

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 4
JULY-AUGUST 2015

MOTORSPORTS

FORMULA E LONG BEACH GRAND PRIX
PIR HONORS JEFF GORDON

SPECIAL EVENTS

PALM BEACH, NEWPORT BEACH AUCTION RESULTS
MONTEREY/PEBBLE BEACH INFO | 2016 ARIZONA CONCOURS

VEHICLE EVENTS & DRIVES

MUDFEST AWARDS AND SPRING RALLY COMPAROS
BMW | FORD | MAZDA | MINI | MITSUBISHI | NISSAN | VIPER | VOLVO

BLUE ANGELS

ZERO GRAVITY ABOVE EL CENTRO

ROAD TRIPS

TOM MIX MEMORIAL
SEDONA SUMMER EVENTS



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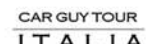
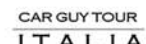
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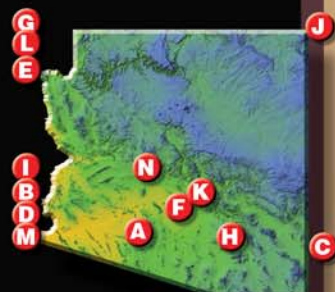
THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

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COVER: The highly anticipated launch of a second-generation Volvo XC90 seven-passenger utility introduces us to two flavors: a 300-hp supercharged and turbocharged 4-cylinder T6 model and an innovative almost-500-pound-foot T8 Twin Engine Plug-In Hybrid (PHEV).

Jan Wagner

Joseph Mackey / NWAPA

Randall Bohl

Joe Sage

Jan Wagner

Joe Sage



July and August are great road trip months if you live in the Valley of the Sun. We hit a number of cool, green spots in this issue, as well as some well-known hot spots.

Palm Beach, Florida and Newport Beach, California are two hot spots, if not for the weather then for the auction action taking place there with our home town teams, Barrett-Jackson and Russo and Steele. Both set records for dollars and for head count, and both set the stage for California and Nevada events coming up next.

We traveled to two cool, green destinations to get you behind the wheel of top off-road contenders at Mudfest (the Outdoor Activity Vehicle of the Year Awards) in the Pacific Northwest, and the Midwest Automotive Media Association's Spring Rally at famed Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. Mudfest is competitive by definition; MAMA Spring Rally is not, although it's hard not to feel the juices flowing on this world class racetrack.

Closer to home, we have information on events in the cool, green red rocks of Sedona this summer. Or take a desert drive with **Randall Bohl** and remember Tom Mix.

We meet some all-new vehicles—the Volvo XC90 with innovative new powertrains, a Mitsubishi Outlander reworked in more than 100 ways and the fastest street-legal Dodge Viper ever. Correspondent **Jennifer Johnson** brings us Ford's full EcoBoost lineup.

Contributor **Jan Wagner** brings us two highly divergent forms of alternative power in this issue. One is FIA Formula E racing at the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach, substantial evidence that electric power is not only here to stay but is exhilarating in ways conventional powertrains can't touch. The other is air power, with a zero gravity experience high above El Centro, California in a Blue Angels training plane, piloted by Captain Katie Higgins, the elite corps' first female pilot.

Enjoy the ride.

Joe Sage

Publisher/ Executive Editor



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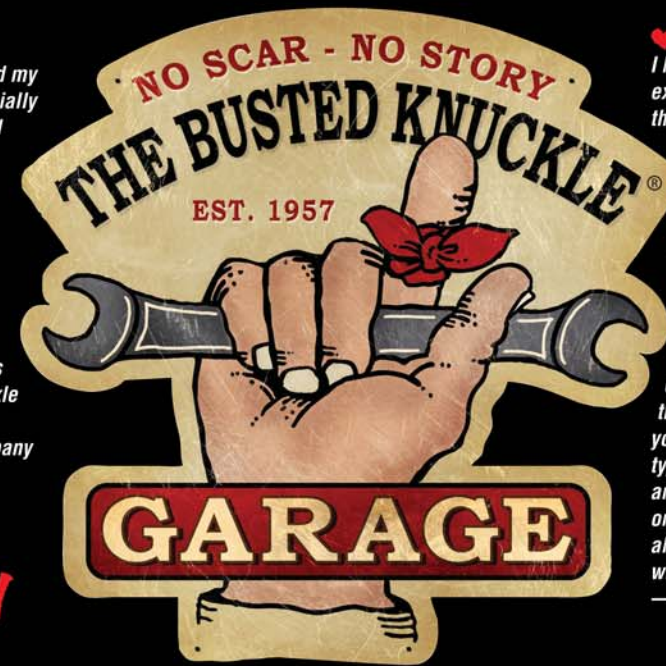
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♥ We have received our goodies and my husband just loves everything, especially me for getting him such cool stuff. I'd have to say we will be lifetime customers, oh ya!! Thank-you Greasemonkeys.
 — Sincerely, Pam

♥ I just had the most wonderful buying experience! I can't tell you how impressed I am with the service I received. I only hope my father asks for something from The Busted Knuckle Garage for Christmas so I can do business with such a wonderful company once more.
 — Cheers! Michelle



♥ First, let me be the one thanking you! I honestly cannot remember such extraordinary customer service. You may think I'm overstating, however, I assure you I am not. I wish you and all your "greasemonkeys" a great day, and know that thanks to you I also will have a great day.
 — Thanks again, "JR" Jean

♥ I am the proud wife a very hard working mechanic, so naturally I fell in love with your products. Not only are your products awesome, but the service and the people are too! As you know Greasemonkeys have only two types of friends; other greasemonkeys and people who need something worked on. I very much intend to pass the word along about how great it is to do business with the Busted Knuckle Garage.
 — Many thanks! Jackie B.

Check out these three Hot Sellers!



BKG Canvas Tool Bag

Papa got a brand new bag! This HEAVY DUTY zippered canvas bag is the perfect tote and storage bag for tools, detailing kits and all around general car guy stuff. Complete with a pocket divider inside and a handy, comfortable shoulder strap. A generous 25" L x 6" W x 10" H.

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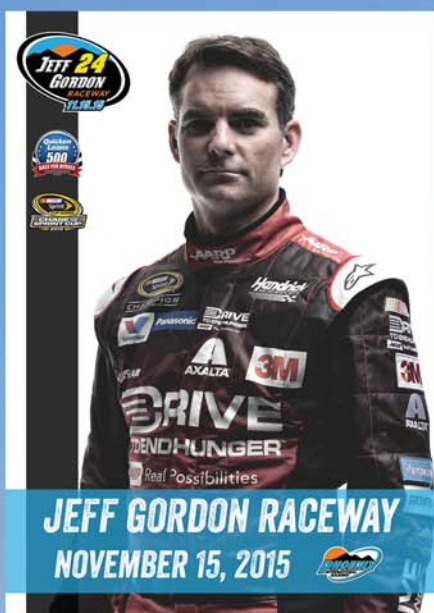
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PIR TO BE JEFF GORDON RACEWAY FOR A DAY

HONORING GORDON'S SPECIAL PHOENIX HERITAGE DURING HIS FINAL SPRINT CUP SERIES RACE AT PIR AS A FULL-TIME COMPETITOR, THIS NOVEMBER 15



This fall, Phoenix International Raceway will again host the final race in the Eliminator round of the Chase for the Sprint Cup, with the Quicken Loans Race For Heroes 500 on Sunday, November 15. This is the final of four races over four days, Thursday through Sunday, November 12-15, and the next to last race of the 2015 NASCAR season.

Excitement runs high at this one, not only for fans in Arizona, but through the entire NASCAR circuit. Under the Chase for the Sprint Cup format, the 312-lap, 500-km Sunday race in Phoenix is the last of the Eliminator round and determines the final four drivers who will fight for the championship the next weekend at Homestead-Miami.

Last fall, Kevin Harvick secured his spot in the final four with his dominating win at PIR, which led him to his first-ever Sprint Cup Series Championship after his victory the following weekend, making Harvick the only driver in PIR's 52-year history who has won four straight Sprint Cup races, capped off by the CampingWorld.com 500 held at PIR this March. This is action you do not want to miss, and PIR is the place to be.

Jeff Gordon Raceway

In January, Gordon announced that this NASCAR Sprint Cup season would be his last. In June, it was announced that Phoenix International Raceway will officially be renamed Jeff Gordon Raceway on Sunday, November 15, the day of the big race. The NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Quicken Loans Race for Heroes 500 at PIR (or, ahem, JGR) will be Gordon's last Sprint Cup Series race at the track as a full-time competitor.

The renaming of the track will be a way for all PIR fans to celebrate the importance Gordon has had for the track, for the fans and for the sport as a whole. This will in fact mark the first time that a track has been renamed for a NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race.

PIR will also release a series of five individual trading cards featuring Gordon's image and information on key moments from his 24-year career at PIR. A limited number of each will be randomly distributed to ticket holders—both with ticket mailings and at the gates each day during the race weekend. This will give fans plenty of opportunity to trade with each other at dedicated loca-



tions along the Fan Midway throughout the weekend, in order to collect the complete set.

The day will be commemorated with an official logo displayed throughout the track, and fans will be able to purchase apparel online and on race weekend through a partnership with licensed sports retailer Fanatics. Leading up to the race, PIR will post 24 Moments of Greatness on its social media channels, highlighting some of the track's and fans' favorite Jeff Gordon moments.

Gordon has four career wins at PIR, including three in NASCAR-sanctioned races. Each of his wins represented a significant moment to the track's history.

On November 6, 1999, he raced to victory in the inaugural Xfinity Series race at Phoenix, before tying the legendary Dale Earnhardt with his 76th career Sprint Cup Series win on April 21, 2007. Forever etching his name into PIR history, Gordon kicked off the repaving of the track by digging out the first piece of old pavement following his win on February 27, 2011. His 23 top-10 finishes at Phoenix are a track record. And he will tie Mark Martin's record of 34 Sprint Cup Series starts when he races at PIR in November.

The NASCAR champ will join the FOX broadcast team full-time in 2016 as race analyst. ■



EVENT AND TICKET INFORMATION

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

CASINO ARIZONA 100, NASCAR K&N PRO SERIES—WEST RACE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

LUCAS OIL 150, NASCAR CAMPING WORLD TRUCK SERIES RACE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

XFINITY SERIES 200, NASCAR XFINITY SERIES RACE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

QUICKEN LOANS RACE FOR HEROES 500, NASCAR SPRINT CUP SERIES RACE

NOVEMBER RACE WEEKEND The fall race at Phoenix International Raceway has been a fixture on the NASCAR schedule since 1988. Value Pricing began on May 29 and runs through July 5. Regular pricing begins on July 6 and runs through Monday, November 10, when race week dawns and walk-up pricing goes into effect. Tickets for the 500 start at \$25. The stands are divided into four sections, with either three or four tiers in each, plus there is hillside seating, so you have fifteen options for the big race. This popular event—the Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Semi-Final Race—sees many seats sell out well before race day, so don't delay.

SUNDAY RACE DAY The Quicken Loans Race For Heroes 500 will begin at 12:30 pm, but there will be plenty of food, drink, music, entertainment, celebrity sightings and other excitement to keep you busy when you get there early. Broadcast television coverage will be provided by NBC and radio coverage by Motor Racing Network.

2016 SEASON TICKETS Season Tickets for the 2016 season at PIR start at \$99 and range up to \$512. Existing Season Ticket renewals and upgrades are already underway. New Season Tickets go on sale August 17, 2015. Season Ticket benefits include substantial savings off individual ticket prices (up to 70 percent off in select seating areas); no service fees (a \$10 savings); PIR's new ZOOM PASS (just show and go); dedicated customer relations managers (and a toll-free number); the ability to buy additional tickets at Season Ticket prices; first crack at seat upgrades; special event invitations; an exclusive e-newsletter; and a free race weekend program.

TICKETS Tickets are available online at PhoenixRaceway.com, by calling 866-408-RACE (7223), or in person at the PIR ticket office. ■



Sixth-generation 2016 Chevrolet Camaro

The new sixth-generation 2016 Chevrolet Camaro offers a broader powertrain range, starting with a 2.0L 4-cylinder turbo and running up to the most powerful Camaro SS ever, with a 6.2L LT1 V8 at 455 hp. In between is an all-new 3.6L V6. All three are available with six-speed manual or eight-speed automatic. Models will include LT and SS. The car, though immediately recognizable, has been downsized a bit. Lightweight materials shave 200 pounds, while providing a stiffer chassis. Aggressive body sculpting—we see an echo of the Corvette Stingray in the hood's creases and curves—delivers style along with improved aerodynamics. Fully 70 percent of the car's parts are unique to Camaro. A grand total of just two parts carry over from the current generation: the rear bowtie emblem and (when applicable) the SS badge. The turbo four is expected to deliver over 30 MPG with a zero-to-60 time "well under 6 seconds." Drive modes include everything from snow and ice to track.



2016 Chevrolet Camaro

Lamborghini Asterion LPI 910-4



LAMBORGHINI ASTERION LPI 910-4

▲ Automobili Lamborghini participated for the first time at the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, a prestigious competition for classic cars held in May at the Grand Hotel Villa d'Este at Villa Erba, Cernobbio, on the shores of Lake Como. The Lamborghini Asterion LPI 910-4 was presented for the first time at the Paris Auto Salon in 2014 as Lamborghini's plug-in hybrid (PHEV) technology demonstrator, designed to significantly reduce CO2 emissions through a high performance hybrid system with a naturally aspirated 5.2-liter longitudinal midengine V10, in combination with three electro motors, providing a maximum power output of 669 kW (910 hp). Asterion accelerates from 0-62 mph in 3.0 seconds, with a top speed of 199 mph. The Asterion LPI 910-4 promises Lamborghini driving feel with a pure electric range of 31 miles.

SHELBY TO FINISH UNBUILT RACE CARS

Fifty years after the 427 Shelby Cobra was first introduced, the Carroll Hall Shelby Trust will complete and offer to the public the remaining original Competition Chassis race cars that were started in 1965. Built faithfully to the original specifications, the roadsters will be sold as race cars, just as Carroll Shelby intended when he launched the car in 1965.

Each authentic 427 S/C Shelby Cobra will come with the CSX VIN and badge number originally assigned in 1965, as well as an "MSO" and "Title" document signed by Carroll Shelby himself. As a pure race car, this vehicle cannot be registered for use on the streets. But each car will be specially registered and have a unique place in the Shelby American World Registry, not to mention American muscle car history. The first 100 cars had been designated to be competition versions so the car could compete in FIA races, therefore the "S/C" designation after "427." Only 53 were completed before Henry Ford II made a special request of Carroll to take on Ferrari in the "Prototype" class. That, in reality, marked the end of the Shelby Cobra builds, 998 in all. Until now, Carroll Shelby had begun the sacred task of completing the "Remaining 43" in 1988 when he hired legendary restorer Mike McCluskey, who began the painstaking job of making the tooling, jigs and fixtures necessary to build these vintage cars true to their original specifications. Carroll completed and sold five of the 427 S/C Cobras for \$500,000 each between 1990 and 1992. The process was then interrupted by many years of litigation between Shelby American and others about heritage and brand ownership. Flash forward to 2014, when the Carroll

Hall Shelby Trust followed Carroll's wishes and began the job of gradually finishing the remainder of the 427 S/C Cobras.

MITSUBISHI INDIANA TURBO PLANT

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. (MHI) this spring began full-scale production at their new turbocharger manufacturing plant in Franklin, Indiana, in preparation for growing demand expected for turbochargers in the North American market, for vehicles needing to meet increasingly tighter fuel efficiency standards. With this startup, Mitsubishi Engine North America, Inc. (MENA) has completed a worldwide production base structure for final assembly of turbochargers, targeting an annual global production capacity of 10 million units. Under a shared factory arrangement, the new dedicated turbocharger production lines are in a newly expanded building and an existing building where compressors for car air-conditioning systems are manufactured for Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Climate Control, Inc. (MCCA), MHI's group company handling air-conditioning and refrigeration operations in North America. This arrangement will facilitate the pursuit of increased operating and other efficiencies. The area shared by MENA and MCCA

KEEP RIGHT >>

BMW 3.0 CSL Hommage



will be used for inspection, distribution and related tasks. On the assembly floor, finished products will be produced by attaching housings and other components to core cartridges made primarily by an MHI company in Thailand. Initial production capacity is 600,000 units annually, to be progressively increased to 1.2 million units and beyond.

