

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 2

MARCH-APRIL 2015

AUCTION RESULTS!

**ARIZONA CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE WINNERS
COLLECTOR PANEL TIPS AND INSIGHTS**

**ANTELOPE CANYON ROAD TRIP
GOODGUYS SPRING NATIONALS INFO
PIR NASCAR UPCOMING RACE INFO**

DETROIT AUTO SHOW | CHICAGO AUTO SHOW

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COVER: The 2015 Jeep® Renegade is an all-new vehicle, in the burgeoning B-SUV subcompact segment. Anything in the lineup will get you to these northern Arizona dirt roads, and the Trail-Rated Renegade Trailhawk can even tackle those rocks.

Joe Sage



Joe Sage



Tyson Hugie



Joe Sage



Shows and auctions, auctions and shows. January in our neck of the woods has been about world-famous collector car auctions—now fully six of them—for decades. Once again, records were set for dollars, volume and rarity, for which sellers, buyers and the auction houses who facilitated things are all duly delighted. And our new auction week-opening Arizona Concours d'Elegance is a firmly rooted addition after just two years.

If all this makes you long for more time with the classics, plan to spend a couple of days at the Goodguys Spring Nationals in March, at WestWorld in north Scottsdale, where the 21-event national series kicks off its season (and also finishes it in November).

While our weather in Arizona is the envy of the Northern Hemisphere each January, it's also time for cold and snow during the North American International Auto Show in Detroit and the Chicago Auto Show, for two more rounds of new model and concept reveals, following the Los Angeles Auto Show (see our last issue).

To make sure we didn't get too spoiled by Arizona winter, we also headed to a very wintry Connecticut for an all-wheel-drive event with Buick. On a warmer and drier note, we flew to San Jose to be among the first to drive the remarkable new little Jeep® Renegade, yet another Fiat family dividend that—well, see inside.

In between it all, we report on the usual wide variety of vehicles driven locally, many of which are Asian this month, from the red hot giants of Korea to the compelling smaller makers from Japan, including Mazda, Mitsubishi and a small car from bigger Honda.

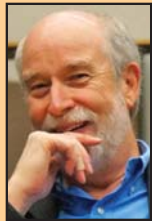
And if all this gets your motor racing, check out the schedule for March's NASCAR races at Phoenix International Raceway, including our personal favorite, the fun, accessible and more hands-on NASCAR Mexico events held the same week.

Enjoy the ride.

Joe Sage

Publisher/ Executive Editor

Photo: Brenda Priddy



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**MARCH NASCAR
 Y NASCAR MEXICO**

This year, PIR again hosts two NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race weekends, in spring and fall.

MARCH 12-15 NASCAR AT PIR

Phoenix International Raceway has hosted a NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race every spring since 2005 and the second race of the NASCAR season in each of the prior four years. This year's event, headlined by the Camping World 500, is about two weeks later than last year, on March 12-15, so this year it will be the season's fourth.

Mid-March aligns better with Spring Break for most Arizona K-12 school districts, making NASCAR an easy family entertainment option. It also falls during Spring Break for ASU, University of Arizona, NAU and Grand Canyon University.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13: 630PM

Toyota 120 NASCAR Mexico Series
 TV: NBC Universo / Radio: MRN/SiriusXM

SATURDAY, MARCH 14: 1PM

NASCAR XFINITY Series at Phoenix
 TV: FOX / Radio: MRN/SiriusXM

SUNDAY, MARCH 15: 1230PM

CampingWorld.com 500 / TV: FOX
 Radio: MRN/SiriusXM

Tickets start at just \$25, available at PhoenixRaceway.com, or by calling 866-408-RACE (7223) or in person at the PIR ticket office. Season tickets for 2015 start at \$99 (see info at right).



PIR WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS

PIR has redesigned its website for the 2015 season. Featuring a more engaging, data-driven user experience, the new site has streamlined navigation and enhanced fan content.

The site features bold photos and new navigational panes to guide fans through the event weekend. Navigation and overall site structure are based on extensive analysis of traffic patterns and search engine optimization.

Sections include ticket purchasing, a selection of race weekend offerings, raceday add-ons to complete your experience, and information on visiting the track. The PIR News section has upgraded article search, so fans can sort through stories from PIR's past.

Other new content includes a PIR record book, PIR history and timeline, and an all new camping and RV visitors section. A Spanish language "PIR en Español" section is also being added, along with interactive multimedia offerings.

NOVEMBER AND SEASON PASS INFO

NOVEMBER 12-15 NASCAR AT PIR

PIR again hosts the final race in the Eliminator of the Chase for the Sprint Cup. The fall race at PIR—a NASCAR fixture since 1988—will again be the semi-final race in the Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup. Friday Nov 13 (630pm) is the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Lucas Oil 150. Saturday Nov 14 (2pm) is the NASCAR XFINITY Series race. Sunday Nov 15 (1230pm) PIR's 2015 season concludes with the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Quicken Loans Race for Heroes 500.

PIR SEASON TICKETS

PIR season tickets for 2015 start at \$99 and are available at PhoenixRaceway.com, or by calling 866-408-RACE (7223) or can be purchased in person at the PIR ticket office.

A season ticket includes all races during both NASCAR weekends, at great savings over individual tickets. Season ticket holders have the exclusive opportunity to buy discounted parking passes, pre-race pit passes and Budweiser ROLL-BAR passes. Another exclusive benefit is the first opportunity to upgrade or change seat locations each year. And you can buy additional race tickets at the discounted season ticket holder price.

New for PIR 2015 season ticket holders in 2015 is the Zoom Pass. This hard plastic credential replaces individual grandstand tickets and grants access to all races.

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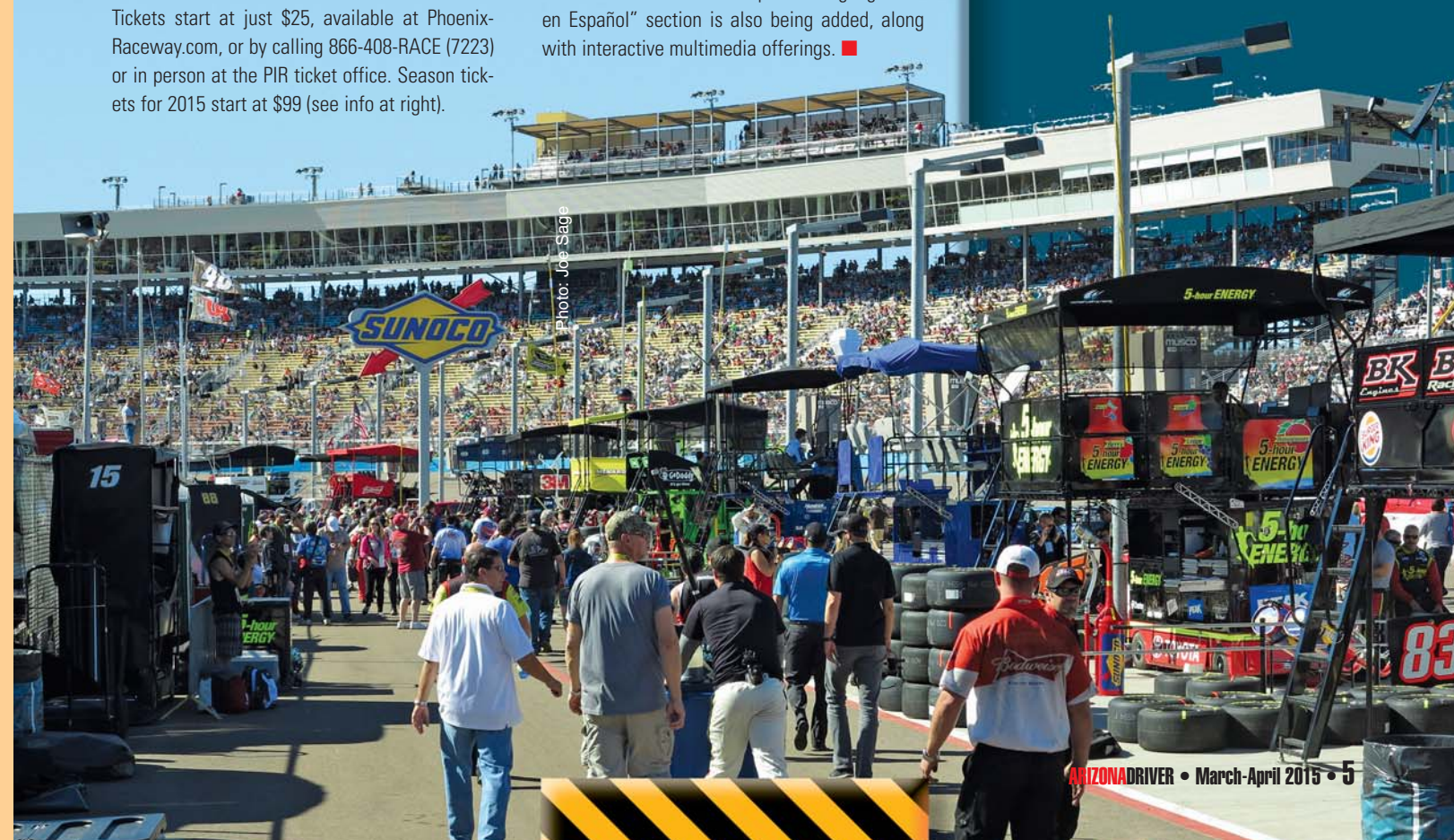


Photo: Joe Sage

By land and by sea: Mercedes-AMG and Cigarette Racing collaboration

Mercedes-AMG and Cigarette Racing joined forces for the fifth consecutive year at the Miami International Boat Show, presenting the all-new 2016 Mercedes-AMG GT S and the most powerful production twin engine performance boat, the Cigarette Racing 50 Marauder GT S concept. With AMG Solarbeam Yellow paint and matte black accents, the concept boat complemented the Mercedes-AMG GT S displayed with it. Launching in April, the new Mercedes-AMG GT S delivers racetrack performance with a front-mid-engine AMG 4.0-liter V-8 biturbo and aluminum construction combining for 503 hp and 479 lb-ft of torque, with a 0-60 time of 3.7 seconds. The Cigarette Racing 50 Marauder GT S concept is custom hand-crafted, powered by a pair of Mercury Racing 1550 HP V8 engines rigged in a Solarbeam engine room and tested under extreme conditions. Lightweight construction has removed some 1000 lbs from the standard spec weight, thereby allowing the 50-foot boat with 8-foot beam to achieve an estimated top speed above 135 mph. Mercedes-AMG and Cigarette Racing have been collaborating like this since 2007. Mercedes-AMG and Cigarette Racing both have racing roots and are dedicated to this passion. The price of the boat is \$1.2 million. For more information, visit cigaretteracing.com. ▼



2016 Mercedes-AMG GT S and Cigarette Racing 50 Marauder GT S concept.

Detroit Electric SP:01 pure-electric sports car



DETROIT ELECTRIC 2-SEAT SPORTS CAR

▲ Detroit Electric has revealed pre-production prototypes of their Lotus-based SP:01 electric sports car, currently undergoing extensive testing at their production facility in the UK. The SP:01 features a 285-hp electric motor, lightweight carbon fiber body panels and a manual transmission. Optional single-speed and twin-speed automatics will also be available. Zero-to-60 acceleration is stated as 3.7 seconds, with a top speed of 155 mph—the world's fastest pure-electric production two-seater sports car. Since its 2013 Shanghai Motor Show introduction, the SP:01 body has received a more aerodynamic fastback, replacing its original flying buttress setup. A large carbon fiber rear wing and under-body diffuser have also been incorporated, to reduce lift and improve handling at higher speeds. The SP:01's center console features an 8.4-inch touchscreen, which replaces all analog dials and switches and works off an open-source Android operating system, for access to everything from music to telephone and streaming internet services, to climate, navigation and vehicle system status. The car will offer a choice of leather or alcantara sport seats and a selection of bespoke alloy wheels. The car will be sold in Asia, Europe and North America. Visit detroit-electric-group.com.

AUTONOMOUS DRIVING BILLS ADVANCE

Ready or not, the push for autonomous (self-driving) cars continues at an accelerating pace. With most of the technologies required already on board newer vehicles (everything from smart cruise control to lane-keeping assistance to automatic braking for collision avoidance), state legislatures nationwide have been addressing this. Uber is hard at work on autonomous cabs, while Google's driverless car has been shown widely for a couple of years now. Apple is getting a lot of attention currently from a secret project that has been spotted repeatedly and seems to be another self-driver, in a minivan format. The goal is for you to be able to plug in your work address, settle back in your seat and just show up. The primary motivator is fuel economy, although proponents also seek improved safety, while skeptics are not at all so sure about that. Four states plus Washington DC have passed legislation so far, including California and Nevada (where Google is based and where it tests, and where the Defense Department also tests); Michigan (but only for the sake of testing); and Florida. There are over a dozen states where it has failed and a handful which have bills still under consideration. Arizona has had failed legislation, but has new legislation under consideration. An

Arizona bill in 2012 was rejected largely due to the burden it would put on AZDOT to accommodate the vehicles. A newer 2013 bill is said to be closer to Florida's, which starts to make broad allowances for the technologies, but contingent upon further reports that must be submitted to the legislature for further consideration.

CAR LOAN RATES HIT RECORD LOW

With broader interest rates at record lows, low oil prices producing a consumer windfall and the average vehicle now over 11 years old, you may be ready to shop for your next vehicle. Personal finance social network WalletHub has released its *2015 Auto Financing Report*, analyzing auto loan and lease offers from more than 150 providers. They find that interest rates for both new and used cars are at their lowest point in the past few years. WalletHub suggests that people in the market for a new car should start their search for financing with car manufacturers, whose rates are generally 35 percent below average, or with credit unions, whose rates are about 25 percent below average. Their findings are that national banks are right about average (therefore unfavorable) and regional banks are charging about 40 percent above average.

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They further find that new car loans currently charge an average 17 percent lower interest than used car loans. But you still need good credit. Those with fair credit should expect to pay about four-and-a-half times as high a rate, equaling about \$5,500 additional over the life of a five-year \$20,000 loan. Despite their statement that new car loans run lower than used, they also say interest rates decreased the most—almost 18 percent—for those with excellent credit who were purchasing used vehicles.

PORSCHE GTS CLUB COUPE FOR PCA

▲ Celebrating six decades of the largest Porsche club organization in the world, Porsche Cars North America is producing a 60-unit limited run of the Club Coupe, based on the 911 Carrera GTS. Known as the GTS Club Coupe, the 430-hp sports car is painted in a unique “Club Blau,” created exclusively for this anniversary edition. The GTS Club Coupe features the 44mm wider body of 911 Carrera 4 models, but with a rear-wheel-drive platform. Sport side mirrors, black framed bi-xenon headlights and taillights tinted in black are standard, while doors are marked with black “Club Coupe” model designations. The limited-edition model has a SportDesign package fitted as standard, with a more pronounced front fascia,

ducktail rear spoiler and 20-inch semi-gloss black wheels with polished centers and rim flanges. Powering the GTS Club Coupe is an enhanced version of the Carrera S engine, (also found in Carrera GTS variants), with 430 hp and a 3.8-second 0-60 time when equipped with seven-speed PDK transmission. Top track speed is 190 mph (189 mph with PDK). A third center radiator ensures consistent performance in all conditions.

PAINT POPULARITY 80 PERCENT GREY

Fully 80 percent of cars and trucks in the Swapalease.com auto lease marketplace are in the grey family (they include white and black). Black (31.4%), white (19.6%), silver (13.1%), dark grey (9.1%) and grey (6.5%) are the top five colors and total 79.9%; off-white (0.8%) and light grey (0.7%) add to the total. Red is the first color not in the greyscale, sixth most popular overall, and represents 5.2% of total cars. Blue and dark blue are in seventh and eighth, at 3.6% and 2.6%, respectively, and purple is last on the list—twenty-third—at 0.1%, not surprisingly since it is not often available. According to executive VP Scot Hall, grey has been popular since before the recession. “Red and blue were much more prominent in the Swapalease.com marketplace in the early and mid-2000s, but since around 2005

the popularity of greyscale cars and trucks began to emerge,” said Hall. “If anything, silver led the greyscale renaissance, but since the recession, varying forms of exotic greys have become popular with drivers and car shoppers.” Since the inception of Swapalease.com in the late 1990s, black has always been most popular in the car lease marketplace.

LOWER PRICE ENTRY POINTS FROM GM

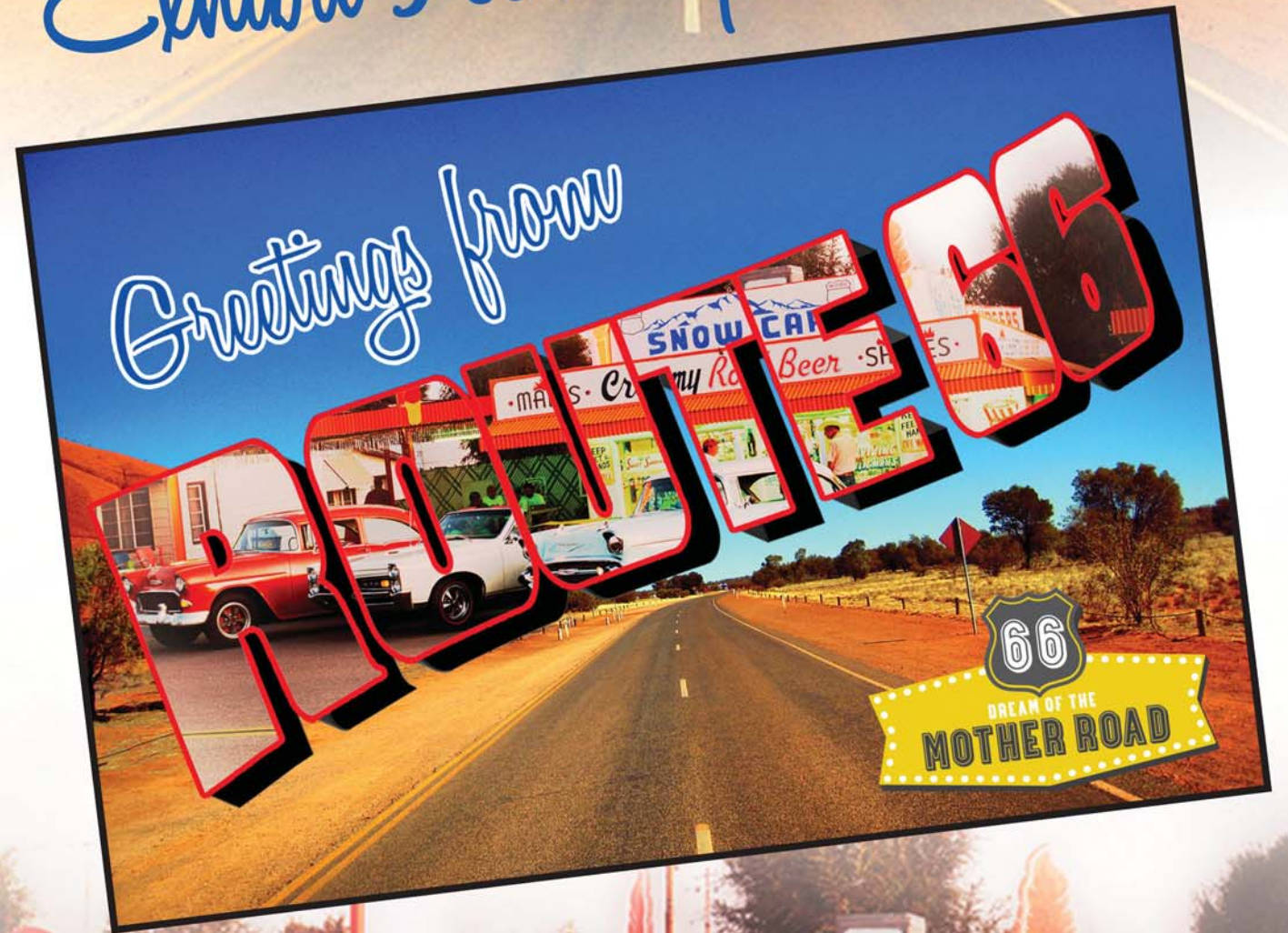
General Motors is adding new base levels to four models—Chevrolet Cruze, Chevrolet Equinox, GMC Terrain and Buick LaCrosse—at price points lower than base trims in the current lineup. The two Chevy models will have L designations, coming in below the prior LS base models at about \$1,500 less on the Cruze and \$2,400 less on the Equinox. GMC’s entry Terrain will be about \$2,500 lower than before. And Buick’s LaCrosse in 1SV trim will shave about \$2,500 off its starting price. GM emphasizes that the new trim levels are rebalanced against customer feedback, not stripped down. For example, the Cruze L comes standard with 4G LTE internet, remote keyless entry and a USB port, but eliminates floor mats, satellite radio and a spare tire (coming instead with an inflator kit). *Automotive News*

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Greetings from





Ford Focus RS

reports that the models may be hard to find, as their dealer margin shaves a prior fairly minimal \$600 (before negotiations) down to just \$100—not enough to keep the lights on.

