG, which reportedly is based on the Dodge Viper—or perhaps on what the next Dodge Viper was destined to be, had it lived on.

And take for instance the Dodge Durango—a large and powerful SUV from Chrysler Group LLC, which they themselves gently mention contains some valu-

able elements of its departed half-sibling, the Mercedes-Benz GL-Class. Despite a dearth of specifically corroborating evidence, that factoid got our attention. After all, the Mercedes GL is one of our favorites, and we are not alone—it has vaulted to the head of the line in sales for its segment and class. But what of the Dodge Durango, which arguably delivers much of the same product, but clearly at a much lower price. How much lower? It depends upon your final trim and options, but the difference in base prices is startling: \$63,000 for a bottom-tier GL, but \$29,795 for a rear-drive SXT trim Dodge Durango.

Now we are definitely interested. And what, for that matter, of another one of our favorite vehicles, the Jeep Grand Cherokee—an even closer half-sib-



ling of the Durango (both hailing directly from Chrysler Group)? These questions led us to build the chart shown on the facing page.

One thing Dodge made clear to us at this vehicle's press launch is that the brand does not try, or even want, to be all things to all people. There are some niches they don't touch (small hybrids, electric or convertibles, for example). What they do do, they do right, and they are proud of that. They feel it makes them unique within their segments. Dart, Challenger and many other models substantiate this. Dodge CEO Tim Kuniskis tells us a Charger "is like an Avalon on paper, but is cross-shopped against... nothing." Dodge thinks the mid-to-large SUV category has gotten soft, but they are proud that the Durango is still the real deal. It delivers towing, performance, technology and safety—but also per-

sonality and attitude.

Compared with the Jeep Grand Cherokee, it delivers seven seats. It has two of the same three engines (no diesel) and the same transmission. Towing capacity is the same. Cargo room is considerably larger, unless of course you utilize all the seats—the classic seven-seater tradeoff.

The Durango's extra size adds anywhere from 200 to almost 600 pounds, which drops fuel mileage (Jeep's 30 MPG high end comes with its apples-and-oranges available diesel). Prices match at the low end, but you can save about eight grand with a Durango in top trim, still with that extra interior volume. You may not want the extra length—it's about a foot longer, with a 5-inch-longer wheelbase—but the turning circle is the same. A tie on around-town maneuverability, but more to squeeze into a garage, basically.

But that mention of what we've called the Daimler dividend in the Dodge Durango's bloodlines is what led us to what we think is a most enlightening perspective and study in relativity.

Compared to Mercedes-Benz GL, your Durango—whether base or top end—comes in at less than half the cost of the Benz. Horsepower is about the same (on the mainstream models), and the Dodge is better on MPG (again, not counting the Mercedes diesel). The GL can tow a bit more—100 to 1300 pounds more—but its turning circle is three feet larger, a disadvantage as you maneuver your boat to the ramp, or at Safeway.

As of August, Dodge sales had topped 400,000 units and were on track to pass 600,00 for the year. This is America's fastest-growing brand, with double-digit growth on all models.

As for cross-shopping Ford, GM, other Europeans, the Japanese and Koreans—well, now that this Benz and Grand Cherokee comparison has gotten our attention, there is no question the Dodge Durango should be high on any comparative shopping list in the segment. ■

	DODGE DURANGO	MERCEDES-BENZ GL-CLASS	JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE
ENGINES (hp/lbft)	3.0L V6 (290/260)	3.0L V6 T-diesel (240/455)	3.0L V6 diesel (240/420)
	3.6L V6 (290/260)		3.6L V6 (290/260)
	5.7L V8 HEMI (360/390)	4.6L biturbo V8 (362/406)	5.7L V8 HEMI (360/390)
		4.6L biturbo V8 (429/516)	
TRANSMISSION	8-spd auto	7-spd auto	8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	RWD / AWD	RWD / AWD	RWD / AWD
FUEL MPG (CITY/HWY)	14/23 to 17/22	13/18 to 19/26	17/24 to 22/30
LENGTH (IN.)	201.2	201.6-202.6	189.8
WHEELBASE (IN.)	119.8	121.1	114.8
TURNING CIRCLE (FT.)	37.1	40.7	37.1
PASSENGER CAPACITY	seven	seven	five
CARGO (sq.ft. bhd 1st row / 2nd row)	84.5 / 47.7	93.8 / 49.4	67.5 / 36.3
GROUND CLEARANCE (IN.)	8.1	8.5	8.6
WEIGHT (LB.)	4756-5331	5401-5578	4545-4725
TOW CAPACITY (LB.)	6200-7400	7500	6200-7400

BASE MODELS, BASE PRICES:

Durango:	SXT RWD	\$29,795
MB GL:	GL 350 BlueTEC 4MATIC	\$63,000
Jeep GC:	LAREDO 4X2	\$28,995

TOP MODELS, BASE PRICES:

Durango:	CITADEL AWD	\$43,395
MB GL:	GL 550 4MATIC	\$89,000
	• GL63 AMG w/ 5.5L biturbo V8 (550hp) AWD	\$118,560
Jeep GC:	SUMMIT 4X4	\$51,195
	• SRT 4X4 w/ 6.4L HEMI V8 (470hp) AWD	\$63,660

TESTED: 2014 Dodge Durango Limited AWD

BASE PRICE\$38,395

Options: Dual screen Blu-ray rear DVD entertainment center, second-row fold/tumble captain's chairs with full console, power sunroof and power liftgate, 20-inch polished aluminum wheels.

AS TESTED\$43,875

Note: all specifications subject to change and further verification.



soul reincarnated

The original Kia Soul represented a watershed moment for the brand. Could they completely redesign it without losing its flavor and, well, soul? Well, yes.

By Joe Sage



Kia chose Minneapolis as the launch site for the 2014 Kia Soul for a number of reasons. For one thing, it's been declared the Nicest City in America by the *Wall Street Journal*. And Kia is a nice company, and the Soul is a nice car. The town is also increasingly recognized as a hot spot for art and music, and for food and wine (it's *Food & Wine Magazine's* favorite new food city). Perhaps most pertinently, Minneapolis has been declared one of the Top Five Best Cities for Generation Y, and this generation's style, philosophies and demographics—including art, music, food, wine and niceness—mesh perfectly with the Soul.

The funny thing is that despite this focus on Gen Y, popularity of the Kia Soul actually completely spans age groups, vehicle shopping niches and taste in general. The company shies away from stating the average buyer age, because it is 48. This is younger than most—it's always surprising to realize how many brands have average buyers of 55 or 60 years old—but not as young as the Soul would seem to attract. One key reason for this is that most data comes from vehicle registrations, and a great many Souls are sold to parents, for their offspring to drive. At the same time, the numbers are legitimately skewed by the vehicle's popularity with some older buyers, who like everything from its price, to its youthful look and feel, to its utility and easy access.

Buyers migrate to Soul from many segments: over 20 percent from compact cars, 17.2 percent from compact MPVs, 13.3 percent from midsize cars, just over 10 percent from compact SUVs and just under 10 percent from midsize SUVs.

Bottom line: if the Kia Soul catches your eye, yours is not to wonder why. It's broadly popular.

What's surprising about the Kia Soul's broad success is not just its breadth and depth, but its persistence and duration. Most new models do well for a couple of years, but then see sales decline by about 5 to 10 percent after the second year. Not Soul. Its second year was more than double its first, but its third was over 50 percent above that. The fourth year was up again, now hitting almost four times the first year's sales, and model year 2013, the car's fifth year of production, is on track to repeat that.

So when the time comes to create a new version of such a vehicle, the designers, stylists and engineers proceed very carefully. We've seen this over the years—with mixed results—in such other enduring vehicles as the Volkswagen Beetle or Jeep Wrangler. Some go retro and succeed,



while others are a miss. The Kia Soul isn't old enough to confront the retro issue. For this, it's simply a matter of providing the car with a refreshing shot in the arm, while not damaging any of its enviable brand equity.

Do it right, and you'll keep your customers, attract new ones and draw interest to the brand. This is what made Soul so significant five years earlier—prior to its introduction, the overall Kia brand was not very significant in the US, with combined sales of the Spectra and Optima at less than the then-nonexistent Soul is now. "Since Soul" (which is a bit of a mantra inside Kia), sales are up 250 percent and Kia has long since cracked the Top 20, now ranking as the eighth largest brand in the US by volume.

The Kia Soul is the quickest turner—has the shortest time on the lot—of any vehicle in the industry. The need for cash or other incentives is among the lowest. And the average price as outfitted continues to rise (from a plurality of sales under \$18,000 and even a few around \$14,000 in 2009, to equal volume around \$18,000 and \$20,000 plus a growing volume around \$23,000 by 2013). So yes, they have to do it right.

The project planners identified three areas to address in the Soul's redo: design, desirability and dynamics. By design, they mostly mean styling, although elements of engineering and ergonomics have been addressed throughout, as well. The styling redo has really been a master stroke—or seems to be, as of now (the passage of time is needed, to confirm this). A few specific points are mentioned in the sidebar, and comparative photos tell the tale. Some quirky features



NEW MODEL SPOTTER'S GUIDE: The red and brown Kia Souls shown above are the prior model, while the Latte Brown one on the facing page and the Solar Yellow at top are the redesigned 2014 Soul. • We always liked the cantilevered headlights in the original, but those have been streamlined in the new one, no longer continuing the hood seam. They also depart from following the curve of the wheel arch as they did before. Less distinctive, perhaps, but more fluid and active, less static. • The wheel arches themselves are softened, as is the side crease. • From the rear, there is no mistaking the two, although all the spirit of the original remains. Tying the liftgate's shape in with the taillights gives a wider appearance, and again feels more active and fluid. The taillights evolve from the originals, but with more emphasis on their shape, while the rear reflectors involve body shaping and become a more active part of the styling in the new model.

KEEP RIGHT >>



First all-electric Kia will be a Soul

During our launch event in Minneapolis, Kia announced an all-electric version of the Soul, to go on sale in the US in 2014. With the vibe the Soul commands, it is a natural platform for Kia's first venture into electrics. The Soul EV will be distinguished by enhanced aerodynamic styling cues and will be exclusively battery-powered. More details about the Soul EV's powertrain, range, MPGe and markets in which it will be available will be announced at the major auto shows coming up this winter. "Eco-consciousness already comes standard on the all-new Soul, with 85 percent of its materials able to be recycled at the end of its lifespan, and the Soul EV will further demonstrate Kia's engineering capabilities as well as our commitment to producing vehicles with reduced environmental footprints," said Orth Hedrick, executive director of product planning, Kia Motors America.

are modernized a bit, while an overall feel of fluidity replaces some static and angular aspects of the original. At first, you would be excused if you walked by the new one and didn't realize it was new. But take a look back and forth between the two three-quarter-rear shots on our opening spread—the Latte Brown 2014 Soul in the lead photo and the brown prior model at right—and it becomes clear. Not only are distinguishing details modified, such as the tailgate and lights, but the overall sheetmetal shapes have a lot more flow to them. The overall shape, the stance, the blacked-out window pillars, the high-mounted curving vertical taillights—these are all still present and accounted for. But modernized.

Inside, the stylists applied a circular theme—easy to pick up from the famous pulsing color lights surrounding the door speakers in the prior model (and continued in this model)—but brought into more shapes throughout. The official schtick is that this represents "the sonic range when music is playing." Whether you see that or not, it's easy to see that the audio system, as well as the climate control system, have style points that benefit greatly from this overall direction. Combination speaker and vent stacks at the outboard corners of the instrument panel are so well done (see left sidebar), you will likely marvel at them for as many years as you own the vehicle.

More objectively, the interior is upgraded with de rigueur soft touch surfaces throughout, door handles are engineered to feel better and latches to close with a more solid sound, and the center stack includes soft gloss black surfaces.

The new Soul follows suit to a common evolution, becoming longer, lower and wider. Besides the subtle effect this has on style, it also enhances ingress and egress, and it allows for an inch of additional front seat travel. Rear headroom is increased a bit, and side-to-side separation of front seat occupants is increased a bit, enhancing the feeling of roominess inside.

Driving dynamics are improved several ways. More ultra-high-strength steel and structural adhesives have increased body rigidity by a whopping 28.7 percent. A one-piece front subframe (with four bushings, formerly none) pushes suspension forward and the stabilizer bar back, for more precise tracking with less movement. The steering box is moved forward, for better balance and on-center feel. A new one-piece steering gear housing (replacing a two-piece) is stronger and provides more direct steering feel. A new Flex Steer system has three settings: Comfort, Normal and Sport—which feel more distinct than many such systems. Twin-tube rear shocks have been turned vertically (they were angled

previously) and lengthened for more suspension travel, improving ride comfort.

Increased quietness is also delivered through that new front subframe and improvements to materials and construction of the instrument panel, underbody and chassis. Of note is a new expansion foam, sprayed into the body and frame before the final bake oven, which expands to fill and block out all sound transmission paths.

There are two engines in the 2014 Soul: for the Base model, a 1.6-liter, and for the Plus (+) and Exclaim (!) models, a 2.0-liter. Both are inline four-cylinder GDI (gasoline direct-injection) engines. The Base 1.6L has 130 hp, 118 lb-ft of torque and is available with either a 6-speed manual or 6-speed automatic transmission, either of which delivers 24/30 MPG city/highway. The 2.0L engine in Plus and Exclaim models (which we drove in Minnesota and Wisconsin on our launch drive) has 164 hp, 151 lb-ft of torque and achieves 23/31 MPG city/highway. Manual shifting is available on the Plus but not the Exclaim.

The Soul Plus model is available with an ISG option (Idle Stop and Go), which is rated at 24/31 MPG. We have learned to be apprehensive of some start/stop implementations—including some top-dollar ones—though we know they will soon be universal. But the Kia Soul's is one of the smoothest we've driven.

You can be out the door with a new Soul at a base price of just \$14,400 with a manual (\$16,200 automatic) and still have all the fundamentals of style and utility that come with any Soul.

But for just \$500 more (\$16,700 starting), you are into the Plus (+) model, at least if you make the apples-and-oranges move back to a manual (we would). And whereas the jump to an automatic in a Base model is \$1800 more, the jump in a Plus is only \$1000 more. Unless you are absolutely counting every dollar (plus those dollars are likely to be spread out for several years to come), the boost in power with the Plus (or Exclaim) is well worth that cost differential. (If you're scraping too tight, there will be some great used Souls on the market, too, although another bonus of the car's immense popularity is high residual value.)

The Exclaim (!) model starts at \$19,900—so well equipped, they've clearly worked hard to keep it under \$20k.

We've always found the Kia Soul a great vehicle to drive—around town, on the freeways or even on the long haul. It has punch beyond its numbers, utility beyond its size, and features and comfort beyond its price.