BMW 3.0 CSL HOMMAGE

▲ At the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, BMW presented a new BMW 3.0 CSL Hommage, a tribute to the 3.0 CSL, a classic BMW Coupé from the 1970s. CSL stands for Coupé, Sport, Lightweight. The old BMW 3.0 CSL weighed about 440 pounds less than a standard BMW 3.0 CS, the basis for its career on the racetrack, accomplished with an aluminum hood, trunk lid and wings, plexiglas windows, and equipment stripped down to bare essentials. Today, carbon-fiber-reinforced plastic (CFRP)—even stronger and lighter than aluminum—is the material of choice for optimizing weight-to-strength ratio in this BMW 3.0 CSL Hommage. Wherever CFRP is used, it has been made highly visible, to emphasize the design principle. An elongated body is set off by distinctive air deflectors, powerful wheel arches and prominent spoilers on the roof and tail. Aerodynamic elements are key to optimal

airflow along the sides of the vehicle; the front air deflector serves to ventilate the engine; and wings over the rear wheels ensure optimum airflow around the vehicle. Small rear-view cameras replace mirrors, to further reduce drag. The large rear spoiler increases downforce on the driven rear axle, thus boosting power delivered to the pavement. Air curtain and air breather systems maximize ventilation of the wheel housings. And the whole package is presented in the color of the 1970s original—Golf Yellow. The car is designed around an inline six-cylinder eBoost active hybrid powertrain.

GM HITS 500 MILLION VEHICLES

As of this spring, more than 500 million General Motors-branded vehicles have been built globally, the most of any automaker. GM CEO Mary Barra and GM North America and Global Chevrolet President Alan Batey celebrated the milestone with customers, employees and dealers at the Fairfax (Kansas) Assembly plant, where they surprised Iraq war veteran Trent Brining with the key to a yet-to-be-built 2016 Chevrolet Malibu. Production of the midsize sedan begins at the plant later this year. Brining, of Overland Park, Kansas—a retired Army corporal and Purple Heart recipient and the grandson of a Purple Heart recipi-

ent—was one of five customers who, within 48 hours, were notified that they would be receiving a new, regionally built GM vehicle. Brining actually credits his treasured 2008 Chevrolet Silverado with helping him meet his wife, Samantha. He is now a financial relationship specialist for a local credit union; they have a 17-month-old son. “During 2015, we expect to sell more than 1,000 new vehicles per hour, 24 hours per day,” said Barra. “This adds up to nearly 10 million vehicles, the most in our history. I look at this extraordinary volume as 10 million opportunities to prove what kind of company we are and to say thank you.” Batey also announced GM would be investing \$174 million in the Fairfax plant for new equipment and technology to support production of the 2016 Malibu.

MORE ELECTRIC POLICE MOTORCYCLES

Zero Motorcycles has announced that the number of police departments in the US using their 100 percent electric motorcycles has now surpassed 50. Zero offers three models—the Zero SP, Zero DSP and Zero FXP—to meet the specific requirements of law enforcement. The lack of noise produced by the motor is proving to be a tactical advantage for patrol officers.

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GEICO Motorcycle



“Because the motorcycles are electric, officers may arrive on scene without disruption and come across a crime in progress without being detected,” said Amy (Armstrong) Luna of the Fresno State University Department of Public Safety. Zero’s fully electric police motorcycles are designed exclusively for police and security departments, as a cost-effective tool for patrolling a wide variety of terrain, as well as areas with noise or pollution limitations, notably indoors. Patrol models are fully equipped with pursuit emergency lighting and sirens, safety components, and functional storage options to carry gear, patrol items and emergency medical equipment.

DAVID BROWN SPEEDBACK GT DEBUT

▲ Following a successful spring 2014 launch in Europe, David Brown Automotive marked its first anniversary by announcing that it will bring its classic Aston Martin-influenced Speedback GT to the American market, with a debut appearance due at The Quail Motorsports Gathering during Monterey and Pebble Beach automotive events in August. Designed, engineered and hand-crafted in Britain, the Speedback GT is conceived as a classically styled car with modern mechanicals, reliability and comforts. Made to order, each Speedback offers an

array of detail including hand-formed panels and hand-crafted interior, as well as special features such as a fold-down picnic seat. The Speedback GT’s 5-liter supercharged V8 delivers 510 hp and 461 lb-ft of torque, with a 0-to-60 mph time of 4.6 seconds and a top speed of 155 mph. The car will go on sale with an anticipated price of about \$753,000 (£495,000). After being revealed at the Quail Rally Welcome Reception on August 10, the Speedback will participate in the Rally on August 11-12, then will be featured on a stand at the main Quail event on August 14.

PENSKE INDY WIN AND HALL OF FAME

Champion race driver, team owner and automotive dealership king Roger Penske has plenty to be proud of as he prepares to be inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame in Dearborn, Michigan, as Team Penske achieved its 16th Indianapolis 500 win on Memorial Day Weekend. Team Penske bears hundreds of championship trophies in a wide range of motorsports, including Formula 1, Trans-Am, Can-Am and more. Young Roger began fixing up old cars as a teen in his native Ohio, making a few bucks along the way. By the time he started college, he had already owned a string of Jaguars and Mercedes-Benz—including an SL Gullwing he traded for his first competition Corvette.

Concentrating on SCCA racing—he was 1960 Racer of the Year in *Sports Illustrated*—Penske also dabbled in early NASCAR and participated in both the 1961 and 1962 US Grand Prix races. By 1964, he was driving a Jim Hall Chaparral to victory in the Nassau Trophy—beating Bruce McLaren, Dan Gurney and AJ Foyt, while running as a relief driver. But Penske’s business acumen has always been as important as his racing skills. In 1962, he secured corporate sponsorship from DuPont for his Buick-powered Cooper Formula Car—an unprecedented move he was able to multiply from that point forward, adding sponsorships from First National City Bank, to Sunoco, Marlboro and Verizon. Penske quit driving in 1965, even declining a chance to race in the Indy 500, as his attention was turning to a new effort: running a Chevrolet dealership in Philadelphia. This became the starting block for the dealership empire that carries the Penske Automotive name today, including many here in Arizona. The string of North Scottsdale dealerships on Scottsdale Road just south of Loop 101 also includes the Penske Racing Museum, a must-see. Roger Penske’s Automotive Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place on July 23 at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit. ■

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Electric Grand Prix

FIA Formula E at the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach

Story and photos by Jan Wagner - AutoMatters+

For decades, race fans have enjoyed the month of May in Indianapolis, which culminates with the world famous Indy 500. Now, added to that tradition, there is truly the month of April in Long Beach. In terms of the number of different major races, the largest motorsports event in all of Southern California—and arguably the best motorsports value for fans, is surely the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach.

Our Long Beach coverage features an international race series in its first season, called FIA Formula E. This, the sixth round on the series' schedule and the second in the US (the first was held in Miami), is known as

the Long Beach ePrix.

FIA stands for Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (www.fia.com). Founded in 1904, the FIA is the governing body for world motor sport. Several of the better known, major international motor sport race series that it sanctions include Formula 1, the World Rally Championship, World Endurance Championship, World Touring Car Championship, World Rallycross Championship and, now, the Formula E Championship.

Additionally the FIA is the driving force behind the Commission Internationale de Karting (CIK-FIA), its stated object being "to develop, promote, coordinate and regulate karting-related activities around the world." Karting is where many of today's top racing drivers got their start.

By the way, did you know that the first kart

was built and the first kart race was held in 1956 in Southern California? You can read about it at www.cikfia.com, in the Inside CIK-FIA history section.

Formula E represents a major shift in motor sport as we know it. According to Alejandro Agag, its CEO, Formula E is "the world's first fully-electric racing series." Forget any notion that you may have about the cars being a bunch of re-bodied, open-wheel Nissan Leafs racing around a glorified go-kart track. Formula E racing is the real deal.

Visually the cars resemble those that race in Formula 1, the world's premier open-wheel racecar series. Many of the Formula E drivers have raced in Formula 1.

Just as Formula 1 represents the pinnacle of technology for cars that are powered by what are now essentially hybrid internal

KEEP RIGHT >>



(Lead photo at left) Daniel Abt leading Lucas di Grassi through Turn 3. • (Above) Preparing the car for the race. • Carrying a front wing. • (Below) Michael Andretti, Team Principal of Andretti Formula-E Team. • Alain Prost, four-time F1 World Champion.



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Race winner Nelson Piquet Jr., China Racing Formula-E Team. • Jaime Alguersuari, Virgin Racing Formula-E Team. • Bruno Senna in Turn 3, Mahindra Racing Formula-E Team. • Racing into Turn 4.



combustion and electric "power units," Formula E pushes the technology envelope for all-electric motive power.

Ensuring that Formula E cars will go the distance and are quick on the track requires that they store a lot of electrical energy on-board, at least for the time being. As a short-term measure while battery and charging technology continues to evolve, the racers each drive two cars: one during the first part of the race and the other for the second.

Unlike the original 24 Hours of Le Mans car race, where drivers leapt into their cars and took off without properly securing their safety belts, in Formula E there is a required minimum time in the pits, to ensure that the drivers change from their first car to their second safely.

Incredibly, this year's Long Beach Formula E race was FREE to spectators. If their enthusiasm was any indication, they really appreciated that and turned out in large numbers, filling the grandstands that were already set up for the rest of the Grand Prix a couple of weeks later.

The race course was a somewhat shortened version of the regular Long Beach street circuit—there being no point in having extra-long, battery-draining straightaways. Watching the cars race wheel to wheel, and weaving their way through tight turns, was very exciting.

In addition to the power plant—actually because of it—fans will notice a major difference between Formula E racing and traditional auto racing. Instead of having to endure a race-long assault on our hearing that would render normal conversation all but impossible, Formula E cars are quiet. Those of us who grew up racing radio-con-

trolled cars or indoor go-karts will find the mechanical whine of Formula E cars very familiar and entirely appropriate for race-cars. Add to that tire squealing in the corners. The ability to talk to each other during a race is a very welcome change.

This first Long Beach Formula E race was a huge success. It was won by former Formula 1 driver and current Red Bull Global Rallycross driver Nelson Piquet Jr. of Brazil, driving for the China Racing Formula-E Team. ■

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Award-winning JAN WAGNER has been writing professionally since 1979 and an avid photographer for as long as he could hold a camera. He was a television writer/producer in his native Alberta, before transferring to his current home in San Diego.



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Barrett-Jackson
13th Annual Palm Beach Auction
April 17-19, 2015

Records for sales
and attendance
at Florida event

Barrett-Jackson set multiple records at its 13th Annual Palm Beach auction in Palm Beach, Florida, held in late April at the South Florida Fairgrounds. The event generated sales of over \$22 million at a near-perfect sell-through rate of 98.3%, presenting 526 vehicles to over 1,000 bidders before a record crowd of more than 60,000 people. These numbers represented a dramatic increase of 28 percent in bidders and 30 percent in spectators over 2014.

HIGHLIGHTS

▼ **Charity:** As always with Barrett-Jackson, several vehicles were sold to benefit non-profit organizations, with 100 percent of the nearly \$1 million raised going to support veterans', children's and other charities.

GM specially built 2015 Chevrolet Camaro COPO Race Car VIN #001 (Lot #3003, shown at upper right), which sold for \$300,000 to benefit the Achilles Freedom Team. Philanthropists and world-renowned car collectors Jeanette and John Staluppi donated an additional \$100,000 to support that cause.

A 2016 Cadillac CT6 Sedan (Lot #3001) sold for \$200,000 to benefit the Karmanos Cancer Institute, and a one-of-kind Tony Stewart "Smoke" Edition 1969 Chevrolet Chevelle (Lot #3000) sold for \$75,000, benefitting The Darrell Gwynn Foundation.

WWE Hall of Famer Hulk Hogan was on hand, ripping off his shirt to help raise \$150,000 with a '69 Chevrolet Camaro Z/28 (Lot #3003.1) donated by Torque Sports and Performance and benefitting three charities: Connor's Cure, A HERO Team and The Grace Project.

▼ **Volkswagen beetle record:** "Herbie," a 1963 Volkswagen beetle sunroof sedan (Lot #394, center photos), broke the world record for Volkswagen beetles when it sold without reserve for \$126,500 in Palm Beach. This is an authentic "Herbie" from the Disney movies, last used in *Herbie Goes Bananas* and previously known as the "oil-squirting car" in *Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo*. After stints in two Hollywood museums, the car was restored to match its *Monte Carlo* details. Unlike some other "Herbie" Hollywood beetles, this one was used in actual driving scenes, and its interior also shows in the films.

▼ **Buick GNX record:** A 1987 Buick Grand National GNX (Lot #387, bottom photo) set a world record, selling at \$165,000 with no reserve. For the Buick Grand National's final year, just 547 copies were sent to McLaren and upgraded with a turbocharged, inter-



cooled, ceramic-impeller-blown V6 pushing a conservatively estimated 276 hp and 360 lb-ft of torque, good for a 0-to-60 time of 4.3 seconds and a 13.2-second quarter mile—powerful numbers for a production car of that vintage. The copy auctioned at Palm Beach was number 385 and had just 362 actual miles on its clock. It was so showroom-new, the interior still had its plastic seat coverings in place. The car included original books, manuals, paperwork and the original window sticker, as well as a complete history. The new owner will have a tough time deciding whether to preserve these low miles or take it out and open it up.

Up next for Barrett-Jackson:

- Barrett-Jackson's next event is the 3rd Annual Reno/Tahoe Hot August Nights Auction, held August 6-8, 2015, at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center and broadcast in live, high-definition TV on Velocity and Discovery.
- The 8th Annual Barrett-Jackson Las Vegas Auction will be held September 24-26, 2015, at the Mandalay Bay Event Center.
- Barrett-Jackson will then start preparing for their 2016 season, opening with their 45th Annual Barrett-Jackson Scottsdale Collector Car Auction in January.
- www.barrett-jackson.com

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Russo and Steele 3rd Annual Newport Beach Auction June 5-7, 2015

Records for sales and attendance at SoCal event

Russo and Steele's selection of collector automobiles at their Newport Beach event in June—an auction-in-the-round event billed as being By Enthusiasts, For Enthusiasts™ and emphasizing Russo's trademark mix of American Muscle and European Sports—attracted what the company describes as record numbers of bidders and spectators.

Preliminary results from this June event, running in just its third year, indicated a total sales tally of some \$7.2 million—an increase of some 71 percent (or almost \$3 million) over the 2014 event.

HIGHLIGHTS

▼ **2005 Porsche Carrera GT:** This car, coded 980, will always turn heads—a 605-hp mid-engined supercar built from models years 2004 through 2007. Only 604 copies came to North America, out of 1270 manufactured through end of production in May 2006. The car's aluminum V-10 takes you to 60 mph in 3.5 seconds and 100 mph in 6.8 seconds. Use of carbon fiber delivers low weight and high strength, and a carbon-fiber-reinforced ceramic composite brake system—with 15-inch discs inside 19-inch front and 20-inch rear wheels—brings it all to a stop. This car (top photo) sold for \$840,000.

▼ **1958 Fiat-Abarth 750 GT Zagato:** There were nine sales in six figures at Russo and Steele Newport Beach. This classic rarity (center photos) was toward the lower end of those, price-wise, but high on anybody's scale, interest-wise. Similar to the 1957 Mille Miglia class winner driven by Alfonso Thiele, this Abarth is distinctive with its Zagato-trademark double hump roofline. Garaged and kept running most of its life, the '58 sold here had new brakes, overhauled front suspension and a recent tune. The two-owner car spent its life in Italy until 2013, when it was imported and repainted its original blue. This desirable and usable Abarth brought \$136,640.

▼ **2006 Ford GT:** Ford's unexpected new millennium supercar became an instant classic of the modern era, with interest and prices only continuing to climb. With 550 horsepower from its 5.4-liter supercharged V8 running through a 6-speed manual, the highly competitive car is also known as a manageable daily driver. It backs this up with such creature comforts as high-end McIntosh audio. This beautiful red example with white Le Mans stripes (bottom photo), bearing less than 200 miles on its odometer since new, brought \$337,700 at Newport Beach. With a next-gen Ford GT revealed this year, its investment value should be secure.