AWD HI-PERFORMANCE FORD FOCUS RS

▲ Developed by a small team of global Ford Performance engineers, the new Ford Focus RS marks the third generation of the RS line, following models launched in 2002 and 2009. It will be the 30th car to wear the legendary RS badge, following such technology trendsetters as the 1970 Escort RS1600 with 16 valves, the 1985 Sierra RS Cosworth with turbocharging and radical aerodynamics, and the 1992 Escort RS Cosworth with four-wheel drive. Ford Performance plans to bring more than 12 performance vehicles to customers globally by 2020, including the new Ford GT supercar introduced at Detroit in January. The third-gen Focus RS will be available in major markets around the world and for the first time in the US. Focus RS has all-wheel drive with dynamic torque vectoring, paired with a 2.3-liter EcoBoost four-cylinder engine. The most powerful production Focus ever, the RS has aggressive, functional design inside and out and is engineered for performance both on road and on track. Professional rally driver and *Gymkhana* film star

Ken Block teamed with Ford as a development consultant for the Focus RS.

NEW EAST VALLEY RIDES CAR SHOW

January marked the first official East Valley Rides—a new early-morning car show in southeast metro Phoenix. The event happens on the second Saturday of each month in front of Pei Wei at the Dana Park Village Square, northwest corner of S Val Vista Drive and E Baseline Road in Gilbert. Whether you have a '63 Corvette, a new Lamborghini or a classic truck, bring it and bring your friends. Things start cooking at 7 am, and you can come and go as you please. For more information, see facebook.com/EastValleyRides.

HONDA, NISSAN, TOYOTA HYDROGEN

Honda, Nissan and Toyota parent companies have agreed to work together to help accelerate development of hydrogen station infrastructure for fuel cell vehicles (FCVs). Specific tasks and functions will be determined at a later date. For fuel cells to gain popularity, hydrogen station infrastructure must be developed—a classic chicken-and-egg scenario which has been tackled before, notably in California a decade ago, when then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger launched an ambitious infrastructure campaign. But infrastructure companies face difficulties in instal-

ling and operating hydrogen stations while FCVs are extremely rare on the road. Following formulation of a Strategic Road Map for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells in June 2014, the Japanese government has highlighted the importance of developing hydrogen station infrastructure as quickly as possible in order to popularize FCVs. The Japanese will be supporting installation of hydrogen stations via subsidies, while proposing a range of additional policies aimed at generating demand for FCVs, including some subsidies for these stations' ongoing operating costs. The three Japanese vehicle manufacturing giants hope to popularize FCVs from both the product and fuel ends of the equation, so they intend to become more directly involved in promoting the development of hydrogen station infrastructure, in parallel with the government and infrastructure companies. The three automakers "will give careful consideration to concrete initiatives, such as underwriting a portion of the expenses involved in the operation of hydrogen stations," according to a report from Toyota. "FCVs are expected to play a central role in the drive towards establishing a hydrogen society," the report continues, and "Toyota, Nissan and Honda are aiming to contribute to bringing about such a society through ensuring the widespread use of FCVs." ■

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TOP TIER SECOND YEAR



THE 2ND ANNUAL ARIZONA CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

Photos: Joe Sage or as noted

The Arizona Concours d'Elegance served as the start of January classic car auction week in the Scottsdale/Phoenix area for the second time this year, following a highly successful inaugural event. This select display of exceptional vintage automobiles took place on the manicured inner lawns of the historic Arizona Biltmore Resort in Phoenix on Sunday, January 11, 2015.

The 2015 Concours included more than 20 judged classes. Well-known veteran concours judge John Carlson served as chief judge, as he had the prior year. Also returning was Keith Martin, publisher of *Sports Car Market* and *American Car Collector*, as host and emcee.

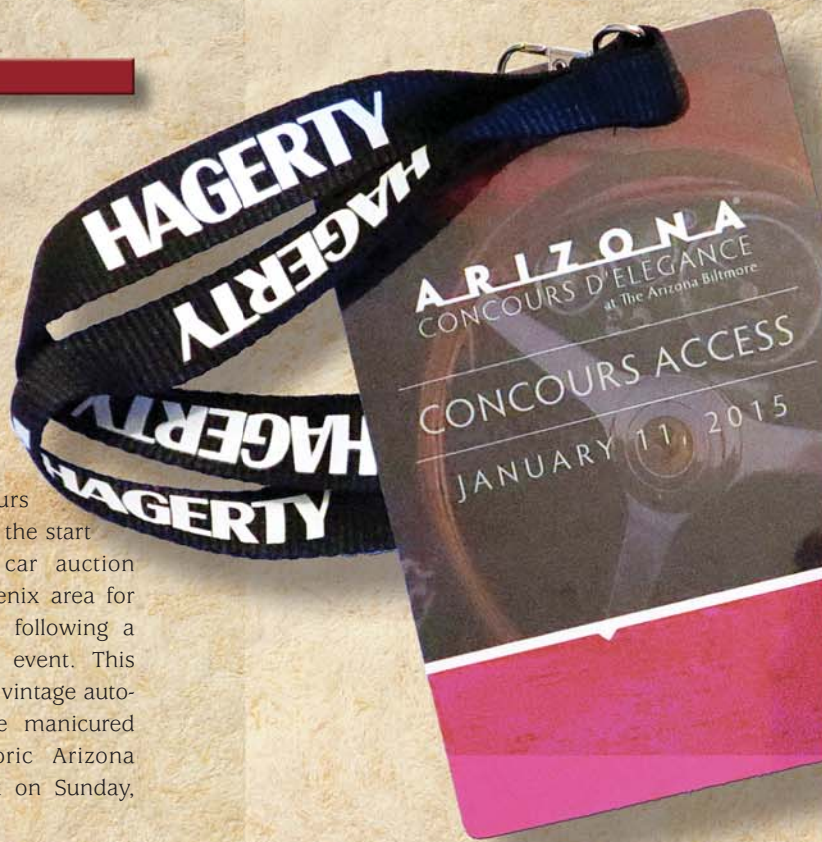
Sunday's attendance was a sellout for the 2015 Concours, and two Saturday seminars—the Phoenix Automotive Press Association auction preview and the Elegance at Speed racing-car design forum—were very well attended.

BEST OF SHOW

A 1937 Mercedes-Benz 540 K Sport Cabriolet A won Best of Show at the second annual Arizona Concours d'Elegance, held Sunday, January 11, at the Arizona Biltmore Resort. The spectacular pre-war cabriolet, owned by Thomas Taffet of Chatsworth, California, was brought to the Arizona Concours by the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center. The 540 K earlier won Best of Class in the European Classics group.

MAKE-A-WISH

The beneficiary of the Arizona Concours, Make-A-Wish Arizona, raised more than \$70,000 in donations. The Arizona organization is the founding chapter of this national foundation that grants wishes for children with life-threatening medical conditions.



CLASS WINNERS

Pre-1915 Antique Automobiles:

1903 Pope-Hartford Model B
John Konwiser, Scottsdale, AZ

Pre-War Sports and Racing:

1932 MG F1 Magna
Malcolm and Barbara Appleton, Waitsfield, VT

Post-War American-Powered Sports Cars:

1952 Cunningham C-3 convertible
Rich and Karen Atwell, Phoenix, AZ

Post-War American Race Cars:

1959 Watson "Simoniz Special" Indy roadster
Larry and Jan Pfitzenmaier, Sonoita, AZ

Post-War European Sports Cars:

1962 Jaguar E-type OTS
Randall Smalley, Paradise Valley AZ

American Classic Open:

1933 Packard 1005 convertible coupe
Aaron and Valeria Weiss, San Marino CA

Post-War European Race Cars:

1956 Ferrari 500 Testarossa
Linda and Bill Pope, Scottsdale, AZ

American Classic Closed:

1937 Buick 91F formal sedan
Lee Gurvey, Scottsdale, AZ

European Classic:

1937 Mercedes-Benz 540K Sport Cabriolet A
Thomas Taffet, Chatsworth, CA

Preservation:

1965 Ferrari 275 GTB
Terry Maxon, Glendale, AZ

Avant-Garde:

1949 Volkswagen Hebmuller cabriolet
Ron Clarke, Paradise Valley, AZ

Exotic:

1967 Ferrari 330 GTS
Philippe and Francoise Reyns, Chandler, AZ

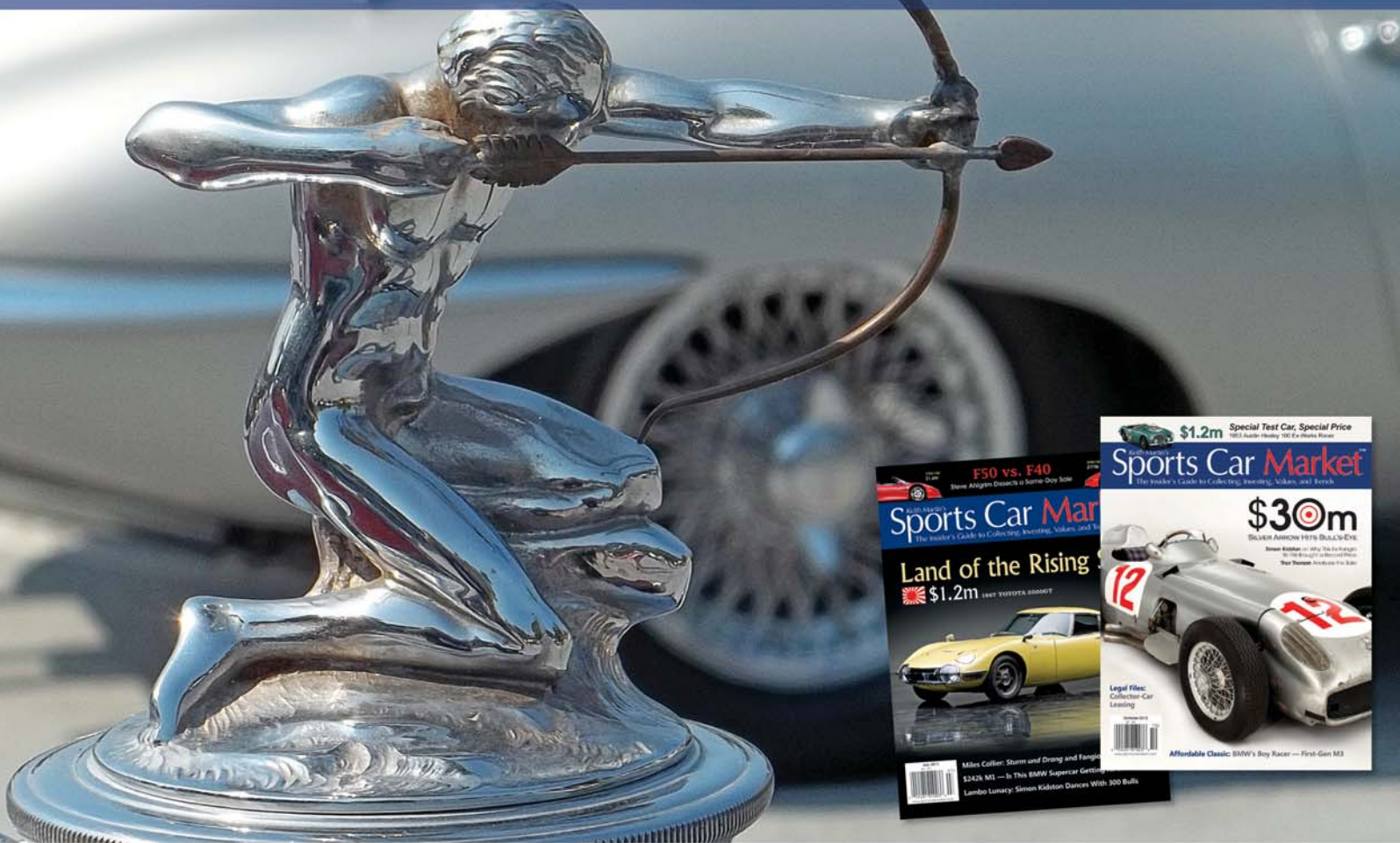
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(Top) This 1937 Mercedes-Benz 540 K Sport Cabriolet A, owned by Thomas Taffet of Chatsworth, California, won Best of Show honors, after earlier winning Best of Class in the European Classics group. Photo: Michael Tobian, courtesy Arizona Concours.

(Bottom) Arizona Concours beneficiary Make-A-Wish Arizona raised more than \$70,000 in donations. The Arizona organization is the founding chapter of the national foundation that grants wishes for children with life-threatening medical conditions.



Post-War Mercedes-Benz:

1961 300D Sedan
Barry Sohnen, Los Angeles, CA

Pierce-Arrow:

1916 Model 48
Clive Cussler, Paradise Valley, AZ

100th Anniversary of Carrozzeria Ghia:

1952 Fiat 8V Supersonic
David Sydorick Beverly Hills, CA

SPECIAL AWARDS

Make-A-Wish Kids' Choice:

Jaguar XK120C
Bill and Linda Pope, Scottsdale, AZ

Hagerty Youth Judges:

1927 Marmon E-75 Speedster
Ed Boice, Los Ranchos, NM

Historic Vehicle Association:

1949 Crosley Hot Shot (Frank Lloyd Wright)
Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, Auburn, IN

Historic Vehicle Association:

1937 AC 16/80 "Ace" roadster
David and Rochelle Buice, Dallas, TX

Phoenix Automotive Press Association:

1972 Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona
Todd and Stan Reeg, Paradise Valley, AZ

Most Elegant Pre-War:

1933 Pierce-Arrow Silver Arrow
Academy of Art University, San Francisco, CA

Most Elegant Post-War:

1956 Ferrari 250 GT Zagato
Rocky Mountain Auto Collection, Scottsdale, AZ

Director's Award:

1953 Cadillac Series 62 Ghia (Rita Hayworth)
Petersen Automotive Museum, Los Angeles, CA

Director's Award:

1951 OSCA MT4
T.G. Mittler, Santa Fe, NM

Director's Award:

1957 Dual-Ghia
Curt and Carole Ziegler, Denver, CO

Most Significant Race or Sports Car:

1954 Ferrari Europa 250 GT
Budd and Laurie Florkiewicz, Scottsdale, AZ

Significant Design of Its Era:

1937 Cord 812 SC Custom Beverly
Bruce Hanson, Phoenix, AZ

Special Award:

1956 Ferrari 500 Testarossa
Bill and Linda Pope, Scottsdale, AZ

PLAN NOW FOR 2016

For more information about the Arizona Concours d'Elegance and to watch for the announcement of 2016 dates, please visit www.arizonaconcours.com. ■



NEW GO-ANYWHERE RENEGADE IS TRUE TO ITS ROOTS

BY JOE SAGE



Some questions are easier to answer once all the facts are in hand. It becomes hard to believe they were ever questions. As rumors grew and early images were glimpsed, the all-new Jeep® Renegade generated questions as to its seriousness of duty, basically just because it seemed small. Turns out that was silly.

It is categorized as a subcompact, with dimensions smaller than the Cherokee. But our world is populated with a great many vehicles of increasingly small size, and when you see the Renegade in person, it fits right in. Jeep today seems to be like Steve Jobs was in Apple's breakthrough years—knowing what you want before you even know you want it. And getting it right.

The new subcompact SUV (or B-SUV) segment is exploding this year, a brief drop in fuel prices not slowing it down. With more upcoming entries from the domestics, Europeans and Asians, interest is high, and sales of the earliest entrants have been hot.

As surely as today's full-size cars would have been called midsize not long ago, we can only wonder how long the subcompact term will even last. It sounds so relative.

Tread lightly, reads the mantra of responsible off-road use. What better way, than to keep things small? There seems something very right about a small Jeep.

Yet treading radically is equally Jeep-like.

The Jeep name and product had long been synonymous with all-wheel drive and off-road capability, no questions asked. Having seen some front-wheel-drive models over the past decade, purists want to imme-

diately know where this falls. We understand why people ask, and so does Jeep.

We met the development team near San Jose, then drove the Renegade through the rugged coastal mountains to the California State Parks system's famous Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA). The facility includes 4100 acres, 152 miles of trails, a motocross course, campgrounds—and a 2425-foot vertical drop, at least 1000 feet more than many midsize ski resorts. We would definitely be getting a serious taste of this new small Jeep's capabilities.

TRUE TO THE BRAND

Yes, there is a Trailhawk. That one fact confirms that the Renegade achieves full and unquestioned Jeep-hood. "We stayed true to the brand," says Jeep brand director Jim Morrison. There could be no other way, as we absorb the development process behind the new Jeep Renegade.

The Renegade team kept two benchmarks close to their hearts—the premium end, as represented by the runaway successful Grand Cherokee; and the unmatched formula of purpose-built utility plus freedom, forever embodied in the Jeep Wrangler. From these touchpoints, the new Renegade's personality and purpose start to come into focus.

About a year earlier, a daringly new Jeep Cherokee compact SUV provoked quite a stir at first. Once the actual vehicle saw the light of day, all questions were put to rest, and Jeep soon had yet another top-selling hit.

That process seems to be repeating itself this year with the Renegade. It's smaller, so people have questions. And once again, the questions have easy (and strong) answers. We anticipate another big hit for the brand.

Renegade has some platform commonality with an upcoming Fiat 500X (an enticing little number revealed at the LA Auto Show). The Jeep was the priority, with Fiat simply seiz-

ing an opportunity to incorporate a few things. You will never mistake the two. Elements of the Wrangler are evident in the flat-grille-and-headlights treatment. The vertical windshield and side glass are a Wrangler cue that locked in our whole perspective, once pointed out. Square taillights and trapezoidal wheels also echo Wrangler. Front and rear are signature red tow hooks, and down below are serious skid plates. Renegade is 100 percent designed and engineered in Michigan. Its Jeep roots run deep.

ALWAYS MAKE IT A JEEP

You hear "all-new" a lot. This is a pure case of it. Jeep design chief Mark Allen points out that the Renegade "is not replacing anything. It's a new red-hot segment." Indeed, this B-SUV segment has emerged suddenly as the next big thing, and Jeep's timing—on the front of the wave—could not be better.

But it's not all about styling and packag-

ing. Under the skin are elements delivering purpose and performance. "The customer expects capability," says Morrison, "and we deliver it. It's in our DNA."

Compared to Jeep Cherokee, Renegade is about 16 inches shorter, with about a 6-inch shorter wheelbase, is about 3/4" narrower and 1-1/4" lower in height, with a load floor height barely an inch lower. Renegade is 600 pounds lighter than the Cherokee.

Renegade's body has a high level of torsional rigidity, with 70 percent high-strength steel, and its suspension tackles high clearance situations under full load off-road, with no comfort or performance penalty on-road.