Factor in all the improvements in the "totally transformed" new model, and it is all the moreso. We drove for a very full day along and across the



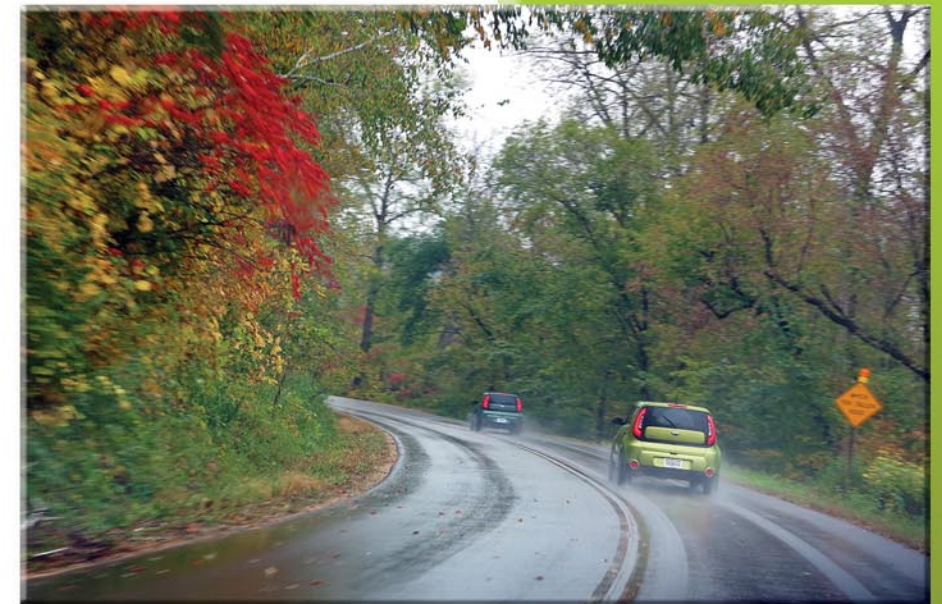
Mississippi River, in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and well into the Wisconsin dells. Our route included beautiful two-lane roads you would be happy to test any car on—and we enjoyed this one fully. To round out the challenge, we had rain for much of the day. The Soul's combination of carefully considered suspension and well-implemented electric steering delivered a solid, neutral feel well beyond most front-wheel-drivers.

The interior amenities are well laid out, including its new side-by-side map-and-nav feature, which proved useful on some of our more challenging stretches of map. As always, the Infinity audio system is not only superb, but—as we've said before—delivers sound that could cost this much just to add on to some more expensive brand vehicles. It has a rock and roll soul.

The folks at Kia have put their hearts and minds into this new Soul, and it shows. ■

SAMPLE TEST SPECS

ENGINE	2.0L GDI 4-cylinder
TRANSMISSION	6-spd auto w/ Active Eco
POWERTRAIN	FWD
POWER/TORQUE	164 hp, 151 lb-ft torque
FUEL MPG	23/31 city/hwy, 26 comb
EXCLAIM (!) BASE PRICE	\$20,300
• Sun and Sound Package: automatic climate control, panoramic sunroof w/ power sunshade, 8" nav-satellite-traffic, Infinity audio, speaker lights	
• The Whole Shebang Package: HID low beams, pushbutton start w/ smart key, leather trim seats, heated/vented front seats, heated rear outboard seats, heated steering shell, Supervision meter cluster w/ 4.3" color LCD, engine immobilizer	
DESTINATION	
\$795	
TOTAL AS TESTED	\$26,195



Mazda MASTERY

By Joe Sage



It's been two years since we met the all-new-for-2012 Mazda3 SKYACTIV, which we drove through the mountains beyond the Hollywood Hills, in Southern California. Flash forward, and we're doing something quite similar, but in the mountains beyond the San Diego foothills, and in a Mazda3 that has advanced more than those two years might normally suggest.

Flash back a month or two, and you'll start to see why. Our San Diego launch drive of the all-new Mazda3 comes right on the heels of our weeklong Arizona drive of the all-new Mazda6. That in turn had come on the heels of our week with the Mazda CX-5, which had been all new the prior year, but for this year received a significant

boost in power—which, in fact, was exactly the only thing it needed. "Nailed it," our headline said. They then nailed it with the new Mazda6. They are the first to confirm that the pressure was on, when creating a new Mazda3.

Mazda's KODO "Soul of Motion" design language had already made it to the CX-5 and Mazda6. As we noted with the Mazda6, they have taken the essence of that theme from original auto show concept cars and delivered "an extremely high percentage of what you saw then, and in short order." We had called the actual production grille on the new Mazda6 "one of the best-proportioned in the current lineup."

If anything, the Mazda3 implementation is even moreso—and a huge improvement over the smiley face it replaces. This was a great place for the redesign to start, putting the car's style right up front, along with its high-class, smaller-size value.

The Mazda3's C-segment is the largest in the world and is now the second-largest in the US. It is only expected to get larger, with 25 percent growth forecast over the balance of this decade. Mazda has sold some 3.5 million copies of the Mazda3 in 120 countries—and won many awards—since its 2003 introduction. It's almost hard to now recall that in 2003, the segment was dominated by largely unlovable econoboxes. With both style and performance, the then-new Mazda3

drew attention immediately. With multilink rear suspension, 4-wheel disc brakes, nav, leather, xenon headlamps, rain-sensing wipers and other such traditionally high-end and high-dollar features making it into a high-fuel-efficiency mid-\$20s sedan and hatch, the Mazda3 forced everyone else to up their game.

Thus the pressure for the new Mazda3. The team's mantra was that they "must get it right." We'll jump ahead a little, right here, to let you know that, yes, they nailed it on the Mazda3, too. They have upped their own game.

At the core of Mazda's current product lineup are the dual goals of delivering a fun and performance-oriented driving experience, along with frugal fuel economy. Tackling these two attributes simultaneously is not unique to Mazda, but they do have their own comprehensive approach to it: SKYACTIV. This suite of technologies comprises the development of everything in unison—engines, transmissions, chassis and suspension, body, interior materials, you name it. All is interrelated, all is examined and some things are unexpected. For example, higher compression ratios (13:1) demand new air conditioning systems. A new transmission requires a different design for the trunk. Ultimately, anything that can be tweaked to weigh less while performing better and/or looking classier has been addressed.

Two SKYACTIV engines are available in the Mazda3: a 2.0-liter four-cylinder achieving up to 41 MPG and a 2.5-liter achieving up to 39 MPG. (Both those numbers are for the Mazda3 four-door; the five-door test cars we drove in California—specs at right—are rated a little lower.) The smaller engine has an improved low-end and midrange torque curve, while the larger one has available i-ELOOP regenerative engine braking. Your decision will fall mostly to the balance between price and horsepower. (The 2.5L has about 18 percent more power and 23 percent more torque, for just 14 percent more cost, so if you have three grand, the choice is probably pretty clear—but if not, you won't be disappointed.)

The success of Mazda's new engine comes from their approach to computer engineering, in which they have wiped classic concepts of economy of scale out of the formula. They are able to scale individual parts for maximum performance and efficiency, both, rather than adapt larger and smaller engines parts, each to the other, and rather than spend the sums traditionally needed to optimize both. Older Mazda MZR engines shared blocks among 2.0- and 2.3-liter engines, and shared crankshafts between 1.8- and 2.0-liters. Four iterations from 1.8 to 2.5 liters all were essentially the same size and weight. This



OUR 2014 MAZDA3 TEST CARS

MAZDA3 I 5-DOOR GRAND TOURING

ENGINE.....SKYACTIV 2.0L four-cylinder
TRANSMISSION.....6-speed manual
HORSEPOWER/TORQUE.....155 hp / 150 lb-ft
MPG (EST).....29/40 city/hwy - 33 combined

BASE.....\$23,245
DELIVERY.....\$795
TOTAL.....\$24,335

MAZDA3 S 5-DOOR GRAND TOURING

ENGINE.....SKYACTIV 2.5L four-cylinder
TRANSMISSION.....6-speed auto w sport mode
HORSEPOWER/TORQUE.....184 hp / 185 lb-ft
MPG (EST).....27/37 city/hwy - 31 combined

BASE.....\$26,495
CARGO MAT.....\$70
REAR BUMPER GUARD.....\$100
SCUFF PLATES / DOOR SILL TRIM PLATES.....\$125
DELIVERY.....\$795
AS OUTFITTED.....\$27,290

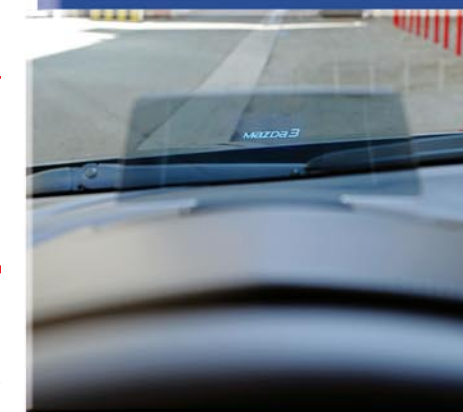
was no way to optimize fuel economy, much less performance. Bore, stroke, size and weight are all pro-rata on the SKYACTIV-G series (the two discussed here, plus a 1.5-liter). Lightweight performance, achieved.

And here's one more way all this effort ends up not only in your garage, but in your wallet: this approach to engineering reduced 45 assembly processes down to just four. The engine assembly rooms are so efficient and so spotlessly clean, you might think you are in a hospital or a climate-controlled computer clean room. The general look and feel of the finished drivetrain is surprising to most who see it—exquisite as a Swiss watch, while powerful enough to rip up the roads with pleasure.



One look at the Mazda3's cockpit shows style, features, sport and comfort you would expect to see at a much higher price point. All the vitals are designed to work with the driver's center line. The display screen is separated, so its functions remain distinct.

Mazda's ADD is a new take on heads-up displays. The familiar approach projects key readouts on the windshield glass. This could limit the slope of the windshield, and therefore the car's aerodynamics, plus it could be exposed to more glare. Mazda's solution (below): a separate transparent screen, which pops up where it's needed.



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The Mazda3's frame is heavily reworked, with more high-strength steel and alloys, resulting in a 30 percent increase in torsional rigidity. The benefits of this are many, but they include the car's best-ever steering response. Number one, the steering communicates—this is not one of the disconnected electric units we've seen in a few vehicles over the past couple of years. It steers as well as a Miata and feels even better. Steering effort is carefully calibrated for the right amount of effort at varying speeds and throughout a turn. As with all things SKYACTIV, there is more to this than just the steering mechanism. For example, a new high caster angle in the front suspension self-centers to create the neutral basis for a solid feel. The system is a fully mechanical build, with power added only for fine-tuning the driver's effort—not for the steering itself, as in full electric systems. It feels great.

Mazda claims the best fuel-economy-to-power ratios in this class—"right down to the base models." Speaking of classes and base models, Mazda points out that their overall goal is to provide "class-above" content and technology. This already includes—carried over from the previous model—such things as keyless entry and start, dual-zone climate, Bose 9-speaker audio, auto-leveling bi-xenon headlamps, heated front seats with leather trim and 6-way power driver's seat, auto headlights, rain-sensing wipers, adaptive front lighting, blind spot monitor, rear cross traffic alert and more.

Added for 2014 are LED daytime running lights, 18-inch alloy wheels, rear camera, paddle shift, a heads-up Active Driving Display (ADD: see side photo and notes on previous page), the CONNECT™ infotainment system, and more safety (or near-autonomous) electronics, such as lane departure warning, high beam control, forward obstruction warning, radar cruise control and smart city braking. Look at those prices again. A couple of years ago, you were talking Mercedes-Benz E-Class and well above, to get all that.

Much of the Mazda3's tour de technology falls under the i-ACTIVSENSE umbrella—a suite of radar-, laser- and camera-based features. Radar (76 Ghz in front, 24 in rear) provides adaptive cruise control, forward obstruction warning, smart brake support and rear blind-spot vehicle monitoring. Near-infrared laser data also contributes to smart brake support, and cameras set the stage for lane departure warnings and high-beam controls.

That's a lot of technology for a driver-oriented car, but it doesn't get in the way of your driving. Overall, these features contribute fairly passively

to your driving enjoyment. Adaptive front lighting reacts to your speed and direction plus actual perceived road conditions, to point your headlights more toward where you're going. You will be aware of blind spot warnings, and if you need them you will be glad they are there. Lane departure features vary, but the Mazda3 has the best ratio of usefulness to intrusiveness: it gives you visual and audible signals if you deviate (approximating the effect of crossing Bott's dots on lane markings). Smart braking features are of the warning and brake-force-preset variety, letting you know an obstruction is imminent, then reducing your speed to where damage should be greatly reduced, or—better still—you command a full stop more easily than you would without the assist. Its laser input claims faster responses than others who use radar. When asked whether all these features were aimed toward a future with autonomous cars—something that at the moment seems semi-inevitable in some form, industrywide—Mazda tells us that their brand is "all about the driver and the driving" and that these features are "just helping out... so far."

There are a lot of ways to choose your Mazda3, starting with seven trim levels. Five of those are with the 2.0L engine and two with the 2.5L. Trims available with a manual transmission (any of the 2.0L models) are priced \$1050 lower than their automatic counterpart. (We consider the manual, at a savings, to be a win-win, but the actual take rate on the manual is just 10-15 percent. They do say a manual is in the works for the 2.5-liter, though, and they expect a higher take rate with that.) The automatic, however (officially known as SKYACTIV-Drive), is not your uncle's automatic. This unit is engineered to work and feel like a dual-clutch manual, though below 5 mph, it operates like a conventional automatic. The result is impressive. On challenging roads in the mountains of Southern California, we found both transmissions strong, smooth and enjoyable.

The whole lineup starts with a 2.0L SV with manual, at \$16,945 base. This carries forward 16-inch steel wheels, AC, 4-speaker AM-FM audio and tilt-telescope wheel—things that do sound like the base model—but for 2014 adds that 2-liter SKYACTIV engine with 41 MPG highway rating, a 6-speed SKYACTIV transmission, stylish DRLs, USB audio input, keyless entry and push-button start, and power doors, windows and mirrors. All that for under \$17,000, and the values build from there. At the top of the chain is a 2.5-liter GT, which has everything five prior levels of 2-liters have added, plus everything an S Touring 2.5L has—including Sport mode on its 6-speed



SKYACTIV automatic, LED/DRL combos and 18-inch alloys—then adds moonroof, leather trimmed seats, adaptive front lighting, auto dimming mirror, auto headlights and rain sensing wipers. This chart-topping hit has a price of just \$25,995. On most models, that moonroof is a standalone option, a rare opportunity to choose without compromise, which may be welcome with some Arizonans, who don't always want a moonroof at all, given the intense sun beating down for a few summer months.

Mazda has been selling about 70 percent four-doors and 30 percent five-doors in the Mazda3 segment. Note that they call this a five-door, not a hatchback. Intensely popular in most of the world, hatches have traditionally received a cooler reception in the US. Calling them something else may be helping, but most likely the overall trend toward shopping smaller has awakened a few more people's senses to the wonders of this format. Mazda expects the five-door percentage to rise. Note that we grabbed five-doors for both halves of our launch drive.

Mazda is a much smaller outfit than the Japanese big three, and they have mastered their processes at this scale. Small size and focus are big pluses for the development of the SKYACTIV program and its drivetrains. And the company's efforts have not gone unnoticed in the marketplace. Sales have been strong, with the month before our launch drive having been the company's best in ten already impressive years. The newest models—the new CX-5 and the new Mazda6—are leading the pack. Supplies are tight, with turnarounds (days on the lot) in the 40s for the CX-5 and 20s for the Mazda6. If you like what you see in the new Mazda3, you might want to get your name in. ■

Drive time in the Mazda3 included some of the best roads we've driven, in the mountains east of San Diego. Through steep climbs and slaloms at speed, this car handled like a champ, all the while aiming for 40 MPG. There's a lot to love in the Mazda3.

Part of our drive route was very close to the Mexico-US border—so close, in fact, you could pretty well kick a football over the fence. That dark line three-quarters of the way up the hill is the border, and Mexico sits at the top of the hill. Mazda is building a new assembly and engine plant in Mexico, but the Mazda3 is built in Japan.



