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Bentley Bentayga

The Future is here!



Range Rover Sport HSE

Fit for the Queen herself

Mercedes-Benz GLE

One big, fast coupe

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Same crossover, new tricks



May-June 2016 issue

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Nissan's futuristic-looking crossover gets a whole lot better



Bugatti Chiron
The world's newest and fastest production car



2016 Range Rover Sport HSE
Fit for the Queen herself



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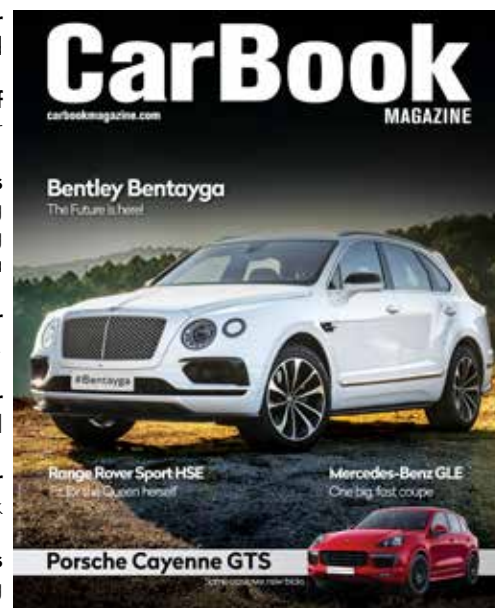
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Full of surprises.

Bentley Bentayga

The Future is here!



The Bentley Bentayga combines unparalleled luxury with effortless performance and everyday usability. With an all-new W12 powertrain, the Bentayga is the fastest, the most powerful, the most luxurious and the most exclusive SUV in the world. It offers a true Bentley driving experience and showcases innovative technology features.

Designed, engineered and handcrafted in Crewe, the Bentayga's styling is pure Bentley. Sculptural with

an elegant, timeless execution, it perfectly balances athleticism with confidence. From the four round LED headlamps and large matrix grille, to the distinctive power line and muscular haunches, the Bentley DNA is apparent throughout.

The Bentley Bentayga boasts the world's finest automotive cabin, with unrivalled levels of precision. The detailing in metal, wood and leather – including meticulous tolerances between elements of trim – is the

epitome of modern British luxury.

An all-new twin-turbocharged 6.0-litre W12 engine is at the heart of the new Bentayga. The mighty 12-cylinder unit combines efficiency and refinement with ultra-luxurious levels of power and torque. With 608 PS (600 bhp / 447kW) and 900 Nm (663 lb. ft) delivering a 0-60 mph time of 4.0 seconds (0-100 km/h in 4.1 seconds) and a top speed of 187 mph (301 km/h), the Bentayga is the world's most powerful



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and fastest SUV.

All set to make its full public debut at the IAA Frankfurt Show from 15 to 27 September, the Bentayga customer deliveries will commence in early 2016.

Innovative Features and Advanced Technologies

A suite of state-of-the-art driver assistance systems and infotainment features designed to enhance safety, comfort and convenience make the Bentayga an innovative, advanced and connected luxury SUV.

It offers the widest range of on- and off-road drive settings of any vehicle via Bentley's Drive Dynamics Mode and optional Responsive Off-Road Setting. Up to eight modes are available, allowing drivers, at the simple turn of a dial, to select the perfect dynamic set-up for any surface or road condition.

Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) including Stop & Go, Predictive ACC and Traffic Assist enables the driver to maintain a set distance to the vehicle in front. In urban environments, there are a number of driver aids available on the Bentayga.

Sculptural Form, Sharp Lines and Elegant Execution

The Bentayga's wheel arches, fenders and bonnet deliver a balance between sportiness and SUV presence. The ultra-sharp Bentley power line and muscular rear haunch display a taut tension in side profile, as part of the largest single-piece aluminium pressing in the automotive world.

The grille is flanked by four distinctive floating all-LED headlamps. The lights sit flush within the seamless superformed aluminium front fenders. Innovative design features, like the discreet headlamp washers contained within the outer lamp's body-coloured centre, demonstrate remarkable attention to detail.

A combination of advanced design, innovative engineering and state-of-the-art manufacturing technologies - including the use of lightweight aluminium - has enabled a total weight saving of 236kg compared to a traditional body construction.

As standard, the Bentayga comes with a panoramic glass roof. Making up almost 60 per cent of the total roof surface, the 1.35m² glass feature is split into two panes.

The World's Finest Cabin, Handcrafted at the Home of Bentley

Step inside the new Bentayga and you find the finest automotive interior in the world, with handcrafted





wood and leather throughout – engineered with precision to deliver absolute perfection. The attention to detail in metal, wood and leather is the epitome of modern British luxury, and is only achievable thanks to the exceptional skill of the workforce in Crewe.