The Trailhawk's suspension can reach 8.1



SPECIFICATIONS: 2015 RENEGADE

Engine: 1.4L MultiAir Turbo I-4
 POWER/TORQUE160 hp / 184 lb-ft
 TRANSMISSION6-speed manual
 FUEL.....unleaded reg; premium recom'd
 MPGt.b.d. ("more than 30 MPG hwy")
 TOWINGnot recommended
 ENGINE ASSEMBLY.....Termoli, Italy
 • STANDARD ON:.....Sport, Latitude (4x2, 4x4)

Engine: 2.4L MultiAir2 Tigershark
 POWER/TORQUE180 hp / 175 lb-ft
 TRANSMISSION9-speed automatic
 FUEL.....unleaded regular
 MPGt.b.d. ("more than 30 MPG hwy")
 TOWING(with 4x4) 2000 lb
 ENGINE ASSEMBLY.....Dundee, Michigan
 • STANDARD ON:.....Limited (4x2, 4x4)
Trailhawk (4x4)
 • (OPTIONAL ON):.....Sport, Latitude (4x2, 4x4)

4x4 Systems

JEEP ACTIVE DRIVE. Optional: Sport, Latitude, Limited models: Fully disconnecting rear axle, w auto 4x4 engagement
 JEEP ACTIVE DRIVE LOW. Standard: Trailhawk: Full-time 4x4 mode w active on-demand clutch, neutral
 CENTER DIFFERENTIAL.....none
 GROUND CLEARANCE (").....4x2 6.7 4x4 7.9 Trailhkw 8.7
 APPROACH ANGLE17.9°21.0°30.5°
 BREAKOVER ANGLE21.2°24.0°25.7°
 DEPARTURE ANGLE29.7°32.1°34.3°

STEERING:.....electric power rack & pinion
 TURNING CIRCLE.....(4x2, 4x4) 36.3 ft
Trailhawk: 35.3 ft
 TURNS LOCK-TO-LOCK.....(4x2, 4x4) 2.68
Trailhawk: 2.76
 FUEL CAPACITY12.7 gal
 WHEELS.....16,17,18-inch; 17 on Trailhawk
 WHEELBASE101.2 in
 OVERALL LENGTH166.6 in
 OVERALL WIDTH74.2 in
 OVERALL HEIGHT66.5 in
 LOAD FLOOR HEIGHT29.8 in
 CARGO VOLUME18.5 to 50.8 cu.ft
 WEIGHT3044 to 3573 lb
 FINAL ASSEMBLY.....Melfi, Italy



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inches or articulation, with 8.7 inches of ground clearance (which matches Cherokee). Sport, Latitude and Limited models have slightly lower clearance, more geared toward highway travel or more moderate outings. (More drivetrain and suspension details are given in photo captions.)

Renegade's main distinctions come down to a partly definable and partly indefinable mixture of style, function and an owner's particular purpose.

Sport and Latitude models come standard with a 1.4-liter turbo and six-speed manual. Limited and Trailhawk models have a 2.4-liter Tigershark and a 9-speed automatic (as introduced in the Cherokee). The larger engine has 20 more horsepower, but the smaller turbo has more torque. The Tigershark has tow capability, up to 2000 pounds (with 4x4 only) and is optional on Sport and Latitude (but then packaged with that 9-speed auto). All are available in 4x2 or 4x4 models, except the Trail-Rated Trailhawk, which is of course 4x4 only. Customers expect fuel efficiency in the subcompact segment. Although EPA numbers are not out yet, Jeep is confident they will exceed 30 MPG—for either engine and transmission.

Renegade safety features, many of which are segment exclusives, include forward collision warning, lane departure warning, blind spot monitoring, rear cross path detection, rear camera with dynamic backup lines, electronic stability control with roll mitigation and seven air bags.

FUN IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS

Not all of Renegade's magic is found where the rubber hits the rocks, dirt or pavement. To develop a clean-sheet interior for the new machine, interior design chief Klaus Busse took Jeep's youngest

designers on Wrangler outings, then "we would give them a pencil and see what they draw."

Results are strong, clean and complete. Classic gauges work together with contextual information. Modern touches include orange trim inspired by base jumpers. The upper instrument panel is colloquially named after virtual film star Wall-E. An electronic parking brake creates maximum console storage. All have Uconnect systems, with screen size and features climbing by model grade.

There are details added throughout just for fun and spirit (and brand). Designers have snuck in a series of what the computer industry calls Easter eggs—fun little surprises. They include splashes of mud, profiles of Jeeps, terrain maps, seven-bar grilles and more. Nobody on any one team knows where they all are, says Busse, "and management doesn't know anything." Some of our media crew searched high and low, hoping to locate every one of them. Some think they did. Happy hunting!

A recurrent "X" theme reflects the classic design of a jerry can, stamped to increase the rigidity of its large flat sides, and usually found on a classic army Jeep. The "X" appears in everything from taillights to the MySky removable roof.

That roof is inspired by the open-air spirit of the Wrangler. Available in manual or power tilt-slide removable versions, its slim and lightweight panels can be popped off and easily stowed.

Ultimately, those details are just a lot of fun. And that's the point. The new Jeep Renegade was tested all over the world, run through the full gamut of Jeep test evaluations. But ultimately, Renegade is just a lot of fun. Very serious fun, if that's your flavor. The vehicle is expected to start arriving at dealers in early March—right now. ■

Renegade is the first Jeep to incorporate Koni frequency selective damping. Front suspension comprises MacPherson strut, coil springs, flat front steel cross-member, high-strength steel double shell lower control arms for 4x4, high-strength steel mono shell lower control arms for 4x2, and stabilizer bar. Rear suspension has a new Chapman strut, high-strength steel links, isolated steel rear cradle for 4x4 (non-isolated for 4x2), coil springs, and stabilizer bar. We drove the lineup over a full gamut of challenges at Hollister Hills—tight breakovers, narrow troughs, boulder fields and water hazards—conquering even the toughest demands with ease and comfort, while showing off Renegade's tough capability.



BASE PRICES: 2015 RENEGADE

RENEGADE SPORT	4x2.....	\$17,995
.....	4x4.....	\$19,995
RENEGADE LATITUDE	4x2.....	\$21,295
.....	4x4.....	\$23,295
RENEGADE LIMITED	4x2.....	\$24,795
.....	4x4.....	\$26,795
RENEGADE TRAILHAWK	4x4 only....	\$25,995
ABSOLUTE TOP-OPTIONED SAMPLE		\$32,000
DESTINATION CHARGE		\$995



BARRETT-JACKSON

Lower photos: Barrett-Jackson



BONHAMS



2015 season again starts with records

Story and photos by Joe Sage

Arizona's famous sextet of auctions has kicked off the world's collector car calendar once again. Records of all sorts were individually set, and the six events collectively brought just shy of \$300,000,000, up from just under \$250 million last year, while last year's impressive 82 percent sell-through rate climbed to a remarkable 86 percent this year.

Each of the six brings something to the table. Barrett-Jackson is the granddaddy of them all, at 44 years running. Bonhams is our newest, though the company has been in business since 1793. They join RM Auctions and Gooding & Company in the top-dollar stratum, where those two have battled it out for top sale for eight years now (they also go head-to-head in Monterey and Amelia Island). Russo and Steele and Silver Auctions are tops in personality, you might say, with Drew Alcazar adding a distinctive star turn as ringmaster in Russo's arena format, while Silver just plain has lots of offbeat charm.

Four of the six achieved the top ten sales. RM pulled the highest price of the week—\$9,625,000 for a 1964 Ferrari 250 LM Coupe—yet this was just a scant 2.3 percent ahead of Bonhams' \$9,405,000 sale of a 1966 Ferrari 275 GTB Competizione Coupe. It was, however, fully 25 percent ahead of perennial top-spot-swapping Gooding, whose 1959 Ferrari 250 GT LWB California Spyder brought \$7,700,000. Gooding, in turn, was still 50 percent ahead of Barrett-Jackson's \$5,100,000 for a 1966 Shelby Cobra 427 Super Snake. Barrett-Jackson is increasingly coming on strong in the seven-figure cars—with three of the top ten sales this year.

A few had caught our eye ahead of time at each auction, and we had a few others catch our eye unexpectedly as each unfolded. Details and highlights follow.

Barrett-Jackson 44th Annual Collector Car Auction Event

Just like last year, Barrett-Jackson has broken their own record, with sales over \$130 million, as they sold 1,611 cars to a record number of bidders over 10 days. Figures were boosted considerably by sale of the Ron Pratte Collection—their largest consignment ever—which in itself raised \$40.44 million in vehicles and automobilia combined. Automobilia sales nearly tripled prior world records, with some 2,000 pieces bringing over \$6.55 million. Vehicles sold for the benefit of local and national charities raised \$8.6 million, with celebrities from Sharon Stone to Jeff Gordon boosting the excitement.

A FEW THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE (SHOWN AT LEFT):

▼ **Lot #2084.** Catching our eye as it crossed the block was this 1962 AAA Radiator Buddy Taylor Sprint Car, with extensive Southwest racing history, fully restored to as-new condition, correct for vintage racing. **RESULT:**

sold at no reserve, for \$88,000.

▼ **Lot #2500.** On our original watch list, this 1954 Pontiac Bonneville Special Motorama Concept Car was inspired during time GM design chief Harley Earl spent at the Salt Flats. It is the birth of the Pontiac Bonneville name and carries many styling cues for subsequent GM production in the '50s. **RESULT:** third place among the Top 10, this sold with reserve, for \$3,300,000.

▼ **Lot #2524.** Also on our early watch list, this 2007 Ford Shelby GT500 Super Snake Prudhomme Edition carried massive credentials, was one of only 100, and in fact was Shelby CSM # 0001C, the car used to launch the program. **RESULT:** sold at no reserve, for \$275,000.

Barrett-Jackson's top 10 sales totaled \$19,748,000 and included two Shelby Cobras, the Motorama Pontiac, a GM Futurliner bus for charity, three Mercedes-Benz Gullwings and Cabriolets, just one Ferrari, and a couple of other rarities. Their number one sale 1966 Shelby Cobra 427 Super Snake brought \$5,100,000.

A total of 10 cars raised \$8,635,000 to benefit local and national charities, led by the aforementioned 1950 GM Futurliner Parade of Progress Tour Bus (Lot #2501), which itself raised \$4,650,000 on Saturday evening (\$4 million bid, plus \$650,000 in additional pledges). The Futurliner was donated by Pratte, a Vietnam veteran, to benefit the Armed Forces Foundation.

▼ Barrett-Jackson auctions are held in Scottsdale (January), Palm Beach (April), Reno-Lake Tahoe (August) and Las Vegas (September). ▼ www.barrett-jackson.com

Bonhams 4th Annual Scottsdale Auction

There were a great many people watching the stunningly beautiful, fast and historic 1966 Ferrari 275 GTB Competizione that crossed the block at Bonhams, but only one brought it home—for \$9,405,000, a new world auction record for the model, one of the most valuable cars ever auctioned in Arizona and, as noted above, just a hair's-breadth shy of being top seller for the week.

A FEW THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE (SHOWN AT LEFT):

▼ **Lot #172.** This 1955 Jaguar XK140 MC Roadster with 3442cc six-cylinder and 4-speed manual epitomizes the postwar sports car craze that swept the US and had only 22,000 original miles, plus beautiful Aston-like Suede Green paint and leather. **RESULT:** sold for \$132,000 including premium.

▼ **Lot #165.** Bonhams is a top-dollar auction, but we always find something fun, affordable and unexpected. This 1937 Chevrolet Master Deluxe "Demonstrator" Sport Coupe, with an 85-hp six and front independent suspension, was restored with promotional details for its function as a dealer new model showpiece. **RESULT:** sold for \$69,300 including premium.

▼ **Lot #128.** We had planned to watch this ex-Scuderia Filipinetti, Le Mans 24 Hours, 1000 Kms de Spa-Francorchamps and 500 Kms di Imola class-winning 1966 Ferrari 275 GTB Competizione, and sure enough it was a record-setter (see above). **RESULT:** sold for \$9,405,000

KEEP RIGHT >>



An annual panel discussion of motivations, trends and insights in classic car collecting featured prominent experts John Carlson, Dave Kinney and Tom Cotter. Held at the Arizona Biltmore on the eve of the Arizona Concours d'Elegance, as auction week got underway, the event was presented and moderated by the Phoenix Automotive Press Association (PAPA). Photo: Randall Bohl.

Scratching your itch

The Phoenix Automotive Press Association has hosted a panel discussion before the start of auction week for some years now. This year it was held at the Arizona Biltmore, on Saturday, the eve of the second annual Arizona Concours d'Elegance. There is a great deal of overlap between the concours and auction groups, of course, and the venue adds a rich undertone to the subject matter.

Moderated by automotive journalist and author Larry Edsall, the panel of collector car experts included John Carlson, an accomplished muscle car collector who would be expanding his realm by serving as a concours judge; Dave Kinney, publisher of the *Hagerty Price Guide*; and Tom Cotter, author of such well known books as *The Cobra in the Barn*, *The Corvette in the Barn* and others, as well as several motorsports biographicals and his latest barn find study, *Fifty Shades of Rust*.

They would share insights about the state of collectible automobiles and perceptions of trends, but began with personal tales of their earliest automotive roots.

JOHN CARLSON started his hobby in a familiar way. When he was about 14 years old, he wanted a car. He worked a paper route, and an old car would be fine, so he asked his mom. "Not a chance," came her quick reply. "When you can afford to have

an old car, you can have an old car." Along his paper route was a 1936 Plymouth 4-door sedan belonging to one Mrs. Ashlock, which had been sitting around forever. He helped himself to rejuvenating it, slipping into her garage to polish it up. Once it was a thing of beauty, young John told her he would like to buy it. "How much do you want?" he inquired. Her reply seems to foreshadow the auction industry: "How much do you have?"

"Well, how much do you want?" he asked again. "Well, how much do you have?" came the same reply. John had twelve dollars. "That's how much I want," she said. Benefitting from a hill between their houses, John rolled the car home, where he proceeded to hot-rod it to his taste.

DAVE KINNEY says his father was "a very kind and understanding man." Dave is the third of three children, the other two of whom defined a wide continuum. His big brother was a superstar at Duke University, head of the student body, who then went to University of Chicago Law School and became a very prominent attorney. His big sister, on the other hand, had run off to Oregon on the back of a motorcycle with a heroin addict. ("Everything is fine now," he assures us.)

So when young Dave got to about age 15, his dad said, basically, "don't get arrested and don't go to jail." This left him a fair amount of headroom. His dad had long known Dave had a love for automobiles—at age 6, the kid knew the sound of

KEEP RIGHT >>



GOODING & COMPANY



Alfa Romeo photo: RM Auctions

£133,000

RM AUCTIONS



RM AUCTIONS



including premium.

Bonhams, with a nearly 90 percent sell-through rate, set multiple records during its fourth year here. Other seven-digit notables included a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing Coupe formerly owned by the prime minister of Northern Ireland, at \$1,375,000; a silver 1958 Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster with red interior, at \$1,237,500; and a very original single-family-owned 1964 Shelby Cobra 289 at \$1,017,500.

▼ Bonhams hosts a variety of fine art, antique and collectors' auctions worldwide. ▼ www.bonhams.com

Gooding & Company 8th Annual Scottsdale Auction

Gooding & Company has often had the highest-selling car of the week during its eight years here. This year, they did not, but they did sell eleven cars in seven figures and set 25 new auction records during their two-day sale totaling \$51.5 million, with a 90 percent sell-through rate. The 114 cars they sold (out of 126) averaged a healthy \$451,900 each.

Jay Leno donated his personal 2008 Dodge Challenger SRT8 for charity, raising \$565,625 for the USO—\$360,000 from the winning bid plus over \$200,000 in donations from other bidders and attendees

A FEW THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE (SHOWN AT LEFT):

▼ **Lot #59.** This 1946 Ford Marmon-Herrington Super Deluxe woodie station wagon was extremely rare for its 4-wheel-drive and had been restored to concours quality. **RESULT:** estimated at \$400,000-500,000, this car did not find a buyer at reserve.

▼ **Lot #135.** This 1960 Alfa Romeo Giulietta SZ with Zagato coachwork is one of only 200, virtually untouched since the '60s. A late reanalysis of its provenance seems to have affected the sales price. **RESULT:** estimated at \$600,000-800,000; sold at \$577,500.

▼ **Lot #129.** This 1964 Pontiac GTO convertible in Starlight Black over red has a 4-bbl, 4-speed and rare A/C. Restored and PHS documented. **RESULT:** estimated at \$200,000-250,000; sold without reserve at \$330,000.

Top price was achieved by a 1959 Ferrari 250 GT LWB California Spider, sold for \$7,700,000 against an estimate of \$8,000,000-10,000,000. Records included a 1962 Ferrari 400 Superamerica Series I Coupe Aerodinamico (\$4,070,000) and a 1966 Porsche 906 Carrera 6 (\$1,980,000). Cars sold for seven figures included five Ferraris, two Porsches, one Shelby Cobra, and one each from BMW, Lamborghini and Mercedes-Benz.

▼ Gooding & Company stages auctions in Arizona (January), Amelia Island (March) and in Monterey as the official auction of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance (August). ▼ www.goodingco.com

RM Auctions 16th Annual Automobiles of Arizona

This year's apparent Ferrari-fest hit RM Auctions, too, where their top seller, a Classiche-certified 1964 Ferrari 250 LM with an extensive competition record, achieved a \$9.6 million sale to become the most expensive car sold in Arizona auction history—by a razor-thin margin over that \$9.4 million Ferrari sale at Bonhams.

RM's sales totaled \$63.7 million, with a 90 percent

sell-through rate, 17 cars selling in seven figures and a number of individual auction records smashed. Brushing off competition from newer high-end auctions in town, these were RM's best Arizona results to date.

A FEW THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE (SHOWN AT LEFT):

▼ **Lot #122.** This freshly restored 1965 Jaguar E-Type Series 1 4.2-Litre Roadster with 265-hp triple-carb six and 4-speed was numbers-matching, with wire wheels and removable hardtop. **RESULT:** sold for \$280,500.

▼ **Lot #224.** Considered one of the most beautiful cars of the modern era, this 1956 Continental Mark II with 300-hp V8 had received a frame-off rotisserie restoration. **RESULT:** sold for \$247,500.

▼ **Lot #247.** With cars from the '80s becoming auction fare, this brand-enhancing, technology-changing 1984 Audi Sport Quattro coupe with 302-hp inline-5 turbo and 5-speed manual is all original, with just two owners and 8300 km since new. **RESULT:** sold for \$401,500.

The top-selling Ferrari 250 LM attracted bidders from 20 countries, in person, by phone and online.

Ferrari fever did not stop there. Fully eight of RM's top ten sales were of that marque. A freshly restored 1966 Ferrari 275 GTS and a low-mileage 1984 288 GTO both established new auction records for their models, at \$2,365,000 and \$2,750,000 respectively. Prices for Ferraris of all eras were strong, with a 1974 Ferrari 365 GT4 BB selling for a record \$511,500 and a 2005 Ferrari 575 Superamerica pushing past the high end of its estimated range to \$517,000.

The two non-Ferrari top ten cars at RM were a 1971 Lamborghini Miura SVJ, selling at \$1,897,500, and a 1965 Porsche 904 Carrera GTS, going for \$1,650,000. RM's top ten sales represented over \$31 million of their record \$63.7 million total.

▼ RM's Arizona sale kicked off their 2015 global calendar, which includes Amelia Island (March), where they are the official auction house, St. John's in Michigan (July), Monterey (August) and many more, from Texas to Paris and beyond. ▼ www.rmauctions.com

Russo and Steele 15th Annual Sports & Muscle in Scottsdale

Russo and Steele's five-day event invites muscle cars, classic European sports cars and hot rods. This year's event, generating roughly \$20 million (up a few percentage points from last year), and with an average sale price above \$43,500 (up from just under \$42,000 last year) had some of its most notable successes in that European sports car niche.