Automotive Artifacts

*super secret
spy photographer
faces the spotlight*

Photos by Brenda Priddy

Many know Brenda Priddy as the anonymous person behind many of the photos we see of cladded and camouflaged test cars. Brenda usually stalks the region's desert proving grounds, waiting for test cars and prototypes to exit, and then photographing them for magazines and websites around the world. But Ms Priddy will make a rare public appearance in late January, when an exhibit of her fine art photography debuts at the Chandler Center for the Arts.

While waiting for test cars to photograph on the public roadways, Ms Priddy is always looking for other subjects, and recently found them in places as diverse as junkyards and classic car concours: hood ornaments, nameplates and various details caught her eye. These have become the focus of this upcoming photography exhibit.

The exhibit, Automotive Artifacts, opens with an artist's reception on January 31st (5:30-7:30pm) and runs through March 8, 2014. Normal gallery hours are 10am to 5pm, Monday through Friday, and noon to 5pm on Saturday. Admission is always free.

For more information, visit:

www.chandlercenter.org/visual-arts/exhibition-hall.html



Spy photo by Joe Sage





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SRP expands electric fleet

Watch for a splash of color on Valley freeways as Ford's Energi plug-in hybrids join Chevrolet Volts already in service

Full into the parking lots at Salt River Project's headquarters in Tempe and you'll notice electric vehicle (EV) charging stations sprinkled throughout, for the convenience of employees and customers. And more 240-volt Level 2 charging units are coming, as SRP—the nation's third largest public utility—continues to invest in its "green fleet."

As part of the company's program, SRP increased its line of new-technology vehicles with the addition of five Ford plug-in hybrid electric vehicles in October—three Fusion Energi and two C-MAX Energi. These augment five Chevrolet Volts already in the SRP fleet. A total of 15 green vehicles will be leased by 2014.

"The initial five Chevy Volts were added to SRP's fleet as part of a demonstration project with the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) to help determine the impact of electric vehicles on the Valley grid," said Jim Wood, SRP's director of transportation.

The electric vehicles are being rotated through the company to get a wide variety of driving distances and habits. Each Volt's OnStar system is collecting data such as drive time, state of charge, recharging details, trip routes and charging locations. On the Fords, the MyFord Mobile app collects data on driving and charging habits, toward improving all-electric driving and charging performance. The Ford app also provides real-time battery charge status, a vehicle locator and value charging—so you can automatically recharge at lower-cost, off-peak times, when there is less strain on the electrical grid.

Departments throughout SRP, including Facilities, Transportation Services, Load Research, Environmental Management, Policy & Compliance (EMPC) and others are teamed up to review and analyze data collected.

The Volt's drivetrain is powered only by electricity stored in its 16-kWh lithium-ion battery, for a typical range of 25 to 50 miles. Its on-board gasoline engine

can generate electricity to power the drive unit for extended-range capability, and it plugs into either a standard household 120-volt or 240-volt outlet.

Employees are also test-driving SRP's plug-in hybrids to become more familiar with the technologies and to find out why SRP is adding these vehicles to its fleet.

SRP built excitement among employees by allowing them to vote on the best custom-designed wrap for each of the new Ford plug-in hybrids. The top five employee-voted designs were to be announced November 7, after we went to press.

"We're very proud of the high level of interest that employees have demonstrated during our fall transportation campaign. These new additions to our green fleet will not only reduce emissions, but are fun to drive. Perhaps you'll spot one during your next commute," said Kelly Barr, senior director of Environmental Management Policy & Compliance. ■



Brawler

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JP MOLNAR

PREDATOR: Dodge's HEMI Charger Pursuit model is one bad mamba jamba in the police vehicle world

In law enforcement, there is what is known as the Use of Force Continuum.

Simply put, this is the scale of force options available to an officer to achieve both compliance and control of a situation, as well as protect themselves and others. Unlike many other scales, the importance of the very "lowest" level can be just as critical as the highest level, as compliance or deterrence in a more basic sense can prevent the necessity of a higher level of force.

That said, the Continuum begins with mere command presence. In the driving world, it is pretty basic: you see a cop car, you slow down. You see a cop car with someone stopped on the side of the road, you slow down for a while. Part of this equation, then, is having a patrol vehicle that, by its mere presence, lays down an unspoken law: you can try, but you aren't gonna win. In that

respect, the Dodge Charger Pursuit model delivers that message in spades. Here's why.

Background

Law enforcement vehicles, while small in number compared to the general consumer marketplace, are a critical category for automobile manufacturers, for several reasons.

First, it is the perfect environment to test their product under the harshest of conditions, 365 and 24/7. Second, the garnering of lucrative government contracts can mean years of steady purchasing. While you may buy a new car every few years, larger departments buy them by the hundreds or thousands. Finally, and arguably most importantly, manufacturers derive a tremendous sense of pride from supplying hard working officers with a vehicle that lets them do their job efficiently and safely while

actually enjoying what they drive. Plus, since everyone notices a cop car, better to have your logo on the grille and trunk than someone else's.

Dodge has certainly been a part of this mix for decades, but the Charger has been their most successful iteration so far. Introduced in 2005, the "new" Charger hit the road at full steam with a brawny 5.7-liter V8 that absolutely decimated the patrol vehicle market in terms of straightline performance and top speed. I had one of the first Chargers as a patrol vehicle, and it was a thrill to drive, and overall a much better car than the Crown Victoria or the Impala. It has some warts in the space, braking and visibility areas, but the car functioned extremely well and delivered driving dynamics that really stood out.

KEEP RIGHT >>



Hauler

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOE SAGE

Prey: This store-bought civilian Charger has the cojones to take on the police Pursuit model, but they know that, and we don't recommend you try it

The Charger Pursuit model shown at left will win any contest. It comes with a competitive advantage that goes beyond any spec sheet. But, as always, the Charger SRT8—the maximum performance model from Chrysler Group's Street & Racing Technology group—outspecs the rest, including the Pursuit model, on paper.

There is not a weak-kneed Charger in the lineup, of course. The basic car ranges from a 292-hp 3.6-liter Pentastar V6 to a 370-hp 5.7-liter HEMI V8. The Pursuit model offers the same two engines. An SRT8 ups the game with a highly tuned 6.4-liter HEMI pumping out 470 hp—a 27 percent horsepower gain off just a 12 percent displacement bump.

We drove the Pursuit model first and fell in love with its 5-speed immediately. The shifts are powerful and smooth, and it feels good to feel them. It's a throwback during a time

when 7-, 8- and even 9-speeds are joining the fray—and we liked the five.

The basic Charger 5-speed automatic is an AutoStick overdrive model whose final drive ratios vary by trim and engine option in the civilian model, with the Pursuit version (just about) matching the base SE, or optionally matching the R/T. That is the only Pursuit transmission, but the civilian Charger also offers an 8-speed automatic on SXT models. The SRT8's 5-speed has the same ratios and a final drive ratio matching the base model's R/T Blacktop model (3.06), delivered through a Getrag limited-slip differential. Adaptive electronic control (automatic, AutoStick or paddles) adds a more aggressive shift pattern through available Track mode.

Some things never change: Chrysler Group

KEEP RIGHT >>



CHARGER PURSUIT VS SRT8

	Pursuit V6	Pursuit V8	SRT8
ENGINE	3.6L	5.7L HEMI	6.4L HEMI
TRANS	5-spd auto	5-spd auto	5-spd auto
<i>(Pursuit with overdrive and AutoStick; track mode on SRT8)</i>			
POWERTRAIN	RWD	RWD	RWD
<i>(or avail late 2014)</i>			
	--	AWD	--
POWER/TORQUE	292/260	370/395	470/470
TRAILER WT MAX	1000 lb	1000 lb	--
FUEL MPG c/h (RWD)	18/27	16/25	14/23
	(AWD)	--	15/23
CHARGER SRT8 BASE (as tested 2013)\$44,995			
DRIVER CONFIDENCE GROUP\$745		
ADAPTIVE CRUISE CONTROL GROUP\$795		
HARMAN KARDON AUDIO GROUP\$1995		
POWER SUNROOF\$995		
245/45ZR20 BSW PERFORMANCE TIRES\$150		
GAS GUZZLER TAX\$1000		
DESTINATION\$995		
TOTAL AS TESTED\$51,670		

2011 meant a redesign

While there is a new, reskinned Charger due in 2014, for 2011 Chrysler had listened to department gripes by fixing the brake issue, and making some substantial changes body-wise. While looking similar to the previous model, in actuality the sheet metal was all new. The biggest change came in visibility, as the windshield header was moved up 3 inches, larger side glass openings were added, and quarter glass was added at the rear doors for better over-the-shoulder view. There were also wider door opening angles, a redesigned front grille and fascia, and a redesigned rear decklid and fascia. Personally speaking, I can say that the changes were immediate and night-and-day. After having a patrol Charger based on the previous model, these changes have helped to keep the Charger in the hunt with newly-released products like Ford's Interceptor and SUV, and with the recently released Caprice (the platform for the upcoming Chevrolet SS). That the Charger has essentially remained unchanged since 2005, yet is still highly effective in the patrol environment, speaks to its solid design. Let's review why the car still has a lot of dog left in its fight, and why it's not too far from the SRT8 in spirit and performance.

Drivetrain

Cop cars need power to minimize the time it takes for apprehension of offenders, which can make traffic enforcement safer. Now, before you start griping, the same power allows them to come help you when you are in a world of hurt. The pursuit Charger is available in two flavors.

The first is a 3.6-liter Pentastar V6 that churns out a respectable 292 hp (6500 rpm), with 260 lb-ft of torque (4800 rpm) bringing up the bottom end. It's mated to a 5-speed autostick transmission that transfers power to the 200 mm rear axle through a standard 2.65 final drive with 3.07 optional. I have had several occasions to drive this powertrain choice, and it's not a bad combination, especially if the bulk of patrol work is block-to-block, short distance driving. It won't set the world on fire, but it can get out of its own way, and if you have driven a rental Charger V6 as of late, it's the same motor.

Then there is the 5.7-liter HEMI option, the same roaring, snorting beast of a powerplant you find in the civilian model. It rules the patrol vehicle roost with 370 hp (5250 rpm) and a tree-stump-pulling 395 lb-ft of torque (4200 rpm) delivered through a 5-speed autostick, 215 mm rear axle and 2.65 final drive

(3.07 optional). Equipped with this torque beast of an engine, the Charger smacks 60 mph in the nose at just a tick over 5 seconds, and keeps on pulling from there. Comparatively speaking, the V6 delivers more of a body blow with a mid-6-second time, which isn't slow, but not amazing either. Both versions have a 19.1-gallon fuel tank, and fuel economy numbers are 18/27 for the V6 and 15/24 for the V8, not much of a difference actually, and consistent with what I have seen with both models in real world driving.

Transmission-wise, the 5-speed autostick on both models allows for "manual" control of the transmission via a rocker switch located on the column shifter. The transmission also features an electronically controlled torque convertor. More on this later.

Suspension

In short, the Charger is like most beasts: large and in charge, with muscles rippling from every angle. Park it next to typical mid-to full-size four-door sedans, and its slabshape with high door skins and squared-off corners makes them look like kiddie cars, outside your favorite supermarket. This

KEEP RIGHT >>

does engineering very well—hence the special attention paid to details of each model.

While the Pursuit model's suspension adds front and rear stabilizer bars (28/20mm in RWD with either engine; 32/16mm in an AWD V8), the SRT8 adds 30mm and 18mm bars (front and rear), Bilstein shocks, lateral and diagonal lower links in front, and an isolated suspension cradle in the rear. An Auto suspension mode is joined by a Sport mode and Track mode (the latter working in combination with shift programming).

For comfort, control and the general presence of a Navy destroyer slicing through the high seas, every Charger delivers. The SRT8 delivers to the absolute max. Suspension is a key part of the timeless American muscle car formula, and Dodge gets it right.

Overall, our logbook noted that we like the Charger SRT8's simple and effective interfaces, its fit and finish, and its style—wheels, badging, spoiler and other SRT details (though we appreciate the Pursuit model's stealth approach, lighter on the scoops and scallops and spoilers). We liked the SRT's power, solid feel and ergonomics.

If you miss the best of the great American sedans and muscle cars, here is a great modern example. This is not the only way you

The SRT8's race-inspired flat-bottomed steering wheel is cool in style but hot in summer. Alerts from a forward collision warning system could be welcome but seem a little out of character in this libertarian muscle car. SRT8 wheels are stylin'.

can get it, but... you can sure get it this way.

Our car had a \$1995 Harman Kardon system, and audio quality was very good. (It also seemed to have a sixth sense, like the radio in Stephen King's *Christine*—in our case bringing all-American Springsteen, Seger, Thorogood, Boston and Skynyrd around on the iPod's shuffle, as though it just knew.)

We found the Charger Pursuit and SRT8 to both be smooth, powerful and utterly a kick to drive. The SRT8 might win on the track (if its driver is as well trained as a law enforcement officer), but a real world faceoff between the two would be folly for the SRT8 owner. We drove through one speed trap in the Charger Pursuit (and lived to tell the tale). Whereas those officers were probably puzzled by our lights and livery, they basically didn't bat an eye. A good thing, since if they had been more curious, we would have had some 'splainin' to do. What the SRT8 has in common with the Pursuit version is that confident feeling—yeah, c'mon, just try to take me on. The SRT8 adds a rebel touch. ■



The full-size spare needed in the police version of the Charger takes space away from an already fairly tight trunk. • The current Charger has added some dimension to the rear doors and noticeable improvement to rear glass visibility.

comes at a cost, and that's in a curb weight of between 4000-4275 lbs, so controlling it all requires a competent suspension. Thankfully, Dodge has done an excellent job with this by equipping the Charger up front with independent suspension with high upper "A" arms, coil spring over gas-charged mono-tube shock absorbers and a very hefty 28 mm stabilizer bar. Lateral and diagonal lower links with dual ball joint knuckle help control the suspension deflection shenanigans. Bringing up the rear is a five-link independent rear suspension with coil springs, gas-charged load-leveling NIVOMAT rear shocks, a 20 mm stabilizer bar and isolated suspension cradle, charged with both delivering suspension compliance while planting the rear wheels squarely to terra firma for the 395 lb-ft constantly coming their way.

Since the HEMI provides a lot of "go," the "whoa" is equally important. As mentioned, Dodge has addressed previous brake gremlins with updated, sizable 13.6-inch vented, dual-piston caliper front brakes and 13.8 inch single-piston, vented rotors in back. As with all new vehicles, the Charger has ABS, stability control and traction control, plus two additional braking proactive technologies called Ready Alert Braking and Rain Brake Support. Since we don't get much of the latter here in Arizona, I didn't get a chance to play with it, but I assume it is similar to other braking systems that "pre-charge" the brake system and modulate braking based on CAN-BUS inputs from other systems like stability control, throttle and steering wheel angle, speed of brake pedal application and so on.

Rounding out the suspension is power assisted rack-and-pinion (my favorite) steering and 18x7.5 inch steel wheels wrapped with either Goodyear or Firestone Pursuited tires. My demo had the Firestones.