Results await final certification. The complete top ten sales at Russo and Steele Newport Beach include:

2005 Porsche Carrera GT	\$840,000
2006 Ford GT	\$337,700
2012 Lexus LFA	\$335,000
1971 Maserati Ghibli	\$226,600
1957 Porsche 356 T1 Cabriolet	\$181,500
1954 Chevrolet Corvette Custom	\$159,500
1966 Shelby GT350H	\$137,500
1958 Fiat-Abarth 750 GTO Zagato	\$136,640
1962 Chevrolet Corvette	\$130,000
1964 VW Type II Dual Cab Transporter	\$89,100

Up next for Russo and Steele:

- Russo and Steele's next event is their 15th Monterey auction, held August 13-15, 2015 on the Monterey waterfront, downtown at Fisherman's Wharf. Russo and Steele has become a highlight of the world famous Monterey and Pebble Beach car week every August.
- Russo and Steele then heads toward their 2016 season, opening with their 16th Annual Scottsdale European Sports, American Muscle, Hot Rods and Customs Auction in January and continuing with Newport Beach in June 2016. • www.barrett-jackson.com ■

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UPCOMING EVENTS : MONTEREY & PEBBLE BEACH 2015 • ARIZONA CONOURS 2016



MONTEREY AUTO WEEK 2015

Schedules and locations for August events in Monterey and Pebble Beach

CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE EVENTS

CONCORSO ITALIANO

Black Horse Golf Course, Monterey Bay
Saturday August 15 2015
www.concorso.com

PEBBLE BEACH CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

The Lodge at Pebble Beach
Sunday August 16 2015
www.pebblebeachconcours.net

Ferrari will be the featured marque at the 65th annual Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, by coincidence coming after a Ferrari won Best of Show last year—the first postwar win in nearly 50 years. Special classes will focus on preservation Ferraris and Ferraris that raced in the Pebble Beach Road Races in the 1950s. Additional featured classes include: duPont; Designs by Carrozzeria Touring; Pope; Postwar Cunninghams; Historic Mercury Customs; Japanese Motorcycles; and British Prewar Sports Cars. Lincoln Continental's 75th anniversary and Shelby GT350 Mustang's 50th will also be featured.

MOTORSPORTS EVENTS

ROLEX MONTEREY MOTORSPORTS REUNION

Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca
Thursday-Sunday August 13-16 2015
www.mazdaraceway.com

COLLECTOR CAR AUCTION EVENTS

BONHAMS' QUAIL LODGE AUCTION

Quail Lodge & Golf Club, Carmel
Thursday-Friday August 13-14 2015
www.bonhams.com

RICK COLE AUCTIONS

Monterey Marriott, downtown
Thursday-Saturday August 13-15 2015
www.rickcole.com

GOODING & COMPANY

Pebble Beach Equestrian Center
Saturday-Sunday August 15-16 2015
www.goodingco.com

MECUM AUCTIONS

Del Monte Golf Course
Thursday-Saturday August 13-15 2015
www.mecum.com

RM AUCTIONS

Portola Hotel & Spa / Monterey Conf. Center
Friday-Saturday August 14-15 2015
www.rmauctions.com

RUSSO AND STEELE

Downtown Monterey waterfront
Thursday-Saturday August 13-15 2015
www.russoandsteele.com



ARIZONA CONOURS D'ELEGANCE 2016

The Third Annual Arizona Concours d'Elegance will be held on Sunday, January 24, 2016, launching Arizona auction week once again from the landscaped inner lawns of the historic Arizona Biltmore Resort.

The 2016 Arizona Concours has announced its three featured classes: Duesenberg; Coachwork by Zagato; and Exceptional Cars of Great Britain. These special classes will join more than a dozen standing classes that will be judged during the event, culminating in the Best of Show.

The 2015 Arizona Concours saw sellout attendance on Sunday, and two Saturday seminars—an auction preview panel and a racecar design forum—were also very well attended. On the Monday after the Concours, the entrants and their vintage cars were treated to the Tour d'Elegance, with a route incorporating historic architectural and automotive highlights.

The Arizona Concours d'Elegance is a not-for-profit corporation registered with the State of Arizona, with federal 501(c)(3) status. The event benefits Make-A-Wish Arizona, the founding chapter of the national organization that grants wishes for children facing life-threatening medical conditions. More than \$70,000 was raised to fund future wishes during 2015.

Submit your vehicle for consideration for 2016 at www.arizonaconcours.com. This site also has links to Android and iPhone apps for the event. If planning to attend, make your plans early, as Concours tickets and hotel availability are limited. ■

Dominant in the dirt

Jeep and Ram take five out of seven trophies in the Northwest Outdoor Activity Vehicle of the Year face-off on the Olympic Peninsula

By Joe Sage / Photos by NWAPA / Josh Mackey and Joe Sage



There are times and places in Arizona that are this wet and muddy. To assess the best vehicles for those conditions, we headed to the Pacific Northwest for the annual Northwest Outdoor Activity Vehicle of the Year competition. The Northwest Automotive Press Association (NWAPA) hosts this event, which everyone knows best as Mudfest.

This is one of our favorite drive events, and it provides very useful data back home. It may seem to rain all the time up there, but that just helps to ensure the kind of extreme conditions we get when a Sonoran Desert monsoon storm hits. Or when we head into the high country. Or when we traverse a river in the Northeast Valley. Or head to Mexico. Or the trails of the Sierra Nevada.

There is some truly fine machinery at Mudfest: capable, solid, good-looking, up to date in features and fuel economy. Each vehicle has been carefully chosen by its manufacturer as having the right stuff to conquer its category. There are six categories—five utility categories and a new category for pickup trucks, which have only been admitted for static display in prior years. A new twist is that the Extreme Capability class—long the realm of Wranglers, Range Rovers, 4Runners and such—could now also include pickups. And it most certainly did. (There is also an overall Northwest Outdoor Activity Vehicle of the Year award given, for which any and all qualify.)

In some of the other regional competitive drive events we attend, some manufacturers enter noticeably more vehicles than others, which may (but does not in and of itself) give them an edge, overall. That's not the case at Mudfest—the number of entries is strictly limited.

There were twenty-seven total vehicles in competition—nine from Detroit, seven from the Europeans and eleven from Asia (nine from six different Japanese manufacturers and one each from the two Korean brands, Kia and Hyundai).

There were also four vehicles for static display—one each from the US, Europe, Korea and Japan—including two big commercial vans, the Ford Transit and Mercedes-Benz Sprinter, and

two minivans, the Kia Sedona and Toyota Sienna.

The European entrants all fell into one of two Premium categories (Premium Utility or Premium Compact Utility), though each Premium category also contained one each American and Asian.

As you might expect, the Pickup Truck category was represented by the Detroit Three, along with Toyota. No doubt Nissan would have liked to have their new Titan ready, but that will have to wait.

The Detroit brands each had an angle. GM brought one of their new midsize pickups, specifically the GMC Canyon. Ford showed off the rugged aluminum construction of its new F-150. And Ram, making waves with towing capacity and fuel economy, entered their hot-selling and repeat award-winning 1500 EcoDiesel.

Ram had another angle, as well. The Extreme Capability class in the past has been occupied by heavy-duty SUVs. With pickups now on the slate, Ram chose to enter one in the Extreme category—their big 2500 Power Wagon Crew Cab 4x4. Toyota's 4Runner TRD Pro SUV was the only other entrant in Extreme, while they chose to run their Tundra TRD Pro in the Pickups category.

Twenty-five media members participated, and manufacturer support was near one-on-one, with 22 brand specialists on hand to point out features or answer any questions about the 27 vehicles competing or the four on display. Ready, set, go.

This was our third Mudfest. It has a varied history of venues—NWAPA has membership cores in both Washington State and Oregon—but the prior two we attended were held in the Northern Cascades near Snoqualmie, Washington, utilizing Dirtfish Rally School, a well-regarded WRC champion training ground. That high country location offered specialty dirt and rock tracks set up with water hazards; a quick autocross on the paved area outside their main buildings; and some open road time in the surrounding countryside.

This year, Mudfest stayed in Washington State, but moved down toward sea level, in the lower Hood Canal region of the Olympic Peninsula, a



COMPACT UTILITY VEHICLE : JEEP RENEGADE TRAILHAWK 4X4



PREMIUM COMPACT UTILITY : LAND ROVER DISCOVERY SPORT HSE



FAMILY UTILITY VEHICLE : JEEP CHEROKEE TRAILHAWK 4X4





For a change of pace, it's hard to beat the Pacific Northwest's wet weather, cooler temps, open water and lush greenery. These also make it nice to return to the desert.

Mudfest had a new location this year. It stayed in Washington State (NWAPA is a regional organization), but moved down to sea level, in Mason County, the lower Hood Canal region an hour or two west of Seattle or Tacoma. In the southern reaches of Puget Sound, it can sometimes be surprising or challenging to figure whether you are on an island or the mainland, including the Olympic Peninsula. We were in that neck of the woods for this event. Whereas it looks as though a kid with a shovel and a pail could turn the upper portion of Mason County and all of Kitsap County into an island before the tide comes back in, our venue was all strictly speaking mainland.

It's easy to fly to Seattle from Phoenix on a number of major carriers. You may want a window seat, as you'll likely see the Grand Canyon, the Sierra Nevada and one or more of the volcanic Cascade peaks up close.

Our event operated out of the Alderbrook Resort and Spa near Union WA, directly on the Hood Canal, a natural body of water in the westernmost reaches of greater Puget Sound. The small capital city of Olympia is at the southern tip of Puget Sound, and this is maybe 30 to 40 minutes up from there, or about twice that far from Tacoma, despite that also being farther north but on the eastern reaches of the Sound.

We drove down from Sea-Tac Airport and south across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. We returned via Washington State Ferry from Bremerton to Seattle, spending a few hours there before returning to the airport.

hour or two outside Seattle or Tacoma. Our headquarters and lodging were along the Hood Canal waterfront.

The first day's paved events—expanded considerably from prior years—were at Sanderson Field, near Shelton, Washington, a former military base that is now half operating FBO and half abandoned and available to us. (The facility also adjoins the Washington State Patrol Training Academy—with any jokes about being on our best behavior unavoidably inserted here.) Our time on the tarmac included an acceleration test, followed by a coned rear camera and (as applicable) sensor test. Next came a long stretch of high-speed slalom cones followed by a braking grid. No matter how well a vehicle does in the mud and ruts, all of these things will be critically important to you the majority of the time you drive.

The second day was what makes Mudfest Mudfest—the off-road portion of the event. Much as we loved Dirtfish, relocating here was a good move. The Tahuya State Forest is a huge park area encompassing over 100 miles of off-road vehicle and mountain biking trails. We also lucked out this year with some bad weather that second day—cold and wet between vehicle swaps back at the staging area, but with water hazards topped off, trails muddy and conditions overall just plenty challenging. Some of our course was very steep, all of it was heavily wooded, and navigating those in pouring rain on fresh mud is a challenging (and potentially expensive, i.e. totally appropriate) way to conduct Mudfest.

Some comparative drive events—trophyed or otherwise—have a wallflower or two. Not this one. Every vehicle was very much up to its task, and they were all the latest and best representatives of their missions. Scoring was often very tight, but each category did produce a statistical winner. Categories and entrants (alphabetically within groups) were as follows. Most were 2015 models, unless noted below as 2016 or in one case 2015.5. A great many of the vehicles entered were all new this year or within the past year.

COMPACT UTILITY VEHICLE

.....\$ as tested	MPG	HP	Torque
Honda HR-V EXL Navi 4WD CVT (2016)	*tba	27/32	141
Hyundai Santa Fe Sport AWD 2.0T	\$38,350	18/24	264
Jeep® Renegade Trailhawk 4x4	\$30,195	21/29	180
Mazda CX-5 Grand Touring AWD(2016)	\$33,840	24/30	184
Mitsubishi Outlander Sport SE AWC	\$29,945	24/30	148

* Honda HR-V pricing to be announced. This category often shows wild diversity, although we can envision the same buyer finding their own best solution with any one of them. This year's list seems fairly uniform at first glance, but differences remain. Horsepower is one area, with a spread of 87 percent for Santa Fe Sport over the Honda. Ignoring the Hyundai, the range is just 30 percent. But why would you ignore that? Then there's price, with something in the 20s—barely—while another pushes \$40 grand. But that's actually only a 28 percent spread. Again, ignore the Hyundai and the spread is just 13 percent. But again, why would you do that?

Bang for the buck comes into focus here, with the Hyundai at \$145 per horse, to \$202/horse for the Mitsubishi. (With no pricing released yet, we don't know whether the Honda may be at an advantage or disadvantage here.) Mitsubishi generally comes to mind particularly for its purchase economy, but Jeep Renegade in maximum-capability Trailhawk 4x4 trim is only \$250 more.

Three out of five hit or beat 30 MPG highway, with the Jeep just one point off that. Spreads are a little wider on city mileage—one more reason to think carefully about how much utility to buy, if you honestly aren't headed into the hills. The Hyundai's lower fuel mileage is not surprising, given its significant horsepower. In all, the stats demonstrate the kind of balance you ultimately have to decide upon when shopping this group.

The new little Jeep's balance of attributes and next-to-lowest price gave it an edge in the group's final vote tally: **Best Compact Utility Vehicle: Jeep Renegade Trailhawk 4x4.**

PREMIUM COMPACT UTILITY

.....\$ as tested	MPG	HP	Torque
Buick Encore AWD Premium Group	\$32,595	23/30	138
Land Rover Discovery Sport HSE LUX	\$50,250	20/26	240
Lexus NX 200t F Sport	\$45,145	22/27	235
Mercedes-Benz GLA250 4MATIC	\$45,505	24/32	208
Volvo V60 T5 AWD Cross Country (2015.5)	\$49,350	20/28	250

You may notice there is more than one way to categorize things. For example, the Buick Encore in this group and the Jeep Renegade in the prior group often share the same hot new segment, Subcompact Utility—premium, trail-rated or otherwise. But categories based on size often overlap, and the Mudfest groupings work well from a buyer's standpoint. And while the new Land Rover Discovery was entered on this list, they happily ran it on the Extreme Capability course, to show just what it's made of—shaking off some of the urbane persona of its roughly equally capable sibling the Range Rover Evoque. This is an excellent set of vehicles: we would actively want at least four out of five. But after running it on the toughest course, knowing it would play equally well at a Valley country club, we can't fault the collective decision: **Best Premium Compact Utility: Land Rover Discovery Sport HSE.**

FAMILY UTILITY VEHICLE

.....\$ as tested	MPG	HP	Torque
Ford Edge Sport AWD	\$45,785	17/24	315
Jeep Cherokee Trailhawk 4x4	\$37,614	19/26	271
Kia Sorento SXL AWD (2016)	\$45,095	19/25	191
Nissan Murano Platinum AWD	\$43,745	31/28	260
Subaru Outback 2.5i Limited	\$34,135	25/33	175



PREMIUM UTILITY VEHICLE : ACURA MDX AWD



EXTREME CAPABILITY : RAM 2500 POWER WAGON CREW CAB 4X4



PICKUP TRUCK : RAM 1500 OUTDOORSMAN CREW CAB 4X4 ECODIESEL





The Family category is full of new hardware. The Ford Edge is a complete rework, just introduced this spring. The Cherokee, new last year, is still making a big impact. The Kia Sorento was just introduced this winter, all new. The Nissan Murano is all new, in its third generation for 2015. And the fifth-gen Subaru Outback was new last year. Everything is up to date on all—lightweight materials, efficient powertrains, electronic handling and safety features. The Subaru Outback delivers the best price and the best fuel mileage—by quite a margin—in this group. And its owner loyalty and reliability are famously tops.

But then there's the Jeep Cherokee. There are more fuel-economical flavors of the Cherokee, but this is Mudfest, where the Trailhawk is most appropriate. If your applications are even just sometimes extreme enough to require its trail-rated designation, it's the most capable of that lineup. Then again, this is the Family category, not the Rubicon Trail category. Nonetheless, Cherokee Trailhawk as outfitted costs just 10 percent more than the Outback, yet delivers 55 percent more horsepower, while consuming just 21 percent more fuel. Tackling an especially muddy day with Trailhawk trim surely gave the Jeep an edge, but the comparative math is surely another reason the judges' totals arrived at this: **Best Family Utility Vehicle: Jeep Cherokee Trailhawk 4x4.**

PREMIUM UTILITY VEHICLE

.....\$ as tested	MPG	HP	Torque
Acura MDX AWD ADV ENT (2016)	.....19/26	290	267
BMW X5 M	.....14/19	567	553
BMW X6 M	.....14/19	567	553
Cadillac Escalade 4WD Platinum	.....15/21	420	460
Mercedes-Benz ML400 4MATIC	.....18/22	329	354
Volkswagen Touareg TDI Sport w/Technology	.....20/29	240	406

Until two years ago, this and the Premium Compact class were known as Luxury. But in addition to the ways various manufacturers categorize

their higher-end vehicles as either premium or luxury—with a Premium category arguably bracketing both—luxury does not as well describe such vehicles as the almost-600-hp BMW M utilities entered in this category this year.

One thing remains the same—prices in this group range more than twofold. How does one choose? The diesel torque plus combined purchase and fuel economy of the VW? The extreme power (at an extreme price) of the BMWs? The top drawer domestic luxury of the Escalade? The German luxury of Mercedes-Benz's volume selling M-Class? When all was said and done, the vehicle with the next-to-lowest price, next-to-lowest horsepower, lowest torque and next-to-best fuel mileage somehow won the collective vote: **Best Premium Utility Vehicle: Acura MDX AWD.**

EXTREME CAPABILITY

.....\$ as tested	MPG	HP	Torque
Ram 2500 Power Wagon Crew Cab 4x4	.....na	410	429
Toyota 4Runner TRD Pro V6	.....17/21	270	278

One look at the off-road course, especially the amped-up new one at the core of our program this year, and you might expect this to be one of the biggest categories. Instead, it is by far the smallest, with a grand total of two official entries.