Russo was emphasizing their leading position with Porsche 911s, Jaguar XK120 roadsters, and "early" Mercedes-Benz 300SL roadsters, three specifics for which they had the top sale of each during the six-event Arizona week. Russo's number one sale of a 1957 Mercedes-Benz 300SL roadster at \$1.43 million beat Bonhams' sale at \$1.24 million, RM's sale at \$1.2 million and another Bonhams sale at \$902,000. Similarly, Russo's sale of a 1974 Porsche 911 2.7 RS for \$305,500 beat 911 sales from RM and Gooding ranging from \$297,000 down to \$187,000 among the combined top

KEEP RIGHT >>

Auction panel: Scratching your itch (cont'd)

Dad's exhaust a half a block away—and he helped him out any way he could. Together, they picked up five used Plymouth Valiants, each with over 100,000 miles on the clock. They cleaned them up, detailed them out and sold three. He next ran into a man with a Studebaker Avanti and traded the other two Valiants ("and a lot of cash") for that. That buyer-seller turned out to be quite the car hustler, later becoming a dealer, and he took young Dave under his wing until it was time for college. Or Dave put himself under that wing, more accurately. He learned a lot "basically, because I made myself such a pain in the ass. I'd go to his garage, lean on the broom a lot, and after six months had learned a lot about cars."

TOM COTTER developed an early taste for hot rods, woodies and Coors beer, none of which they had on Long Island, where he grew up. "We only had rust," he says. An avid reader of vintage tin magazines, young Tom knew exactly what he was seeing while riding his bike past Charlie's Welding Shop one day: a 1940 Ford convertible, the same as Wally's friend Lumpy had on *Leave It To Beaver*. It set him back \$25, plus another \$25 to tow it home. For his second car, Tom aimed higher—and scored—with a 1939 Ford woodie wagon he bought at age 15 for \$300. "And that's the car I still have today," he says.

Master of the barn find, Cotter says there is "no barn find gene in the family"—he must have adopted it. Tom says he doesn't hunt, doesn't fish, doesn't play football—and at a party, he's either the funnest or the dullest guy there.

When the party is the run-up to the Arizona Concours d'Elegance and auction week, there is little question his word will be of great interest.

Panel moderator Edsall had plenty of questions for the panel and started by addressing Tom.

Q: What is the big draw with these dusty, rusty cars, that are now worth more than good ones?

COTTER: I don't understand that. I do own a number of barn finds—Cunningham, Shelby Mustang, had a barn find Cobra. If I bring one of those to a fancy event, everybody drops what they're doing, and they gravitate around that car. There's some-

thing organic about us all, like at age 14, we think we're going to discover something, maybe Captain Kidd's treasure chest. We still have that feeling like we're discovering something. At a Shelby club meet, every judge will look at one of these for 45 minutes, checking out every original hose clamp and such. You can go out and buy a Duesenberg for \$9 million, but are always thinking that maybe if you keep looking and looking, someday you'll just find one.

Q: Concours events now have separate classes for unrestored, which look as though they were just pulled out of a barn. Do you judge these differently?

CARLSON: No, we judge them just as we would any other concours car. They have their own class, so they're rated with their condition factor. Preservation class, to me, should be original in every way and not repainted. One that's been clear-coated will get turned away. My definition is that it has not been touched at all. Period. At the Arizona Concours, they've made a 10 percent exception, but that's very unusual.

Q: Last year at Pebble Beach, a postwar car won Best in Show. Was that a one-off that we ignore, or was it meaningful?

CARLSON: We can't ignore that. It was very significant, the first time a postwar car has won there in 50 years. That opens some doors for postwar cars in general. I'm going to really take a step out here and make some enemies immediately: I would really like to see a concours have two Best of Shows: a prewar and a postwar. But that set the concours world on its heels, when it won first place. At Pebble Beach, the Best of Show is selected by secret ballot from each judge of each class—30 ballots with really not a lot of collaboration or sharing of information. It's a very private vote, so that win was a surprise.

Q: How big a surprise? Was it bigger at Pebble than it might have been at others?

CARLSON: I think it rocked the restoration world. Once again, I'm going to get shot, but there are two really top quality shows in North America. It's very well recognized that Pebble Beach is the grandfather on the West Coast and Amelia Island on the East Coast, and they're going to be that way for awhile. This win made it clear to judges and crowds that Best of Show doesn't have to be a prewar car. It can be anything. It was long overdue.

Q: I just won the lottery, and I want to start a collection. I'm here at the auctions. Advise me.

KEEP RIGHT >>



RUSSO AND STEELE



Lower photos: Russo and Steele



SILVER AUCTIONS



ten. And in early '50s Jaguar XK120 roadsters, Russo's \$143,000 sale of a 1953 model beat Gooding and Barrett-Jackson, at \$132,000 and \$74,800, respectively.

A FEW THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE (SHOWN AT LEFT):

▼ **Lot #2446.** This 1970 Ferrari 365 GT 2+2 was sold to its first owner in Rome and maintained at the Ferrari factory until sold and shipped to California about 20 years later. Recently repainted and retrimmed; major work on the V12 engine; original wood dash and chrome with patina. **RESULT:** reserve not met; still for sale.

▼ **Lot #2080.** This 1957 Porsche 356 Speedster was built with an original San Diego car as its basis and painted in factory colors. **RESULT:** sold at \$286,000.

▼ **Lot #2071.** This SCCA-campaigned 1959 Echidna Chassis #2 "The Grierson Car" Class "CM" Sports Race is powered by a hot small-block Chevy with Rochester fuel-injection and T-10 four-speed. **RESULT:** sold for \$162,800.

▼ Russo and Steele auctions are held in Scottsdale (January), Newport Beach (June), Monterey (August) and Las Vegas (September). ▼ www.russoandsteele.com

Silver Auctions

18th Arizona in January Auction

It's easy to get the feeling that Silver Auctions comes here for fun first. The event has the feel of a weekend auto show, but one where everything is for sale, and pretty much everything can be driven home. And it's all at reasonable prices, as they generally sell cars in very reasonable condition, as opposed to the concours and museum quality undriveables available for millions of dollars at the other events. Silver has so

much fun, in fact, that they have now upped their game to three auctions a year here, unmatched by any others (which they already had been with two, anyway).

Variety is also the name of the game. We encourage you to go to their website and skim the list. Some may be replicas, tributes or not quite accurate originals, but that's all part of the fun (and the pricing). We are confident you could make a fun hobby out of buying something at each Silver event, driving it, then selling it at each next Silver event. We're always tempted.

A FEW THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE (SHOWN AT LEFT):

▼ **Lot #497.** This 2003 Ford V-10 Cobra roadster replica in plum over black includes 5-point quick-release harnesses, custom black and silver interior, upgraded audio and anti-theft systems, power rack and pinion steering, four-wheel disc brakes, custom headers and side pipes, adjustable suspension and more. **RESULT:** sold for \$24,000.

▼ **Lot #333.** This 1958 Morris Minor 1000 in green and Kalahari with a new interior, rooftop luggage rack and whitewalls looks like nothing but fun. **RESULT:** bid to \$7500; no sale, still available. (Compare with another of particular provenance that sold for \$30,250 at RM.)

▼ **Lot #476.** A great example of the quality and value you can find at Silver, this 1959 Oldsmobile 98 Holiday 2-door hardtop with 394 cu.in. V8 and power everything was conservatively rated at 2.5 condition and ready to drive home. **RESULT:** sold for \$24,000.

▼ Silver is the only one with multiple events here, returning to Arizona March 13-14, 2015, and again in November. Other auctions are in Oregon, Idaho, Washington and the Dakotas. ▼ www.silverauctions.com ■

Auction panel: Scratching your itch (cont'd)

KINNEY: You want to buy generations down from what your actual age is. I'm in my 60s, so mostly cars would resonate with me from the '70s, some '80s, even '90s. But I'd be buying Japanese, like the Acura NSX. Or the Ford GT or BMW Z8. There are a handful that will continue to appreciate after we're all gone. Of course buy the Mustang you wanted in high school, for pure love. The others are more for pure investment. There are a bunch of choices you can make, but yes, first buy the cars you always wanted, because that's an itch that has to be scratched.

CARLSON: Buy what you like. I'm a muscle car fan, but also have race cars. In the 1970s, I dragged a J2 Allard out of the barn and still have it today. It turned out to have a glorious race history, of which I had no idea. A friend told me the Allard was the ugliest thing he had ever seen—a Cobra from the windshield back and a beer can from the windshield forward. I paid less than \$10,000 for it then, and today it's ridiculous in value. That beer can has done real well for me.

Q: Can you get a bargain at the auction?

CARLSON: If you're going looking for the green '64-1/2 Mustang K-code car, you won't get a bargain. If you're looking for

'60s or '70s convertibles, well, it's like fishing. If you're hoping for the 300-pound catfish, you'll probably never get lucky, but you can get quite a few 100-pound catfish, and then someday maybe you'll get lucky.

KINNEY: You know what GM does, they wait till they get a car just right and then kill it. Or a whole brand, like Pontiac. Always look for the fish out of water. At a muscle car sale, that Packard may not be of much interest, and vice versa, although internet bidding has somewhat evened the odds out on this. I don't think I've ever been at an auction that didn't have at least one big bargain.

Q: Once upon a time collector cars were classics built before World War II. Now what's hot?

COTTER: Right now, I'm restoring a Datsun 510. Twenty-six years after I had sold it to someone else, they called and said, "I think this is your car; will you come and get it?" I missed the boat on the 911. Affordable days are gone for Cobras and things like that. I think the '71/72 Datsun 240Z will probably pick up. I see interest in more pedestrian cars. I met a guy recently who got me excited. He restores MGBs and for \$14k will make a "new" car for you, to your color and seats and so on. Check out 3-on-the-tree as opposed to 4-on-the-floor. Look for obscure British or French cars and such—"one of those weird little suckers we can drive when the Ferrari won't start."

KINNEY: Buy what's on the wall of your 17-

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Auction panel: Scratching your itch (cont'd)

year-old son or daughter. For the longest time, that was a Lamborghini Countach. Those have absolutely zoomed up over the last few years, even the anniversary cars with bumpers nothing short of embarrassing. And yes, the Ferrari Testarossa, which every Ferrari owner stuck their nose up at for years, is now literally going up every single day. There are a number of cars like that. For regular cars, look for cars that resonate with teenagers of that generation. Keep in mind we all want to buy the car we couldn't buy when we were 17, 18, 19 and on through college. If the football king or cheerleader had a certain car, then if you get that now, your life will be complete. Any unusual Mustang Fox-body and up, for example their green 7-Up promotional car—there were only 200 or so of them. There are all sorts of Mustangs with the Cobra name, some laughingly. If you want dirt reliable fun-to-drive, nobody hates you when you drive a Mustang. Maybe when you buy a Corvette, but everyone in this country can afford a Mustang, so there's nothing in-your-face about that. It's the egalitarian collector car.

COTTER: NPR had an interview recently with a guy turning 100. "What do you wish you could do?" they asked. "The same things that excited me when I was 14 excite me now," he replied. It's the same with these cars.

CARLSON: I concur. Last year, I was sitting on this panel with Keith Martin and Corky Coker. When it came to this question, I had suggested the NSX and talked about it a bit. That was fine, but then I went to Russo and Steele and bought a red NSX. It was brand new. I mean brand new.

Q: What do you see coming up in vintage racing?

COTTER: SVRA (the SportsCar Vintage Racing Association) is now national, having bought out other historic events including Steve Earle's Sonoma Historics. The cars they give medallions to are becoming so valuable owners don't want to drive them anymore, but fans want to see them run, so now they're allowing repros built by the same manufacturer. These are not to the letter of historic law as they used to be, but with so many cars just shuttered up now, instead of a \$5 million car, you can race a \$500,000 car.

Q: Has racing affected the price of used cars that used to be basically free?

COTTER: When I was young, I had a Bugeye Sprite in the back yard, which I bought for \$75 with a roll bar. (A friend said we could find a better one for less.) Now that car is worth \$18,000, and racing has affected this a lot. I made my living in the racing world for 30 years and know there is nothing

LESS valuable than a year-old race car. Why would you want that thing? But now they're dragging old cars out of the woods. After 45 years, there's nothing left. They may chop out a little piece of chassis and clone a car around it. Old race cars were junk, and now old race cars are gold.

Q: Are there classes that should be at concours that we haven't seen yet?

CARLSON: Each concours has its own label and focus, so at some you'll see a lot of one thing, others another. I doubt I'll see a muscle car on the lawn at Pebble Beach, but I could be wrong.

Q: What about the Ford GT, a new version of which is launching in Detroit this week?

KINNEY: The Ford GT ten years ago was successful for Ford, but also always a halo project. You could buy it for \$155k list, \$165k with options like wheels, McIntosh stereo and stripes. It sold well, but not great. Then the recession hit, and it went out of production, "never to do again." If you had bought the least popular, the Heritage Edition in Gulf racing colors, it could be worth \$450k now "if kept in the wrapper"—the least popular color as a new car and the most popular as a collector car. Think about that. The buyer is not necessarily the same guy. And color makes a big difference.

Think about Panteras that were bought in '72-'73 and brought back on Monday because the dentist couldn't fit two sets of golf clubs in it. There was a little of that with the Ford GT. It had what the actuarials might call a high attrition rate—some bozo never learned how to drive it, or gave it to the kids, so there is a lot of damage history. But a regular plain jane with just stripes and a radio is now pretty much guaranteed to be a \$250k car, which is pretty good appreciation for 10 years.

There are others out there, built in the last few years, that will be collectors.

Q: What is the golden age of automobiles?

KINNEY: It is today. Today's cars are the safest, the fastest and get the best gas mileage. Go to the Mitsubishi dealer, buy something cheap, and it'll blow the doors off any old muscle car and can go around a corner. Technology has changed so much. I'd go buy the latest Subaru WRX and TAKE CARE OF IT and be the only guy 20 or 30 years from now who has one that wasn't wrecked. Same with the Acura NSX and early WRXs.

Q: We've talked about buying. How do you sell? Do you ever? How do you know when it's time?

COTTER: I have way more than I should. I have a huge building, with cars my wife has never even heard about. I hit 60 this year, and a friend from high school said, "welcome to the 20 percent

club. 80 percent of your life is over, and the 20 percent yet to go includes the diaper stages." So why do I need these cars? I'm selling them off. I want to keep 8 to 10 that I really love. Not the ones that are most valuable. I'm keeping the ones that excited me as a kid—a Datsun 510, a '72 VW Beetle.

KINNEY: I'm going to do less, and better. Take the story of a Bentley built as a 4-door and changed to a 2-door for the Sultan of Brunei. He paid \$500k for it, and it's worth \$42k. The market has lost interest, and the value is declining. Getting to Tom's point, I don't want my wife's next husband to drive all my damn cars, thank you very much.

CARLSON: I built my own home with a hammer, myself, which I designed myself over a period of years. I have a variety of garages dovetailed into the house itself, which does not have much floor space. My wife came to me a year ago with a clipboard and said, "I've been walking around 18,000 square feet total, but 2500 to 2800 square feet of living space." Glancing at her notes on the number of bays, she said, "I just wanted to let you know that I'm not going to be parking outside anymore."

When you run out of space—and you can never have too much—something has to go. So I collect exactly what I want. Once in awhile, something unrestored will come across my plate, and I'm a preservation guy. It may not be in vogue. My most recent was a '73 Mustang Grande, which nobody in their right mind wanted, but here it was, with a/c and a 351 Cleveland, and it's a pretty nice driver. It was like BRAND new. I asked the seller how he could have gotten an avocado green roof, body and interior? Well, his wife had custom ordered it from Ford, and it's the only one you'll ever see. My friends give me a bad time, but they all want to ride in it, because it has a/c and always runs.

I look at trends in the marketplace, but at this stage of my life, if Tom's at 20 percent, I'm at 10 percent, and I want to make sure I can do what I want to do, right now. I've made some wise choices, and I've made some bad choices.

Someone asked me recently if all else were going away and I could only have one car, what would I buy? What would I want to own? It's an important question, so I thought long and hard.

When others ask me, I ask them what group they want to associate with—Model A Ford? A serious Corvette group? A race car group? Which people would you associate your life with? Find a car that would be revered in that particular group.

For me, that would probably be a '63 Corvette split window with a/c and 4-speed, a 300-hp car that would be THE car for me. I can't play in the classic car world, but they all revere the split window Corvette, so I can at least park on the fringe. It's really important to look for the groups you want to play in, then buy the car that fits that need. ■

Mazda3 Sedan: BY JOE SAGE ALMOST A Mazda6?

Choosing your new Mazda is pretty easy. If you want a crossover, they come in large, medium and small: the seven-passenger CX-9, the five-passenger CX-5 and, coming soon, the subcompact CX-3. If you want a sports car, it remains hard to beat the MX-5 Miata for its combination of physical and emotional attributes at a remarkable price.

Mazda2 and Mazda5 have clear niches, one as a subcompact and one serving minivan functions.

If you want a midsize or compact sedan, there are two, with just a few decision points.

The first choice seems easy: a midsize Mazda6 or the compact Mazda3. The obvious difference at this point might seem to be size, but another significant point is that the Mazda3 is also available as a very popular hatchback, creating another decision between a pair officially known as the Mazda3 4-Door and Mazda3 5-Door—the sedan and the hatchback respectively.

But first, back to that option of size.

The Mazda3 we're driving here reminded us of the Mazda6 from the moment we first received it—to the point that we idly doublechecked the decklid badge. We figure this was for two primary reasons: it's the 4-Door (sedan) version; and it

arrived in the same gorgeous Soul Red Metallic paint job as our last test Mazda6, a sedan model and color we increasingly notice on the road.

Within moments of getting in the Mazda3 and turning the proverbial key, taking in the style, features, quality of fitment and general roominess of the car, we kept finding ourselves thinking, heck, this is just like the wonderful Mazda6, but for less dough. What's not to like?

The Mazda3 provides 96.3 cubic feet of passenger volume, to the Mazda6's 99.7. That's a difference of a few basketballs or a couple of bags of groceries, packed to the max, but for basic daily occupancy, it seems negligible. The Mazda3, after all, starts at \$16,945 and the Mazda6 at \$21,190.

Since Mazda3 offers one lower base trim grade, let's jump to the upper middle: a Mazda3 Touring (6-speed manual) goes for \$19,595 and a Mazda6 Touring for \$23,845. That's about 22 percent higher cost (or if you're a base model shopper, 25 percent more) for 3.5 percent more passenger space.

If you use your trunk more than your seats, the Mazda6 provides 14.8 cubic feet, to the Mazda3 4-Door's 12.4—another couple of basketballs.

This brings us to that other key Mazda3 distinction, the availability of a 5-Door hatchback. In this, cargo space climbs to 20.2 cubic feet, or a whopping 47.1 if you fold down the rear seats.

The hatchback is also a little sportier in its rear-most sheetmetal and such accompanying details as bright-tipped twin exhaust pipes (as opposed to concealed pipes on the sedan).

But overall, the two Mazda3 models are the same car, with the same wide trim range. Our test car here is in top trim: the S Grand Touring.

Powertrain choices largely overlap for Mazda3 and Mazda6. The midsize Mazda6 has a 184-hp 2.5-liter SkyActiv four-cylinder in every model, and a choice of 6-speed automatic or 6-speed manual transmission in all but one top model (automatic only). The compact Mazda3 offers either transmission on every trim level or body style, but the larger 2.5L engine only on "S" models (S Touring or S Grand Touring). A 155-hp 2.0-liter SkyActiv four-cylinder is also available, on "i" Touring or Grand Touring trims, or on two models below those, SV and Sport. (Mazda6 skips SV and starts at Sport.)

The Mazda6 weighs about 200 pounds more than the Mazda3, but the range of fuel economies is similar, with some models topping 40 MPG. More significantly, the larger Mazda6 body delivers close to 50/50 front/rear weight distribution, while the smaller Mazda3 is basically 60/40. Most people won't much notice this; enthusiasts could make a case for either, depending upon road

conditions and their driving styles.

Our driving style is generally what you might call routinely aggressive—street, freeway and highway time where acceleration, cornering, tight maneuvers and sweeping curves all come into play. We also do boulevard U-turns and parking lot challenges, and at some point there is always cargo.

We are tall and found the car quite spacious. Its manual transmission delivered strong, solid and responsive driving. We found it a pleasure to shift, a pleasure to steer and a pleasure to accelerate.