Interior

If there is anywhere where the Charger has taken some hits, it's the size and accessibility of interior areas. This isn't different from the civilian model. When I had my 2005, getting a taller or bigger subject into the back seat took some creative maneuvering at times. Once in, they fit fine, but larger doors were needed. Chrysler responded with the 2011 model revision by restyling the doors to square them off a bit more. This has helped. Another area of gripe was rear window visi-

bility. The revision has helped, for sure, and makes backing the Charger much easier, cage and all.

If there is any Achilles heel to the Charger, it's the trunk. What's deceptive is that, despite having large rear haunches, the trunk is actually pretty small. This is hampered further by the fact that the full-size full spare doesn't fit in the cutout at the bottom of the trunk. While the compact spare may be fine in the civilian world, officers who work rural areas or highways need a full-size spare. Making this happen means it has to be mounted in the main area of the trunk, under the slide-out metal electronics tray located under the rear deck area (also not in the civilian model). The end result is pretty poor, to be honest. The lack of a spare in the spare tire hole means you have a bit of chasm to deal with, and not much flat surface area. In other words, if you have items you carry in your car you hardly use, the spare tire well is the perfect place for it. It's the only real weakness on an otherwise fine car, and may or may not matter, depending upon what you carry around. This isn't an issue in the civilian model, but hopefully the 2014 model will cure an ailment that has plagued this car since the beginning.

Thankfully, up front, things are much better. The front seats are shaped and cut to accommodate duty belts, and seating position is fairly high up in the car, making for good visibility out the squared-off windshield and side windows. Dash height is manageable, and the car feels airy inside, despite a high door line, something I can't say about the Interceptor.

The floors, front and rear, are predictably rubber for easy clean-up, and the traditional center stack between the front seats has



been replaced with a law enforcement-specific equipment tray for radios, siren controls and so on. The shifter has also been moved to the steering column to make room for police gear. Ergonomically, the control switches are good quality, fall easily to hand, and the leather-wrapped steering wheel feels nice to the touch.

As can be expected, many wiring configurations can be ordered, depending on your needs. Chrysler's infotainment/HVAC command center is called Uconnect, and it's available in some models. Mine had the standard HVAC and radio head unit, with steering wheel-mounted controls and a 12-volt outlet, USB port and AUX-input cluster located central in the dash. Dual-zone climate control is

standard, and a 6-speaker audio system is standard. A dual-mode white/red dome light is standard, as are 160 mph speedometer and power windows and mirrors.

In the rear, a cloth seat is standard, with a fixed plastic (yes, please) rear seat, which mine was equipped with. Plastic seats with padded handcuff cutouts don't bode well for taking Grandma comfortably to the Golden Corral on Sundays, but then again, I don't know your grandmother. Overall, the interior is a comfortable place to be, with lots of space and easy-to-use features.

Driving impressions

In short, this is one awesome patrol car. I didn't expect to be as smitten with the Charger as I was, especially since it is in the twilight of its production life. As a law enforcement and high-performance driving instructor, I drive every current patrol car out there, and while many are powerful cars, a big engine in itself does not often a great car make. Driving dynamics is important, of course, but capturing the blend between comfort and handling can be a tall order.

Furthermore, as someone who has spent a lot of non-exciting time in a patrol car (yes, it's not like COPS all the time), ergonomics and comfort are equally important. In other words, when I evaluate any new patrol vehicle, it really comes down to whether I could see myself wanting to drive the thing every day. In this case, yes.

My time with the HEMI Charger involved two weeks of daily driving on city streets, highway, back roads, and even seeing how it easy it was to park at the gym. Along the way, the Charger grew on me. As an example, the 5.7-liter HEMI is powerful, but it's the smoothness of its delivery that impressed. Power is everywhere in the rpm range, and the engine never seemed at all concerned with delivering what I asked of it. It's also quiet despite its size, only snarling appropriately under full throttle.

Another component to that experience is the 5-speed transmission. One clear way to see if a drivetrain engineer is paying attention is the amount of drivetrain lash between shifts. A surge, or rough shift, is not only an unpleasant feeling, but it can also upset the dynamic balance of the car due to erratic weight shift. In this area, the Charger impresses. The electronically controlled torque convertor does its job, with barely perceptible upshifts even under full throttle. Impressive.

The advertisement features the name "Torva" in a large, stylized font at the top. Below it, the slogan "Fine Art of Fine Automobiles" is written in a bold, orange font. The central image is a vibrant yellow classic car, possibly a 1950s Ford, shown from a front-three-quarter view. The car is set against a background of a blue sky with white clouds, and the image is framed by a white border that looks like torn paper. At the bottom of the advertisement, the name "Lucretia Torva" and the phone number "480.251.3817" are listed, along with the website "www.TorvaFineArt.com".

Dynamically speaking, the suspension and tires do their job well, with essentially zero body roll or pitch under most conditions. The suspension settings are stiff, almost to the point of being a little overaggressive. Suspension compliance is limited, as this is one stiffly sprung and shocked car. On billiard smooth roads like here in Arizona, that can be advantageous, but add in some minor imperfections and you can feel where shock compression settings could stand to be a little softer, as the end result is that the car tends to want to dance around a bit as the suspension valiantly attempts to remain compliant with the road surface. It's not anything major, and while I tend to prefer a stiffer suspension over a soft one, I can see where areas of the country with atrocious roads could make for a rough ride for officers.

Braking is confident, with excellent feel and modulation. Overall, the rack-and-pinion steering is very precise, the feel is good, and the car feels like a 4000-lb go-kart that goes where you want it to go, and does so without ever feeling really challenged.

Stylistically speaking, nobody else comes even close to the Charger. It's one bad mamba-jamba, and the styling says "Uh

uh...not in my house." The car looks like what a police car should look like, and the public apparently agrees. I had numerous people tell me what a "bad ass" car it was, not something I ever heard with any of my other patrol vehicles. So, congrats, Chrysler, for being unique and nailing it right on the head.

Down the road

The Use of Force Continuum begins with "Command Presence." In many cases, this begins with what you see in your rear view mirror, or on the side of the road. Beyond that, the vehicle has to be many things: powerful, safe, versatile, comfortable, efficient, flexible and enjoyable to drive.

If I were to sum up the Charger, I would call it "highly capable" on all fronts, despite the thorny trunk. Like Rocky, it still has a few more solid punches to throw before it's time to throw in the towel. It's solid in every aspect of its performance, and it sits on the road with authority that few cars can match. Hopefully, the 2014 Charger will preserve the excellent chassis, Rottweiler attitude, roomy interior and unmatched command presence, while adding in a decent trunk and some more goodies. Can't wait to drive it. ■

Russian Roulette.



When is a cell phone a weapon? Whenever you drive a car and use one. It's that simple. And that deadly. Last year, nearly 6,000 fatalities and over half a million injuries were caused by distracted drivers. In fact, texting behind the wheel is so dangerous that it can impair a driver's response time by 18% - or the seconds it takes to miss a stop sign, run an intersection and broadside a family.

Whatever you have to say can wait. Unless it's goodbye.™



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Arizona biorubber research center farm construction complete



Bridgestone Americas Inc. in early October announced completion of their Agro Operations Guayule Research Farm in Eloy, Arizona. The research farm will supply guayule biomass for rubber production at the company's BioRubber Process Research Center, which is currently under construction in Mesa (see "In Pursuit of Homegrown Tires" in our July/August 2013 issue).

Bridgestone has restated their commitment to a healthy environment for current and future generations. "Because the demand for tires is expected to increase in the long term, we are investing in identifying ways not only to diversify our natural rubber source beyond the hevea rubber tree, but also to explore other innovative methods to make our products more sustainable. Guayule fits the profile perfectly, as it's both domestic and renew-

able," said Bill Niaura, director of new business development, adding that the completed Agro Operations site is a critical piece of the puzzle.

Agro Operations includes a dedicated 281-acre research farm, two greenhouses, an equipment storage building, and a main research and laboratory building—all now completed. Teams working on-site will research genetic improvement and optimized agronomic practices; will scale up seed availability for additional farming and biomass production; and will build relationships with independent producers.

The farm started growing guayule for research use in spring of 2013. The team has completed its fall planting, scheduled to provide its first output of biomass to the BioRubber Process Research Center for tire evaluation in mid-2015.

The center was designed by Tempe-based architects Hollon Design Associates LLC. Construction management was performed by BSI Construction LLC.

Bridgestone Group has established the usage of 100 percent sustainable materials as an initiative to make full use of the company's technological and product development capabilities. Accomplishing this will require progress specifically in the areas of expanding or diversifying renewable resources.

Through efforts such as guayule research, the Bridgestone Group aims to offer its customers high quality products on a perpetual basis—sustainable from both a business and an environmental standpoint. The project aligns with the Bridgestone Group's company-wide dedication to sustainability, known as One Team One Planet. ■





PACKARD, MASERATI WILL BE HONORED MARQUES AT THE INAUGURAL ARIZONA CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

The inaugural Arizona Concours d'Elegance, a premium automotive event that starts up Arizona collector-car auction week, has chosen Packard and Maserati as its honored marques for the Sunday, Jan. 12, 2014, concours held at the historic Arizona Biltmore Resort and Hotel.

Maserati, the renowned Italian racing and performance brand, is marking its 100th anniversary during 2014, and the Arizona Concours will serve to kick off the celebration. Magnificent pre- and post-war examples of competition and road cars from Maserati's illustrious history will be on display at the Concours.

Packard, one of the greatest luxury brands in American history—marketed with the famous quality slogan, "Ask the man who owns one"—will have a strong presence on the Concours field, including pristine classic models among the Classic Car Club of America judging classes.

"We chose these two great automakers—Packard and Maserati—to serve as the first honored marques of the Arizona Concours d'Elegance," said Kevin Cornish, director of the Arizona Concours. "The inclusion of both a famous American luxury brand and a European sports and racing brand shows the breadth of the entries for the inaugural Arizona Concours."

Each of these cars will appear at the Arizona Concours d'Elegance, representing the inaugural event's honored marques, Packard and Maserati. Photos by Michael Tobian. Top to bottom:

- 1937 Maserati 6CM grand prix car, owned by Bill and Linda Pope of Paradise Valley, Arizona.
- 1956 Maserati 150S sports racer, Bill and Linda Pope of Paradise Valley, Arizona.
- 1932 Packard 900 Light Eight Coupe Roadster, owned by Gordon and Janet Apker of Des Moines, Washington.

The first staging of the long-envisioned Arizona Concours d'Elegance will take place on landscaped lawns within the art deco elegance of the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix. An expected 75-100 exceptional automobiles will compete in classes that range from vintage and classic to sports, racing and exotics.

Keith Martin, publisher of Sports Car Market and American Car Collector magazines, will serve as host and emcee for the inaugural Arizona Concours. A columnist, author, television personality and all-around collector-car enthusiast of the highest order, Martin will add his characteristic charm and expertise to delight the crowd of participants and spectators.

One of the nation's premier concours judges, John Carlson, serves as Chief Judge at the Arizona Concours, leading the teams of top concours judges who will pick the class winners as well as the coveted Best of Show. Highly regarded for his decades of concours experience, Carlson is a Master Judge for the Classic Car Club of America, and a Chief Class Judge for the Pebble Beach Concours and the LeMay/Kirkland Concours, as well as Chief Judge for the Hilton Head, Cobble Beach, Crescent Beach and Louisville concours events.

The inaugural Arizona Concours serves as a charity event, with proceeds benefitting Make-A-Wish Arizona, the founding chapter of the national organization that grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions. For more information about Make-A-Wish Arizona, see www.wishaz.org.

The inaugural Arizona Concours d'Elegance starts up Arizona's famous collector-car auction week with a luxury event of premium style and elegance. For tickets, entries and more information, see www.ArizonaConcours.com.

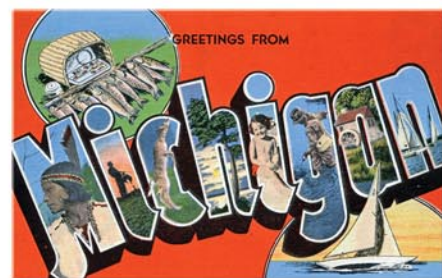
The Arizona Concours d'Elegance, 501(c)(3) status pending, celebrates classic automobile engineering and style while supporting local charities. ■



The school of hard knocks

PICKUPS TAKE A POUNDING AT FORD'S MICHIGAN PROVING GROUNDS

By Joe Sage



Proving grounds are where a company tests their engineering and determines proof of concept or proof of product. It's also a great place to gather some automotive media and some competing products, when they are pretty proud about proving their point.

This is what brought us to Ford's Michigan Proving Grounds, near Romeo (north of Detroit) for what was billed as an F-150 Built Ford Tough Durability Forum. Joining us were key Ford engineers, including the top dog of the F-150 (and Expedition) lineup, chief engineer Jackie DiMarco, who provided us with a detailed introduction to her most prized product and our day ahead.

THE STAR OF THE SHOW

Born in 1948, the Ford F-Series hit age 65 in 2013—ready for retirement if it were human. The end of its work days, however, are nowhere in sight. In fact, the F-Series is about as hard-working as they come. Despite Chevrolet and GMC always nipping at their heels, impressive growth from RAM, and consistent increases from the Toyota Tundra, Ford massively dominates work categories—from mining to construction to ranching to law enforcement—at market shares from over 50 percent to as high as 77 percent.

During its six and a half decades on the planet, over 33 million F-Series have been sold. For the past 31 years, the brand has been the best-selling vehicle—of any type, not just pickup truck—in the US. And there are more F-Series still on the road with 250,000-plus miles on the odometer than any other vehicle.

At this event, Ford announced a 22 percent increase in F-Series sales for August, year over year, with one new pickup selling every 38 seconds. The Kansas City truck plant had just added a third shift, capable of building an additional 90,000 units. Their lead sounds secure.

DiMarco rattles off specific improvements from just the past few years (the current generation), from high-strength steel in 2009, to four new powertrains in 2011, to advancements and competitive leads in towing, power, torque, payload



and fuel economy, including best-in-class payload of 3120 pounds and 11,300-pound tow capacity.

Ford technical innovation within this category includes first introduction of an integrated trailer brake in 2005, rear camera and fully boxed frame in 2008, EcoBoost engines, trailer sway and hill descent controls, and more.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

If there is any doubt that Ford is confident they are ahead of the curve, for this event we drove 2013 model F-150s (this was in September), but 2014 models from RAM, Chevrolet and Toyota. Even more significantly, Ford put its 3.5-liter EcoBoost V6 up against V8 engines from the other three. (Available Ford engines also include 5.0L, 5.7L and 6.2L V8s.) Fuel economy is important to most shoppers, but Ford has statistics: overall, it's the number 14 reason; for F-150 shoppers, it's number six; and for Ford EcoBoost engine buyers, it is their number one basis for choosing.

For both Toyota and Chevy, these are new third-generation trucks. RAM for 2014 is a (considerable) refresh. The current F-Series—its twelfth generation—launched for 2009 and is entering its final year for 2014, with an all-new 2015 model on the horizon (something to compete with the sizeable buzz of an all-new Mustang).

Trim levels varied from one course to another (F-150 XLT on some, Lariat on others; RAM Big Horn on some, Express on others; Chevy LT on some, LTZ on others; Toyota SR5 on all).

Engines were the same across the board, with in each brand: Ford with its 3.5L EcoBoost V6, Chevrolet with its 5.3L Ecotec3 V8, RAM with its 5.7L HEMI V8 and Toyota with its 5.7L DOHC V8.