As noted, the Land Rover Discovery Sport ran this course, too, though just to make a point in its successful quest for the Premium Compact trophy.

We had driven both the Toyota 4Runner and Tacoma midsize pickup in TRD Pro trim at the Texas Truck Rodeo last fall, and although they appear somewhat long in the tooth, we found them exceptionally capable. In a way, that's to be expected, from a classic body-on-frame SUV.

What was not expected were the abilities of a full-size, heavy-duty Ram Power Wagon crew cab pickup on such a course as this—but it blew us away as we not only tackled the steep and the deep, but on command applied its articulation to unlikely steep sudden turns or a squeeze between trees you might hesitate to do with your dirt bike. No quibbles with this trophy: **Best Extreme Capability Vehicle: Ram Power Wagon.**

PICKUP TRUCKS

.....\$ as tested	MPG	HP	Torque
Ford F-150 4x4 SuperCab 2.7L V6 EcoBoost	.....18/23	325	375
GMC Canyon 4WD SLE Crew Short Box	.....17/24	305	269
Ram 1500 Outdoorsman Crew Cab 4x4 EcoDiesel	.....19/27	240	420
Toyota Tundra TRD Pro Crewmax 5.7L V8	.....13/17	381	401

Each manufacturer brought something special to this newest of Mudfest categories. The Ford F-150's aluminum build is its biggest news, though we found time to appreciate its stunning interior, too. GM has pleased a lot of people with two new midsize pickups—Chevrolet Colorado and GMC Canyon—though they are not really all that small. The Ram 1500 EcoDiesel is a serial award winner, bagging trophies just about everywhere it goes. For an Outdoor Activity Vehicle event, the Ram Outdoorsman was a natural, with tow hooks, skid plates, active-leveling air suspension, on/off road tires and a full complement of tech and creature comforts. Toyota brought a TRD Pro version of its Tundra, surely the toughest Tundra we've driven. It takes a lot to shake off the brilliant spotlight shining on the new F-150 and the glow of the GMC midsize, and Ram did just that once again, as it has at one event after another: **Best Pickup: Ram 1500 EcoDiesel.**

OVERALL WINNER

There is seldom any one right way to vote, although there are many useful ways to narrow things down. Ours agreed with the group's winner in four categories, and our second place choice won first in two others. On one, we were a clean miss. That suits us. (If we had a one hundred percent match, you'd know how we voted.) Mostly, it underscores the ultimately subjective nature of choice—as it will be when you head out to make your own purchase decision. Quite a few of the vehicles entered in this event have notably won other recent events with other criteria. One such repeat winner is this year's overall champ: the **Northwest Outdoor Activity Vehicle of the Year: Jeep Renegade Trailhawk 4x4.**

VEHICLE IMPRESSION : 2015 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5 SL

The midsize sedan segment was long the biggest seller and is still one of the hottest there is—appropriate as our transport during Mudfest, creating a counterpoint to the event's crossovers, which have now become the biggest selling segment. We used to think the Nissan Altima seemed a little underdone compared to the full-size Maxima. But both have evolved, and through the miracles of relativity, the current Nissan Altima now looks just right.

Our time and miles in the car were limited, but showed off Nissan's usual clear instruments and interface, a comfortable cabin and solid handling in the driving rain, and quick performance as we had ferries and planes to catch (this was the 182-hp four; there is also a 270-hp V6). Its CVT provided smooth and transparent power.

This SL is the top of four trims. Included features are extensive, and its few options are favorably priced.

The base Altima starts

at just \$22,300; a top V6 model starts at \$32,350. The four-cylinder is rated at 38 MPG highway. Our sample as outfitted strikes a great balance point in the lineup. Nissan Altima is a solid entry in a very crowded and competitive segment. ■

2015 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5 SL

INCLUDED: ABS, traction control, dynamic control, electronic brake force distribution, alarm/immobilizer, Zero Gravity front seats, advanced display, leather-appointed seats and wheel, heated front seats, 8-way power driver's seat w lumbar, 4-way power passenger, cruise, Bose 9-speaker audio w 5" color display, rear camera, USB, NissanConnect w apps, Bluetooth phone, streaming audio, dual zone auto climate, rear A/C vents, keyless entry and start, remote start, dual illuminated vanity visors w extensions, HomeLink, 60/40 split rear seat, seatback pockets, auto headlights, fog lights, LED tail lights, heated manual fold mirrors w turn signals, chrome exhaust tips.

BASE PRICE	\$28,150
MOONROOF PACKAGE (power/tilt)	800
CARPETED FLOOR & TRUNK MATS	210
TECHNOLOGY PACKAGE: Navigation with 7" touchscreen; blind spot, lane departure and moving object warning; SiriusXM Traffic and Travel Link	1090
DESTINATION CHARGE:	810
TOTAL	\$31,060





A legend lost on an Arizona desert highway

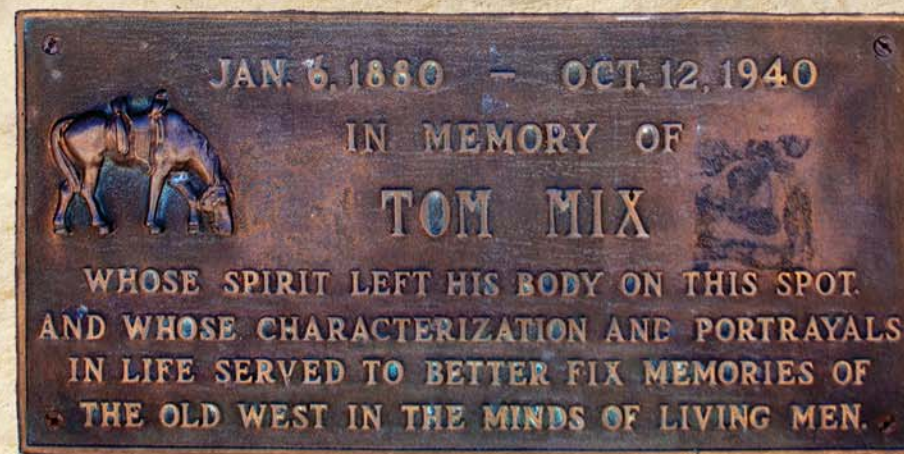
STORY AND PHOTOS BY RANDALL BOHL

During a motorcycle ride through southeast Arizona with his uncle, your correspondent happened upon a roadside shrine of great Western significance.

In 1940, Tom Mix was the hero of more than 300 Hollywood Westerns—the King of the Cowboys a couple of decades before Roy Rogers would inherit that title. Mix was born in Pennsylvania, but Hollywood wrote him a new biography—born in old El Paso, served alongside Teddy Roosevelt as a Rough Rider in the Spanish American War, fought in the Boxer Rebellion in China, then the Boer War in South Africa. The official press release bio then had him serving as a US Marshal and a Texas Ranger.

While most of that was a stretch, the tall man in a white Stetson was known for commanding a crowd, or an individual, or a lady—he was married five times. Tom Mix's dad was a stable master and had taught him horsemanship early. Tom was a rodeo cowboy in his younger years, right up till the start of his movie career in his late 20s. Mix reportedly loved to gamble and to drink. One tale has him breaking up a cowboy barroom brawl with a bullet in his leg hardly slowing him down.

A piece in the old *Tucson Citizen*, writ-



ten by John Jennings a few decades ago, sums up his silver screen persona: "In the movies, Mix's blaze-faced wonder horse, Tony, would prance his way through bad guys' bullets, leap huge chasms and gallop to a maiden's rescue time after time. Then, when Tom and the rancher's beautiful daughter would lean in for a film-ending kiss, Tony would either nudge Tom toward the girl, or swipe his white hat and spoil the moment. Tony was the first horse to be a real movie star. He was the ultimate hero's steed when Champion and Trigger were still in ponytails."

That was all during the silent movie era, and by 1940, Mix was done with movies. He did not make the transition to "talkies," leaving this path to the likes of John Wayne and Ronald Reagan.

Rather, Mix next pursued his childhood dream of joining the circus. (As a child, his parents had caught him practicing to be a circus performer, working on his knife-throwing tricks against the barn wall, with his sister as his foil.) Now 60, he actually took to promoting the circus.

On October 12, 1940, after stopping to visit Pima County Sheriff Ed Nichols in Tucson, Mix headed north toward Phoenix, driving his 1937 Cord 812 Phaeton. He stopped at the Oracle Junction Inn, a popular gambling and drinking establishment, to call his agent, and then continued north on US Highway 80 (now Arizona Highway 79). About eighteen miles south of Florence, enjoying the beautiful Arizona autumn day at a reported 80 mph, Mix came upon barriers where a bridge had been washed out by a flash flood. He was unable to stop in time. The car swerved twice, then rolled into a gully, pinning the Western hero underneath. As the lanky cowboy started to

emerge from the wreckage, a large rawhide trunk full of silver dollars and jewelry, loaded behind him, toppled over and broke his neck, killing him instantly.

Mix had been headed to his grandson's christening in Phoenix, but instead was interred at Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

A small stone memorial marks the site of his death on Arizona 79, where a nearby arroyo is named Tom Mix Wash. Included are photos, newspaper clippings—including the *Tucson Citizen* quoted above—and a plaque reading: "In memory of Tom Mix, whose spirit left his body on this spot and whose characterization and portrayals in life served to better fix memories of the Old West in the minds of living men." It's a humble memorial to a larger than life man, and worth a visit. ■

A legendary car, restored

The 1937 Cord 812 Phaeton shown below—completely repaired and restored—is the very car in which silent-screen Western film star Tom Mix suffered his fatal crash on October 12, 1940, near Florence, Arizona. The Cord—an important piece of early Hollywood and Arizona history, festooned with flags, badges and other Western regalia, as Mix had decorated the car when he owned it—was displayed at the inaugural Arizona Concours d'Elegance in January 2014, by owners Bob, Pat and Chris White of Scottsdale. (Car photos: Joe Sage)



Scandinavian Design Center

by Joe Sage

Volvo Cars was once part of Ford's Premier Automotive Group (PAG), a high-end brand consortium implemented by Ford at the start of the new century and disbanded as its first decade wore on. Jaguar and Land Rover were sold to Tata Motors of India. Aston Martin has taken twists and turns with smaller investors. And Volvo found a home with the Chinese, as a wholly owned subsidiary of emerging giant Geely.

The first-generation Volvo XC90—launched in 2002—was at the leading edge of a revolution, as herds of big, boxy truck-based SUVs would make way for a lean, sporty and stylish generation. The XC90 has been a longlasting success story, selling a quarter million copies in the United States since then, and over 600,000 worldwide.

they have built three Chinese factories over the past few years, the familiar factories in Torstlanda and in Ghent, Belgium build all our models.

Everyone knows the Volvo brand. It has long conveyed a nice Scandinavian flair, with clean, bright interiors featuring blonde wood laminates, minimalist controls and the like. It has also ridden the wave of a reputation for safety, established decades ago when this was more uncommon. Volvo has expanded its general aura a bit toward the wild side, with rally-oriented R-Design and Polestar Performance models that immediately perk up the brand's image, while promoting its hugely successful European race heritage. No matter how you slice it, Volvo's image has been as stylishly durable as its vehicles' reputations.

The new XC90 is again at the leading edge of a wave. Though steadily successful, Volvo under its new ownership is preparing for a big boost in sales. The 2016 Volvo XC90—a familiar nameplate on a seemingly familiar vehicle—is the first of a whole new generation. By 2020, they tell us this brand new vehicle will have become the oldest model in an entirely new Volvo lineup.

Interest is already high. The XC90 was first announced in late 2014, with a run of 1,927 units

—commemorating Volvo's founding in 1927. That whole edition sold out in 48 hours, 568 of them to customers in the US. Through our launch drive in May, some 30,000 "hand-raisers" had expressed active interest in a purchase, and some 2,200 sold orders had been placed in the US—reaching 15 percent of the 2016 model's first-year sales goal before anyone had even driven one.

We traveled to California to be among the first to actually slip behind the wheel and fire it up.

The new vehicle can in fact fire up via either of not one but two innovative drivetrains.

Over the past couple of years, with the introduction of their Drive-E suite of fuel-efficient yet power-boosting technologies, Volvo has transformed the application of its model designations, to deal with changes in engine sizes. T5 and T6 nameplates, once used for five-cylinder and six-cylinder models, are now applied simply by pecking order, with the smaller T5 typically being a four-cylinder in most models for the last couple of years. Rather than having to introduce a T4 and then later perhaps a T3, they just wanted to stick with the same familiar, comfortable names.

For the 2016 XC90, Volvo goes a step farther. This T6 model bears a potent 316-hp four-cylinder, and a new T8 designation is added for a highly innovative new plug-in hybrid powertrain model.

The new four-cylinder T6 is both turbocharged and supercharged. And this is not just a matter of piling it on—rather it's a matter of very carefully considered sequential needs and solutions, with the supercharger giving immediate power from a standing start, then the system changing over to

turbo power once the system is fully in motion (at about 3500 RPM), eliminating any possibility of turbo lag at low revs and saving fuel after that.

This Drive-E two-liter four-cylinder is one of Volvo's most important areas of simplification, allowing them to engineer their whole lineup around just one gas and one diesel engine—which, in fact, share 50 percent common parts.

The XC90 T8 is a new animal—so new that Volvo had flown in just a handful of preproduction copies for our launch drive. It bears the same four-cylinder engine, plus a lithium-ion battery pack and an electric motor, providing a combined 472 lb-ft of torque, compared to 295 in the T6. This also enables full electric driving for short hops, which for some people could be all their daily driving, up to about 24 miles of range, and it can recharge in two and a half to six hours.

Swedish design character is unmistakable from the moment you put the new XC90's elegant blonde leather and chrome keyless fob in your pocket. The interior is a clean design, but richly detailed with special touches, from graceful brushed aluminum, to Scandinavian woods, to the machined finish of its engine start and drive mode controllers. The shifter is built of crystal.

A special design studio in Copenhagen developed new interactive controls. Prior generations had a stylish floating bent-wood center console, but it suffered from a nest of small buttons that usually made us think knitting needles could be a useful tool for many settings. This area has been com-

A vehicle that will earn your continued admiring glances is a good thing, and the 2016 Volvo XC90 has no shortage of pleasing design details inside and out.



2016 Volvo XC90 T6

KEEP RIGHT >>

2016 VOLVO XC90 SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.2.0L 4-cylinder supercharged turbo
TRANSMISSION	8-spd automatic
LENGTH	194.8 in
WIDTH (MIRRORS/FOLDED)	84.3 / 79.1 in
HEIGHT	69.9 in
OVERHANG (FRONT/REAR)	34.9 / 42.5 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	(T6): 9.3 in
	(T8 Twin Engine): 9.4 in
HEADROOM (1/2/3 ROW)	38.9 / 38.5 / 35.5 in
LEG ROOM (1/2/3 ROW)	40.9 / 37.0 / 31.9 in
CARGO VOLUME (BEHIND 3RD)	13.0 cu.ft
	(BEHIND 2ND) 41.8 cu.ft
	(BEHIND 1ST) 85.7 cu.ft
TOW CAPACITY	5000 lb

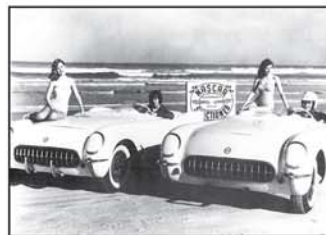
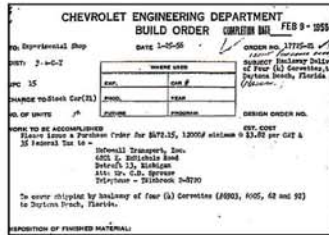
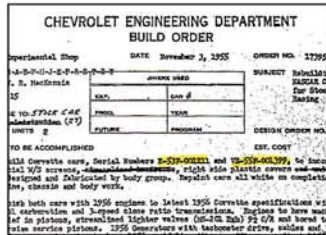
2016 VOLVO XC90 T6 AWD

HORSEPOWER/TORQUE	316 hp / 295 lb-ft
ACCELERATION 0-TO-60	6.1 sec
TOP SPEED	130 mph
WEIGHT	4627 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	18.8 gal
MPG	20/25/22 city/hwy/comb
• T6 Momentum	\$48,900
• T6 Inscription	\$54,500
• T6 R-Design	\$52,900

2016 VOLVO XC90 T8 AWD TWIN ENGINE PLUG-IN HYBRID

ELECTRIC MOTOR	65 kW
BATTERY	Lithium-ion / 9.2 kWh
ENGINE HP/TORQUE	313 hp / 295 lb-ft
ELECTRIC MOTOR HP/TORQUE	.87 hp / 177 lb-ft
COMBINED TORQUE	472 lb-ft
ACCELERATION 0-TO-60	(prelim.) 5.3 sec
TOP SPEED	130 mph
WEIGHT	5059 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	13.2 gal
MPG	(prelim.) 59+ MPGe city
• T8 Twin Engine Momentum	\$68,100
• T8 Twin Engine Inscription	\$71,600
• T8 Twin Engine R-Design	\$70,000

NASCARCORVETTE.com "The Un-Told Story"



email: terry@ProTeamCorvette.com

pletely reworked, with a far more intuitive set of controls. A primary touchscreen, center screen and heads-up display are usefully grouped by task, with most key functions accessible via one button. Exclusive infrared technology enables you to work the touchscreen with gloves, or even a pen-tip. A full suite of apps, from navigation to dining, are fully integrated.