The Bentayga's cockpit sets new standards for both luxury and precision, with meticulous tolerances between the exquisite veneered woods and metal elements. The dashboard takes the iconic Bentley 'wing' design as its inspiration, with the beautifully finished surfaces flowing gracefully from door to door over the top of the instrument binnacles, down under the centre console and back up around the passenger side fascia and foot well.

The hand-selected veneers form pure and elegant surfaces throughout the cabin, and each of the 15 pieces are shaped by Bentley's artisans from a choice of seven different veneers, and finished with trademark Bentley attention to detail. Highly polished, handcrafted metal elements adorn the dashboard, centre console and doors. Trademark Bentley knurling on the drive mode selector, gear knob, iconic bulls-eye vents and organ pulls adds sophistication and tactile refinement.

The four-seat configuration makes the ultimate statement in design, comfort and luxury. The two individual rear seats adjust in 18 different ways and include massage and ventilation functions as well as footrests. The veneered rear console hides additional functionality such as cup holders, generous storage areas and USB charging sockets.

The opulent feeling is completed by the fixed back, dividing the interior cabin from the boot. Also trimmed in the signature diamond quilting and including a ski-hatch, it creates an enclosed rear cabin space that sets new standards in the SUV sector. A full-length panoramic sunroof with acoustic interlays allows ample natural sunlight to highlight the surfaces and detailing.

All-New W12 – Efficiency with Unrivalled Power and Torque

At the heart of the Bentayga is the all-new Crewe-built W12 TSI engine. This 6.0-litre twin-turbo unit combines efficiency and refinement with the luxury of unrivalled power and torque.

It is the most technologically advanced 12-cylinder engine in the world and develops 600 bhp (608 PS / 447 kW) @ 6,000 rpm and 900 Nm (663 lb ft) from 1,250 rpm to 4,500 rpm. These mighty outputs

result in equally impressive performance figures. The Bentayga is capable of dispatching the sprint to 60 mph in just 4.0 seconds (0-100 km/h in 4.1 seconds) on its way to a top speed of 187 mph (301 km/h). An impressive efficiency figure of 292 g/km CO₂ is made possible in part thanks to Bentley's Variable Displacement system, which shuts down half of the engine under defined conditions. The engine is mated to an eight-speed automatic gearbox. The transmission and four-wheel-drive system has been strengthened to handle the demands and high torque levels of off-road driving. The new W12 sees a 11.9% efficiency improvement compared to the existing powertrain.

Genuine Luxury with Go-Anywhere Ability

Never before has a vehicle so coherently combined genuine luxury with go-anywhere driving ability. The development programme for the Bentayga has been the most exhaustive in the Bentley brand's history, ranging across five continents. From the dirt and gravel of South Africa and the dunes of Dubai, to the muddy fields of Cheshire, and from -30°C in the frozen North Cape to searing 50°C desert heat, the Bentayga's ability to perform on any surface and even in the most extreme conditions has been proven.

The Bentayga has also driven more than 400 laps of the famous Nürburgring Nordschleife circuit, as part of developing the dynamic performance of the chassis and fine-tuning the relevant control and stability systems. The unique features of the Nordschleife, including the high level of topographical change, variety of surface grip levels and wide range of cornering speeds, made it the perfect place to develop the fastest, most powerful SUV in the world.

The Bentayga introduces Bentley Dynamic Ride – the world's first electric active roll control technology that utilises an unrivalled 48V system. Inherent in larger vehicles with a higher centre of gravity, this system instantly counteracts lateral rolling forces when cornering and ensures maximum tyre contact to deliver class-leading cabin stability, ride comfort and exceptional handling.

Bentley Personalisation Options and Mulliner Bespoke

The Bentayga redefines personalisation and bespoke luxury. Paint, leather, veneer and lifestyle options are unlimited and tailored to the individual.

The standard palette alone comprises 17 exterior paint colours, with up to 90 hues available in the extended range. There are also 15 luxurious carpet options, seven different handcrafted veneers and 15 choices of interior trim hide, which means that customers are able to specify their own choice of luxury finish. In addition, customers can choose between a new range of bespoke Bentayga alloy wheels, ranging in size from 20" to 22". As with all Bentleys, the Bentayga can also be handed over to the highly skilled and dedicated craftspeople at Mulliner, who will respond to bespoke customer requirements.

At launch, the Bentayga is available with an exquisite integrated Mulliner Hamper Set, complete with refrigerator, bespoke fine Linley china cutlery, crockery and crystal glass, and storage area for dry goods. For comfort in the great outdoors, sections of the hamper can be removed and used as seats.