The F-150s had different rear ends in all three phases: a 3.31 on the torture track, 3.55 for the trailer tow and 3.73 for the wet pad. (We might have expected that highest-ratio 3.31 on the hill climb with tow load, but the durability torture tracks also showed off torque.) Ford supplied comparable ratios in the competitors. The Chevys came with two rear ends, including a much higher 3.08



on the durability track. Tundras were all the same at a low 4.30. And RAM had 3.21 for the durability and trailer sessions, but 3.55 on the wet pad.

All were crew cabs. Prices ranged from the mid-to-upper \$40s for Ford, mid-\$40s to mid-\$50s for Chevy, \$40k to mid-\$40s for RAM, and mid-\$30s to \$40k for Toyota. (The top Chevrolet cost 47 percent more than the least expensive Tundra.)

SO LET'S BEAT 'EM UP

Ford's Michigan Proving Grounds cover 4000 acres—that's six square miles. There are 110 miles of roads, of which over half are specialized test surfaces—sand washes, salt spray, hills of varying steepness and length, wet pad, a squeak and rattle facility, and more.

We spent three hours in the field: one hour on a series of four durability tracks, testing suspension, body and driveline strength, rigidity, power and comfort; next on a specially built steep incline in the form of a typical two-lane public highway; and finally on a wet pad where we could compare vehicle dynamics, in particular the ability to turn and to stop.

At the durability tracks, we first watched from a high bank as all four brands were driven by, before driving them all ourselves. We were advised to watch chassis, body and wheel travel, and we noted some remarkable differences. The Tundra had the most box movement—not such a good thing—while the RAM had significant movement from its rear suspension—for good reasons, as their suspension has been highly redone for 2014 (more on this in our next issue). The Silverado seemed to emit noticeable squeaks from the chassis and considerable wheel

• Above: Already shrouded in secrecy, Ford's Michigan Proving Grounds were also shrouded in fog as we arrived. • F-150 chief engineer Jackie DiMarco has advanced engineering and business degrees from Ohio State and the University of Michigan. This 100,000-plus-mile Grimmway Farms F-150 is one of dozens owned and operated by this California agricultural producer. A video showed just how hard that operation beats up their F-150s, but this one looked no worse for wear. We then proceeded to beat them up, ourselves, on Ford's dedicated series of durability test courses.

• Below: Not every manufacturer wants to see photos of the competition on the same page as their featured product. But a major point of this event was to pit the Ford F-150 against the RAM 1500, Toyota Tundra and Chevrolet Silverado 1500. (The Fords were 2013 models; others were all new for 2014.)



KEEP RIGHT >>

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SCIENCES 




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Top to bottom: • We lined up repeatedly for a series of pounding durability courses—Silver Creek 1 and 2, and Accelerated Durability North and South (also shown on prior pages). • The hill route involved towing a 9000-pound trailer up a steep paved road. • Ford engineers on one section of high-bank racetrack reminded us that it was not for speed, but merely the path we were taking to our vehicle dynamics wet pad. Yeah, well. • Even on a foggy morning, the coned course made its own rain.

hop. Toyota and Chevy both seemed to demonstrate a bit of fishtailing (yaw). All of these are observations of eye and ear, not instruments.

During our torture drive time, the Ford was not yaw-absent, but seemed to have the least—comforting while holding tight and strong to a straight line against great odds. There was considerable noise from the Toyota, as its box slapped against the cab, as well as its doors against jams. Some competitors hit their suspension stops hard.

It's tough to fly to Michigan for a few hours and state a definitive comparative on all the major pickup trucks. Although the torture goes deep, the overall session was relatively brief and our conclusions fairly superficial. But it's also hard to deny that we could experience differences on the courses Ford presented. Granted it's their own track and their own regimen, and you might think it's optimized for their vehicles. And you might conclude that everybody else has a similar track, optimized for their vehicles. On the other hand, this track has been established for a long time, and they really build the trucks to the track. It represents, in literally concrete form, exactly the types of real world challenges they engineer to conquer. Bottom line, their trucks on their track were impressive indeed.

F-150 FOR 2014

The torture track is not the only way to make the tough decision on which tough truck to buy. The fastest growing segment of the market is in under-\$30,000 light duty trucks, though most sales are in the \$30-40,000 range. Ford also boasts having pioneered the above-\$40k pickup market with their King Ranch, Harley-Davidson, Limited and other posh offerings.

For 2014, Ford F-150 will add SuperCrew to the STX lineup, plus an STX Sport Package with 20-inch wheels. The F-150 Tremor has already made waves as the world's first EcoBoost-powered on-road sport truck. And Raptor enters its fifth year as the hottest stock off-roader. (Ford proudly has "never spent a single penny" on Raptor incentives, moving inventory on an especially fast 20-day cycle.) Also for 2014, Ford will deliver a CNG/LPG half-ton F-150, featuring a 3.7L V6 with gaseous prep package, offering 750 miles of range per tank (and an estimated 24-to-36-month payback in fuel savings). Lots of choices. ■





Barrett-Jackson

43rd Annual Collector Car Auction Event : Sunday-Sunday, January 12-19, 2014
WestWorld - Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd at AZ Loop 101 - Scottsdale

An advance purchase All-Week Pass is \$100 for an adult, \$75 for senior, military or student with ID (gate prices are \$175 and \$125 respectively). Daily tickets are available, with prices varying day to day, as well as full day to evening, from \$6 to \$40 per single day, advance purchase (or \$10 to \$60 at the gate), with special rates for seniors, military, students and kids. Last year, Barrett-Jackson sold more than 1,300 vehicles for nearly \$109 million dollars, with some \$5 million of that total going to charities. ▼ Barrett-Jackson hosts annual auctions in Scottsdale, Palm Beach, Reno/Lake Tahoe, and Las Vegas. www.barrett-jackson.com

Bonhams

3rd Annual Scottsdale Auction : Thursday, January 16, 2014 (viewing Tues-Weds, January 14-15)
Westin Kierland Resort & Spa - 6902 E Greenway Pkwy - Scottsdale

The third annual Bonhams Scottsdale Auction returns to the Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, and anticipation is running high. Last year's sale saw several world records made with some rare and remarkable cars on offer from international collections representing Bugatti, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Mercedes-Benz and more. Select consignments are currently invited; early consignments include the ex-William Fisk "Bill" Harrah (just three owners from new) 1910 Thomas Flyer Model 6-40 Touring; the only Figoni et Falaschi-bodied Bentley ever Built, 1947 Bentley MK VI Coupe; and a matching numbers, factory 6C and torque-tube, 1966 Ferrari 275 GTB/6C. ▼ Bonhams—since 1793—hosts a wide variety of auctions of many types, worldwide, throughout the year. www.bonhams.com

Gooding & Company

7th Annual Scottsdale Auction : Friday-Saturday, January 17-18, 2014 (viewing Weds-Sat, January 15-18)
Fashion Square - E Camelback Rd and N 68th St - Scottsdale

Gooding & Company appeals to the top end of the classic car collecting hobby by trying to offer "best-of-category" vehicles. General admission to the viewing and auction is \$40 per person. An auction catalog for \$100 admits two to the viewing and auction. Children under 12 attend for free. For bidders, \$200 includes a catalog, admission for two to the viewing and auction with reserved seats (as available). Last year, Gooding sold 101 vehicles for \$52.5 million, including a 1958 Ferrari 250 GT long-wheelbase California Spider for \$8.25 million, a record for classic car auctions in Arizona. A dozen cars sold for a million dollars or more, with seven at \$2-million-plus. ▼ Gooding & Company is the official auction of Pebble Beach Concours and has an auction during Amelia Island. www.goodingco.com

RM Auctions

15th Annual Automobiles of Arizona : Friday, January 17, 2014 (preview Thurs-Fri, January 16-17)
Arizona Biltmore - N 24th St and E Camelback Rd - Phoenix

Like so many other classic car auction houses, RM opened its 2013 calendar in Arizona, though it tried something different, switching from a two-day sale to a one-day event. This will be the case in 2014, as well. Early consignments include a 1938 Bugatti Type 57 Stelvio Cabriolet by Gangloff; a 1948 Packard Super Eight Convertible Victoria; a 1968 Jaguar E-Type Series 1½ 4.2-Litre Roadster; and a 1938 Bugatti Type 57 Stelvio Cabriolet by Gangloff. Purchase of the official auction catalog admits two to the preview only. The auction is limited to registered bidders and consignors only. Bidder registration includes the official auction catalog and admission for two to the preview and auction. Last year's catalog was \$120, and bidder registration was \$200. Prices for 2014 were not available as we went to press. ▼ RM Auctions is the official auction of Amelia Island Concours and hosts auctions worldwide. www.rmauctions.com

Russo and Steele

14th Annual Sports & Muscle in Scottsdale : Wednesday-Sunday, January 15-19, 2014
N Scottsdale Rd and E Mayo Blvd at AZ Loop 101 - Scottsdale

Locally-based Russo and Steele caters to enthusiasts seeking to buy and/or sell top tier European sports, American muscle, hot rods and customs. The event is presented in a signature "Auction in the Round" format. Over 700 classic cars will be sold over five days. Early consignments include a 1960 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Roadster "Two-Top"; a 1959 Testarosa SPCNS Sport Speciale By Creative Workshop; a 1953 Chevrolet Corvette Roadster (original unrestored); and a 1968 Shelby GT500 "427 side-oiler" Fastback. General admission is \$20 for one day, \$55 for three or \$80 for five days, with tickets available online. Bidder registration is \$150, with guests \$50. ▼ Russo and Steele hosts annual auctions in Scottsdale, Newport Beach, Monterey and Las Vegas. www.russoandsteele.com

Silver Auctions

17th Annual Fort McDowell AZ Auction : Friday-Saturday, January 17-18, 2014
Fort McDowell Resort & Casino - (AZ 87 Beeline Highway, north of Fountain Hills)

Silver's auction started in 1992 and grows each year as an alternative where thousands of buyers and sellers can participate within a personally comfortable arena—real cars and real deals. The average price of a car sold at Gooding last winter, for example, was over \$520,000. The average at Silver's sale was \$13,628. In fact, the 10 most expensive purchases during the Silver sale (topped by a 1967 Chevrolet Corvette at \$62,640) totaled \$150,000 less, collectively, than Gooding's average for a single transaction. The 2013 Silver Auction drew the largest crowd in the event's long history. Friday noon to 10pm, Saturday 10am-11pm. Admission is \$18, and children under 12 attend for free. ▼ Silver Auctions has two annual events each in Portland OR and Arizona. For more information visit www.silverauctions.com



Photo: Ryan Bernstein (1)

Arizona International Auto Show: Thanksgiving Weekend

Phoenix Convention Center
Thanksgiving Weekend: Nov 28 - Dec 1, 2013

The 2014-model Arizona International Auto Show rolls into town with hundreds of the latest cars, trucks, crossovers and more. Showgoers are invited to check out the newest rides, sit behind the wheel, experience the latest in-car technology and even take a test drive—right at the show. From car buffs to consumers, the show will feature a dazzling collection of high-end luxury cars, plug-in electric vehicles, family fun and much more.

Manufacturers' representatives will be on hand to answer questions and provide information. The Arizona International Auto Show is owned and presented by the Valley Auto Dealers Association and produced by Motor Trend Auto Shows, LLC, the nation's largest auto show producer.

DATES AND TIMES: Thursday, Nov 28 (Thanksgiving)9am-7pm
Friday, November 299am-9pm
Saturday, November 30.....9am-9pm
Sunday, December 19am-7pm

LOCATION: Phoenix Convention Center
100 N 3rd Street, Phoenix AZ 85004

TICKETS: Adults.....\$10
Seniors (62 and older).....\$ 6
Military with DOD ID.....\$ 6
Children (7-12).....\$ 6
Children 6 and younger.....free

ADVANCE E-TICKETS: www.AutoShowPhoenix.com





The 6th Annual Barrett-Jackson Las Vegas Auction • September 26-28, 2013

This was the first year Barrett-Jackson held two Nevada auctions—their sixth in Las Vegas, after their first in Reno a month or so earlier. The formula is working well, as this year's Las Vegas event, held again at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino Event Center, hit \$32 million in sales—a 41 percent increase over 2012—and raised \$2.2 million for charitable causes—bringing the total amount the company has raised to date to over \$57 million.

The event kicked off on the Sunday prior, with their 6th Annual Cruise-In, followed by a midweek Road Rally and an invitation-only opening night party.

Some 70,000 spectators and bidders saw a record 657 consignments cross the auction block—the largest ever outside Barrett-Jackson's huge Scottsdale event. Charity auctions kicked off on Thursday afternoon with the sale of Lot #3000, a 2012 Shelby GT500 Super Snake (▲), which brought \$500,000, a special military tribute with all proceeds benefiting Wounded Warriors Family Support. (This car was due to come through metro Phoenix on a road tour in late October; watch for a followup in our next issue.) Ford Motor Company provided Lot #3004 2014 Ford Mustang Cobra Jet (photo at top ▲) to benefit the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, bringing \$200,000.

Auction highlights included Rick Hendrick's stunning pair of 1963 Chevrolet Corvettes at \$106,400 and \$110,000 and a 1999 Chevrolet Suburban from "The Sopranos" at \$110,000. (Barrett-Jackson will offer the late James Gandolfini's personal 1972 Oldsmobile 442 convertible in Scottsdale in January.) The top five sales at Las Vegas were a 1967 Ferrari 330GTC (▲) at \$495,000; a 1931 Lincoln Model K Convertible at \$352,000 (▲); a 2005 Ford GT 2 Door Coupe at \$275,000 (▲); a 2006 Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren 2 Door Coupe at \$258,500; and a 1967 Shelby GT500E at \$242,000.

For information on Barrett-Jackson's 43rd Scottsdale auction in January, see the previous page of this issue, or visit www.barrett-jackson.com ■

The 1st Annual Russo and Steele Las Vegas Auction • September 26-28, 2013

Russo and Steele headed to Las Vegas in September—hot on the heels of their annual Monterey event in August—for their inaugural auction in that town, held in the same time slot as Barrett-Jackson, and just a block or two away, at the new Tropicana.

A total of 350 cars crossed the block, with sales totaling \$3,751,540.

Four cars sold in the six-digit range. Tops was a late-production 1974 Ferrari 246 GTS Dino (▲), with just two owners from new, the second of whom covered the past 28 years. This original US-spec car came equipped with Daytona-style seat inserts, Campagnolo alloy wheels, power windows and AC. Harrah's in Reno imported it, and Arizona Ferrari dealer Harley Cluxton sold it new to Joe Pisano, the highly successful Bonneville competitor, drag racer and businessman. The Dino sold for \$321,750.

Second was an authentic 1967 Shelby GT500 E Super Snake (▲), authorized and serialized by Shelby, one of only 35 serialized cars and one of only three in this color combination. The car has only 1,640 miles since completion, a Keith Craft 427FE supercharged engine, all induction and cooling upgrades, and all upgrade options including coil-over rear suspension. This Super Snake sold for \$130,000.

A 1973 Porsche 911S (▲)—originally a special-order vehicle for Forest Lane Porsche Audi in Dallas—was a low-option S model without the S trim, but with tinted windows and AC. Bahia Red over black leatherette, the car had no other options specified or requested. Auction sale price was \$116,000.

A 1958 Mercedes-Benz 190SL (▲)—completely restored by a marque specialist and still accompanied by its original jack, spare, and tools—rounds out the top four, with a hammer price of \$112,750.