We're not automatically fans of a 6-speed manual. Some have a shifter pattern that's spaced too tightly or too ambiguously, but not this. Gearing was equally well spaced. Together, they gave us accurate shifts and a smooth power curve.

Driving technologies are applied at just the right level. There is no auto stop-start. Electric power steering feels like a solid mechanical setup. Plentiful electronic aids (see sidebar) are non-invasive. A heads-up display is another premium inclusion.

None of our compact-midsize comparative drill, mind you, is intended to detract from the Mazda6. The point is to underscore how much the newest Mazda3 delivers, riding the Mazda6's coattails.

Sales of both have been red hot. In fact, Mazda overall just had its best sales year in over 20 years,

with over 300,000 units sold in the US in 2014. These two cars did their bit, with Mazda6 US sales up by 22 percent for the year and Mazda3 hitting its best month in history during December, with its US sales up 26.7 percent from the year prior.

If you have the dough, and no major parking or other size constraints, the Mazda6 is a beautiful choice. To save several thousand dollars, and/or if you just prefer the fit and feel of the smaller car, Mazda3 has the edge. If you specifically want the smaller 2.0L engine, and/or a hatchback, and/or a top S Grand Touring model but with manual transmission, Mazda3 wins uncontested.

Having settled on the Mazda3, your choice among six different trim levels, times two body styles, times two transmissions is relatively easy and rewarding (except for those of us who want to own both bodies). And Mazda's all-inclusive trim levels and pricing make the rest easy.

This Mazda3 made us simultaneously want everything it is and everything it almost is. It's almost equal to a Mazda6 sedan in many ways, and we want that. It's a direct sibling of a Mazda3 5-Door hatchback, and we want that. And it is what it is—both of those in a sporty, responsive, affordable high-trim package, and we want that. If that's not successful market positioning, what is? ■



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE.....SkyActiv-G 2.5L DOHC 4-cylinder
TRANSMISSION.....6-speed manual
DRIVETRAIN.....FWD
POWER/TORQUE.....184 hp / 185 lb-ft
TOP SPEED.....130 mph (limited)
WHEELS/TIRES...18" alloy, P215/45 all-season
TURNING CIRCLE.....34.8 ft
WEIGHT.....(60/40 F/R distrib) 2947 lb
FUEL.....regular unleaded, 13.2 gal tank
MPG.....25/37/29 (city/hwy/comb)

INCLUDED: keyless entry and start, heated power mirrors w turn signals, fog lights, rain-sensing wipers, leather wheel, leather shift knob, leather brake handle, leather-trimmed sport seats, 6-way power driver's seat w lumbar adjust, heated seats, dual-zone climate, power windows/locks, Homelink auto-dim mirror, one-touch moonroof, 60/40 fold rear seat, rear seat armrest/cupholder, anti-theft immobilizer, 24-hour roadside assistance, blind spot monitor, rear cross traffic alert, 4-wheel disc brakes, electric power steering, independent front/rear suspension, auto on/off bi-xenon headlights, gloss black grille, rear lip spoiler, LED taillights, adaptive front lighting, active driving display, 7" color touchscreen display, multifunction controller, rear camera, navigation, Bose 9-speaker audio, Pandora, Aha, Stitcher, AM-FM-CD, HD radio, dual USB inputs, satellite radio, SMS text delivery/reply, Bluetooth phone and audio, cruise, trip computer, paddle shifters (if automatic), steering wheel mounted controls, dynamic stability control, traction control, hill launch assist, ABS with EBD and brake assist, air bags and air curtains all around.

BASE PRICE.....\$25,045
SOUL RED METALLIC PAINT.....300
CARGO MAT.....70
SCUFF PLATES/DOOR SILL TRIM PLATES.....125
DESTINATION CHARGE.....795
TOTAL.....\$26,335

LOGBOOK NOTES

The touchscreen interface is easy to understand—icon-ID'ed buttons are intuitive, and most functions are one-step. Saving radio favorites is a little cumbersome, but you don't do it often.

Volume for audio is on the console, leaving the upper stack clean for screen, thus disambiguating climate controls.

The Bose audio does a great job with just bass-treble equalizer and a handful of other common settings. It's drive-around-a-little-longer-just-for-the-tunes good.

We pulled into the garage after one very short dash from dinner home, and as we shut off the engine, we noticed a complex fuel economy readout and charts briefly on the main touchscreen. It disappeared sooner than we wished, but not before we saw a stated fuel economy for that run as just 7.0 MPG. We didn't have this car long, unfortunately, and never saw that readout again.



The deep north

THIRTEEN STORIES BELOW GRADE ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Story and photos by Tyson Hugie

Any resident of the Grand Canyon State owes it to himself or herself to pay a visit to Grand Canyon National Park on a regular basis (the South Rim is an easy 3½-hour drive from the Phoenix area). It's a huge mistake, though, to overlook the many, many day-trip opportunities that northern Arizona offers besides the Grand Canyon. Here's one example: Antelope Canyon. Cruising just another hour beyond the Highway 64 junction on State Highway 89 in Cameron, the small town of Page, Arizona thrives near the Utah border. Page is an important hub for recreation at Lake Powell, a man-made reservoir that receives over 3 million visitors annually. But I wonder how many of those 3 million people know that one of the most oft-photographed slot canyons in the southwest is located just 15 minutes from the lake?

While the rest of Phoenix was bustling with Super Bowl preparation activities, a few friends and I had other plans in mind for our weekend in late January. We hit the highway and headed up Interstate 17 in search of high adventure at high elevations.

The drive to Flagstaff, our halfway point, was wet, and the San Francisco Peaks were obscured by low cloud cover, but just a couple of hours into our trip we were already enjoying fresher air and



It's a simple and rewarding drive to canyon country on the Utah border. Head north on I-17 to Flagstaff, east a few miles on I-40, then exit to US 89 north (above). Or stop in Flagstaff for gas, lunch and its high altitude atmosphere. Highway 89 is clear sailing for many miles. Shown above is the northbound stretch just before US 64 heads west and a temporary stretch of 89 fills a construction gap to Page. Below is the Little Colorado River at the Cameron Trading Post, another must-stop on 89.



KEEP RIGHT >>



greener landscapes. The sun broke through north of town as we made the descent to around 4,000 feet in elevation, igniting the vivid red sandstone formations along Highway 89 near Gap. There, we'd be taking a "temporary" stretch of Highway 89 (while undergoing repairs) the rest of the way into Page.

Antelope Canyon was named for a herd of antelope that once roamed the area, and legend has it that a sheep herder discovered the canyon in the 1930s. Since Antelope Canyon is located on part of the 27,000-square-mile Navajo Nation, there are special considerations in place for visitors to keep in mind. Antelope Canyon has two sections, upper and lower, and each one requires a tour guide for access. Since we'd met up with another party of friends, our group size was now a total of eight. Luckily, my friend Jason had been able to secure us a group reservation with an outfit called Antelope Canyon Tours, which charges \$35 a head for the 90-minute tour, including shuttle services to and from the mouth of the canyon. Visitors should keep in mind that any tour's availability is subject to weather conditions—if there is flash flood potential, it's possible the entire canyon could be shut off to visitors.

Luckily for us, the skies weren't threatening enough to put our canyoneering in jeopardy, so right on schedule at 1:30 pm, we hopped into the bed of a lifted Ford pickup with a blue canopy overhead and geared up for the 20-minute ride to the mouth of the canyon. For half of that ride, we were bumping along in a sandy wash, and I realized why that Ford pickup needed such meaty tires to keep from getting stuck. The breezy truck ride made us all wish we'd dressed in a few more layers.

Our tour guide told us she'd been navigating Antelope Canyon for 13 years, and she seemed to know every perfect photo-op along the way. Though the length of Upper Antelope is short at only a quarter-mile, its twists and turns offered a vastly different perspective with every step we took. At some points, the canyon walls were so narrow that we had to walk single file. And due to the canyon's depth—maxing out at around 130 feet below ground level—there were times when the darkness made it difficult

to even find our footing. The guide was helpful to point out certain landmarks with her flashlight as we passed them: debris overhead that had been deposited by flooding, a rock shaped like Abraham Lincoln's profile, and a heart-shaped formation overhead.

Soon, we could see the light at the end of the tunnel—or the canyon, rather. We exited the south end of the canyon and did a U-turn to head back to the pickup for our return shuttle. As much as I usually prefer continuous loops to "out and back" hikes, in this case I didn't mind since the scenery was quite different heading through Antelope on the return leg.

Our last stop for the day—and one that shouldn't be missed—was a landmark just 10 minutes south of Page along Highway 89 called "Horseshoe Bend." Here, the mighty Colorado River makes a 180-degree meandering turn inside a 1,000-foot-deep sandstone canyon. The viewpoint is accessible by a three-quarter-mile hike that's hardly strenuous. The most challenging part of the hike, in fact, was just keeping sand from filling up our shoes as we walked. Ahead of us, the view was incredible, and we couldn't have timed things any better, with perfect sunset lighting. Ledges along the canyon rim were slippery in areas, so we had to exercise caution when climbing around. While my friend Peter sat on the edge and dangled his tennis shoes off into the ravine, I was content to stay a few feet back.

By the time we finished at Horseshoe, we'd worked up an appetite. For some of the best (read: only) Italian fare in Page, check out Stromboli's on Navajo Drive. The hostess there was quickly able to accommodate our large group, and the "Sampler Plate" appetizer had some of the tastiest fried zucchini I've ever eaten. The Comfort Inn's hot tub beckoned for a quick dip before bed, and it offered great relief for tired legs after being on-the-go since early in the morning. That evening, we all enjoyed sharing pictures with one another, that we'd captured during our day's adventures.

For a rewarding getaway to Arizona's high country, Antelope Canyon is a must-see. It's an easy overnight trip from the Phoenix area and delivers some of the most stunning views in all of the southwest. Now get on the road! ■



Antelope Canyon is a hidden treasure with professional access courtesy of the Navajo Nation. Our team quickly learns why those trucks are built to such high capability (opposite page) and why the trip is so rewarding (upper right). Other worthwhile stops near Page include Horseshoe Bend on the Colorado River, 10 minutes to the south (lower left) and—several of the crew had never been—the Utah state line 10 minutes to the north. And there's the smartphone screen at the end of a great day.



Beating blizzards with Buick

by Joe Sage



There are four major components to this adventure: New England, winter, Buick and all-wheel drive.

Buick is on a roll, with an 11 percent sales gain for 2014, outselling such premium brands as Audi, Infiniti, Acura and Lincoln. Buick offers all-wheel drive on four out of its five models—the Regal midsize sedan, LaCrosse full-size sedan, Enclave big SUV and Encore subcompact crossover. (The Verano compact sedan is the only one without AWD available.)

To demonstrate just how effective all-wheel drive can be, and just how well Buick has implemented it, GM brought us to Lime Rock Park in Connecticut—one of the nation's premier racing facilities and home to the Skip Barber Racing School. And to be sure it made an impression, they did this in February. And to ensure that their efforts were well expended, Mother Nature kicked in with its first two of what would be three heavy blizzards in a row, along with near-zero temperatures.

With planes catching a quick opening between heavy onslaughts of snow if they

could, we headed east.

We're already fans of all-wheel drive. To those who say they don't need it, we say it's not a crutch—it's a feature. Race cars have it. If you're going to (ever) be driving in snow or ice, or heavy rain, or on loose sand or gravel—including the kind that graces Arizona roads after a rainstorm—it will have reserve grip at all four corners that can save your bacon. If you only drive on smooth, dry roads at all times, it will still give you enhanced performance. Grip distributed to all four wheels can make you perform like a cat on rails, to mix metaphors we have mixed before.

Additional drivetrain parts that bring power to both axles add some weight—271 pounds on a Buick Regal (or 288 on the sportiest GS) or just 119 pounds on the Buick Encore crossover.

You will pay a little more (the differences are \$2425 and \$1500 for the Regal and Encore, respectively). But what you gain is more than worth it.

Paris-Dakar desert off-road endurance rally champion Jean-Paul Luc's Ice Driving

School in Colorado—note the crossover value of winter and desert driving skills—had a cover headline on its original manual saying something like, "The weather is horrible, the roads are even worse ... perfect, let's go for a drive!"

We started our day with a drive of about an hour and a quarter to the track, on the icy and snowy two-lanes of hilly northwestern Connecticut.

Buick Encore AWD

We started with the little guy—the subcompact Buick Encore. Powered by a 1.4-liter Ecotec four, with a 30 MPG highway fuel mileage rating, Encore produces 138 hp and rides on 18-inch Continental tires.

We quickly gained experience with the Encore, sharing the roads with a general population who, despite some presumed familiarity with winter conditions, presented our team with every emergency

We were joined on this trip by driver Sue Mead (at far right), who was in the midst of final preparations for her stint on one of ten American teams in the women-only 25th Gazelle Off-Road Rally in the Moroccan desert, running from March 20 to April 4.

condition imaginable, well beyond what the roads themselves offered.

Stop sideways across the road, over the crest of an icy hill? All in a day's work for one local. Stop in time when we see this? All in a day's work for the Buick Encore AWD, with 11.8-inch vented front and 10.6-inch solid rear disc brakes, ABS and electronic brake force distribution.

The Encore's system in motion is just as sure—constructed with a separate power take-off in front and Borg Warner torque transfer device in the rear. This automatic on-demand system has electronic yaw damping and torque distribution among all four wheels, with up to 70 percent to the rear.

When we arrived at Lime Rock, we had two special winter courses prepared for us—one for the Encore and one for the Regal. We stayed with the Encore for our first circuit. Fresh snow made for optimum conditions—in this case meaning optimally challenging. Edges were hard to see and could be unforgiving had they been exceeded; and snow quickly developed into thick, wheel-grabbing chop.

The all-wheel-drive Encore performed like a champ—a plush, comfortable, confident, fully equipped champ with a premium cabin. (They have even added a WiFi hot spot this year.) Encore may look



small, but in a downsizing world, it feels very right-sized. Despite its tight dimensions, it proves itself to be very balanced and sure-footed. Everything can indeed come in a small package. Encore has 18.8 cu.ft. of cargo space behind the rear seats, or 48.4 cu.ft. with the rear seats down. Its cage body structure is 66 percent high-strength and ultra-high-strength steel.

The market has responded, with AWD representing 38 percent of Encore sales. In the Northeast, that figure is 69 percent, and here around Hartford, Connecticut, 80 percent. Availability of AWD has had Buick Encore completely dominating the premium subcompact crossover segment.

Encore with FWD starts at \$24,065. With AWD, three trim levels range from \$26,490 to \$30,375. Absolutely fully tricked out, you will still just top \$32k.



KEEP RIGHT >>



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Lisa Jesme, Buick Regal Driveline Engineer, takes the wheel of her creation to show us exactly how it's done. Exactly how it's done is a whole lot of fun.

Buick Regal AWD

As a key element of the brand's styling and engineering renaissance, the Buick Regal was greeted at its launch as a potential "3 slayer," meaning it just might finally be the one with the chops to take on the perennially successful BMW 3 Series. Our sidebar suggests that this is going well.

An entry level Regal has a 182-hp 2.4L four-cylinder and front-wheel drive. All others have a 259-hp 2.0L turbo and a choice of front- or all-wheel drive, right up to the sportiest Regal GS level. (The Regal GS includes a painful bargain for us: there is a six-speed manual transmission available, but only with front-wheel drive.)

The all-wheel-drivers have a six-speed electronic automatic with overdrive. Their on-demand system has two clutch packs: an electronically-controlled, hydraulically-actuated torque transfer device (TTD) for front/rear split and an electronic limited slip differential for left/right rear. In slick conditions, these improve traction and stability. In dry conditions, they can send up to 90 percent of torque to the rear; performance is optimized to reduce any torque steer or understeer.

The Regal's snow circuit at Lime Rock was racier, with longer straightaways and braking sections, slaloms and more complex cornering sections—all in line with the car's performance personality. As the day wore on and our team's spinning rubber started warming up the subsurfaces, significant ice fields were forming, hidden below the drier surface snow, equaling some of the most challenging condi-



CONSUMER REPORTS FIRSTS

FIRST DOMESTIC IN TOP 10. Buick is the first domestic brand to make the Top 10 of *Consumer Reports' Annual Car Brand Report Cards* since its inception, passing Honda and BMW for the first time.

REGAL DISPLACES BMW AS TOP SPORTS SEDAN. Buick Regal has earned *Consumer Reports' Top Pick for Sports Sedan*, replacing the BMW 328i.

• The complete report is at ConsumerReports.org.

tions you'll encounter in the real world. The Regal mastered it all; and however far a couple of dozen of us had pushed the envelope, Regal driveline engineer Lisa Jesme could push it farther (above).

AWD represents 17 percent of Regal sales nationwide, 33 percent in the Northeast and 50 percent in Hartford.

Regal starts just under \$30k. AWD models run from the lower-mid 30s up to the sporty Regal GS AWD at about \$40k.

We love the aggressive bite and confidence of a well-executed all-wheel-drive sedan, coupe or wagon on dry pavement, and we tend to think of AWD as all but expected on a crossover or SUV. Buick's AWD lineup pleases us greatly. ■



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SPECIAL EVENT : GOODGUYS SPRING NATIONALS

Full throttle

GOODGUYS 6TH SPRING NATIONALS
WESTWORLD / SCOTTSDALE / MARCH 13-15 2015

Hot rods and customs from 23 US states and Canada

The Goodguys Rod & Custom Association kicks off its 2015 season once again at WestWorld in Scottsdale, setting the stage for a full year of colorful "Full Throttle Fun" automotive festivals geared toward classic American vehicle enthusiasts. This event has become a must-attend on the Goodguys schedule, bringing hot rodders from all over North America to the Valley of the Sun. Pre-registered participants are from Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin, as well as Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba.

Fans will get a close-up look at just how eclectic the modern day hot rodding scene is, though the Goodguys core spirit is unchanged after 30-

plus years—it's all about fun with cars. Hundreds of 1972 and earlier show cars in candy colors will be spread across the grass polo field of WestWorld, where each car's owner takes extreme pride in polishing and displaying their entry.

The sound of rubber meeting pavement fills the air as competitors get on the gas in the Goodguys AutoCross, a high-adrenaline electronically-timed speed and agility course. Here, they battle it out all weekend long, in a fastest-car-wins contest of speed and skill. AutoCross Shootout Finals qualifiers are showcased at each event all season, and the Final Shootout, Duel in the Desert, will take place at the 18th Southwest Nationals in November, as Goodguys closes out the season right back here where it started, at WestWorld.

You won't want to miss the midway, featuring multi-million-dollar custom big rig tractor trailers (a show in and of themselves) offering high-performance parts and accessories to budding hot rodders and do-it-yourselfers. Having the chance

to interact directly with manufacturers has long been an appealing aspect of Goodguys events. Throw in a giant used car parts swap meet and car corral (turn-key classic cars for sale) and it's auto-utopia for any red-blooded American (or Canadian) with motor oil running through their veins.

Rounding it all out is All American Sunday on March 15th, where owners of American-powered show cars and trucks of all years, makes and models can come in and join the event, showing off right next to all that 1972-and-earlier iron.

It's also on Sunday that Goodguys displays all top award winning cars together as a group in the Winner's Circle, prompting endless clicks by amateur and seasoned shutterbugs.

Gates are open Friday and Saturday from 8am to 5pm and Sunday from 8am to 3pm. General admission is \$20, kids 7-12 are \$6, and kids 6 and under are free. For tickets or to register a show car, visit www.good-guys.com, or call 925-838-9876 for information. WestWorld parking is \$5. ■



ON TOP OF ITS GAME

BY JOE SAGE

If you skim the list of awards to the right, you may conclude that the 2015 Hyundai Genesis can do no wrong. And you'd be about right.