Four-zone climate grants individual control to second-row passengers, and the third row has its own A/C vents. An optional 1400-watt, 19-speaker Bowers & Wilkins sound system not only delivers powerful, dynamic audio, but includes a trick that feeds the signal to each speaker with the precise timing needed to reproduce the acoustics of the Gothenburg Concert Hall. A panoramic sunroof completes the feeling of spaciousness inside.

The exterior gets its own complete redo. In an era of increasingly complex sheet metal creases and folds, the new XC90 seems strikingly spartan and smooth. In fact, it may be taking our eye a little longer to get used to that. It somewhat takes us back to the aerodynamic Audis of thirty years prior, or the Infiniti utilities of fifteen years ago, either of which one friend memorably referred to as looking overinflated. However, perhaps there's a backlash to more complex sheet metal now, as we've heard one person after another especially admire the sheet metal styling of this new XC90. Differentiation is everything, and this is a styling approach that reemerges as distinctive.

The XC90 is built on Volvo's newest SPA platform, especially adaptable to the T8's plug-in hybrid powertrain layout. Air suspension at all four corners calibrates itself 500 times per second, while double wishbone front suspension and



Thin-shell sport seats that made a Volvo S60 concept one of our auto show favorites a few years ago have heavily influenced these seven comfortable, legroom-scalloped, weight-shaving, performance-bolstered seats in the new XC90. Long distances are more enjoyable with massage features and thigh extensions. The third row sits higher, spacious for adults up to 5'6", and tighter spacing gives a line of sight through the cabin.

an integral link rear axle with a lightweight transverse leaf spring accommodate wider seats and heavier loads. The suspension can be lowered by two inches for easier rear loading.

The T8 features a crankshaft-integrated starter-generator (C-ISG), shift-by-wire, electric rear axle drive and electric air conditioning, which has received extensive extreme hot weather testing.

Our drive time in the T8 Twin Engine Plug-In Hybrid was brief—about a half-hour in LA rush hour traffic, as a light rain started. The drive experience itself was not highly noteworthy—both models have great off-the-line acceleration—but normal behavior is sort of the point. If you have the considerably higher price of entry, the T8 can whisk you around in all-electric efficiency, possibly all the time, with its full gasoline-hybrid powertrain in reserve for your long haul driving.

The premium space has become very competitive. Volvo has positioned themselves by emphasizing that they intend to deliver to each customer a "next-generation luxury" experience that promises three things: a superior human-machine interface (which says "we understand you"); industry-leading safety ("we protect you"); and distinctive design points ("we make you feel special").

Swedish flavor is strong in the all-new XC90—a consistent undercurrent of style, heritage, personality, philosophy and build.

The Detroit show this winter offered a first look at the Volvo S60 Inscription, a lengthened version of their midsize sedan, which bears special significance, as it will be built in one of the new Chinese factories. The Volvo S60 Inscription is thus, in fact, expected to surprisingly be the first Chinese-built vehicle to be sold in the US. ■



Wisconsin smörgåsbord

Dozens of the best of the best—on the track, dirt, roads and cones at Road America

Story and photos by Joe Sage

A little inside baseball. We are a regional publication, bringing you news of interest to, as our title suggests, Arizona drivers. But there's a lot that happens in the rest of the country, and the rest of the world, that's of interest to drivers in Arizona, particularly to the vehicle application and purchase decisions we make.

As such, we have long been members of our home base Phoenix Automotive Press Association (PAPA), as well as our sister home base Motor Press Guild (MPG) in Southern California (which actually came first). And we belong to several other associations in the Western states: Rockies, Pacific Northwest, Texas and most recently California's Central Coast. Each has characteristics in common with parts of Arizona, and all share many of the same manufacturer representatives and overlap many of the same writers

and producers we already work with.

One reason sharing common characteristics with the other associations is useful is that they all present drive events, while our Phoenix-based association does not (although one of PAPA's members independently produces the Active Lifestyle Vehicle [ALV] awards).

A couple of years ago, we decided it would be appropriate to join something in Detroit, too. But one colleague after another suggested the Chicago-based Midwest Automotive Media Association (MAMA to our local PAPA), as one of the strongest and most professional in the country and one often anchoring Detroiters—media and manufacturers, both—anyway. And they run an event with one of the most stellar reputations: the MAMA Spring Rally.

First, absorb this benchmark. When we participated in the Northwest Automotive

Press Association's Run to the Sun event in Oregon last fall, there were 25 cars involved (and 25 drivers). That two-day drive event had a predetermined driver sequence for each, which is uncommon but a tremendous timesaver and organizational aid. Nonetheless, that amounted to about 25 minutes per car over two days, with one ongoing mission—one road course, driven simultaneously by all.

The MAMA Spring Rally also runs for two days, but comprises four elements: track driving on the 4.048-mile, 14-turn, 640-acre Road America course in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin; highway driving on the beautiful two-lane roads in the vicinity; an off-road course; and an autocross course.

That's four times the mission, and the vehicle count was staggering: some 90 cars, trucks and utilities—mostly cars—perhaps a few more, with just a few duplicates brought for efficiency's sake. On the first day, some were designated for road use and some for track. On the second day, some were designated for an autocross session on what is most commonly Road America's kart track, and some for an aggressive off-road course on the property. A number of cars were designated for both road and track (with only a few

KEEP RIGHT >>



(2015 models unless noted)

STREET

Acura ILX Premium A-Spec
Acura MDX Adv
Acura RDX
BMW M235xi Coupe
BMW 228i Convertible
BMW M4 Convertible
Cadillac ATS-V Coupe
Cadillac ATS-V Sedan
Chevrolet Trax
Chevrolet Sonic
Chevrolet Colorado midsize pickup
Chevrolet Silverado full-size pickup
Chrysler 300
Dodge Challenger Scat Pack
Dodge Charger Scat Pack
Dodge Charger SXT
Fiat 500 Abarth
Fiat 500 X (two)
Ford Edge Titanium 2.0L EcoBoost
Ford Edge Sport 2.7L EcoBoost
Ford Focus Titanium 2.0L
Ford Focus Sedan 1.0L EcoBoost
Ford Mustang 2.3L EcoBoost Convertible
GMC Canyon midsize pickup
Honda CR-V AWD Touring
Hyundai Genesis 3.8 V6 AWD
Hyundai Veloster Rally Edition
Infiniti Q50
Jaguar XJL 3.0L AWD
Jaguar XF 3.0L AWD
Jeep Renegade
Kia Forte5
Kia Sedona SXL
Kia Sorento SXL (2016)
Land Rover Range Rover Sport HSE
Land Rover Range Rover HSE
Land Rover Discovery Sport HSE
Lexus NX 200t
Lexus NX 300h Hybrid
Lexus RC 350 F Sport
Lincoln MKC AWD Black Label 2.3L EcoBoost
Maserati Quattroporte GTS
Maserati Ghibli S Q4
Mazda3 S 5-door Grand Touring
Mazda6 i Grand Touring
Mazda CX-5 Grand Touring AWD
Mercedes-Benz S550 Coupe
Mercedes-Maybach S600
MINI Cooper S Hardtop 4-Door
Mitsubishi Evo MR
Mitsubishi Outlander Sport 2.4L GT
Nissan Murano
Nissan Rogue
Nissan Altima
Nissan Juke SL AWD
Subaru WRX (2016)
Subaru BRZ Series Blue
Subaru Outback
Subaru Impreza
Toyota Sienna
Toyota Camry
Toyota Camry Hybrid
Toyota 4Runner TRD Pro
Volkswagen GTI w/ Performance Package
Volkswagen Golf SportWagen
Volkswagen Jetta GLI
Volkswagen Touareg



TRACK

Alfa Romeo 4C
BMW X6M
Buick Regal GS
Cadillac ATS-V Coupe
Cadillac ATS-V Sedan
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Coupe Z51
Chrysler 200 S
Dodge Challenger Hellcat
Dodge Challenger Scat Pack
Dodge Charger Hellcat
Dodge Charger Scat Pack
Dodge Viper
Ford Focus ST 2.0L EcoBoost
Ford Mustang GT Coupe Premium 5.0L
Hyundai Genesis 5.0 V8
Kia Forte5
Lexus RC F
Mazda3 S 5-door Grand Touring
Mazda6 i Grand Touring
Mazda CX-5 Grand Touring AWD
Mercedes-AMG GT-S
MINI 2-Door John Cooper Works Hardtop (2016)
Mitsubishi Evo MR
Nissan 370 Z NISMO
Subaru WRX (2016)
Subaru WRX STI (2016)
Subaru BRZ Series Blue
Volkswagen Golf R
Volkswagen GTI w/ Performance Package
Volkswagen Jetta GLI

AUTOCROSS

BMW M235xi Coupe
BMW M4 Convertible
Buick Regal GS
Chevrolet Sonic
Hyundai Veloster Rally Edition
Lexus RC F
Mitsubishi Evo MR
Volkswagen Golf R
Volkswagen GTI w/ Performance Package
Volkswagen Jetta GLI

OFF-ROAD

Chevrolet Colorado midsize pickup
Chevrolet Silverado full-size pickup
GMC Canyon midsize pickup
Jeep Renegade Trailhawk
Jeep Wrangler
Kia Sorento SXL (2016)
Land Rover Range Rover Sport HSE
Land Rover Range Rover HSE
Land Rover Discovery Sport HSE
Subaru Outback
Toyota 4Runner TRD Pro
Volkswagen Touareg

STATIC DISPLAY / REVEAL

Alfa Romeo 4C Spider
Dodge Viper ACR (2016)



instances of multiple hardware provided); a number were designated for either track or street, plus autocross; and a number were designed for street and also off-road. Only two Volkswagen entries (GTI and Jetta) were designated for all three paved courses: track, road and autocross. (There were none that shared racetrack and off-road designations.) There were about 100 media participants driving.

Chart it all out, and there were some 125 different driving opportunities, five times as many as that Oregon run, but still in just two days. And selections were random, which leads to some lost time, and also to longer waits at the starting line for the hottest of the track machines—often a good cue to try another road car.

It was a chilly and wet couple of spring days in Wisconsin, with highs in the 50s or 60s and lows around 30. We had been to San Diego just a couple of days earlier and were reminded the hard way that 65 is colder than it sounds, especially when it's drizzly. That was a good thing, as it ensured we packed jackets for Wisconsin, but we should have also packed gloves.

None of this dampened anyone's spirits, nor did it keep a few convertible tops from being lowered by eager Midwesterners just coming out of hibernation.

The track was damp at first, but some orientation laps warmed up the pavement, and it was soon fairly dry.

A first-come first-served approach dictated a lot of juggling between wish lists and next-availables. If you skim the vehicle list, you can guess which ones were in the most demand for track time, although there was not a bad egg in the carton.

Some decisions were made by what we've driven before, which could play out either way: gotta do that again, or been there done that. We did some of each.

In one instance, we had a great experience by not driving. For the Viper, the list was long, but we found one of the (required) right seat pro drivers cooling her heels, waiting for her next few people to appear. She said, hey, I could drive you on a lap and be back in about a minute and 40 seconds, and nobody would even miss me. We jumped on it, grabbing our own right seat time with this champion driver at the helm. That may sound like an opportunity lost, but the day might have been over before that list cleared, and hot

laps with a real pro are always worth it. When the track list was too deep, we'd take one of the road cars. What seemed at first like a complex route turned out to be the simplest circumnavigation of the Road America track facility, and we quickly learned how to do short, medium and long versions of that. Thus we ended up driving significantly more road cars than track cars on the first day.

It would be misleading to list our drives or to give meaningful impressions, as there were such random and rapid availability factors in play. But we'll refer back to them over time. Every drive is useful to our always developing matrix of familiarity with a wide range of machinery.

Day two goes even faster, as it's officially over by midday. In fact, it's quite definitely over by midday, as an army of transporters from Reliable Carriers is in place by midmorning, and their load-out job will take all afternoon.

The vehicle lists for off-road and autocross were considerably shorter than for track and street. The off-road portion was run in a wooded area of Road America's property and contained some serious challenges. There was very little mud, but a great deal of steep terrain, tightly packed between the trees. Timing was such that three or four people would team up in one vehicle and do quick driver swaps when, if and as they could. We broadened our experience with some of the same vehicles as at Mudfest in the Pacific Northwest and at the Texas Truck Rodeo, while adding a few new ones.

Autocross had a self-generating paddock, in which gathered media drivers would grab what they could as cars reentered the staging area. Drivers swapped, as crews helped thread the next occupied cars to the front of the pack and reset the timing equipment. The track was a custom utilization of Road America's complex and hilly kart course, coned off to specifically challenge these vehicles.

There are a lot of events in life where the next day is when you realize just how much you did *not* get around to. This event may take the trophy for that. But knowing that doing it all is humanly and mathematically impossible, we are plenty happy with the overall experience, and we look forward to spring 2016. ■



ELKHART LAKE, WISCONSIN

We've known about Elkhart Lake for years, but this was our first visit. Road America is at its core, in the automotive realm, but its history is more complex.

Native tribes valued the deep lake for curative powers said to emanate from thousands of springs that feed it—and which keep it still one of the cleanest bodies of water in America.

When the railroad arrived in 1860, the frontier town became a destination, with its first hotel opening in 1867. By 1886, German immigrants Otto and Paulina Osthoff had built their own grand hotel, which remains today as the must-stay lodging choice in Elkhart Lake—and was headquarters for the MAMA Spring Rally.

Elkhart Lake is about 70 miles north of Milwaukee (or 135 miles north of O'Hare Airport in Chicago). We found more than enough flights to Milwaukee, at fares about the same as O'Hare, and opted for that, on US Airways.

Our dinner was at the famous small-town Lake Street Café, where Road America's race drivers have convened for some 60 years. Famed drivers came and went that night, revisiting their own roots and haunts—and surprised to find dozens of us filling the place to its rafters that night.

The Milwaukee Airport gave us one last highlight on our way out: the Mitchell Gallery of Flight, a free museum inside the terminal. Displays and memorabilia cover everything from Major General Billy Mitchell's famous B-25 bomber (displayed at the airport entrance) to the space program, all with Milwaukee heritage.