For information on Russo and Steele's 14th Scottsdale auction in January, see the previous page of this issue, or visit russoandsteele.com ■

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MONTEREY CAR WEEK ATTRACTS ARIZONA AUTO AFICIONADOS

Story by Tim Sharp
Photos by Tim Sharp and Kristin Sharp or as noted



This 1953 Aston Martin DB2/4 Bertone Roadster, belonging to Bill and Linda Pope of Paradise Valley, Arizona, won Best of Class in Class E, Aston Martin Centennial, at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Photo: Steve Burton, courtesy Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

In August, it is toasty in Phoenix and cool in Monterey. This is one reason why so many Arizonans vacation there in summer. However, Monterey Car Week is the primary reason that most Arizona automobile aficionados head for the coast in mid-August.

Scottsdale Auction Week in January is considered one of the world's greatest annual events for classic and vintage sports car collectors and enthusiasts. Monterey Car Week is the other. Both are must-see venues for the classic car devotee.

While Bonhams, Gooding & Company, Mecum, RM Auctions, and Russo and Steele hold auctions during Monterey Car Week, there are also a variety of other activities for the auto aficionado: car shows, car club rallies and vintage races run continuously throughout the week.

CAR SHOWS AND CONCOURS EVENTS

There are a variety of car shows at Monterey: The Little Car Show in Pacific Grove, Concorso Italiano at Laguna Seca, The Quail at Carmel Valley, and the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Of course, Pebble Beach is considered to be the most prestigious concours on the planet, so it should be highest on your bucket list.

This year we attended The Little Car Show, and there was no fee to view the little critters in downtown Pacific Grove. No doubt about it, if you like cute classic cars like Austin Bantams, MGs, BMW Isettas, Fiat 500s, Porsche 356s and quirky machines like the British Trident 3-wheeler (photo, lower right), this is the place for you.

Concorso Italiano has hundreds of classic and contemporary Italian sports cars,



ranging from Fiats to Ferraris. Held at Laguna Seca Golf Ranch, en route to Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, in 2013, Concorso Italiano moves back to Black Horse Golf Course for 2014. Rows of luscious Ferraris, Maseratis and Lambos are almost mind boggling. This year a 1969 Lamborghini Miura P400S won "Best of Show."

The Quail concours in Carmel Valley has recently taken on a motorsports theme. The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering features a range of rare vintage sports cars with remarkable racing histories. In addition, the Quail has a number of fine food and wine stops around the green, all of which are included with your admission ticket. The Quail is somewhat pricey, but well worth it—a wonderful venue for vintage racing fans.

PEBBLE BEACH CONCOURS

The Pebble Beach Golf Course is located on exclusive 17-Mile Drive. Owners of the world's most beautiful automobiles meet here each year to determine who has the finest classic car in the world. Featured French makes plus Packard, Lincoln, Porsche and vintage Indy 500 cars joined the usual array of exotic vintage automobiles on the sprawling Pebble Beach

(Above): A 1934 Packard 1108 Twelve Dietrich Convertible Victoria, owned by Joseph and Margie Cassini III of West Orange, New Jersey won Best of Show at the 2013 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. The Packard Twelve is considered by many to be one of the finest automobiles produced by Packard and one of the most significant creations of the Classic Era. This was the second time Joseph and Margie Cassini have taken "Best of Show" at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Photo: Kimball Studios, courtesy Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance

(Below): Cars of all sizes attract enthusiasts of all sizes. This British Trident 3-wheeler sets the tone for The Little Car Show, a free event in downtown Pacific Grove.



KEEP RIGHT >>



(Above): Vintage racers: Rick Rawlins with his Barney Oldfield Mercedes-Benz.

(Below): Bobby Rahal with the #9 Belond Special, in which Sam Hanks won the 1957 Indy 500 (the author has sat in this when he met his dad's friend Hanks at the Brickyard). (Bottom): A 1940 Tatra, belonging to John and Sonnia Breslow of Scottsdale, Arizona.



green. "Best of Show" went to a flawless 1934 Packard 12 Dietrich Convertible Victoria (photo, previous page).

At Pebble Beach, people-watching is as much fun as car-watching. Many of the car owners dress in vintage costumes. We especially liked Rick Rawlins' outfit. With vintage driving suit, goggles and cigar, Rick posed next to his Mercedes-Benz (above), which was raced by Barney Oldfield. Celebrity watchers could spot Jay Leno, Brian Redman, Jackie Stewart and Bobby Rahal (photo at left) all at Pebble Beach this year.

Bill and Linda Pope of Paradise Valley, Arizona, won the FIVA Pre-war "Special Award" trophy with their lovely 1935 Voisin C 25 Clairiere Berline. They also won first place in the Aston-Martin Centennial Class with their 1953 Aston-Martin DB2/4 Bertone Roadster (see lead photo). John and Sonia Breslow of Scottsdale showed their unique, rear-engined Czechoslovakian 1940 Tatra in the European Classic Late Class (at left). Tatra was one of the most advanced and aerodynamic automobiles of its time.

A bit of advice: buy your tickets in advance, bring a beach blanket and

arrive early at Pebble Beach if you want to stake out a good spot to watch the class winners drive across the awards platform. Sit where Tiger Woods hit a famous chip shot. Very cool.

AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

You can buy a good classic car at a reasonable price at Monterey. Scottsdale's Russo and Steele auction had some of the best deals. A 1956 Chevy Bel Air 2 door custom with a 383 V8 for \$15,400. A 1969 Fiat 500 for \$23,00. A 1951 Ford custom woodie for \$55,000. Monterey is a great place to buy hot rods and woodies.

In the market for something extremely rare? Monterey is where the world's most desirable sports cars are sold. Attend the Gooding, Bonhams and RM Auctions for these exceptional automobiles. Bonhams also has an exotic engine and automobilia auction.

RM Auctions set a world record for Ferraris with a 275 GTB/4 NART Spyder at \$27,500,000. Gooding & Company countered with a 250 GT Tour de France Ferrari at about \$9,500,000. Of course, you could have acquired a Ferrari "Magnum PI" 308 at Russo and Steele for about \$32,000, and that would gain you entry into the Ferrari Club. The 308 would not place you in the club's elite, but it is a good place to start.

ROLEX MONTEREY MOTORSPORTS REUNION

When Ernie McAfee died racing at Pebble Beach in 1956, his passing rocked the racing world. While the road racing fraternity was not huge in the 1950s, Ernie was a giant in the sport. His racing skills were on par with legends Phil Hill and Carroll Shelby.

Following McAfee's death, racing through the tree-lined streets of Pebble Beach was deemed too dangerous. Hence, the Laguna Seca Raceway was born. Today the circuit is known as the Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, and it is the home of one of the three most prestigious historic races on the planet. While Goodwood (GB) and Monte Carlo (Monaco) also feature great vintage racing, Laguna Seca is the only one of these famous vintage races to be held on this side of the pond.

This year the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion honored the 60th Anni-

versary of the Corvette, so it was logical that Arizonans Bob and Pat Bondurant were special guests. Bob became famous racing Corvettes, so it was fitting that Chevrolet would introduce their 2014 Corvette at Monterey with Bondurant. Racers Dick Gulstrand, Ron Fellows, Tommy Milner and famed Corvette designer Peter Brock were also prominent guests.

Chevy showcased the new C7 Corvette by giving "hot laps" with Bob Bondurant driving school professionals Darren Law and Johnny O'Connell. The on-track display was a crowd favorite with the contingent of Corvette owners at the track.

Arizonan Ross Thompson, an ex-Bondurant instructor, gave the biased Corvette crowd even more to cheer about. Thompson took his Corvette Stingray from 35th to 4th in Race 5A. While not enough to catch the winning Corvette Grand Sport of Bruce Canapa, Thompson's inspired drive was fun to watch.

Scottsdale's Rob Walton finished a close second to Tony Garmley's 1962 Corvette in Race 3A. Rob lent his 1958 Scarab Mk I to David Swig, and the rare machine won Race 7A going away. The Valley's Bob Hardison, Eric Engelhorn and Rob Walton all drove very well in Race 7A; however none were able to challenge Swig. Yes, it is good to have friends like Walton who will lend you their multi-million dollar race car for the weekend. Swig drove the car well.

Arizona was well represented in other races at the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion. Craig Jackson, Alex Curtis, Steven Hilton, Jonathan Ornstein, Jim Cantrell, Sammy Bell, Walt Brown, Jr., John Muller, Lon Walters, Harley Cluxton and Chuck Croteau all ran at the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion. This author's newly restored Austin 7 Special also ran well in qualifying, but was sidelined by supercharger problems before the race. Ah, but the Austin GP car did look beautiful in the pits.

PLAN NOW FOR MONTEREY 2014

If you are a classic car fan, you owe it to yourself to attend Monterey Car Week at least once. Where else do the Ferraris outnumber the Mustangs? Where else will you see prewar racing Bentleys tooling around the city streets? Nowhere but at Monterey. No other time but in mid-August during Monterey Car Week.



Here are some websites to check out for more information:

Concorso Italiano:

www.concorso.com

Legends of the Autobahn:

www.legendsoftheautobahn.com

The Little Car Show:

www.pacificgrove.org/events

Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance:

www.pebblebeachconcours.net

The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering:

www.signatureevents.com

Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion:

www.mazdaraceway.com

Bonhams auction:

www.bonhams.com

Gooding & Company auction:

www.goodingco.com

Mecum Auction:

www.mecum.com

RM Auctions:

www.rmauctions.com

Russo and Steele auction:

www.russoandsteele.com

Hotel rooms and tickets for events like the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance and The Quail are gobbled up quickly. Our advice is to act now to insure that you can have an enjoyable vacation during Monterey Car Week. ■

(Above): Arizona's Ross Thompson, a former Bondurant instructor, goes toe-to-toe with a Shelby Mustang in his Corvette Stingray.

(Below): David Swig in Rob Walton's 1958 Scarab Mk I. (Bottom): Pretty girls, vintage costumes and classic cars at Pebble Beach.



BY JOE SAGE

Impossible but true

A brand new Mercedes-Benz for under \$30,000

There are two ways to conclude that a vehicle “does it all.” one is the tour de force, such as the go-anywhere, do-anything Mercedes-Benz Geländewagen, or the luxury-and-features-hang-the-expense of S-Class. Either of those aims to deliver everything you dream of, though at quite a price. The other way to do it all is with a best-of-both-worlds synthesis. In today’s lesson, this means delivering a Mercedes-Benz, in all its style, features and glory, in the \$20s. Meet the brand new Mercedes-Benz CLA-Class.

Perhaps you’ve already met. The CLA has been making a splash since last winter’s Super Bowl, wherein a devilish enticement from Willem Dafoe led to Kate Upton and more, but was dismissed by our young hero, who found he could afford the car without signing away his soul—not by a long shot.

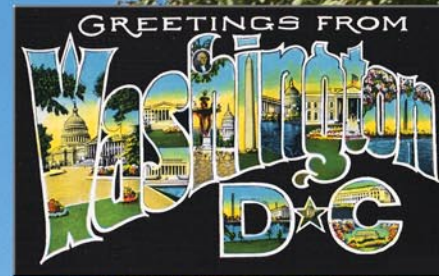
Mercedes-Benz VP of marketing Bernie Glaser tells us the purpose of the CLA is for the brand to reach out for “a new buyer, a different buyer—with a new car, at a new entry point.” And so it is.

Try this for perspective: the C-Class evokes an E-Class—just a little smaller and so on—at a starting price of \$35,800, compared to the E-Class

starting price of \$51,400 (i.e. at about 70 percent of its cost). Stylewise, the new CLA-Class evokes if anything the even more rarified CLS, which starts at \$72,100. And yet the CLA starts at just \$29,900 (just 41.4 percent the cost of a CLS).

The risk of such a move, for the company, could be to lessen the panache of the CLS, or to cheapen the brand overall. Mercedes-Benz is the number one luxury brand in the US, with 17 percent market share. As the saying goes, it can take years to build a relationship and just seconds to ruin it. It can be much the same with a brand. That’s a challenge the company tackles with this project, as much as the creation and delivery of the product itself.

At the same time, the company has not bet the farm on this. Mercedes tells us they will introduce a whopping 30 new cars over the next three years—an average of about one every three months. This daring CLA move will not have to redefine the brand. It simply creates a new access point. After all, conquests from other brands—who it is hoped will stick around and move up within the brand, if they like what they find—are a primary goal of every manufacturer, with every vehicle of conse-



quence they produce. Mercedes claims the highest loyalty rate in the business, so they simply seek to broaden their base. And that’s where this product and its price point come into play. Not only will it go after the lowest-sticker luxe models from BMW and Audi and so on—the CLA is also intended to steer customers away from more middle-of-the-road offerings like Accord, Altima and Fusion, which can easily bump into the mid-\$30s. We see this all the time—a vehicle that will beg

KEEP RIGHT >>



• Our drive spanned two days on the byways of Virginia, through Washington DC and across Maryland (top to bottom at right). • The CLA 250 in Northern Lights Violet Metallic, above, starts at \$29,900, while the red CLA45 AMG at lower left starts at \$47,450.





Mercedes-Benz Concept A-Class
Revealed before the show at new Mercedes-Benz Manhattan

Nobody drives in Manhattan. Everybody knows that. But it's not really true. Or, if it is, they still buy and service cars there, to park at notoriously great expense for their forays into the hinterlands. Mercedes-Benz tells us some 22,000 customers buy and service vehicles in Manhattan. This it should be no surprise that their dealership there—the only company-owned US store—is one of the largest. And it's now becoming larger (and more convenient, as Mercedes-Benz Manhattan moves into its new 330,000-square-foot digs at 775 11th Avenue between 53rd and 54th Streets).

What better place to kick off the 2011 New York International Auto Show, and what better way than with a slick new concept that's certain to find its way to dealers' floors sooner than later.

Meet the Mercedes-Benz Concept A-Class. This name has been used before, for a small vehicle that somewhat resembles an extended Smart car (and uses the same kind of engine-in-a-sandwich floor construction). In fact, as those have been sold in Mexico (as well as in Europe and other places around the globe), they have been a novel but not uncommon sight on the roads of Arizona. Forget all that. There is now a global first (not available here) B-Class, which carries the format and front-wheel drive of the old A-Class into the future, in a slightly larger size that evokes the big 7-Doorer B-Class.

The new A-Class aims at a different spot, or at least aims to make that spot appealing to the US market.

- The Mercedes-Benz CLA 250's chrome-spangled grille (second from top at far right) is very faithful to the dazzling Concept A-Class show car revealed at the New York Auto Show in spring 2011 (at left).
- After Labor Day, things get nice and quiet in a Maryland beach town (bottom left). Sadly, most of the pizza and soft ice cream are gone by then, too.

The CLA was developed on much the same timeline as a new S-Class, which starts in the \$90s and can quickly top \$135,000. This would offer the team plenty of opportunity to compare notes and seek some trickle-down features.

It also helped them keep their eye on their goal that the new Mercedes-Benz CLA must be “every bit a Mercedes-Benz, and nothing less than that.”

Bart Herring, general manager for product management, identifies an edge: “we wanted to build a bad-ass car,” he admits. The Concept A-Class, introduced at the New York International Auto Show in spring 2011, had given us our first glimpse of what was in store. As Herring says, it was a cool design that spoke a universal language (he notes that both his niece and his retirement-age dad love it).