Our logbook gushed: performance is spectacular, we noted. Steering is rock solid. Handling is rock solid, atop performance gas shocks and 5-link fully independent front and rear suspension. Acceleration is remarkable—the electronic 8-speed transmission is very responsive, prompt and smooth, even if you never play with its very capable Shiftronic or paddle shift features. At parking lot or U-turn speeds, it turns incredibly tightly. Launching from metered freeway ramps, we easily dusted such foes as a 911 Carrera 4S and BMW X5 (they may have been slow-witted, but still). We chose and nailed freeway spots at will.

The included feature set is just about endless—auto headlights, rain-sensing wipers, heated/folding mirrors, keyless entry and start, navigation and rear camera, 12-way power seats, leather everywhere, dual climate controls, the works. Where the standard list ends, a few packages easily add the rest, and then some (see sidebar). Even those, none of them cheap, keep the car's total price just below \$50 grand.

Little features also mean a lot. We disliked the car's "easy access" seats and incessant chimes. It required the manual to locate these, but once off, all was bliss. We loved the car's implementation

of heads-up display, including its presentation of posted speed limit signs. Convenience lights under the side mirrors shine a crisp Genesis logo on the ground, bat-signal-like. Change simple settings like lights or wipers and never look down, as there is a quick confirmation screen between your primary gauges. Classy and useful touches.

Hyundai has two other flavors available: a 420-hp 5.0-liter V8, and an all-wheel-drive version of this 3.8-liter V6. We've driven them all and could love owning any. The V8 is rear-drive only, and it does drop your fuel mileage (also requesting though not requiring premium fuel, while the six runs on regular). Highway mileage drops from 29 MPG for the rear-drive V6 to 25 MPG with AWD, or to 23 MPG with the V8. All-wheel drive adds just \$2500 to the V6, worth considering depending on your travels (the car's traction and handling are still tops without it on dry pavement). The V8 raises your base price by \$13,500. The cars look pretty much the same, so with the hidden powers of the V8 (and anticipated volume sales of the V6), you could have yourself a real sleeper with that one.

Hyundai Genesis competes with the German premium brands, plus Lexus and Cadillac. At a price point below the range-topping Equus, Genesis has become a halo car for the brand. This fine sedan is more than in the game. At this price, it may be king. ■

2015 HYUNDAI GENESIS AWARDS

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CAR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

KIPLINGER'S BEST VALUE AWARD
Best New/Redesigned Car \$50,000 and Over.

GOOD DESIGN™ AWARD
Quality design, function and aesthetics—Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design, and European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies.

AUTOGUIDE.COM CAR OF THE YEAR

NORTH AMERICAN CAR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

ESQUIRE SEDAN OF THE YEAR

POPULAR MECHANICS LUXURY CAR OF THE YEAR

ALG RESIDUAL VALUE AWARD

Projected to retain highest percentage of original price after three years' ownership, Premium Full-Size Car.

RUEDAS ESPN "BEST LUXURY SEDAN" AWARD

From the leading Spanish automotive radio show in the US.

JD POWER INITIAL QUALITY AWARD

IIHS TOP SAFETY PICK+

The first and only rear-wheel-drive vehicle in its class to receive the highest honor as a TOP SAFETY PICK+ when equipped with optional front crash prevention.

TOP FAMILY CHOICE AWARD

Greater Atlanta Automotive Media Association.

"CAR OF TEXAS" PLUS TWO OTHER AWARDS

Also Best Mid-size Luxury Car and Best New Interior.

"MOST LOVED" BY STRATEGIC VISION

With five "loved" cars including the 2015 Genesis, Hyundai has more than any other brand.

BEST OF CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

Best Car Tech at CES, from both TechHive and PCWorld.

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE3.8L DOHC dual-CVVT aluminum GDI V6
TRANSMISSION8-spd auto w Shiftronic/paddles
DRIVETRAINRWD (AWD available)
POWER/TORQUE311 hp / 293 lb-ft
STEERINGrack-mounted electric, variable
WHEELS/TIRES18x8.0 / P245/45R18
BRAKESfront: 13.6" four-piston vented disc
.....rear: 12.4" one-piston solid disc
WEIGHT4138 lb (AWD 4295 lb)
FUEL CAPACITY20.3 gal
TURNING CIRCLE36.2 ft
MPG18/29/22 (city/hwy/comb) (AWD 16/25/19)

BASE PRICE (3.8 V6 RWD)\$38,000

SIGNATURE PACKAGE: Power tilt/slide sunroof, memory/vented front seats, power tilt/tele wheel, HID heads, auto-dim mirrors, blind spot and rear cross traffic, parking guides, power rear sunshade, manual side sunshades4000

TECH PACKAGE: Ultra leather, 7" cluster display, power driver seat extender/bolster, lane departure, lane keep, smart cruise w stop/start, haptic steering wheel, pre-safety seatbelt, auto emergency brake, electronic park brake w auto vehicle hold, front/rear park assist3500

ULTIMATE PACKAGE: Matte wood & aluminum trim, heads-up display, power trunk lid, premium 9.2" hi-def nav, Lexicon 17-speaker audio, dual-mode climate with CO2 sensor3500

DESTINATION CHARGE:950

TOTAL\$49,950



There really is no "base model" Genesis. Unless you have a specific need for AWD, you will almost surely find your sweet spot right here with the rear-drive V6 model. At a starting point of \$38,000—or under \$50k all tricked out—this is very tough to beat.

Where the roads are dry and the cars are slick.



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MARCH

MARCH 13-15, 2015

★ **6th SPRING NATIONALS** ★

WestWorld of Scottsdale - Scottsdale, AZ
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral and All American Sunday.
#GGSPRINGNATIONALS

MARCH 20-22, 2015

★ **5th SPRING LONE STAR NATIONALS**

Texas Motor Speedway - Fort Worth, TX
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Track Cruise, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral and All American Sunday.
#GGSPRINGLONESTARNATS

MARCH 28 & 29, 2015

★ **33rd ALL AMERICAN GET-TOGETHER** ★

Alameda County Fairgrounds - Pleasanton, CA
Featuring All Years of American Made or Powered Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks, Goodguys AutoCross, Indoor Car Show, Vendors, Swap Meet and Cars 4 Sale Corral. #GGAAGETTOGETHER

APRIL

APRIL 10-12, 2015

★ **15th MEGUIAR'S DEL MAR NATIONALS**

Del Mar Fairgrounds - Del Mar, CA
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Goodguys AutoCross, Indoor Car Show, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral and All American Sunday. #GGDELMAR NATIONALS

APRIL 17-19, 2015

★ **1st NORTH CAROLINA NATIONALS** ★

North Carolina State Fairgrounds - Raleigh, NC
Featuring All Vehicles '72 and Older and American Made or Powered Vehicles of Any Year, Saturday Night Demolition Derby, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet and Cars 4 Sale Corral. #GGNC NATIONALS

APRIL 24-26, 2015

★ **2nd FLORIDA NATIONALS** ★

Osceola Heritage Park - Kissimmee, FL
Featuring All Vehicles '72 and Older and American Made or Powered Vehicles of Any Year, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet and Cars 4 Sale Corral. #GGFLORIDANATIONALS

MAY

MAY 15-17, 2015

★ **10th NASHVILLE NATIONALS** ★

LP Field - Nashville, TN
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral and All American Sunday.
#GGNASHVILLENATIONALS

★ National Event	🏁 Drags
🏁 AutoCross	🇺🇸 All American Sunday

MAY 30 & 31, 2015

★ **22nd SUMMER GET-TOGETHER** ★

Alameda County Fairgrounds - Pleasanton, CA
Featuring All Years of American Made or Powered Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks, Goodguys AutoCross, Indoor Car Show, Vendors, Swap Meet and Cars 4 Sale Corral. #GGSUMMERGETTOGETHER

JUNE

JUNE 5-7, 2015

★ **2nd INDY NATIONALS** ★

Indiana State Fairgrounds - Indianapolis, IN
Featuring All Vehicles '72 and Older and American Made or Powered Vehicles of Any Year, Goodguys Friday Night Drags at Lucas Oil Raceway Park, Saturday Night Demolition Derby, Indoor Car Show, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet and Cars 4 Sale Corral. #GGINDYNATIONALS

JUNE 12-14, 2015

★ **23rd GRUNDY WORLDWIDE INSURANCE EAST COAST NATIONALS**

Eastern States Exposition - West Springfield, MA
Featuring All Vehicles '72 and Older and American Made or Powered Vehicles of Any Year, Indoor Car Show, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet and Cars 4 Sale Corral. #GGEASTCOASTNATIONALS

JULY

JULY 3-5, 2015

★ **24th HEARTLAND NATIONALS** ★

Iowa State Fairgrounds - Des Moines, IA
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral, Saturday Night Fireworks Extravaganza and All American Sunday. #GGHEARTLANDNATIONALS

JULY 10-12, 2015

★ **18th PPG NATIONALS** ★

Ohio Expo Center - Columbus, OH
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral, Friday Night Vintage Drags at National Trail Raceway and All American Sunday. #GGPPGNATIONALS

JULY 24-26, 2015

★ **28th WESCO AUTOBODY SUPPLY PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONALS**

Washington State Fair Events Center - Puyallup, WA
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Indoor Car Show, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral, Friday Night Vintage Drags at Pacific Raceways and All American Sunday. #GGPNW NATIONALS

AUGUST

AUGUST 14-16, 2015

★ **14th GREAT NORTHWEST NATIONALS**

Spokane County Fair & Expo Center - Spokane, WA
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Indoor Car Show, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral and All American Sunday. #GGGNW NATIONALS

AUGUST 21-23, 2015

★ **29th WEST COAST NATIONALS**

Alameda County Fairgrounds - Pleasanton, CA
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Vendors, Swap Meet and Cars 4 Sale Corral. #GGWESTCOASTNATIONALS

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 11-13, 2015

★ **18th COLORADO NATIONALS** ★

The Ranch Events Complex - Loveland, CO
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral and All American Sunday.
#GGCOLORADONATIONALS

SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2015

★ **4th NOSTALGIA NATIONALS**

Beech Bend Raceway Park - Bowling Green, KY
Featuring All Vehicles '72 and Older and American Made or Powered Vehicles of Any Year, Goodguys Nostalgia Drags All Weekend Long, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet and Cars 4 Sale Corral. #GGNOSTALGIANATIONALS

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 2-4, 2015

★ **23rd LONE STAR NATIONALS** ★

Texas Motor Speedway - Fort Worth, TX
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral, Track Cruise and All American Sunday.
#GGLONE STAR NATIONALS

OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 1, 2015

★ **22nd SOUTHEASTERN NATIONALS**

Charlotte Motor Speedway - Concord, NC
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Goodguys AutoCross, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral, Track Cruise and All American Sunday.
#GGSOUTHEASTERN NATIONALS

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 14 & 15, 2015

★ **26th AUTUMN GET-TOGETHER** ★

Alameda County Fairgrounds - Pleasanton, CA
Featuring All Years of American Made or Powered Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks, Goodguys AutoCross, Indoor Car Show, Vendors, Swap Meet and Cars 4 Sale Corral. #GGAUTUMNGETTOGETHER

NOVEMBER 20-22, 2015

★ **18th SOUTHWEST NATIONALS** ★

WestWorld of Scottsdale - Scottsdale, AZ
Featuring Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Muscle Cars and Trucks thru '72, Goodguys AutoCross Shootout, Goodguys "Top 12" Vehicles of the Year, Vendors, Swap Meet, Cars 4 Sale Corral and All American Sunday.
#GGSOUTHWESTNATIONALS

Goodguys Schedule as of 9/17/14. All dates subject to change.

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VEHICLE IMPRESSION : 2015 HONDA FIT EX-L NAVI

Big cabin, big economy

By Joe Sage

The first surprise when you get in the Honda Fit is its spaciousness. Atop a diminutive 99.6-inch wheelbase is a cabin with 93.8 cubic feet of passenger volume and 16.6 of cargo volume (or 52.7 with the rear "magic seats" down, almost completely flat). Compare this with 120.8 cu.ft. of passenger and 16.5 cu.ft. of cargo volume in a Dodge Charger sedan. Or with 53.2 and 7.8 in a Smart car. The Fit's tidy package is sort of all-cabin, but with no loss of luggage space, and with its engine consuming only a very efficient volume.

That 1.5-liter engine does not create a race car, but it has plenty of go-power around town, easily getting us across busy multi-lane frontage road challenges or onto a freeway.

The top model EX-L (ours with Navi) comes only as an automatic—a continuously variable transmission (CVT). Lower LX and EX models offer a 6-speed manual option, although these have lower fuel mileage than the CVT. A base LX with CVT hits 41 MPG highway, tops in the lineup.

We had disappointing performance in Sport mode with the CVT, preferring regular Drive. CVTs can be programmed a number of ways, from straight-line acceleration to mimicking shift points. This one, in Sport mode, keeps

RPMs right around 2800-3000 all the time, which made shift points feel doggy instead of boosted.

Honda Fit launched in the US in 2006, and sales grew rapidly, peaking near 80,000 in 2008, then losing ground. Since a major 2013 reengineering—a new ultra-high-strength steel platform and restyling—it has rebounded to its highest numbers since 2009 (about 60,000 units for 2014).

Masterful third-gen styling keeps the car's spirit and brand equity—recognition is immediate—while every bit of it was completely modernized.

The 2015 Honda Fit has already earned honors as an Edmunds.com Top Rated Vehicle, an ALG Residual Value Award winner and an *Automobile* magazine All-Star. It rates a KBB.com Best Resale Value, is an IIHS Top Safety Pick and received a 5-Star Overall Vehicle Score from NHTSA. It was a finalist for Green Car of the Year (edged out by the more-than-double-the-price BMW i3 electric).

Honda always makes it easy to select a trim level. Our top-model Fit EX-L NAVI lacked little at its twenty-grand price point (two power seats and auto-down windows would be nice). The Honda Fit LX starts at just \$15,650 and the EX at \$17,560. All have the same nifty style, nimble handling, and useful and appealing layout. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	1.5L DOHC 16-valve i-VTEC 4-cyl dir inject
TRANSMISSION	CVT (continuously variable) with sport mode and paddle shifters
DRIVETRAIN	FWD
POWER/TORQUE	130 hp / 114 lb-ft
THROTTLE	Drive-by-wire
STEERING	Electric power steering: rack & pinion
TURNING CIRCLE	35.1 ft
SEATING CAPACITY	5
CARGO VOLUME	16.6 cu ft (52.7 w seats down)
WEIGHT	2642 lb
WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION	61/39 front/rear
FUEL CAPACITY	10.6 gal
MPG	32/38/35 (city/hwy/comb)

INCLUDED: SAFETY/TECH: Theft-deterrent system, front dual-stage airbags and side airbags, side curtain airbags w rollover sensor, ABS, brake assist, EBD, vehicle stability, cruise control, lane watch, child seat system, advanced body structure, LED taillights. **EXTERIOR:** Power moonroof w tilt, 16x6 alloy wheels, intermittent wipers, rear defroster and washer/wiper, auto headlights, heated mirrors w turn signals, fog lights, roofline spoiler, keyless entry. **INTERIOR:** Keyless start, leather-trimmed seats, leather-wrapped wheel, tilt/tele, heated front seats, 7-inch touchscreen audio-nav w voice recognition, rear camera, next-gen HondaLink w smartphone apps, 6-speaker audio, XM satellite, HD, Pandora, SMS text, Bluetooth, USB, wheel-mounted controls, filtered A/C, storage console/armrest, 60/40 rear seat, power windows, programmable locks, driver auto up/down window, driver adjustable-height seat.

BASE PRICE (EX-L NAVI)	\$20,800
DESTINATION CHARGE	790
TOTAL	\$21,590



Goodguys
PO Box 9132 • Pleasanton CA 94566
925.838.9876 • good-guys.com

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Inside and out, the little Fit is a beauty. This no-cost Passion Berry Pearl paint job adds richness to this \$20,000 do-it-all subcompact.



• 2016 Alfa Romeo 4C Spider (preproduction)

DETROIT SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW | JANUARY 2015

The North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) is held at Cobo Center in downtown Detroit. No matter how much the world evolves, Detroit means cars at its core. NAIAS is the first show of the calendar year (though second in the seasonal cycle, after Los Angeles in November). Since Detroit happens after January 1, we get reveals of production vehicles for the following model year—2016 models with sale dates crossing January 1, 2016. They were even taking the wraps off some 2017 models. Here are some highlights (alphabetically, with exceptions for the big photos):

- Some 25 years after the original NSX, and after several years of developmental reveals, we have a production **2016 Acura NSX**. The car has a new longitudinally mid-mounted twin-turbo V6 and 9-speed dual clutch transmission, is 3 inches longer and an inch wider than its predecessor, moves its cabin forward a bit from the concept, and has Acura SH-AWD (all-wheel drive), an internal frame of aluminum, ultra-high strength steel and other advanced materials, anchored by a carbon fiber floor. They start taking orders this summer.
- The rejuvenated presence of Alfa Romeo in the US has just been multiplied by two, as the **2015 Alfa Romeo 4C Spider** (photo at top) was shown in preproduction form at Detroit, preparing to join the recently introduced 4C Coupe on dealer floors by the end of this calendar year. As with the Coupe, the new Alfa Romeo 4C Spider has a Formula 1 inspired carbon fiber monocoque chassis and all-aluminum 1750 cc dual-intercooled direct-injection turbo with variable valve timing.
- It has been awhile since a redesign of this successful three-row SUV. The new **2016 Audi Q7** is one of the final efforts under outgoing design chief Wolfgang Egger and contains evolutionary style elements, notably a huge brushed metal bezel around its grille. From there back, the vehicle's familiar egglike shape has become more generic. The big news is that it has shed over 700 pounds, which contributes to a 26 percent



• 2016 Acura NSX



• 2016 Audi Q7



• Bentley Mulsanne Speed



• Buick Avenir concept



• Chevrolet Bolt concept



• Hyundai Santa Cruz crossover truck concept

increase in fuel efficiency. The vehicle is smaller outside and larger inside. Infotainment and driver assistance technologies are upgraded.

- A new **Bentley Mulsanne Speed** has selectable sport suspension and steering, on demand. An updated 6.75-liter twin-turbo V8 carries the substantial sedan to 60 mph in just 4.8 seconds, with a top speed of 190 mph. With nine percent global sales growth last year, the US remains the super luxury brand's largest market, at 30 percent. Also revealed was a **Continental GT Speed Convertible**, and further buzz centered around a long-rumored **Bentley SUV**, yet to be unveiled.
- The **Buick Avenir concept** is a study in the brand's design direction, vehicle technologies and passenger comforts. A global team of designers applied the spirit of historic Buicks that had most influenced the world's automotive style direction in the past. This personal premium four-seat concept has full LED lighting, cylinder-deactivating V6 and twin-clutch all-wheel drive, all sitting on 21-inch wheels. Also revealed was the **2016 Buick Cascada** convertible, sure to be a hit.
- The **Chevrolet Bolt concept**, a new subcompact electric vehicle aimed for production—very soon—achieves 200-mile range at an approachable purchase price of about \$30,000. The car carries technologies from the Volt and the Spark EV. The Bolt has near-zero body overhangs, for a spacious interior on a small footprint. Construction is of lightweight aluminum, magnesium carbon fiber and woven mesh. Many features can be operated via smartphone—including ride-sharing. The Bolt was joined onstage by the **2016 Chevrolet Volt**, with significant restyling and enhanced range.
- A show-stopping new **2017 Ford GT** supercar (photo, next page) returns to market with a 600-plus-hp rear-midengine EcoBoost twin-turbo V6, construction of aluminum and carbon fiber, and an extremely aggressive and highly aerodynamic new body. Production begins in late 2016, as a

2017 model, in time for the 50th anniversary of the original Ford GT40 race car's famous 1-2-3 finish at the 1966 24 Hours of Le Mans. Also revealed were a new **F-150 Raptor** extreme sport pickup and a **Shelby GT350R Mustang**.