The entire trip is highly recommended. •

Osthoff Resort (1)



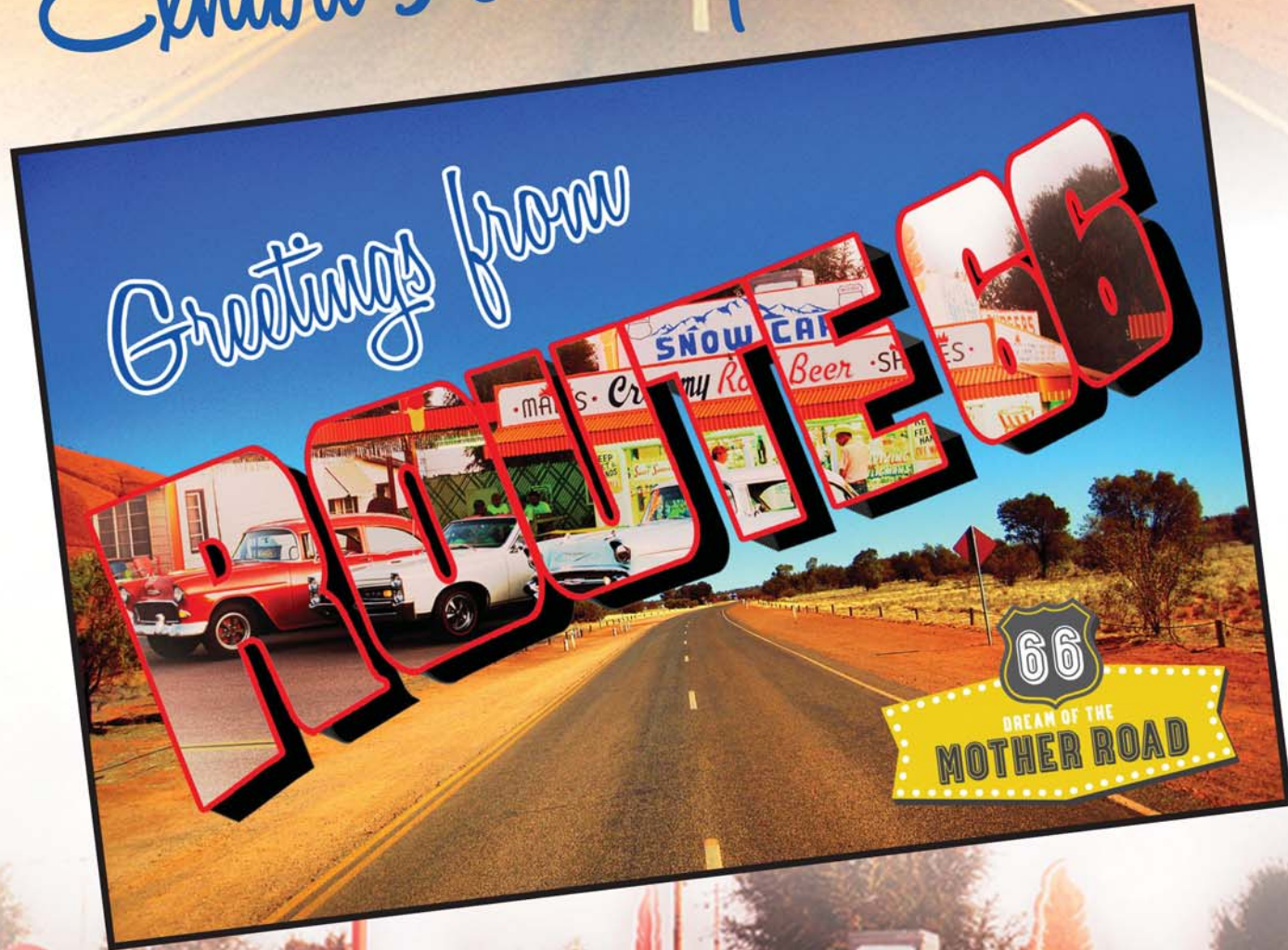


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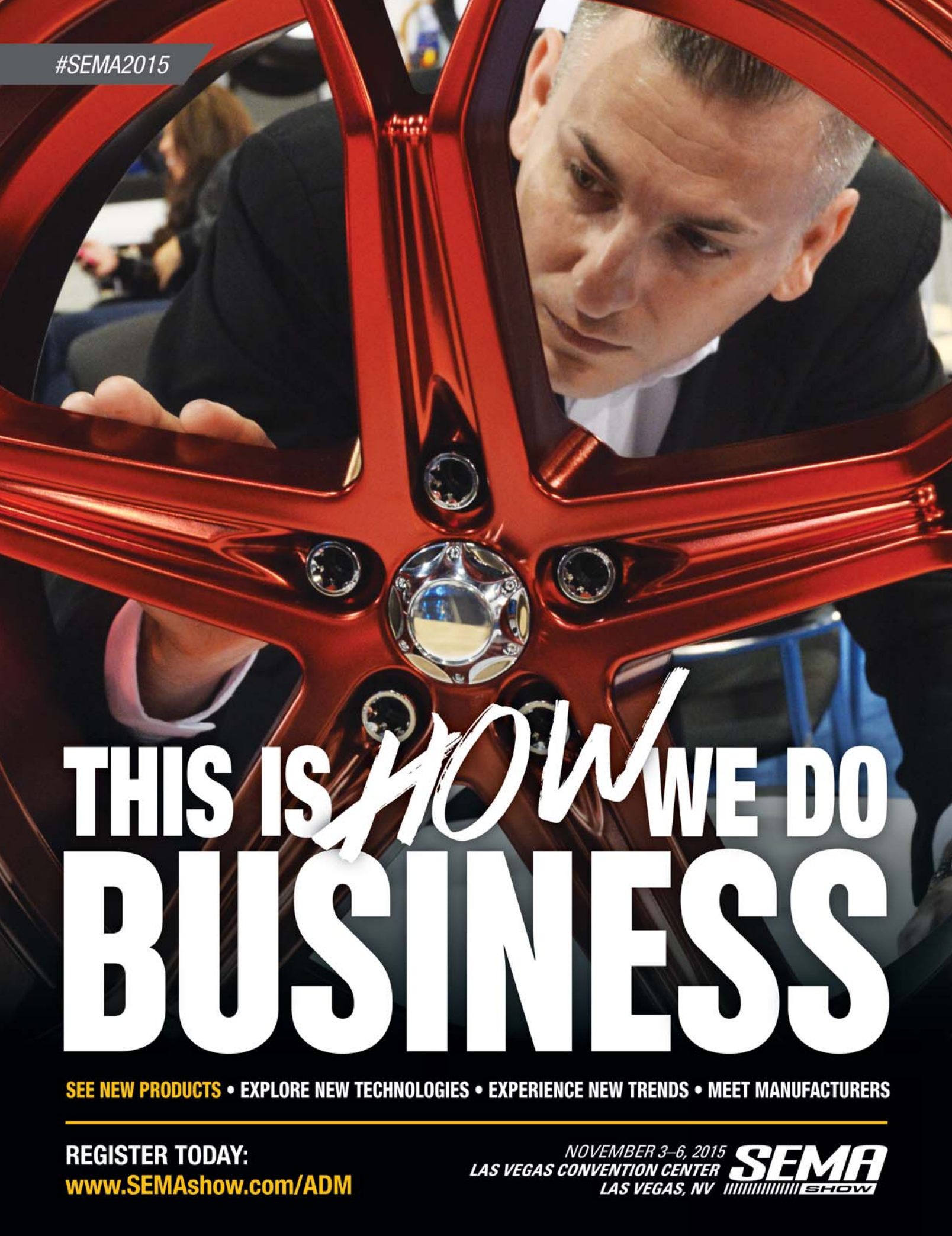
Fiat Chrysler (FCA USA) had brought plenty of noteworthy hardware to the MAMA Spring Rally in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin—some 16 vehicles in all—including both flavors of Hellcat (Challenger/Charger), both flavors of Scat Pack, the Fiat 500 Abarth, the carbon fiber Alfa Romeo 4C, the current Dodge Viper and more. But it turns out they had something else up their sleeves.

Back at event headquarters after a day at the track, they pulled the wraps off the 2016 Dodge Viper ACR. This highly enhanced club racer was first introduced in 1999 and last produced in 2010, when Viper went briefly dormant. Viper gen five returned as a 2013 model, and at the SEMA show in Las Vegas last November, FCA showed a Viper ACR concept—to predictable acclaim.

The production model includes a wide range of exclusive engineering: unprecedented brake fade resistance from exclusive carbon ceramic matrix two-piece 15-inch rotors and six-piston Brembo front calipers; double-adjustable Bilstein coil-over racing shocks with ten settings and three inches of height adjustment; and huge Kumho tires (295/25/19 front, 355/30/19 rear) for 1.5-second better lap times than prior track-only tires. The cabin is stripped for weight, yet has three-speaker audio. The ACR's hand-built 8.4-liter V10 puts out 645 hp and 600 lb-ft of torque—the highest of any naturally aspirated sports car engine in the world. Cornering grip is 1.5 g, and weight distribution is 50/50.

“One of one” customization is available for ultimate personalization. An Extreme Aero Package joins the option list later, for almost one ton of downforce through a combination of a huge adjustable dual-element carbon fiber rear wing, rear carbon fiber diffuser, unique SRT hood with removable louvers, detachable front splitter extension and additional dive planes. Pricing was not announced. ■





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VEHICLE EVENT : FORD ECOBOOST CHALLENGE

Booster shot

17-city Ford EcoBoost Challenge visits the Valley

Story by Jennifer Johnson | Photos by Joe Sage



Canadian drift champion Tania Bourbonnais gives an overview of the Mustang autocross course, then heads out to check the starting line. These were the new 2.3L EcoBoost Ford Mustangs, with both manual and automatic transmissions. The course put acceleration, handling and braking to a serious test.

More than 700 Ford fans and potential customers got behind the wheels of Ford Motor Company's latest products at the EcoBoost® Challenge consumer drive tour, which stopped at WestWorld in Scottsdale on May 2 as part of a 17-city national tour.

"With EcoBoost engines now available across 100 percent of our US light-duty lineup, the EcoBoost Challenge lets consumers experience this innovative technology that helps Ford deliver better fuel economy with a more engaging driving experience than the competition," said Michele Bartlett, Ford group marketing manager for large cars and SUVs. "Not only is the EcoBoost Challenge a lot of fun, but getting people in the driver's seat is the best way for them to experience the craftsmanship, innovation and performance of the Ford lineup."

2015 EcoBoost Challenge participants were able to drive the all-new 2015 Ford Mustang and all-new 2015 Ford F-150—branded as the toughest, smartest, most capable F-150 ever. Also on hand were the all-new 2015 Ford Edge, new 2015 Expedition, plus Escape, Fusion Hybrid and Transit Connect Wagon.

At this year's event, EcoBoost Challenge participants took part in the EcoBoost Challenge Drive, which allowed participants to drive Ford products head-to-head against the competition. The most popular course proved to be the ST Reaction Time Challenge, where participants tested their reflexes in both Fiesta ST and Focus ST models. A dedicated course for the all-new 2015 Mustang EcoBoost highlighted the model's elevated performance and handling, and a street drive showed off Ford's innovative park assist technologies.

As an added bonus, the 2015 EcoBoost tour also included a "ShiftPhobia" boot camp, giving consumers a hands-on clinic on the basics of driving a manual—complete with on-course driving instruction from a professional driver.

By combining advanced engine technologies such as turbocharging, direct injection and variable valve timing, Ford EcoBoost engines can help customers conserve fuel without sacrificing power. In North America, EcoBoost sales make Ford the leader in turbocharged direct-injected gasoline engines in high-volume passenger vehicles such as Fusion, F-150, Edge and Escape. For 2015, 100 percent of Ford's US light-duty vehicle lineup is available with an EcoBoost engine.

For more information on the tour, visit ecoboostdrive.com.



Bigger and smaller By Joe Sage

The MINI lineup continues to proliferate, and that's largely a good thing. Variety is the spice of life, of course. We've noticed this once niche brand is multiplying rapidly on local roads, and variety keeps things fresh, providing novelty anew, where it otherwise could wither.

Through a combination of virtual design tools and a need to meet the instant gratification needs of the general public, along with manufacturing advances, many automakers have been able to bring auto show concept models to market, whether they had originally intended to or not, in record time. Much of MINI's expanding lineup seems to have started out that way—one-of-a-kinds that ended up going into mass production.

The new MINI Hardtop 4-Door could come across in either of two ways: a handy mainstream evolution of the original two-door Hardtop coupe; or a violation of the original simple concept. It's

not hard to envision the thinking that brings us to this point. The original two-door is a solid concept, but surely some potential buyers pined for four. The MINI Countryman has four doors, but it's a different vehicle—burlier, gnarlier, higher off the ground and 4x4 capable, surprisingly so, in fact. The Paceman, one of our favorites, is a Countryman with a lower, sleeker body but the same rough and tough capabilities—and two doors. The Clubman has had three doors (or five including the “barn doors” in the rear): on the passenger side, a rear-hinged “club door” augments the opening of the primary door—leaving the driver's door full size, while giving rear seat passengers some hope of reasonable entry and egress.

Put that all together, and there still was not a simple four-door MINI sedan.

Officially, there still is not. MINI avoids saying coupe or sedan, sticking with Hardtop for both the

original two-door and this new four-door version of the updated original car. (The Coupe name, for a couple of years, has gone to the tin-top variant of the Roadster, anyway.)

We have a lasting impression of the Clubman. The first time we saw it at a major auto show when introduced, an NFL linebacker was checking out those little barn doors. Visualize someone of considerable height and bulk, opening two tiny back doors with just thumbs and index fingers, like playing with a dollhouse. We've had trouble getting a utilitarian vibe from it ever since.

If you've ever read a MINI review, you have almost surely heard it referred to as having go-kart handling. This is intended purely as a compliment, bestowed by those who love a little track time. The car delivers very direct responses to your acceleration and braking inputs, and its suspension hugs the road, flat and solid, as you nav-

igate your daily drill. It's bound to put a smile on your face. The only downsides we noted were in a tendency to oversteer on sweeping fixed-radius curves—just a little, but unusually so—and a ride that can be a little too harsh on speedbumps. We would be buying the manual transmission, but the automatic included in this sample had BMW's usual e-joystick quirks. Our best performance came when we used the manumatic mode.

Size-wise, though smaller than that NFL linebacker, we kept having that same dollhouse experience. Only this time, it was with the doors we used the most—every time, the driver's door, and many times, the left rear door, if just for groceries, camera bag or a load of mail. There's no question a four-door format is very handy, even if you are a party of one. The rear is still a good closet, and a good closet benefits from a door.

But that door is small. So small, we didn't even try to contort ourselves into that space, with its already assured limited legroom. We thought of one sub-five-foot-tall colleague in the Midwest, who for example always tries on a trunk for size. As fate would have it, we were in Wisconsin later that same week for a rally event, and both she and an identical copy of this car, even the same color, were there. For her, it all fits just fine.

So if you have a family of one, and the back is just for gear and packages, who cares? Or if you have a family of three or four, and the back is for the kids, that should work. The downside—for anyone—is that the front door is now considerably smaller, and that one gets used by the owner-driver every time. It's a challenge that gets harder over time, not easier.

Since MINI had earlier solved this with the Clubman's one-on-the-left and two-on-the-right door system, this could be a step backward, reverting to a solution they had vetoed at that point. Or it could be a step toward fleshing out the lineup all the better—creating the one obvious model that had been missing.

Since we'd never been huge fans of the Clubman's styling—long and squeezed out toward the back, and bearing those dollhouse rear doors—we can see the purpose of this Hardtop 4-Door. It bears expanded function, but with a big degree of the original car's style. And the Clubman had been dropped from the lineup. (*But wait! Just as we went to press, MINI announced an all-new Clubman, bigger than ever and with four real doors.*)

As with any MINI, the Hardtop 4-Door is a hoot to drive, delivers economical operation, conquers tight-spot driving and parking convenience in spades and still has about the most personality you can find in a subcompact. Just make sure you try it on for size, before committing to your own personal door count. ■



Pillars and window surrounds above the beltline are blacked out, but when sunlight catches the boundaries of the four windows, they stand out like squares quickly laid out with electrician's tape. • Instruments and controls are revised, with the formerly huge center speedo migrating to the binnacle, while the center circle takes on a wide variety of other functions. Cool and clever details include a toggle switch for keyless ignition. • Polarizing sunglasses make the heads-up display appear blank, but you can't retract it. It then catches your eye as though someone left a top hat on the dash.

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE.....2.0-liter TwinPower Turbo 4-cyl
TRANSMISSION.....6-speed Getrag manual
DRIVETRAIN.....FWD
HORSEPOWER/TORQUE.....189 hp / 207 lb-ft
MPG.....26/33/29 (city/hwy/comb)
TIRES.....Run-flat
INCLUDED: Black stripes, roof, mirror caps; driving modes, stability, dynamic cruise, ABS, EBD, corner brake control, auto dual-zone climate, MINI Connected XL, real time traffic, sport seats, floor mats, hidden dash storage, interior LED mood lighting, interactive LED ring, rain sensor

BASE PRICE	\$25,100
ELECTRIC BLUE METALLIC PAINT:	500
LEATHERETTE CARBON BLACK:.....incl	
COLD WEATHER PACKAGE: Heated front seats, power folding mirrors	600
FULLY LOADED (SPORT+WIRED+PREMIUM)4,500	
• WIRED PACKAGE: Navigation, enhanced Bluetooth/USB.	
• PREMIUM PACKAGE: Keyless entry, panoramic moonroof, harman/kardon premium audio, storage.	
• SPORT PACKAGE: 18" vanity spoke wheels, white turn signals.	
CENTER ARMREST:.....	250
LED LIGHTS: LED foglights	0
LED headlights w cornering lights.....	750
INTERIOR SURFACE FIBER ALLOY:.....	350
SPORT AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION:	1500
JCW LEATHER STEERING WHEEL:.....	250
ANTHRACITE HEADLINER:	250
REAR PARK DISTANCE CONTROL:.....	500
HEADS-UP DISPLAY:	500
DESTINATION CHARGE:.....	850
TOTAL	\$35,900

Rear sheet metal is revised considerably, with large taillights set against a scalloped panel. But the overall style and spirit of the original car are generally maintained.



Raising expectations. And more than meeting them.

By Joe Sage

“Brand is a substitute for knowledge.” This profound marketing observation explains a lot of buying decisions. It is perhaps somewhat cynical, but can explain the success of everything from cellphones to breakfast cereal. It is likely a big reason we consistently see certain makes of vehicle on the road, when there are so many good alternatives. One brand may benefit from some reputational perception earned during specific eras long past, while another may just not have built sufficient awareness. Nonetheless, there are clearly many big decisions made with the thinnest of reasoning. And a lot of people miss a lot that way.