We are pleased to see so much of that show car make it into production. And it's interesting to note the final name is not A-Class, surely a nod to the fact they don't want buyers themselves to feel (or look) as though they are on the bottom rung.

One car they don't see the CLA eating into is the C-Class. They are similar sizes—the CLA is about an inch and a half larger in key dimensions, but the C-Class will be all new within a few months, too. But style alone takes the CLA somewhere different, just as with the CLS versus the S-Class above it or the E-Class below. Ultimately, there is its raisin d'être, price: the CLA is almost \$6000 less expensive than a C-Class.

The CLA 250 bears a brand-new, fourth-generation 2.0-liter turbo, generating 208 hp and 258 lb-ft of torque through a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission. That torque is a big factor in the car's performance, but so is its weight—just 3264 pounds—combining to deliver a zero-to-60 time of 6.9 seconds. At the same time, the car delivers a tough-to-beat 38 MPG on the highway (26/38/30 city/highway/combined).

The CLA 250 you can buy today is a front-wheel-drive model, which is one of the most surprising deviations for a Mercedes-Benz. There will be a 4MATIC all-wheel-driver in spring 2014. (The AMG variant is only all-wheel-drive and should be available by about the time you read this.) Because of the front-drive basis, the CLA's 4MATIC system is all new (and 25 percent lighter). It can distribute drive force 50-50, front and rear, but can send all torque to the front wheels.

- (At right) the Mercedes-Benz CLA 250 and CLA45 AMG are recognizable any number of ways, though many are subtle. There is badging on the rear decklid (plus a Turbo badge on the front fender of the AMG). The first column at right shows the AMG, as does the top right photo. The balance of the second column shows the CLA 250. Interiors vary, so this is not the definitive spotter's guide. But the flat-bottom, race-inspired steering wheel is an AMG dead giveaway. Wheels also vary, with some similar styles available between the two models, but you'll spot AMG brake calipers (though not always red). The engines are easy to tell apart, under the hood or on the road. A black chainlink grille differentiates the AMG, as well its lower spoiler lip and air intakes.

So if the point of the CLA 250 is a Mercedes-Benz in the \$20s, where does the CLA45 AMG come in? This version has an expected base price of \$47,450. Well, a C63 AMG starts in the \$60s, an E63 AMG in the \$90s. How about an SLS AMG, starting at \$201,500? Or a CL65 AMG at \$215,500 base? When it comes to the high-ticket, high-potency AMG performance lineup, CLA is still the best of both worlds—an affordable AMG.

The CLA45 is the first four-cylinder AMG. It surely will not be the last. This is said to be the most powerful four-cylinder engine in the world. Based on the same 2.0L, the AMG is tweaked—an understatement—to 355 hp and 332 lb-ft of torque. The car's zero-to-60 time is 4.5 seconds. Fuel mileage numbers were not yet published for the AMG, but they've given it a larger gas tank: 14.8 gallons, compared to 13.2 in the CLA 250.

The first day, we drove deep into Virginia, grabbing lunch in wine country we didn't know existed, and returning via the ridge-capping highway through Shenandoah National Park. Virginia is one of those states where you had best drive 53 in a 55. Police would stop us (in parking lots, at least) just to tell us not to get any ideas. Beautiful cars and beautiful roads, but acceleration and speed testing were limited. Winding, hilly, curvy mountain terrain was not, however, and we are pleased to report a completely neutral and solid, directly connected feel to the steering and front-drive handling in the CLA. Those who think they can't live with a front-drive Mercedes owe it to themselves to give this a spin.

Day two was a dash across Maryland and up the Chesapeake Bay shoreline. Our codriver was a DC-area local, from the Maryland side, and he knew where we could drive, and how. We took the AMG, and he drove—and how.

Lots of fun on the highway, pleasant and manageable while passing through small towns, easy to park at the beach, stylish wherever they went, while also delivering a firm but not overdone burble to fulfill the bad-ass requirement, the CLA 250 and CLA45 AMG both delivered.



At one point, we pulled in and parked in a row of CLAs that had one stray Ford Fusion mixed in. The Ford did not look half bad, even in that exclusive company. We are reminded that “brand is a substitute for knowledge.” We are also reminded that, “hey, this is a Mercedes-Benz.” The market leader's name does speak for itself.

In some parts of the country, there is some shyness about buying a higher-end brand. This is generally not the case in most of Arizona. If that's the tie-breaker, then count on it: we expect to see a lot of Mercedes-Benz CLAs on the roads here. There are plenty of other tie-breakers, too, from fit and finish to power and handling.

A luxury brand cannot simply build a cheap car and survive and thrive. Cadillac famously spent decades (successfully) living down the Cimarron. That, of course, was just a rebadged starter level Chevrolet. The Mercedes-Benz CLA is a completely new Mercedes-Benz through and through: engineered, conceived, sourced, built, outfitted—everything but priced—in every way you are used to. The price is the surprise, and let it be nothing but a pleasant one. And yes, dealers will have some stock at exactly \$29,900. ■



to be optioned up, quickly crossing into the price range of the next model up, even within its own brand, which in turn may beg fewer options.

The idea here is that it won't take much for the shopper of a less-inspired brand to note, “I could be driving a Mercedes-Benz.” Will the strategy work? We don't see why not. Will the affordable Benz always win the nod? That's harder to say. Feature-by-feature comparisons can get complex. But brand is a powerful thing. So far, we see little to suggest that an under-\$30k car will cheapen the three-pointed star's brand, and everything to suggest the brand will demonstrate inherent value and prestige to the under-\$30k car.



ARIZONAFLYER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE ON THE WING



The Future of Flying: Trends to Shape Air Travel

Cushla Sherlock

Over the past four decades, the airline industry has changed the way people live and experience the world—not even the financial crisis has gotten in the way of that. Olivier P. Müller, Head of Consumer Goods Research within Credit Suisse's Private Banking and Wealth Management division, says the trend in affordable tickets and high passenger volumes is set to continue.

CUSHLA SHERLOCK: We've seen many technological changes in the airline industry in the past few decades. Will this continue? What big innovations we can expect?

OLIVIER P. MÜLLER: Over the last 20-30 years we have seen two big trends. First, pricing has come down massively due to a number of reasons, particularly competition. The second big trend is that the number of people travelling by air has increased substantially. Despite the financial crisis, passenger volume growth has increased by 5.6 percent over the past 10 years. These trends are likely to continue: pricing will remain under pressure and volumes will continue to increase, particularly in Asia. Innovations will probably be in IT systems that could help to increase efficiency and pricing and profitability.

CS: Low-cost airlines have popped up everywhere

in the past 10 years. Established airlines seem to be adopting a similar approach, for example, cheaper prices. Is this sustainable? Are there dangers associated with this?

OPM: I think it is a sustainable approach and the low-cost model will likely remain attractive because flying has become a commodity. Low-cost airlines have two differentiating factors. First on the revenue side, they try to be flexible on pricing and charge for extras like choosing a specific seat, for additional luggage and for food and beverages. Second, on the cost side, low-cost airlines try to keep costs as low as possible. Traditional airlines have been mimicking that behavior, particularly with regard to pricing. Think about Lufthansa and Air France, for example. We think that this will continue and that price pressure will remain fairly intense — airlines will have no choice but to keep their prices low and try to improve their efficiencies through higher passenger-load factors. The good thing is that it forces airlines to become big because the airline industry is a volume business that requires a lot of operating leverage. That, in our view, will inevitably force combinations, mergers, bigger alliances, or even inter-country mergers, as Air

France and KLM did a few years ago.

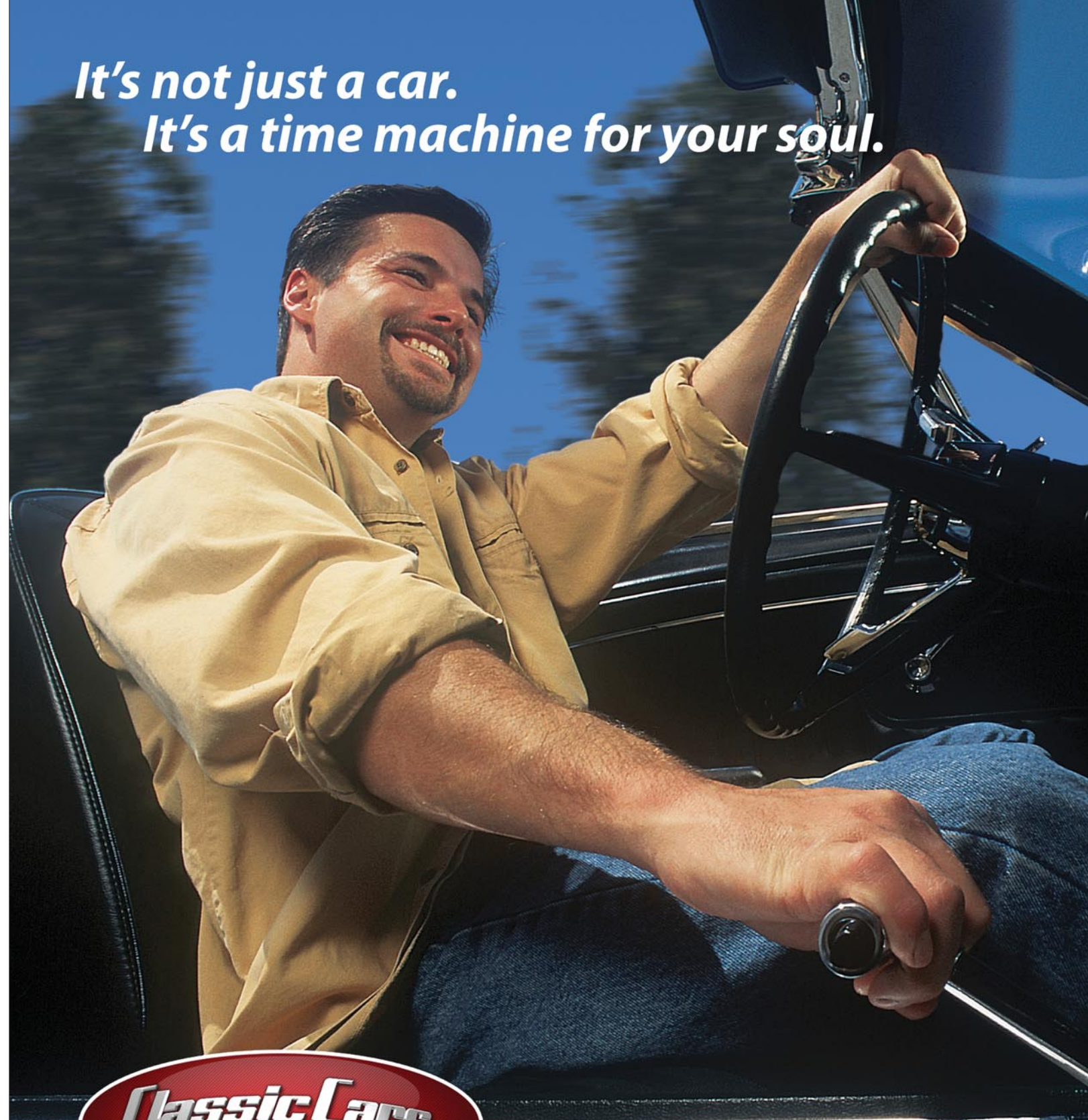
CS: How could the increasing popularity of high-speed trains shake up the industry?

OPM: High-speed trains will definitely further impact the airline industry because at the end of the day, for the people travelling, it's a competition between pricing and travel times. Customer loyalty is based mainly on price. For example, if you have to travel between Barcelona and Madrid, it's a question of which method of travel is cheapest and fastest. That increases pressure on airlines.

CS: Looking ahead, what are some of the critical elements for airlines to stay competitive in an environment of rising costs for fuel, labor and maintenance?

OPM: There are three elements for success: The first is on the revenue side, particularly pricing where I think airlines will continue charging for extras. Second, they will have to keep costs low. However, here they have limited flexibility because more than 50 percent of their costs are on fuel and staff. Third, and where I think they have the biggest leverage, is efficiency. Here, they will need to improve aircraft utilization such as seating capacities. ■

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Photos by Rupert Berrington

Arizona Race Drivers Win SCCA National Championships

LINCOLN, Nebraska—Three Arizonans earned Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) National Championships in early September, at the 41st Tire Rack SCCA Solo National Championships, held at the Lincoln (Nebraska) Airport.

Held for the fifth-straight year on three million square feet of concrete at the Lincoln Airport, the Tire Rack SCCA Solo National Championships is the largest motorsports competition in the world, where more than 1,000 drivers compete for titles in 66 separate car classes. The event is the pinnacle of autocross competition in the United States, where two distinct courses are set up on the tarmac with traffic cones. Competitors are afforded three runs on both the East and West courses over two days, with the fastest aggregate time of the two courses determining the winner.

While extremely skilled, SCCA race drivers are classified as amateurs, meaning they compete for the love of the sport rather than for money.

Fred Züst, Tempe X Prepared class

Fred Züst of Tempe earned his fifth SCCA National Championship on Wednesday, September 4. Driving a Lotus Elise, Züst topped 22 other competitors in the X Prepared class to win the two-day competition that pits drivers from across the country in a single-event, winner-take-all format. Andy McKee, of Livermore, California, finished second, 1.518-second behind Züst in aggregate time.

Brian Peters, Litchfield Park Street Touring R class

Brian Peters of Litchfield Park earned his fourth SCCA National Championship on Friday, September 6. Driving a Nissan 350Z, Peters topped 49 other competitors in the Street Touring R class to win the two-day competition that pits drivers from across the country in a single-event, winner-take-all format. Colin Fiedler, of Pewaukee, Wisconsin,

(Lead photo): Fred Züst of Tempe on the track at Lincoln Airport in his Lotus Elise. (Portraits, top to bottom): Fred Züst, Brian Peters and Mandy Owens of Arizona, all SCCA National Class Champions.

finished second, 0.310-second behind Peters in aggregate time.

Mandy Owen, Phoenix E Street Prepared Ladies class

Friday was a big day for the Arizona contingent, as Mandy Owen of Phoenix earned her first SCCA National Championship that same day. Driving a Subaru WRX, Owen topped five other competitors in the E Street Prepared Ladies class to win the two-day competition that pits drivers from across the country in a single-event, winner-take-all format. Lorien Feighner, of Howell, Michigan, finished second, 0.267-second behind Owen in aggregate time.

SCCA holds more than 1,200 Solo competitions across the country each year, culminating with the Tire Rack Solo National Championships each September, running this year from September 3-6.

For additional race or membership information, please visit www.scca.com/solonationals ■

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by Joe Sage

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TRANS.....	5-speed electrically controlled auto
POWERTRAIN.....	full-time 4-wheel drive
POWER/TORQUE.....	270 hp, 248 lb-ft torque
FUEL MILEAGE.....	17/22/19 MPG city/hwy/comb
BASE (LIMITED V6 4WD)	\$39,400
• Cross bars	\$229
• Door edge guard	\$109
• Carpet/cargo mat (3 row seating)	\$280
DESTINATION	\$845
TOTAL AS TESTED.....	\$40,863

The Toyota Highlander was a pioneer—the first car-based midsize crossover—back in 2000 (as a 2001 model). But despite its car-based unibody chassis, Toyota calls it an SUV in its official full product name on the Monroney sticker. The three-row, seven-passenger Highlander has been a strong-selling (often top-selling) option between the 4Runner SUV or the smaller RAV4 crossover.