- The **Hyundai Santa Cruz concept**—a dramatically styled and broadly useful third millennium pickup, is equally suitable for urban duty, weekend adventure and general utility. With a mission similar to the Honda Ridgeline a decade ago—a new interpretation of what a pickup is—Hyundai nails it. Gutsy and gorgeous, it has the bearing of a utility hot rod. The concept has integrated rear-hinged rear doors. The roof, bed rails and even wheel arches offer tie-down cleats for securing cargo. The bed easily expands for longer cargo, using a drawer-like sliding function.
- The **2016 Jaguar XE** sport sedan slots below the Jaguar XF sedan—one of our favorites—at a starting price anticipated around \$42k (the XF starts at around \$50k). The line-topping XE S model will have a 340-hp 3.0-liter supercharged V6, though its price may approach that of an XF S, based on early UK pricing. The aluminum-intensive XE is available with rear- or four-wheel drive.
- The **Infiniti Q60 concept** two-door sports coupe is a peek at a new 2+2 launching during 2016 as a 2017 model. It's part of their renamed product realignment, between the new premium compact Q30 and a full-size car like the Q80 Inspiration concept shown in Paris last fall. A 3-liter twin-turbo V6 in the Q60 concept hints at a sporty character for the production model.
- Lexus generated plenty of buzz with a new **2016 GS F**, a 467-hp 5.0-liter V8 version of their rear-drive sedan, and its related **RC F** coupe. These machines echo the brand's return to racing, for which they had on hand the **Lexus RC F GT3** race car, first shown last year at the Geneva



• 2016 Jaguar XE



• Infiniti Q60 concept



• Lexus RC F GT3 race car



• 2015 Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 Coupé 4MATIC



• 2016 Nissan Titan XD





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show. At 2,755.8 pounds, it carries a modified V8 with 540-plus hp. Lexus will supply GT3-compliant vehicles to racing teams starting this year. GT3 cars qualify for events such as the 24 Hours of Nürburgring in Germany and the Super Taikyu Endurance and Super GT series in Japan.

- Combining everything they've learned from pioneering four-door coupes, 4MATIC SUVs and AMG performance builds, the **Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 Coupé 4MATIC** follows last year's introduction of the GLE with a 585-hp biturbo V8 powerhouse AMG version. The high-performance SUV coupé has sport suspension with active roll stabilization, active curve system and sports direct-steer.

- Big pickup wars gain a rejuvenated contestant with the **2015 Nissan Titan XD**. The truck's 5.0-liter Cummins turbo-diesel, with 310 hp and 555 lb-ft of torque, is intended to position the new Titan between lightweight (150/1500) and heavy-duty (250/2500 and up) competitors. "We weren't just going for best-in-class," says Renault-Nissan chairman and CEO Carlos Ghosn, but rather, "best new class." The all-American new Nissan Titan was designed and engineered in Arizona, California, Michigan and Tennessee and will be built in Mississippi, with engines from Tennessee and Indiana. Nissan Titan goes on sale later this year.

- The **2016 Porsche 911 Targa 4 GTS** is a 50th anniversary model, combining its open top with a 430-hp GTS engine, PASM chassis, 20-inch wheels, standard Sport Chrono package and sport exhaust. Even with all that—and a wider Carrera 4 body, as on all Targas—the power to weight ratio of the new model is improved, to under 8 pounds per horsepower. Expect a top track speed over 186 mph and zero-to-60 acceleration in just 4.1 seconds with PDK transmission.

- The new **2015 Ram 1500 Rebel** combines air suspension and 33-inch tires for increased ride height and immense capability, backed up by skid plates and tow hooks, with a classic 4x4 stance.

With 3.6L Pentastar V6, the pickup has a 3.92 rear axle—the first time for this combo. HEMI V8 models are also available. A new grille departs from the brand's longstanding crosshairs for the first time (see also the later Chicago show in this issue), giving the truck a rugged tubular pushbar look, without that weight and bulk. The Rebel is the tenth model in the extensive Ram pickup lineup. Rear-wheel-drive models are also available.

- The midsize **2016 Toyota Tacoma** updates powertrains and retunes suspension, for the next iteration of a truck that has sold over seven million since 1964. Primarily developed in Michigan, the new Tacoma receives more high-strength and ultra-high-strength steel in both frame and body. The truck has a choice of 2.7L four-cylinder or all-new 3.5L Atkinson cycle V6 with both direct and port fuel injection. Toyota says to expect better off-road capabilities and a quieter cabin. Five trim levels come in both two- and four-wheel drive.

- The show opened with the **Volkswagen Golf** and **Golf GTI** receiving Car of the Year trophies. Then, on stage inside, the company revealed the **Volkswagen Cross Coupe GTE concept**, a handsome new five-seat plug-in hybrid SUV. The powertrain includes a 276-hp 3.6 VR6 FSI engine, two electric motors (54 and 114 hp) and all-wheel drive. Its sheetmetal gives indications of VW's next-gen SUVs in the US, while its instruments demonstrate a future incorporating gesture controls for instruments and information.

- The **2016 Volvo S60 Inscription** is an upsized S60 sedan, with larger interior dimensions for US customers—a full 3.4 inches of additional rear seat legroom, thus rating best-in-class. Materials are intended to reflect the car's Scandinavian origins, including walnut trim and "silk metal." But the biggest news may be that the S60 Inscription will be now-Chinese-owned Volvo's first Chinese-built Volvo sold in the US, and thus the first Chinese-built car of any sort for sale in the US. ■



Not just by the numbers By Joe Sage

Forte is a powerful word. Rooted in Latin and still used in modern Italian, it means strong or it means loud. This attractive compact can deliver what it should of either. Forte can mean large, heavy or substantial. The Kia Forte is neither large nor heavy, yet it proves to be substantial for such a small package.

An echo chamber among many autowriters loves to say “hatchbacks” are wonderful cars everybody should want if they were as savvy as that autowriter, yet that nobody in America will buy by that name—used more in Europe. We don’t suffer their hangup, and regardless have a model here whose Monroney sticker calls it the Kia Forte SX 5-Door.

Kia Forte comes in three formats: a four-door sedan, simply called Forte; a two-door Forte Koup; and this hatchback 5-Door, more widely known as the Kia Forte5.

The least costly of the Forte lineup is the sedan in LX trim, with a 1.8L engine and stick, starting at just \$15,890. The Forte5 skips LX and starts at a higher EX trim level and with a bigger (2.0L) engine, at \$19,690. An SX version has a more potent 1.6L turbo and starts at \$20,890 with a manual or \$21,890 with an automatic transmission, like ours here.

Forte5 slides neatly into a spot somewhere between volume econo-hatchbacks and the hottest of the tuner hot hatches.

The SX has several style and feature advantages over the base model. An upsize from 16-inch to 18-inch wheels really nails its appearance—this car will easily stand out from its base sedan cousin. Feature inclusions are extensive and on a par with vehicles twice its price. Ours added two more packages, but that’s where a car of about \$20 grand became a car pushing \$30 grand.

Fuel mileage varies widely among body styles, engines and transmissions. A 39 MPG rating for the cheapest Forte sedan drops about 25 percent, to 29 MPG on our SX hatch. That’s significant. However, its turbocharged power has climbed from 145 to 201 hp over that same model range, a 39 percent jump.

For frugality, the base sedan fills the bill. But this peppy, stylish and spacious Forte5 SX turbo will carry the day in every other way.

Forte: strong or loud. Our Forte5 SX is not dragstrip strong, but matches the 201 hp of a first-year Porsche Boxster and is a smooth, tight handler on a great two-lane. The only place it might be called loud is in its high level of driver connectedness, with a hair more road feel on rough pavement than some may like, though exactly what we would crave.

Our Graphite Steel over black leather sample was one of those cars we could happily take out on those two-lanes indefinitely. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE.....	1.6L turbo GDI 4-cylinder
TRANSMISSION	6-spd auto w Sportmatic & paddle
DRIVETRAIN	front-wheel drive
POWER/TORQUE	201 hp / 105 lb-ft
WEIGHT	3122 lb
PASSENGER CAPACITY	5 passengers / 98.2 cu.ft.
CARGO CAPACITY	32.2 cu.ft.
TURNING CIRCLE.....	34.8 ft
FUEL CAPACITY	13.2 gal
MPG.....	21/29/24 (city/hwy/comb)

FEATURES: Keyless entry/start, cruise, power windows/locks, leather tilt/tele wheel & shift knob, A/C, AM/FM/CD/MP3, SiriusXM, USB/aux, Bluetooth, UVO eServices, rear camera, LED DRLs and tail-lights, fog lights, power fold mirrors w turn signals and puddle lights, 60/40 split rear seat, cargo cover.

BASE PRICE \$21,890

SX PREMIUM PACKAGE: Power tilt/slide sunroof, leather seat trim, power driver’s seat w/memory, heated/vented front seats, heated steering wheel, heated outboard rear seats, auto-dim mirror w HomeLink.....2300

SX TECHNOLOGY PACKAGE: Xenon HID headlights, dual-zone climate, HD radio, navigation w Sirius Traffic, meter cluster w 4.2" color LCD1900

CARGO MAT 95

CARPETED FLOOR MATS 115

DESTINATION CHARGE: 800

TOTAL \$27,100



Surprise package By Joe Sage

We did a full writeup of this highly developed multi-purpose vehicle (Kia does not like the term minivan) two issues back, following its launch in California, which you can find online. The Kia Sedona is evolutionary, able to work as a traditional minivan—it still has sliding rear doors—or taking on the functions and feel of anything from a luxury SUV to a daily driver sedan.

We have here an SX Limited (a.k.a. SXL)—the top of the line. Sedona starts at just \$25,900, while this one as outfitted passes the \$40,000 mark. Every trim level has the same powertrain, steering, braking and appealing, un-minivanlike handling. By the time you get to the SXL, you have added a lot—some of which kicks in at various midlevel trims, some of which may be optional and some of which is unique to this model.

One of everybody’s favorite SXL-only features is the second row, featuring “first class lounge seats.” Slide back, feet up and stretch out in full recliner-and-ottoman living room comfort. Grab some chips and tune in the big game, or make that confident business call—from this luxurious

perch, the world is yours. (These reduce the top model’s total seat count from eight to seven.)

No chauffeur? As the driver, you will enjoy Kia’s well-implemented UVO infotainment and eServices interface, as well as nimble rack and pinion hydraulic steering and surprisingly fine handling from a chassis of 76 percent ultra-high and high-strength steel. We were seldom reminded of the van’s large size, as it turns tight, parks easily and handles the Valley’s competitive freeways like something much smaller and sportier.

If you need a minivan’s capabilities, the Kia Sedona delivers them all, in reinterpreted premium style and finish. If you don’t need a minivan, Sedona still delivers a premium ride and personal environment, with tons of room for daily hauling and special activities—augmented by the fact that this vehicle has a tow capacity of 3500 pounds. And if you do need a minivan but are in some degree of denial about that, the Kia Sedona—with its modern, aggressive styling and carlike road handling—is clearly a remarkably balanced choice for you. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE / DRIVETRAIN.....	3.3L DOHC GDI V6 / FWD
HORSEPOWER / TORQUE	276 hp / 248 lb-ft
STEERING	Rack & pinion hydraulic power
TURNING CIRCLE	36.8 ft
SEATING	7 passengers
CARGO VOLUME.....	total 142.0 cu.ft.
.....	behind 2nd row 78.4 cu.ft.
.....	behind 3rd row 33.9 cu.ft.
WHEELS.....	6.5x19
BRAKES.....	Power hydraulic vacuum, ABS
WEIGHT	4414-4720 lb
TOW CAPACITY.....	3500 lb
MPG	17/22/19 to 18/25/21 city/hwy/comb

FEATURES: Power-fold heated mirrors w turn signals, power sunroof w tilt front row, solar control glass, heated rear glass, dual power sliding doors, height adjustable smart power liftgate, variable wipers, rear wiper/washer, projector beam headlights, LED markers, fog lights, LED taillights, roof rails, keyless entry and start, Infinity audio, Bluetooth-USB, wheel-mounted controls, UVO infotainment/eServices, rear camera, backup warning, front-rear park assist, blind spot detection and rear cross traffic, drive mode select, chilled glovebox, leather seats, lumbar support, heated/vented front seats, first class 2nd row lounge seats.

BASE PRICE \$39,700

SXL TECHNOLOGY PACKAGE: Xenon HID headlights, lane departure warn, forward collision warn, surround view monitor, smart cruise.....2700

DESTINATION CHARGE: 895

TOTAL \$43,295



Convenient one-touch up/down windows on all four doors bring our eye to a greenhouse with great visibility and an invitation to wide open spaces, whether as a family or a solo enthusiast driver. Eyes forward, you can completely forget that whole volume of space you’re carrying.



• Nissan 370Z NISMO Roadster concept

CHICAGO SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

CHICAGO AUTO SHOW | FEBRUARY 2015

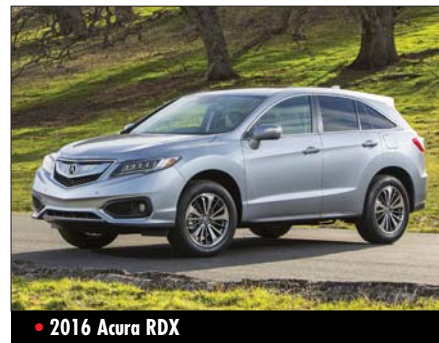
Hosted by the Chicago Automobile Trade Association, the Chicago Auto Show is of a stature short of the big internationals in New York, Geneva, Shanghai and their ilk, yet much greater than the regional shows in Denver, Portland, Phoenix and such. It is the longest-running show in the US and fills over one million square feet of exhibit space. Taking place after LA and Detroit but before New York, the manufacturers always save something for Chicago. The show ran from February 14-22; media preview days were February 12-13. Here are some highlights (alphabetically, with exceptions for big photos):

- Crossovers are popular in the upper Midwest, and there were a number of them at the show. The **2016 Acura RDX** is a refresh, with a new LED projector lamp headlight cluster and LED taillights, and a more powerful 3.5L V6 under the hood. Safety and driver assistance technologies are expanded, along with a few luxury touches. A new Advance Package tops the lineup.

- The **2016 Chevrolet Equinox** is the latest version of a crossover whose US sales have grown every year for five years, since the 2010 model was introduced, now holding nine percent of the industry's largest segment. This update has new styling accents, new wheels and new available safety features, as well as a larger color touchscreen and standard backup camera even on the base model. It goes on sale this fall.

- A modification with 45 years' heritage, the cold-air-intake Shaker hood from Dodge does as its name suggests: it pokes through the hood and will rock and roll with the powertrain's dynamics. A highly functional satin black scoop identifies this variant, available with the 5.7-liter HEMI V8 in the **2015 Dodge Challenger R/T Shaker** and now also with the 6.4-liter (392 cu.in.) HEMI V8 in the **R/T Plus Shaker**. Both are available to order now.

- The first RS to be marketed globally, the **Ford Focus RS** in its third generation will be its first sold in the US (see also page 10). The car features



• 2016 Acura RDX



• 2016 Chevrolet Equinox



• 2015 Dodge Challenger R/T Plus Shaker



• Ford Focus RS



• 2016 Honda Pilot



• 2015 Ram Laramie Limited

performance all-wheel-drive with torque vectoring, behind a potent 2.3-liter EcoBoost four. Styling is functional and aggressive, inside and out. The car was developed in consultation with professional rally driver and *Gymkhana* film star Ken Block.

- The **2016 Honda Pilot** three-row midsize SUV adds premium finishes and safety features, plus ups its fuel mileage, but is most notable for its significant restyling, tip to tail. It may not be as distinctive as its predecessor, but it falls into line better with its smaller CR-V and new HR-V stablemates. Honda also revealed a preview sketch of their next *Ridgeline* alternative pickup.

- A new **2016 Hyundai Veloster Rally Edition** adds performance suspension, RAYS lightweight wheels and wide tires, carbon-fiber-look aero accents, special badging and other highlights, building upon the Turbo R-Spec. The 1200-unit limited production Rally Edition comes in exclusive Matte Blue paint. The 2016 Veloster hits dealers in May 2015. The Turbo model adds 7-speed dual-clutch transmission, machined-finish wheels, sportier seats, electroluminescent gauges and black headliner. Non-turbo Velosters get new wheels and available black seats with yellow accents.

- We hope to see the **Kia Trail'ster concept** hit production. Based on the popular Kia Soul (and Soul EV), it features an innovative gasoline-electric hybrid system. Trail'ster takes the Soul's urban flavor outdoors, with suspension raised 2.5 inches, armored skidplates, all-wheel drive and a full canvas sunroof. Primary propulsion is from a 1.6L turbo four, with an electric drive system biased to the rear axle for launches and acceleration, and all four wheels for bad weather or off-road uses.

- The **2016 Mazda MX-5 Miata accessories design concept** boosts interest in the new roadster as it approaches its summer arrival. Painted Ceramic Metallic, the concept adds a front dam, side sill, rear skirt and spoiler aero kit, forged black BBS wheels, Brembo brakes with red

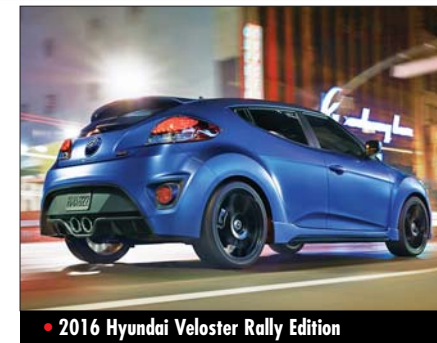
calipers, and an under-two-pound carbon fiber luggage rack with integrated center brake lamp.

- With the promise of big things coming to market, meet the **Mitsubishi GC-PHEV concept**—"a glimpse at the brand's new design language applied to a large vehicle." Beneath its dramatic sheetmetal is a plug-in hybrid system with 335-hp V6 and electric motor, an 8-speed automatic and S-AWC full-time all-wheel drive. The new Tactical Table information system provides electronic feature interactivity for everyone, front and rear.

- The **Nissan 370Z NISMO Roadster concept** (top of facing page) starts with a 350-hp 3.7L V6 and NISMO performance suspension. If built, this would add something new to the NISMO lineup of GT-R, 370Z coupe and Juke—extreme performance in an open-air sports car. Style points include GT-R-inspired aerodynamics, hyper-LED DRLs, black headlight bezels, NISMO emblems and red stripe accents, all riding on super-lightweight 19-inch aluminum-alloy RAYS performance wheels.

- Ram has been a standalone division since 2009, but its Dodge-echoing crosshair grille has managed to linger. Not so on the new **2015 Ram Laramie Limited** (top of this page), which introduces a radically new grille and a host of other new features. This premium model has all-black full-leather seating and real wood interior finishes, a luxury alternative to the more outdoorsy Laramie Longhorn pickup. Laramie Limited is available on Ram 1500, 2500 and 3500 models.

- The **2015 Toyota Corolla Special Edition** adds aggressive touches to this year's redesigned model, including paddle shifters, a sport driving mode and rear disc brakes. Based on the Corolla S Plus, it adds 17-inch gloss black alloy wheels, black interior with red accents and stitching, keyless entry and start, all in three exclusive paint choices. The Corolla Special Edition will be produced from August till December, limited to 8,000 units. There is also a *Camry Special Edition*. ■



• 2016 Hyundai Veloster Rally Edition



• Kia Trail'ster concept



• Mazda MX-5 Miata accessories design concept



• Mitsubishi GC-PHEV concept



• 2015 Toyota Corolla Special Edition

Bipolar relationship By Joe Sage

The Acura TLX is a new model this year, or an evolutionary recombination of two expired models. Gone are the TL and the TSX. As the chart below shows, there has been considerable reduction in weight from midsize TL to TLX, with the new TLX falling between the TL and compact TSX. Fuel mileage is up, horsepower ratings have shifted and prices cover a wider range. The TSX may be considered to have been replaced by the compact ILX, whose production overlapped it by a year or two. Comparisons can be made among all four. All in all, it strikes us as an improved lineup, and once it sinks in, the nomenclature should be clearer, too. (A small TLC sticker, for Acura's Total Luxury Care program, is just there to make you crazy.)

The car we have here is tops in the lineup: the 3.5L V6 with Super Handling all-wheel-drive (SH-AWD) and Advance Package. Typical for Honda's refreshingly simple model and pricing schemes, at \$44,800 no further options are needed.