Mitsubishi is a huge company, one of Japan’s keiretsu conglomerates, with operations in everything from consumer electronics to aerospace and defense. From liquid natural gas freighters to cruise ships. From wind turbines to orbital rockets.

In the US, there are three giant Japanese auto brands and several smaller ones. Mitsubishi’s sales are a small slice of our pie, but they are not alone in that, actually falling in

the same general volume range as Porsche, Fiat, Lincoln and others, and about three times those of Jaguar, or ten times those of Smart. None of these need an introduction.

Mitsubishi, though, seems to escape some people’s attention, but that has started to change. Market analyst IHS Automotive identifies Mitsubishi as one of five brands leading the industry in conquest/defection improvement—sales coming from other brands. This spells opportunity.

The \$12,995 Mitsubishi Mirage subcompact has topped industry lists ranking affordability, green attributes and customer loyalty, and its sales have roughly doubled year-over-year as of May, outselling seemingly better-known vehicles including such a wide range as the Scion xB or the Cadillac CTS.

Mitsubishi sales overall are up close to 40 percent, exceeded only by Jeep at 43 percent (and followed next by Lincoln at 27).

Looked at from the home office’s perspective, the US in just one year has moved from fifth place to second place in overseas sales for the brand and is currently on track to be its number one export market yet this year.

The single best-selling Mitsubishi model in the US is the Outlander Sport, a five-passenger compact utility that starts just under \$20,000 and delivers up to 32 MPG highway.

Its big brother is the seven-passenger Outlander—called a compact by some sources, midsize by others. Despite 40 percent more passenger capacity, the bigger Outlander still starts at just \$22,995 and is rated up to 31 MPG highway. (The Outlander and Outlander Sport actually share the same chassis and 105.1-inch wheelbase.)

Sales for the bigger Outlander at less than half the pace of the Sport seem to suggest potential for growth in the wake of the five-seater’s popularity, also spelling opportunity.

For 2016, the bigger Outlander is completely new inside and out. We flew to San Francisco—where Mitsubishi had just finished attending the Google I/O 2015 conference (with its own implications)—to find out more about what’s behind the brand’s rather sudden surge and to meet the new seven-seater.

The room goes dark and a screen comes to life. An Inuit tells us there are 37 words for snow in his native language, and the new 2016 Mitsubishi Outlander can de-ice them all. A plastic surgeon scrutinizes the sheet metal and tells us he hates to say it, but he wouldn’t change a thing. A ballerina illustrates the vehicle’s elegant suspension. A Ninja fighter

underscores its quiet ride. It’s all part of Mitsubishi’s brilliant “100 spokespeople” ad campaign for the new Outlander—a chance to explain the all-new seven-seat crossover’s 100 improvements and upgrades for 2016. It’s a clever way to hold audience interest from one ad to another, building an endlessly varied yet consistent message, all within a smaller manufacturer’s budget.

The main mission is to keep the brand’s individuality. “If we act the same as the competition, we’ll simply blend in,” says marketing director Francine Harsini. Mitsubishi has stood at about 57 percent—similar to Mazda—for brand awareness, but has tended to rank lower for purchase consideration in the past. The new campaign—Find Your Own Lane—will benefit not only from its clever theme, but from a budget that has been roughly doubled, with consistent presence planned “month in and month out,” according to Harsini.

We’ve spent time with both the Outlander and Outlander Sport over the past several years and have noted their subtle points of evolution, some in parallel, some not, inside and out.

The smaller Outlander Sport had taken on a more recognizable family face several years earlier, incorporating cues from the aggressive grille of the hot Lancer Evolution rally car, which also made their way into some versions of the seven-seat Outlander or Outlander GT, though we had found it easy to misinterpret which model was which, at times. You can see at a glance that the 2016 Outlander is new.

The seven-seat Outlander was given a facelift in 2014, a chance to distinguish itself. When we first saw it, at the Mudfest outdoor utility vehicle event in the Pacific Northwest, we instinctively gave its new look a “most improved” nod. But when we had it for a week back home in Arizona, we found people frequently asking what it was. Interest and intrigue are good, but baffling anonymity—not so much so. The rear was weak, too, with an aftermarket catalog feel to the lights and trim. A minor course correction in 2015 opened the grille area wider and squared things off a bit.

But for 2016 the Outlander receives all new sheet metal from the windshield forward and new (red) lenses and trim in the rear. There is style continuity from Outlander’s prior two years in the silver upper grille area, but more has been done to incorporate the styles of the top-selling Outlander Sport and the halo-generating Evo in the blacked-out lower grille—and the whole treatment is tied together with aggressive chrome bars that telegraph strength, echoing elements of the classic Montero. Put it all together, and Outlander is well positioned to capitalize on Outlander Sport’s popularity, but carrying its own distinctive character.

These are things that make that plastic surgeon nod approvingly. But these are just its styling cues. The biggest changes—there are over 100, remember—lie beneath the sheet metal. There are changes you can see—leather seats, 18-inch alloy wheels, new instruments—changes you can feel—improved engines, a new transmission, vastly improved noise, harshness and vibration engineering—and changes you can tally—even more inclusions at even better price points.

There are now four trim levels. Models from the base ES through SE and SEL (that’s L as in leather or luxe) offer Mitsubishi’s 166-hp 2.4L MIVEC 16-valve SOHC 4-cylinder engine, while the Outlander GT features their 224-hp 3.0L MIVEC 24-valve SOHC V6. The SE and SEL volume sellers are available with either front-wheel drive or S-AWC (Super All Wheel Control) all-wheel drive. The base ES is a front-driver only, while the line-topping V6 GT comes with S-AWC only.

Four-cylinder models have a continuously variable transmission (CVT), remapped for quicker acceleration and better power throughput, while the GT has a six-speed automatic with paddle shifters. Zero-to-62 mph acceleration is improved by a full second (AWD versions) and passing speeds are also boosted. The four-cylinder runs on regular fuel; the V6 on premium. Highway fuel mileage for the GT drops from 31 to 27 MPG, but tow capacity increases from 1500 to 3500 pounds.

Suspension has been reengineered, front and rear, for more accurate handling, while reducing vibration and noise. Rear shocks are larger, for a firmer and more comfortable ride. Body rigidity is improved throughout. Reductions in engine, road and wind noise come from dozens of changes, including thicker wheels and more layers of glass. Attention has even been paid to the solid sound of



Product planning manager Melvyn Bautista points out styling cues bearing heritage from Montero to Lancer Evolution. • Long range product planner Nathan Berg reveals the inner workings of the Outlander’s new infotainment systems. • Marketing director Francine Harsini is the creative genius behind Outlander’s clever “100 spokespeople” ad campaign, a powerful and entertaining force multiplier for the new model.



Meet Mitsubishi’s “Dynamic Shield” global styling language. Whether you are more familiar with the face of the five-passenger Outlander Sport, last year’s seven-passenger Outlander or the prior Outlander, this new model is immediately recognizable—a synthesis of the best of them all.



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closing a door.

We began our drive by navigating out of San Francisco's busy streets and clogged freeways in the serene cabin of an all-wheel-drive SEL. We spent most of our drive time on the winding coastal two-lanes and hilly wine country roads of the San Francisco Peninsula. The four-cylinder model with CVT was smooth and very responsive under wide-ranging conditions. And we arrived at our classy vineyard lunch spot with a nice sense of style that can be yours at a bargain cost.

All-wheel-drive models include an Eco drive mode (forced 2WD), Normal (with a full range of power distribution left/right, front/rear), Snow mode and Lock mode for maximum traction situations. Our day was spent on warm, dry pavement, though with plenty of climbs, curves and cyclist surprises. We always felt in absolute control.

The price walk from ES to GT is seductively reasonable. From the base ES at \$22,995, up one step to a front-drive SE, you add just \$1000, which gets you 6.1-inch screen-based audio, rear camera, heated seats, keyless entry and start, dual climate control, even color-keyed side mirrors and fog lights. For \$2000 more, add all-wheel drive.

Or for \$1000 more with either drivetrain, move up to the SEL, with leather, power driver's seat, roof rails and gloss black trim accents. (All-wheel-drive SE and front-drive SEL prices overlap).

The GT carries the biggest bump, \$4000, but at \$30,995 you gain 35 percent engine power and that 3500-pound tow capacity, along with a host of premium features and trim cues. Included are everything from a 710-watt Rockford Fosgate audio system to a remote power liftgate (which opens an inch and a half higher than before).

All models have an extensive range of safety and security features, from child safety systems to anti-theft features, advanced body construction, traction control and hill start assist. Adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning and forward collision mitigation can be added to the top four-cylinder model or the V6.

There are three packages available for the SEL and one for the GT. Maxed out, you hit \$30,245 on



The Outlander's interior is stylish, clean and purposeful. • Headroom ranges from over 40" in front to just shy of 36" in the third row, legroom from almost 41" in front to 37.3" in the second row and 28.2" in the third row. (Tall headrests can handle an adult, but the third row is best for kids; the headrests can be stashed.) Cargo room ranges from 10.3 cu.ft. with all seats up, to 63.3 cu.ft. behind the first row. Seat folding is done in three easy steps. • Reworked controls and functions—hard keys, knob positions and touchscreen translucence—greatly improve audio and navigation operation and set the stage for Apple CarPlay and Android Auto to join the feature list in the near future.



a front-drive or \$32,245 on an AWD four-cylinder, or \$34,345 on a GT. Warranty is 10/100 powertrain, 5/60 new vehicle, and 5-year roadside.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) has rated Outlander a Top Safety Pick Plus (TSP+) for three years in a row—meeting all its crash tests, plus earning an advanced or superior rating for front crash prevention.

The marketing team wants to make sure your Mitsubishi Outlander awareness level gets a boost this year. There are a lot of brands to consider when you shop for a seven-passenger crossover, and now you are armed with new knowledge. Think of the price of the Mitsubishi Outlander. Think of its 100-plus improvements. Think of the global manufacturing giant who creates it. The engineering team has done everything to satisfy you when you give it a better look. Take a test drive. You should have no trouble picking the model that's best for you, and you will find an exceptional level of value in any of them. ■



Leaving gravity behind, high above El Centro



Let's take a thrill ride on Fat Albert

Story and photos by Jan Wagner • AutoMatters+

A recent Friday the 13th turned out to be my lucky day. Earlier I had applied for one of the coveted media spots for a ride on Fat Albert this day, but I'd not heard back. I assumed that meant no, so instead I went on a shoot at San Diego's Balboa Park.

At about 9:30 am, my cell phone rang. It was the Public Affairs Officer from NAF El Centro. I learned that an email snafu had prevented me from receiving my flight approval notification. He asked me if I could make it to NAF El Centro in time for the mandatory briefings?

You betcha. I arrived at the main gate of the base—the winter home of the Blue Angels—with just under half an hour to spare.

I signed an air transportation agreement and listened intently to an initial briefing that included: "This is not a commercial airline. Do not wear your seatbelts loosely. They need to be tight, because you're going to go floating if you don't. If you actually do go floating, you're probably going to crack your head, so hopefully that's good incentive for you guys to keep your seatbelts super tight. That way you can enjoy the ride."

We learned that we were "actually going to be part of history today. Captain Katie Higgins is going to be the first female to be performing the demo, as far as practice, and tomorrow will be her first air show."

Then our left seat pilot, Captain Katie Higgins, introduced her crew and gave them a quick crew brief that included her step-by-step, turn-by-turn, climbing, diving and banking plan for our flight.

Next, in her passenger brief, Captain Higgins told us: "You're going to feel some positive G's up to two. It's about two times your body weight, so you'll feel heavy in your seat, like you're getting sucked down. Then you'll also feel the zero-G, which is kind of like you're in space. You're going to feel weightless. You're going to come out of your seat if your seatbelt isn't cinched down tight enough, so make sure you get that thing cinched down. In addition to your body floating away, anything that you have in your hands, anything that

KEEP RIGHT >>

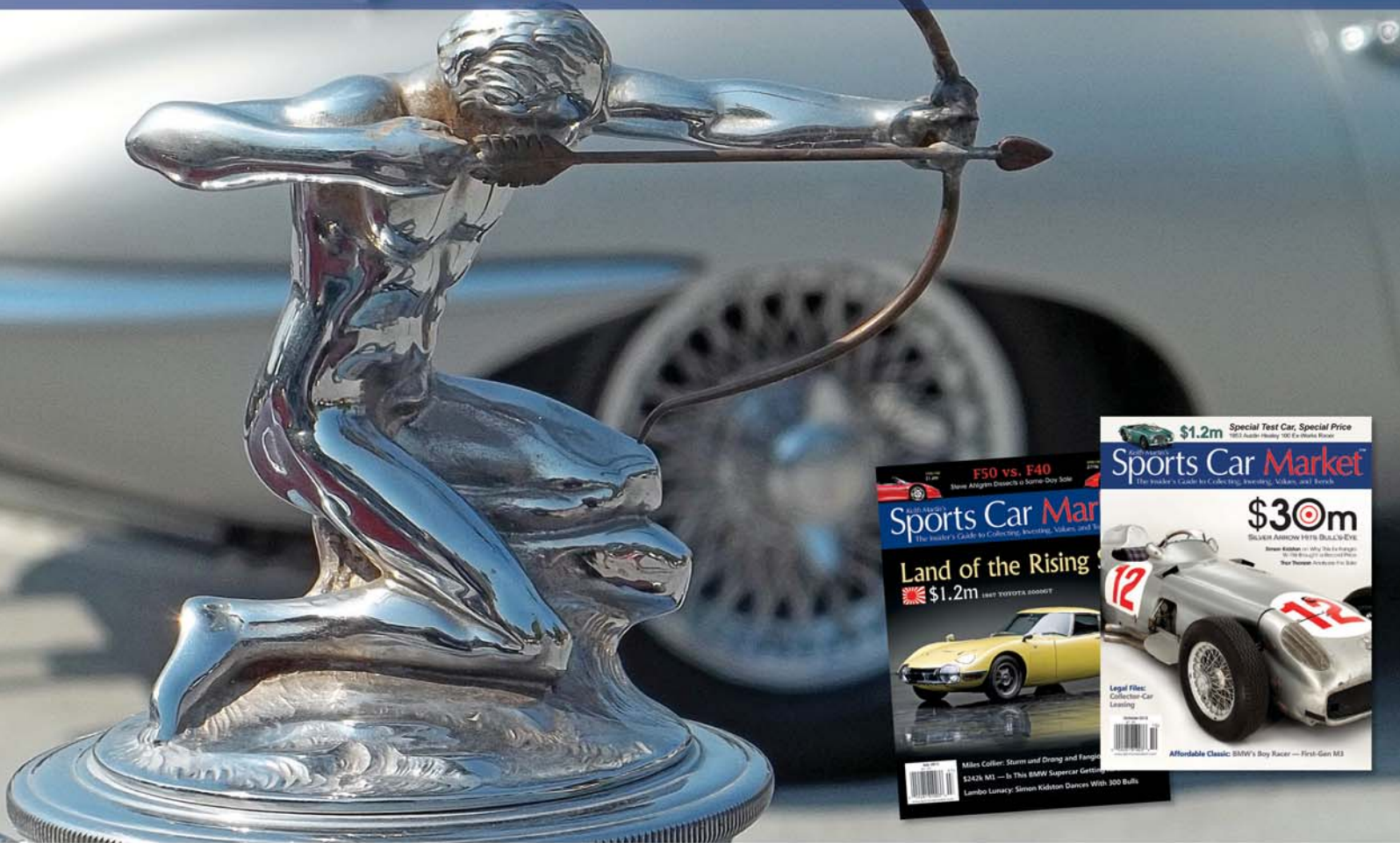
(Left page) Fat Albert in banked turn. • (Right, top to bottom) Fat Albert. • Crew and passenger brief by Captain Katie Higgins. • Seated in a high-G maneuver.



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(Top to bottom) Straight and level flight. • Floating in zero-G. • Crew of Fat Albert (with author at center).

you have around your neck, in your pockets that aren't secured down are also going to float away. This is not conducive to our aircraft because when we put the positive G's back on, everything's going to come crashing down. So, if you don't mind, please keep everything securely on your body: cameras, phones, anything like that, because if it does crash and explode all over the back of this beautiful aircraft, unfortunately you'll be staying here helping to pick up the pieces. That also goes for the contents of your stomach. If someone is going to be sick, if you can please put it in an airsick bag because, again, if it goes everywhere, you're going to have to stay and help us clean it up—if you don't mind. So seatbelts, don't barf unless it's in a bag and keep holding all your stuff.”

I asked Captain Higgins if I could hold my (heavy) camera to take photos. She said “It would be kind of cool because you'll see the guys who are in the back who aren't strapped down—our safety observers—they'll be floating around, and so it would be a really cool kind of picture. I would say definitely have it out.”