We're taking one last look at the 2013 model, which arrived here at the end of summer, several months after the introduction of the 2014 model at last spring's auto shows. We'll include a peek at the new one.

This 2013 model is the last of the second generation, which launched in 2007. For 2013, Highlander offered new feature and option packages and updated navigation, audio and Toyota's Entune infotainment system.

There are four conventional-drive Highlanders and two hybrids. The base 4-cylinder straight-gasoline model starts at just \$29,020 (available only with two-wheel drive). Close in price but a big jump in content is the Plus (which replaces a Tech Package from the prior year) for \$30,475—a small jump in price,

but now with a V6. Next up is a Highlander SE, in the mid-30s, then our test vehicle, the Limited, at a base price just under \$40,000.

The Hybrid and Hybrid Limited are the priciest, at \$40,170 and \$46,370 respectively.

Our test Highlander's highway fuel mileage is 22 MPG. The Hybrids are rated at 28 MPG, and the 4-cylinder model at 25 MPG.

This is the top-of-the-line Highlander, Hybrids notwithstanding—Limited 4WD—and is out the door fully outfitted (this one had three minimal add-ons). Forty grand for tops, versus 30 grand for starting model is a very reasonable spread for the variety of offerings that provides.

Our sample had optional full-time 4WD. All have four-wheel independent suspension, 8-inch ground clearance and approach/departure angles of 22/23 degrees.

Wheelbase is 109.8 inches, overall length 188.4 inches, and turning circle—of interest in town or in the forest—is 38.7 feet. We did no off-roading in this. It really didn't cross our minds. But we did drive it around town, where it proved refreshingly straightforward.

Styewise, we noted that the front sheetmetal was very car-like, especially in the grille and headlight area (see photo at left, the 2013 model).

Despite being top trim, the vehicle had manual tilt and telescope steering wheel.

Controls were clear. Audio tuning worked well through intuition. Prominent knobs on the center stack imply easy audio tuning with eyes on the road, but oddly they're not knobs at all—they're circular housings for little-used functions (four-way flasher and passenger airbag indicator).

A small screen at the upper center of the instrument panel contains vital time and outside temperature info, once you get it legible, which required the manual—a well-organized one with great reference diagrams and indexing. We also learned that the outside temp is only accurate from minus 40 to plus 122 degrees Fahrenheit—pushing the limits for summertime here.

The third row has its own air supply (with its own controls), a huge advantage that can be a deal-maker for family buyers.

While performing routinely aggressive suburban neighborhood maneuvers at a pretty decent clip, we noted that the Highlander handles well overall—certainly not a road-hugging performance vehicle, but the fact we'd even about think that demonstrates how good it is.

Multiple times, we noted the Highlander's smooth handling, smooth cornering and smooth acceleration. One logbook note aside, we found its steering to generally be very solid, steady and reliable, with just the right amount of effort, no electric feel and no disconnect—in an era where so many steering systems are just the opposite.

The Highlander, for all its capability, does not feel high-centered or bulky. Ultimately, we con-



cluded that it would be no trouble at all making this a daily driver.

So, the Highlander is identified an SUV, though built on a unibody chassis. We contemplate this and conclude that if the SUV were invented today and were not made a little carlike, people would probably wonder what kind of shortcuts the designers took to just press some truck chassis into service, when all anybody really wanted was a big station wagon, of sorts. This just works.

The Toyota Highlander is ubiquitous, it's not overdesigned, its interface is near-transparent. It's easy to describe this vehicle as being kind of vanilla. Another way of putting that is that this is one of those vehicles where you could say that if there were only one vehicle in the world, this could be it. That's not to say it's a take-me-now, to-die-for vehicle. It just means it's simple, to the point and handles probably 100 percent of the tasks that 98 percent of people need. ■

Bill Fay, Toyota Motor Sales group vice president and Toyota Division general manager, introduces the all-new third-generation 2014 Toyota Highlander at the 2013 New York International Auto Show.

The 2014 Toyota Highlander was revealed at the New York International Auto Show in March 2013.

You can see at a glance its more trucklike grille—reminiscent of the big Tundra—bringing it closer to its SUV self-image. Everything's more aggressive around the front, from that grille, to its new fascia, to the enhanced power bulge and more angular fender definition, to the wheel arches, which are tighter to the wheels now, giving the vehicle a more purposeful stance.

The vehicle has been refined inside to accommodate up to eight passengers (the second row can be a bench or two captain's chairs).

Two versions of the Entune infotainment system are available, with 6.1-inch screen or 8-inch screen and 12-speaker JBL audio. There is a new one-touch power liftgate, plus driver selectable memory height settings.

There will again by four-cylinder, V6 and V6 hybrid powertrain alternatives. Smoothness and fuel efficiency are aided by a new 6-speed transmission.

Thirty percent more insulation, new acoustic glass and exhaust redesign reduce noise-vibration-harshness.

Toyota says the Highlander promises to deliver style, comfort and utility. They seem to have kept all three benchmarks in mind as they put this new one together. ■



Volkswagen Karmann Ghia



■ **Volkswagen** is celebrating 60 years of its sleek and stylish Karmann Ghia variant, an air-cooled sibling of the classic beetle, first introduced as an internal prototype in 1953. The car was conceived to move the company's image and product line up-market and went into full production in 1955. Wilhelm Karmann hired Luigi Segre of Carrozzeria Ghia in Turin to create the idea—without even first consulting Volkswagen at first. A convertible sports car was first envisioned, but the actual prototype was a coupe. (Both were ultimately produced.) The original prototype is now on display in the Volkswagen Osnabrück Automobile Collection.

■ The YouTube video "The Hamster Stunt" was viewed more than 3.4 million times in just its first week. It features a hamster in a cage atop the steering wheel of a Volvo FMX heavy truck with new Volvo Dynamic Steering. The light effort of the hamster—egged on by a carefully deployed carrot—are all that is used to steer the 15-ton truck up the rough, twisting, cliff-hanging road to the top of a quarry. Volvo Dynamic Steering is a new system from **Volvo Trucks** (unrelated to Volvo cars) that allows the driver to steer a heavy truck without effort. At low speeds, an electric motor replaces muscle power—aimed at delivering perfect steering feel in all operating conditions. "At low speeds, a heavily laden vehicle is so easy to maneuver that it can be steered with just one finger," says system software engineer Jan-Inge Svensson.

■ The new **Kia** Niro European concept, unveiled at the Frankfurt show in September, hints at a possible future B-segment contender for the urban environment—"playful but gutsy, sturdy yet impish," in Kia's words. The body coordinates a mix of contrasting materials within compact, purposeful dimensions. The Kia Niro concept has been tailored to European tastes, where sizes trend smaller overall. There are no plans for production at this point, though the company will gauge customer response on both sides of the Atlantic.

■ The diesel engine celebrated its 120th birthday this summer, as sales of this technology are hotter than ever in the US. Rudolf **Diesel** fired up his first engine on August 20, 1893, running on the compression-ignition principle, more commonly known to the day by his surname. It is highly unlikely that Diesel—who died 100 years ago—could possibly have conceived how the engine bearing his name would revolutionize the world's energy and transportation platforms. But increasing number of buyers in America are discovering the advantages of new clean diesel engines: high fuel mileage, smooth running, and full-range torque for superior acceleration and passing power.



Kia Niro concept

■ The **Terrafugia** Transition flying car performed its first public demonstrations for the aviation community at this year's EAA AirVenture Oshkosh show. The 20 minute demonstrations included flight maneuvers over show center, converting from airplane to car, and driving along the flight line. Whether you missed it and want to see the flight for yourself for the first time, or you were there and want to relive the moment, you can find a video at their website: www.terraflugia.com.

■ This summer, **Kia** Motors Manufacturing Georgia, Inc. (KMMG) celebrated the one millionth vehicle—a snow white pearl 2014 Sorento SXL—to roll off the assembly line at their West Point GA plant. Representing an initial investment of \$1 billion, the plant saw mass production of the Sorento begin in November,

2009. Using on-site and local suppliers, the plant is responsible for the creation of more than 11,000 jobs in the region. A \$100 million expansion in early 2012 increased annual capacity to 360,000 vehicles. The Optima midsize sedan, added to the Georgia production line in 2011, has been Kia's best-selling vehicle in the US for 19 consecutive months.

■ **Scion** has become the first non-luxury car brand to include a touchscreen audio system installed in its instrument panel as standard equipment across its entire lineup—xB, xD, tC, iQ and FR-S.

MINI Driving Experience



■ Both new and advanced drivers can benefit from **MINI** Driving Experience training sessions—drifting on ice and snow, finding the ideal line on the race-track or just touring through scenic landscapes. The underlying mission of all the courses is the same: learning to handle the cars in various, sometimes challenging situations, to become better and safer drivers in everyday traffic. All sessions and tours, operated near Munich, Germany, are conducted in small groups, including MINI Safety Training, MINI John Cooper Works Experience racetrack training, and tours lasting from one to several days. Sessions can be individually selected or include personal coaching.

■ The **Land Rover** Expedition America team has successfully completed its off-road crossing of the US, reaching the Pacific Ocean at Port Orford, Oregon after covering over 4,300 miles in 27 days—the first fully documented crossing of the Trans-America Trail in a production SUV. The route—comprising unpaved trails, forest trails, logging roads and existing passes—was the brainchild of Mississippi adventure motorcyclist Sam Corroero. Expedition leader Tom "TC" Collins used official Trans-America Trail maps and GPS navigation to guide the expedition. The expedition narrowly escaped flash floods in New Mexico and Utah, and in Oregon during the last 48 hours of the expedition, forest fires forced the closure of many trails. Land Rover LR4 vehicles used on the expedition were showroom stock, with factory all-season tires. The only additions were dealer accessory winches and factory roof racks. The vehicles had no mechanical issues; the only repairs were of a few tire punctures from jagged rocks.

■ Industry-first dirt detection technology uses high-resolution cameras to generate a 3D model so **Ford** can identify and eliminate dirt particles smaller than a grain of salt on vehicle paint surfaces.

Data show that this new automated vision system has led to an 82 percent improvement in combined paint quality and customer satisfaction metrics for surface finish within one year. The digital imaging system analyzes more than 3,000 images in 15 seconds to identify dirt particles. Previously, paint inspections were based solely on the human eye.



Ford dirt detection technology

■ **Exa** Corporation, a global developer of fluids simulations for product engineering, has joined forces with Tata Motors European Technical Center and the Royal College of Art (RCA) to offer an innovative project educating post-graduate automotive design students on simulation-driven design and its critical role in today's automotive industry. Taught by automotive industry design leaders using cutting-edge Exa PowerFLOW simulations, RCA students gained insight into the design challenges facing today's automotive manufacturers—creating aerodynamically efficient designs that can still be visually exciting. Students had the opportunity to turn their sketches into digital 3D designs and evaluate them using Exa's aerodynamic simulation software.

■ **Nissan** says it intends to have multiple self-driving vehicles ready for retail sale in 2020. They have been working on self-driving vehicles for years in Japan and now plan to step up investment in the technologies, adding new proving grounds dedicated to autonomous vehicles, plus an advanced autonomous vehicle technology center in Silicon Valley. The sale of self-driving vehicles still faces federal traffic safety regulators. ■



Land Rover Expedition America team

UPCOMING FEATURES

A night out with Craig Jackson and Randy Johnson



SEMA Las Vegas & LA Auto Show highlights



Arizona auctions



PIR 50th Anniversary and NASCAR



2014 Camaro SS convertible



2014 Rolls-Royce Wraith



2014 RAM pickup lineup



2014 Volkswagen Touareg TDI



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1955 LANCIA AURELIA B24S SPIDER AMERICA
Coachwork by Pinin Farina



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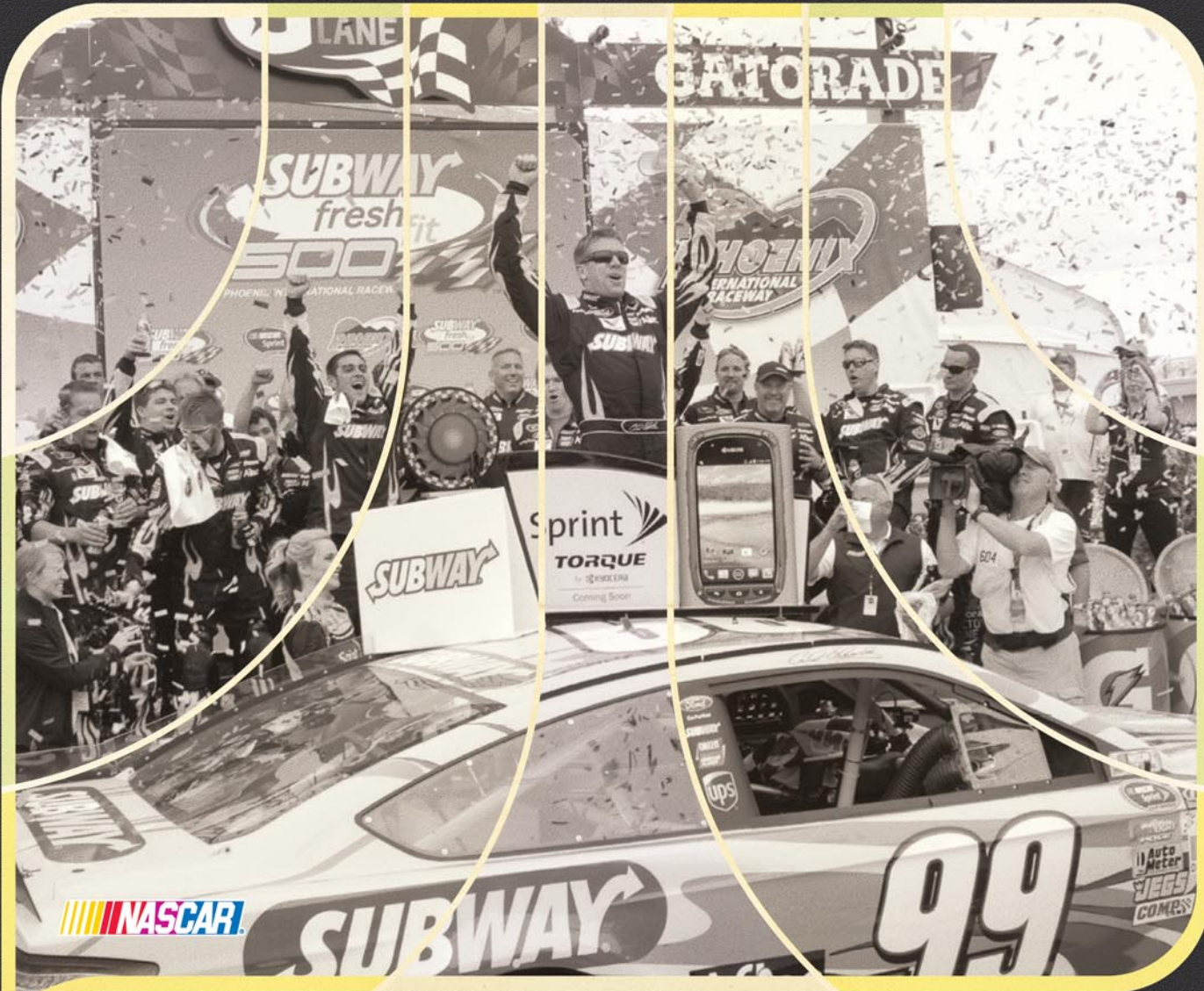
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