A front-drive 4-cylinder starts at just \$31,445, reasonable for a premium brand (and echoing the TSX). The front-drive four also gets 35 MPG highway, which only drops to 34 MPG with the V6 (or 31 MPG with V6 and AWD, 21 city, 25 combined).

The Acura TLX has won Kiplinger's award for Best New/Redesigned Car in the \$40,000-50,000 price range. It is also winner of *US News & World Report's* Best Car for the Money award in the Upscale Midsize Car category. This level of awesomeness was only sometimes evident to us.

STRONG POINTS: The TLX is smooth, quiet, comfortable and capable, with a solid, powerful and sporty feel. Give it a punch, and its V6 produces a satisfying sound. The 9-speed automatic gives strong and rapid delivery of its 290 horses.

The car's all-wheel-drive system, with recalibrated torque-vectoring, provides surefooted traction, handling, control and driver connectedness on a par with the best all-wheel-drivers.

Our TLX came in a Crystal Black Pearl finish that revealed rich brown tones in sunlight. The car's five-projector-beam headlight assembly is a successful combination of class and cutting edge tech, and rear sheetmetal and lights are relatively distinctive, in an era of massive lookalikes.

WEAK POINTS: We encountered annoyances and issues large to small. A medium-sized flaw with

the keyless locking system meant failure to lock and failure to open, several times each. Digging for a key is all the more annoying when you have your arms full and thought you had a system that worked. Surely this can be fixed, but it does not speak well for quality or the potential for ongoing issues. Ditto one instance of coming out to the car at night, to find all its lights on, inside and out.

The turning circle is huge, just shy of 40 feet.

The backup camera is weak, bordering on useless in a combination of nighttime and rain. The surround cameras gave us disturbing results in one parking lot instance, showing a truck two spaces away but without a trace of the car right next to us. We had several other minor-ish notes.

One of our most significant beefs is with the shift interface. Our referring to it as a 'shift interface,' rather than just a shifter, may be telling, in itself. As fate would have it, we came across a discussion about this on social media a couple of weeks later, spinning off a published commentary on "alternative" shifters (this is not the only one) from a safety hazard standpoint. It was spurred by someone who had driven in front of a train, purportedly shifting to D instead of R in a new vehicle with an unconventional shifter. Some were suggesting that any owner with half a brain can learn their car's oddest features in fifteen minutes. Others countered that it's not uncommon for someone else to drive a car, or that in a panic situation unusual learning may be replaced by old reflexes. It was discussed whether driver training or state license testing should address nonstandard controls. As a tech industry colleague said in the same time frame but a different discussion, "if you have to explain an interface, it's not right yet."

As shown above, the TLX shifter has five or six



separate buttons—one a round circle that says D, one an oddly contoured rectangle that says N, in front of that a depressed switch (somewhat in the form of many electronic parking brake switches) for R, above that a slightly curved flat rectangle with P, and at the other end of the array another P. Our notes about the challenges this posed were lengthy, detailed, specific and many.

It's unlike any conventional shifter, so experience works against you. Or even if it's your first, each function is like its own new idea out of left field. You will likely take your eyes off the road to shift from R to D, not good as you depart your driveway amid children and traffic. (Auto stop-start may kick in here unwelcomely, too.) When you stop and park, there are two things that say P, one that you push and one that you pull. When you're ready to go, there are the same two things that say P, one that you pull and one that you do not touch. It's all too easy to confuse the two buttons and four actions.

AND THEREFORE: Aside from our nitpicks, we liked driving the car. It handles beautifully. Our time with the 2015 Acura TLX, along with a new MDX not long ago, have started to transform our feel for a brand we've been lukewarm about in the past.

But the turning circle will never improve. Trouble with the locks and lights makes us uneasy. The nature of some issues is not that uncommon, as automakers seem compelled to try to become tech designers, whether they have the knack or not. The shifter was by far the worst. Its quirks are ultimately impossible to ignore. We could never live with it unless it gets some serious therapy. ■

COMPARISON:	2014 TSX	2014 TL	2016 ILX	2015 TLX
SEGMENT	compact	midsize	compact	midsize
LENGTH (IN)	185.6	194.0	181.9	190.3
WHEELBASE (IN)	106.4	109.3	105.1	109.3
WEIGHT (LB)	3400-3680	3726-4001	3093-3173	3483-3774
DRIVETRAINS	FWD	FWD,AWD	FWD	FWD,AWD
ENGINES	2.4L four, 3.5 V6	3.5L V6, 3.7L V6	2.4L four	2.4L four, 3.5L V6
HORSEPOWER (HP)	201-280	280-305	201	206-290
FUEL MILEAGE (MPG HWY)	28-31	25-29	36	31-35
PRICE RANGE	\$30,634-35,635	\$36,030-43,310	\$27,900-34,890	\$31,445-44,700



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CORVETTE STORE

A NEW MOTORSPORTS PARK IS COMING TO BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

With over one mile of frontage on Interstate 65 and located across from the National Corvette Museum (NCM) and the Corvette Assembly Plant, the 184-acre Motorsports Park will be one of the most centrally located and easily accessible driving facilities in the country.

Opening Labor Day Weekend 2014, the Park will offer Museum-sponsored High Performance Driving Schools for all makes and models of vehicles, track rental opportunities, corporate hospitality and more.

Contact us to secure our next event date or visit our website to see how you can get involved!

www.motorsportspark.org

basics

By Joe Sage

The Mitsubishi Outlander Sport has a full complement of features and options. Pretty full, anyway; some of its features and options are 'lite' versions thereof—one power seat, partial one-touch windows, partially centralized locks. It's not quite as inexpensive as it may seem, unless you buy the base model (this is the top model, or was at the time; see below). But it is relatively affordable. It looks and feels pretty basic.

As we started our week with this vehicle, we were asked to rate it, from one to ten, in terms of recommending it to someone. We had questions. Recommending to whom? Everyone has different needs. And are we recommending five or ten vehicles? Or just one? They wanted just one answer.

Pointless as that seemed, we found ourselves revisiting the concept throughout the week. For an economy buyer, it rates pretty well. For anybody-and-everything, you can not possibly compare this with every SUV from Chevy to Subaru to Jeep to Mercedes-Benz in the same breath.

An economy buyer will find a comfortably sized compact SUV starting under \$20 grand. Knowing that, we were startled to realize this one stickered at about \$30 grand. Five of this was for its only option package, so if you skip that, \$25 grand is not too bad a price (though you'd miss that

Rockford Fosgate audio). That's still with AWD, a big plus in any sport utility worth its salt. To clock in under \$20 grand, you have to strip it down to front-drive and a 5-speed manual transmission.

Unfortunately, the manual is only available on that base front-driver. All the others have a CVT. On the plus side, this CVT is a clean implementation, not trying to cough its way through simulated shifts like so many (although some steps were mildly present under some conditions).

The vehicle's weight is less than 3300 pounds—it does not have a towing spec—which helps it achieve a 30 MPG highway rating. This involves an eco mode, which seems to make its own decisions about engagement—we discovered that when we inexplicably lost power in the fast lane.

Suspension is firm, which we generally like, but perhaps too firm at times even for us. On a stretch of freeway construction, where stripes had been removed, creating mild grooves, we had to fight for straight line control. Brakes—single-piston disc front and rear—seemed weak at times. The cable handbrake never felt 100 percent engaged.

Some ergonomics and controls had room for improvement in small details. The optional seven-inch touchscreen was a mixed blessing—concise but requiring some tight work at times. One-touch power windows or central power locks had selective partial implementations that frustrated us.

One of our more unusual but persistent logbook

SPECIFICATIONS: SE AWD 2.0L

ENGINE	.....2.0L MIVEC DOHC 16v 4-cylinder
TRANSMISSION	.....CVT (continuously variable)
DRIVETRAIN	.....all-wheel drive
POWER/TORQUE	.....148 hp / 145 lb-ft
WEIGHT	.....3274 lb (59/41 front/rear)
CARGO (BEHIND 2ND-1ST ROWS)	.....21.7 / 49.5 cu.ft.
TURNING CIRCLE	.....34.8 ft
MPG	.....24/30/27 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE.....**\$24,195**

TOURING PACKAGE: Leather seats, power driver's seat, nav w 7" touchscreen, Rockford Fosgate 710-watt 9-speaker audio, auto-dim mirror, panoramic glass roof, black roof rails.....4900

DESTINATION CHARGE:850

TOTAL.....**\$29,945**

notes had to do with a lack of respect we encountered. Few honk their horns here, and nobody honks at us, but we were honked at many times in this. We also were cut off a few times, in parking lots or on the road. Did this just look like it was going to be in the way? Our other feeling was of general invisibility, so maybe this was not all bad.

At 148 hp, we knew this could benefit from a stronger engine. Mitsubishi read our minds so quickly and effectively, they introduced a stronger engine for this Outlander Sport within just a couple of weeks of our drive. Outlander Sport is now available with an optional 2.4-liter engine producing 168 hp vs the 2.0's 148 hp. The bigger engine ups the price by several hundred dollars, about a 3 percent bump for a 20 percent power boost.

If you want something not everybody has, on a budget, the Mitsubishi Outlander Sport may be a good bet. Even at a relatively good price, though, competition remains stiff. We look forward to giving the bigger engine a try. ■



The new 2.4-liter models will be recognizable by a black center bar in the grille. The 2.4 GT will add feature upgrades comparable to those on the 2.0 SE trim level driven here, with similar options.

SOLID BOOSTER ROCKET

By Joe Sage

This supercharged-turbocharged high-style tank runs smooth and true

It's kind of rare for us to like a front-driver this much—but we were won over by the Volvo S60's great combination of power, style and fuel frugality. It has a beautiful interior, powerful and economical engine, solid suspension and road handling, and feature interface that is relatively easy to utilize. It's comfortable, with a solid ride—a driver's car. It's spacious to the point we had to look it up to make sure it's a midsize and not a full-size, even though we know full well there's a bigger S80. The S60 has 302 horsepower and a 5.6-second zero-to-60 time (accompanied by a sexy drivetrain and exhaust note), yet gets 35 MPG highway. And the price is pretty competitive.

We knew we had a rocket on our hands as we blasted up our first freeway ramp. It's not the fastest or quickest car we've ever driven, but it has such a solid ride, it feels moreso. The S60 feels as solid as a Brinks armored truck, while its supercharged-turbocharged inline four—which feels like at least a six—is a total kick in the pants.

Its 12-cubic-foot trunk is not remarkably big by the numbers (a Dodge Charger's is 16.5 cu.ft.), but is a triumph of proportions (and clever hinge engineering). We were in the midst of a storage-shifting project, and when we opened the trunk on the

S60, it seemed huge and accommodated our loads very well. If that's not enough, the S60 can also tow 3500 pounds—more than its own weight.

As on every current Volvo, the center console control panel is a little too tight and tidy for its own good—a great many buttons restricted to about the size of a phone pad, hard for big fingers and not that intuitive. But functionally it is very straightforward, and that mostly makes up for it.

A lot of vehicles come and go around our office, and we'd be the first to admit that some are greatly anticipated, while others are barely on the radar. We hadn't really thought much about this Volvo in advance, but after a couple of days with it, it was one of those you wish would never leave.

Unlike the solid booster rockets of the Apollo program, the Volvo S60 won't give you a bone-shaking ride. We call it solid not just because it's a Volvo—every vehicle is built solidly now. We call it solid because it gives us such a firm and comfortable ride, tracks straight and true, turns tight and smooth and accelerates beyond what its displacement might indicate. Volvo's combination of supercharged and turbocharged boost in an inline-four is a winning combination.

Those Swedes seem to really know what

SPECIFICATIONS: S60 T6 DRIVE-E

ENGINE	.....2.0L 16v DOHC turbo/superchg inline-4
TRANSMISSION	.....8-speed auto w sport mode
DRIVETRAIN	.....FWD
POWER/TORQUE	.....302 hp / 295 lb-ft
STEERING	.....Electric power assist rack & pinion
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.0 ft
WEIGHT	.....3472 lb
TOW CAPACITY	.....3500 lb
LUGGAGE CAPACITY	.....12.0 cu ft
FUEL / FUEL CAPACITY	.....regular / 17.8 gal
MPG	.....24/35/28 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE.....**\$39,000**

MODEL YEAR 2015.5 ADDTL FEATURES: Sensus Connect and Volvo On-Call w 6-month subscriptions, Sensus Navigation w Mapcar

PLATINUM: Harman Kardon premium sound, dual xenon headlights/washers; Tech Package incl adaptive cruise, collision warn w full brake, pedestrian/cyclist detect/brake, distance alert, lane keep, active high beam and road sign info; Convenience Package w power retract mirrors, rear park camera, accent lighting.....3750

CLIMATE PACKAGE: Heated seats front/rear, heated wheel, heated windshield/washer, interior air quality system1550

19" BOR DIAMOND CUT WHEELS:.....900

BLIND SPOT INFO SYSTEM PACKAGE: Blind spot, cross traffic, lane change merge, front/rear park900

METALLIC PAINT:550

DESTINATION CHARGE:925

TOTAL.....**\$47,575**

they're doing. And yes, this is still built in Europe, despite Volvo Cars' new Chinese ownership—but note that an upsized S60 Inscription (see Detroit show, page 47) will be the first Chinese car of any sort built and sold in the US. Others will follow. ■



A mid-year update, the 2015.5 Volvo S60 adds online support and navigation services to its interface.

THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS



■ An all-new **Metrocab** by Frazer-Nash Research and Ecotive has become the first zero-emission-capable taxi to be licensed by Transport for London on a trial basis. The purpose-built Range Extended Electric (REE) Metrocab provides unrivalled fuel economy—98 MPG on its ECE101 cycle, over three times more than current London cabs (with 75 percent less CO₂)—with significantly reduced operation and maintenance costs. Customer benefits include a panoramic roof for city views, more luggage space, comfortable seating for up to seven passengers, and full disabled access. The taxi is driven by two electric motors, range extended with a one-liter gasoline engine, in turn coupled to a generator to recharge the battery pack (in as little as 10 minutes while driving). Charging is also available via any electric outlet, for even lower fuel consumption. Ultra-low and zero emissions modes improve air quality and reduce noise pollution. The car also qualifies for UK tax incentives and grants.

■ **Toyota** has broken ground for its new headquarters in Plano, Texas. They have enlisted developer KDC, design firm Corgan and real estate strategy firm JLL to lead the efforts behind construction of the brand new \$350 million campus, set for completion in late 2016 or early 2017. The move will bring all Toyota's North American business affiliates and leaders together in one location for the first time.

■ Sales reports for **Subaru** stand out from a lot of good news from many manufacturers, as the longstanding niche brand increasingly gains broader popularity. For January 2015, monthly sales increased by 24 percent over January 2014, the automaker's 38th consecutive month-over-month growth. It was the best January ever for Forester, Legacy sedan, Outback, WRX/STI and XV Crosstrek. Subaru overall hit its 11th consecutive month of selling over 40,000 vehicles. Individual standouts were the Outback—marking 11 consecutive months of sales over 10,000 units—and Forester, which has now hit 18 consecutive months of sales over 10,000.



■ More pizzas are delivered during the Super Bowl than on any other day of the year. **Mitsubishi** spent its promotional dollars wisely off-air this Super Bowl Sunday, on social media. And they chose their target city fortuitously—Boston, which was receiving over two feet of snow, creating challenging winter driving conditions. Their game plan was this: to keep one delivery driver safe during the big game, Mitsubishi equipped local Boston shop DaCoopas Pizza & Subs with a 2015 Outlander GT. Social media drove their #ProtectThePie campaign, with live tweets and other posts throughout the big game. A video crew followed driver John Francis, as he delivered pizzas and stayed safe in the Outlander. The campaign cul-



minated with a short film that showcased John's efforts on the busiest pizza delivery day of the year, as well as the safety features of the 2015 Outlander GT.

■ After 18 months aboard the International Space Station, humanoid communication robot Kirobo returned to Earth as a passenger on SpaceX's CRS-5 Dragon cargo supply spacecraft, which success-



fully splashed down in the Pacific Ocean in mid-February. The 13.4-inch humanoid robot had a mission: to participate in the first robot-human conversation experiments in space. Kirobo is one of two robots developed under the Kibo Robot Project, a collaborative research effort by various agencies. **Toyota** Motor Corporation provided voice-recognition software for the robots and plans to use what it learns to improve their partner robots and interactive conversation technology. To prepare for the trip, the robot participated in zero-gravity and safety tests. The training, Kirobo says, was tough.

■ **Eco-Motive** USA recently finished construction of a full-scale model of its patented dual-fuel H-Motor (see our Jan/Feb issue), paving the way for a functional prototype to show interested investors and OEMs. "Now that we have a model of the H-Motor built to scale," said Hens Louis, Eco-Motive founder and CEO, "we can accelerate our development. The model will be used to test compatibility with multiple vehicles and used as a tangible representation for the investors and OEMs clamoring for more information about our design." The full-scale model was itself innovative, created partially through traditional processes and partly with individual components fabricated through advanced 3D printing technologies. A functioning prototype is predicted to be completed later this year.

■ Dovetailing with the upcoming market launch of the road-going version of the **Mercedes-AMG** GT (see *Auto Update*, page 6), another stage of the vehicle's evolution is already here. AMG, the sports car

and performance brand of Mercedes-Benz, is presenting a new customer sport racing car that complies with FIA GT3 race regulations: meet the new Mercedes-AMG GT3. With this, the second customer sport racing car to be developed by Mercedes-AMG, the Affalterbach company is seeking to build on the success of the SLS AMG GT3 and further expand the customer sport program first started in 2010. The notable racetrack performance of the road-going GT forms a solid basis for creation of the new Mercedes-AMG GT3, which is due to make its debut appearance by about the time you read this, at the Geneva Motor Show in March.



■ **JC Whitney** launched an industry and has fueled the dreams of generations of auto enthusiasts and hobbyists, who scour through catalogs searching for auto parts and accessories for their beloved cars and trucks. Founded in 1915 on State Street in Chicago by Israel Warshawsky, the company has its 100 year anniversary this year. Celebrations will include custom Jeep and truck projects, appearances at events across the country, and a grand finale at the 2015 SEMA Show. The JC Whitney catalog has been a true rite of passage for tens of millions of automotive enthusiasts. Through its catalogs and online, the company today provides more than six million automotive applications, from the latest model year back to the 1920s, with over 1.2 million parts for everything from trucks to modern muscle to motorcycles. "What do I remember best about looking through the JC Whitney catalog? Dreaming about what I would do, if I only had that one special hobby car," said Shane



Evangelist, president of JC Whitney. "We want our fans to be a part of this centennial celebration, because it's really all about thanking them for opening up their garage to us." Visit jcwhitney.com/100. ■

UPCOMING FEATURES

Goodguys Spring Nationals



Hyundai Sonata



GMC Sierra 2500 HD



Road trip to Meteor Crater



BMW 428i Gran Coupé



Kia Soul EV



Mudfest 2015



Texas Auto Roundup



NASCAR and NASCAR Mexico at PIR



NHRA at Wild Horse Pass



Monterey / Pebble Beach



Photo: Goodguys Rod & Custom Assn.

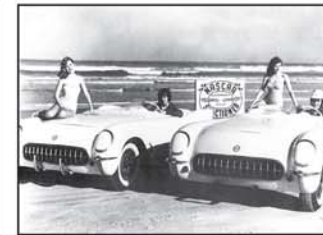
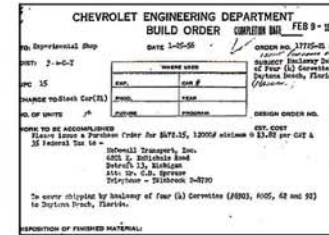
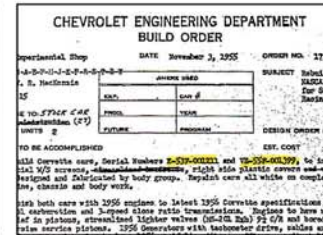
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noun

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