As for whether or not she is nervous about her history-making flight as the first female demo pilot, she replied: “No, I'm not. We've gotten plenty of practice. My parents are in the crowd so I'm really happy to be able to do it in front of them. Its a great opportunity to be here.” We applauded her. “The whole flight takes about 8-½ minutes, depending upon how fast I fly it.”

From there, we found our seats, belted ourselves in and were each given an airsickness bag.

Our flight was unlike anything I'd ever experienced. In the high-G portions, it felt like a super magnet was trying to pull my camera to the deck. Surprisingly, the plane got quite hot and humid on our short flight. Feeling weightless was wonderful. Fortunately I did not need my motion sickness bag, which will now be a treasured souvenir. The memories will last a lifetime. ■

©2015 Jan Wagner, AutoMatters+ #376
 Award-winning **JAN WAGNER** has been writing professionally since 1979 and an avid photographer for as long as he could hold a camera. He was a television writer/producer in his native Alberta, before transferring to his current home in San Diego.



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VEHICLE IMPRESSION : 2016 MAZDA CX-5 GRAND TOURING FWD

one in a million BY JOE SAGE

During the week we had our 2016 Mazda CX-5, news broke that the popular compact crossover had hit a million sales—in just three years. Mazda has one of the highest customer satisfaction rates in the industry, so that's a lot of "likes." We reaffirmed our own.

New in 2012, the vehicle received an available 2.5-liter engine and 9-speaker Bose audio, the two things it needed, both of which we enjoyed—a lot—again in this 2016 model. Dozens of upgrades this year include exterior details, interior fitment and tech features.

Our logbook notes had almost no beefs, just smooth sailing. Prices start at just \$21,795, and our extremely highly-outfitted Grand Touring is just \$28,220 (or \$1250 more with AWD). The CX-5 appeals to us as it continues to have more of a "small SUV" style and stance than many crossovers. We find it to be one of the most solid choices in the compact crossover segment.

The CX-5 has won more than 60 awards, including Car of the Year twice in highly competitive Japan, where it has also been the top seller twice so far this decade. Our CX-5 is built in Hiroshima. Global sales are so hot, plants have been added in four more countries for other markets. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE SKYACTIV 2.5L 4-cyl
TRANSMISSION ...6-spd sport mode auto (avail. man.)
DRIVETRAINfront-wheel drive (avail. AWD)
POWER/TORQUE184 hp / 185 lb-ft
TURNING CIRCLE36.7 ft
WEIGHT3433 lb
FUEL / FUEL CAPACITY87 octane reg / 14.8 gal
MPG26/33/29 (city/hwy/comb)

INCLUDED: 19-inch alloys, rain-sensing wipers, intermittent rear wiper, heated mirrors, leather wheel w/audio/cruise controls, leather trimmed sport seats, 8-way power driver's seat w/lumbar, heated front seats, keyless entry/start, rear privacy glass, roof spoiler/antenna, power moonroof, dual zone auto climate, Bose 9-speaker audio, 7" touchscreen, rear camera, 40/20/40 split rear seat, carpeted floor mats, rear cross traffic alert, ABS/EBD, DSC, TCS, hill launch and much more.

BASE PRICE	\$28,220
GT I-ACTIVE PACKAGE: Radar cruise, smart brake, lane departure warning, high beam control.....	1500
GT TECH PACKAGE: Nav, LED heads, adaptive front lights, LED DRLs, LED fogs, LED tails, smart city brake, auto-dim mirror w/Homelink	1505
CARGO MAT:	60
SOUL RED PAINT:	300
REAR BUMPER GUARD:	100
RETRACTIVE CARGO COVER:	200
DOOR SILL TRIM PLATES:	125
DESTINATION CHARGE:	880
TOTAL	\$32,890



The only thing we might change is the position of the start/stop button, concealed behind the right-hand barrel stalk (the style of which we like a lot) —never intuitive, if you have multiple vehicles.



Little BMW soft-top

BY JOE SAGE

No sooner did BMW bring us the 1 Series, than they renamed things—turning their 3 Series coupes and convertibles (but not sedans or wagons) into 4 Series, and turning 1 Series coupes and convertibles into 2 Series, which is what we have here. (There is not a 1 Series sedan in the US this year.)

The convertible bears a soft top, which operates relatively quickly for a four-seater—about 19 seconds down and 22 up—even with complex bodywork involvement during the process. With the Z4 roadster now bearing a retractable hard top, this makes the little 2 Series the smallest BMW to bear the day-at-the-beach casual ragtop feel.

When the top is up, this model has the same bulging, prominently-ribbed baby carriage style we dislike in the 3-now-4 Series.

The soft top operation is almost as complex as a hard top, requiring working through a series of alerts and alarms, particularly dealing with a movable partition within the trunk, which needs to be dealt with whether you have luggage or not, before you can proceed. And its system of panels and blocks to

conceal the top and its mechanism are about as complex as with the Z4's hardtop.

On the road, the car's power handles its relatively light weight well, with nimble and fairly quick power and handling. Annoyances with the joystick shifter, feature interface screen and turn signals are familiar from other current BMWs.

And as with other BMWs we've driven, we are unable to ignore the option list and pricing. An upper-mid \$30s car once again quickly turns into a mid-\$50s car, with the addition of such fundamentals as rear camera, keyless entry and navigation, each of which forces you into a bundle of additional add-ons. Skim the full list, and you'll see there are a few things that seem desirable—some properly priced, others not—but a number of things you could scratch out. As it is, this car stickers higher than the base price of a 3, 4 or 5 Series, a Z4, X3 or X4 and matches the base price of an X5. It is encroaching on M Series pricing. For the same price, we'd be more tempted to forgo all their add-on costs and instead move up the model lineup. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....2.0L 4-cylinder direct injection turbo
TRANSMISSION	.....8-speed sport automatic
DRIVETRAIN	.....rear-wheel drive
POWER/TORQUE	.....240 hp / 255 lb-ft
WEIGHT	.....3625 lb
ACCELERATION 0-TO-60	.....5.7 sec
TURNING CIRCLE	.....35.8 ft
FUEL CAPACITY / FUEL REQ.	.....13.7 gal / premium
MPG	.....23/34/27 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$37,900
GLACIER SILVER METALLIC	.....550
CORAL RED DAKOTA LEATHER	.....incl
SPORT LINE: 18" alloy green wheels, black mirror caps, sport seats, aluminum/black trim	.....2050
COLD WEATHER PACKAGE: Heated front seats, heated steering wheel, headlight washers	.....700
DRIVER ASSISTANCE PACKAGE: Rear camera, park distance control	.....950
DRIVER ASSISTANCE PLUS	.....700
LIGHTING PACKAGE: Xenon headlights	.....900
PREMIUM PACKAGE: Keyless entry, garage opener, auto-dim mirrors, power front seats, lumbar support, ambient lighting, satellite radio	.....3400
TECHNOLOGY PACKAGE: Navigation, BMW online and apps, RTTI, remote services	.....2150
TRACK HANDLING PACKAGE: M Sport brakes, adaptive M suspension, variable sport steering	.....1600
BLACK SOFT TOP	.....100
PARKING ASSISTANT	.....500
HARMAN/KARDON PREMIUM AUDIO	.....875
ENHANCED BLUETOOTH AND SMARTPHONE	.....500
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....950
TOTAL	.....\$53,825



Our car's silver paint, which was an added cost option, makes a fairly dull presentation from without, until you put the top down and reveal the stunning Coral Red Dakota Leather within.

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TRAVEL DESTINATION : SEDONA

Summer in red rock country

Open Mic Night

JULY 7 THROUGH WINTER. Singer/songwriter open mic night is open to performers of all music styles, as well as to audience members. Enjoy a fun night of hearing local artists or sometimes traveling performers. Every week is different, with an opportunity to hear a variety of musicians. Tuesday nights, 7-10pm, hosted by Dan Rice. Musicians, please arrive early and let Dan know you want to participate. Vino Di Sedona Fine Wine & Craft Beer, 2575 W State Route 89A. 928-554-4682.

Winemakers Horseback Trail Ride

JULY 17 THROUGH WINTER. Take a trail ride through the Verde Valley's high desert terrain with Javelina Leap Vineyard & Winery winemaker Cynthia Snapp. She will discuss the winery and the terroir, along with winemaking, soils, growing grapes, barrel tasting. After the ride, enjoy lunch served in the Arizona Room. Your trail ride begins at 11am, and lunch, ordered from the menu, is served about 1pm. Space is limited; RSVP. Cost is \$120/person. 1565 Page Springs Rd, 928-649-2681.

National Day of the Cowboy

JULY 24-26. Sedona has a rich cowboy heritage. Cattle drives to Munds Mountain began in the 1890s, as early cowboy legends such as Ira Smith and Earl Van Deren made their trek through

Northern Arizona. The main event is from 11am to 8pm on July 25, a free celebration of local cultural heritage, presented by the Sedona Main Street Program and Red Rock Posse.

Sedona Hummingbird Festival

JULY 31 - AUG 2. The International Hummingbird Society presents this annual celebration—three days of presentations by nationally recognized hummingbird experts in the fields of science, gardening, rehabilitation, banding, storytelling and more. Festival highlights include Sunrise Hummingbird Breakfasts at known "hummingbird hotspots," hummingbird garden tours, banding demonstrations, and a marketplace for nature- and hummingbird-themed merchandise. Main event August 1, 9am-5pm. Performing Arts Center, 995 Upper Red Rock Loop Road. 928-284-2251. Prices vary.

Sedona Restaurant Week

AUGUST 21-30. Sedona showcases its dining prowess through semi-annual Sedona Restaurant Week, hosted by the Sedona Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau in August and December. Through a three-course pre-fixe style menu, participants can delight in one-of-a-kind dishes complete with optional libations to complete the experience. This event gives foodies the chance to experience a selection of specially priced meals

from a wide variety of Sedona's restaurants. Prices range from casual (\$22) to classic (\$33) to elegant (\$44) options, with participating restaurants including everything from local stylish bistros to fine food getaways. For more information, visit www.sedonarestaurantweek.com.

Sedona Bike & Brew Festival

AUGUST 28-29. The 2nd Annual Sedona Bike & Brew Festival, hosted by Sedona Golf Resort, is the pioneering event of its kind—a mountain bike competition hosted on a golf course. The event will start on Friday August 28 with a group ride and Criterium. The 6-mile track will take riders over all 18 holes, 400 feet of elevation change, 80 acres of fairways, tee boxes and cart paths. Races start at 8am on August 29. Sedona Golf Resort, 35 Ridge Trail Dr, 928-284-9409. \$75 for racers; free to spectators.

SEPTEMBER

SEPT. 26-27: Sedona Winefest

OCTOBER

OCT 10-11: Sedona Arts Festival

OCT 17-24: Sedona Plein Air Festival

For more information and a complete calendar of events, see visitsedona.com ■

THE INSIDE TRACK: BRIEFS & RUMORS



Petersen Automotive Museum

■ The **Petersen Automotive Museum** has new partnerships with BMW, Ford, Lucas Oil and Maserati, which join Microsoft's Forza/Xbox, the Automobile Club of Southern California and Belkin Linksys as supporters of the museum's rebirth. As the totally transformed museum reopens at the end of this year, these partners will contribute to innovative uses of connectivity and multimedia. **Lucas Oil**—significant in motorsports and owner of MAVTV—will sponsor the Motorsports gallery. **Landi Renzo**, Italian maker of compressed natural gas and other eco-friendly powerplants, will sponsor the Alternative Fuels gallery in its opening year.

■ **General Motors** is investing over \$900 million to support future business growth at its Eero Saarinen-designed Warren Technical Center campus, a National Historic Landmark site. The multi-year project—involving new construction, significant renovations of existing facilities and expansion of some operations, began this spring and continues through 2018. “We will transform this campus into a collaborative workplace of choice for our current team and future talent with the integration of new technologies,” said GM executive VP Mark Reuss. The investment is expected to create more than 3,000 new salaried jobs in product engineering, IT and design. GM's Warren Technical Center is currently home to more than 19,000 employees.

■ **Redverz Gear** has introduced the Solo Expedition Motorcycle Tent, smaller and lighter than their familiar expedition tent. Designed for a single camper, the garage area remains tall enough to stand in and to house a fully loaded adventure bike. Their Atacama Expedition Tent sleeps up to three. Both give riders the luxury of a garage to park their bike, make repairs or wait out a storm. The flexible hoop design is rated for three seasons, with an outer fly and waterproofing on the sleeping bay floor to keep you dry, and entry doors combining a privacy panel with mosquito mesh for complete closure or ventilation with bug protection. The Solo tent is \$449 and the Expedition tent \$499. Visit redverz.com.



Redverz Gear Solo Motorcycle Tent

■ **Aston Martin** recently announced new car lease deals with monthly payments ranging from \$1,400 to \$2,300. **Swapalease.com** has identified eleven other super high-end leases, from model years 2012 through 2014, at a minimum of \$1,500 per month, topped by Rolls-Royce Wraith at \$3,925/month—which they believe is the most expensive lease they've ever seen on the marketplace. Others are from Audi, Bentley, BMW, Maserati, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche. “Even the affluent are focused on monthly payments today,” said Swapalease.com executive VP Scot Hall. “It's easy to understand why consumers with tight budgets would want a lease. But when affluent audiences also look for monthly pricing it has become obvious that even the most distinguished car enthusiast is fixated on the payment, not the price.”

Swapalease.com matches individuals who want to get out of their lease with people who are looking for short-term lease agreements.



GM Warren Technical Center

■ Ever since a BMW 3.0 CSL painted by Alexander Calder was displayed at the 24-hour Le Mans race 40 years ago, **BMW Art Cars** have taken cues from speed and mobility to create a series of rolling sculp-



BMW art cars

tures. The idea began when French racing driver and art enthusiast Hervé Poulain asked famous artist friend Alexander Calder to apply his creative talents to his race car. Since then, new additions to the BMW Art Car Collection have been made over the years at irregular intervals, with works of art from Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, David Hockney, Jeff Koons and many more. Anniversary celebrations began with exhibitions in Hong Kong, Paris, the BMW Museum in Munich, and the Concorso d'Eleganza at Lake Como, where the first four BMW Art Cars by Calder, Frank Stella, Lichtenstein and Warhol, plus a M3 GT2 created by Koons, were all on display. Further presentations are set for later this year in New York, Miami and Shanghai. Seventeen artists have designed BMW models since 1975 is very international, and interest in the Art Cars has spread around the world. Several are usually on display at the BMW Museum in Munich as part of its permanent collection. The rest travel the globe—to art fairs from Los Angeles to London and Hong Kong, and to exhibitions at the Louvre, the Guggenheim and the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai.

■ **Volvo Trucks**—a separate company from Volvo cars—has become the first heavy operator with automatic all-wheel drive and automatic traction control, activating the drive on the front axle auto-



Volvo Trucks with AWD and ATC



Jaguar Mille Miglia heritage lineup

matically while in motion if the truck risks getting stuck. The driver gains improved maneuverability, and the owner benefits from lower fuel consumption and less wear and tear on the truck.

■ Nine of the most decorated landmark heritage cars from **Jaguar** competed in the 2015 Mille Miglia, in celebration of the brand's 80th anniversary. Fans lining the 1,000-mile loop—beginning and ending in Brescia, Italy, and running through the heart of Rome—were treated to the sight of three C-types, three D-types, an XK120, an XK140 and a MK VII saloon, competing as part of the Jaguar Heritage Team. The Mille Miglia, held in May, is one of the toughest tests for both car and driver. C-type number NDU 289 had competed in the original race format back in 1953 and was one of three models competing at this year's race that are owned and run by the Jaguar Heritage Trust. It was driven by Jaguar Vehicle Integrity Chief Engineer Mike Cross. C-type KSF 182 was raced by Jimmy Stewart and later by Sir Jackie Stewart from 1953 to 1955 and was driv-

en at this event by five-time Le Mans 24-Hour and three-time Daytona 24-Hour winner Derek Bell. Completing the C-type trio was PUG 676, raced extensively in the post-World War II era and driven by its owner, Royal Automobile Club Motoring Committee Chairman, Ben Cussons. The lineup also included NVC 260, a D-type formerly owned by Ralph Lauren, which competed in several Mille Miglias in the 1980s. Customers can experience what it feels like to drive a C-type, D-type and E-type at Jaguar's test facility at Fen End near the home of Jaguar Land Rover in the West Midlands, with Jaguar Heritage Driving Experiences. A choice of one-hour test drives, a half-day Le Mans 24 Hours race-themed special or a full-day “Grace and Pace” hospitality and driving program are available. ■

UPCOMING FEATURES

FCA What's New event, Further With Ford event



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NASCAR at Phoenix International Raceway



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