A bespoke mechanical Mulliner Tourbillon by Breitling clock can also be specified. The most complex of watch mechanisms, the Mulliner Tourbillon is automatically wound periodically by a dedicated high-precision winding mechanism within the car. This masterpiece is machined in solid gold (customers can select from either rose or white gold), with a choice of either a mother-of-pearl or black ebony face and decorated with eight diamond indexes.



2017 Jaguar XE S

Jaguar's newest kitten has claws



Back in 2001 and under the ownership of Ford Motor Company's Premier Automotive Group (PAG), Jaguar produced a compact executive car under the internal designation of X400. Known to the public as the Jaguar X-Type, this car was based on a modified version of the Ford Mondeo platform. While the X-Type's objective was to take market share from established German rivals and expand the market segment in Jaguar's key markets, sales fell well short of projections, peaking at 50,000 in 2003. This was roughly half of the number of cars that Jaguar had wanted to sell.

Part of the reason was the X-Type's sharing of the modified Ford platform (also shared with the Land

Rover Freelander compact SUV) which was not well received by Jaguar "purists". While in reality only about 20 per cent of the X-Type's components were shared with the Ford Mondeo, the seed had been planted.

Second Take

In their second attempt at the compact luxury sport sedan market, Jaguar is not taking any chances. In a splashy and highly publicised launch event at Earls Court arena in London, Jaguar flew the all-new XE by helicopter over the city to the star-studded party attended by over 3,000 guests and celebrities.

In order to be a proper, profitable mainstream luxury car maker, Jaguar needs to pump out the volume that only a compact sport luxury car like the XE can

generate.

There will be no old men (or women) 25 years from today weepily recalling the summer spent behind the wheel of the XE; that's what the F-Type coupé and roadster are for. Indeed, the task assigned to the XE is more about boosting Jaguar's bottom line, which makes it exponentially more important to the company.

The XE is the first model developed from Jaguar Land Rover's new modular vehicle architecture and is built using extensive use of aluminium. Jaguar's engineers aimed for an extremely light but yet robust structure that would set the benchmark in the segment for vehicle dynamics. Toppling the king of the jungle, the





BMW 3-Series, is the name of the game, and Jaguar is pulling out all the stops here.

In fact, the XE is the only car in its class to use an aluminium-intensive monocoque, and the platform will form the backbone of several future Jaguar models. The XE body uses over 75% aluminium content, far exceeding any other car in its class.

Look underneath and you'll see components such as a double wishbone front suspension and an integral link rear axle, both of which have been plucked from the playbook of its German rivals.

Design – Form and function

The XE wears Jaguar's new corporate face, which first made its debut on the flagship XJ sedan. The strongly-sculpted bonnet is a testament to Jaguar's expertise over the years of working with aluminium. I love how the curves create a taut, muscular appearance, while the very steeply raked windshield and rising waistline accentuate the streamlined, coupé-esque profile. Much like BMW's "Angel eye" LED daytime running lamps, Jaguar now also has its own signature, manifesting as its signature LED "J-Blades". These are present on all of its new vehicles, creating an instantly recognisable icon of Jaguar design.

Jaguar's rich history of designing aerodynamically efficient and yet stunning car continues with the XE. The company boasts that the model has the lowest drag coefficient of any Jaguar to date – Cd 0.26 – achieved through a combination of over 1,200 computational fluid dynamic simulations and a whopping eight million hours of super computer processor time. The body's low-drag shape is enhanced by innovations,

too many to list in this review. The main ones include front bumper ducts, which channel airflow over the surface of the front wheels to reduce drag, and lightweight under-floor panels running back to the rear silencer to create an almost perfectly smooth surface, also significantly reducing drag.

Inside look

The XE's cabin is a bright and pleasant place to be. A long 2,835mm wheelbase and low seating position befits the XE's sport sedan nature. Contour-hugging front seats, optionally available with cooling and heating, are mounted low, creating a sports-car like driving position.

Despite the long wheelbase, it can feel a bit cramped in the back as the XE's competitors have more rear legroom. By volume, the boot is also the smallest in the class. However this is the price that one pays for styling and Jaguar would argue that the XE's coupé-like design is far worth the compromise. That being said the XE is far from space deficient and every version comes well equipped with Jaguar's InControl touchscreen infotainment system, climate control and parking sensors,

There is a general industry-wide shift towards making less cluttered interiors and the clean design is mirrored in the new XE. All are very straight-forward and logical, albeit the InControl's user interface graphics lack a bit of outright character and flair.

What is in place is good though, and everything feels well-assembled, and the quality of the materials is fairly high. What's missing are some of the surprise and delight features of the bigger and more expensive XF,

but in all fairness, buyers probably expect that.

Some may find it slightly tacky, but the sense of theatre from the rising automatic gear selector knob is still a neat touch. Coupled with the electric handbrake switch, there is plenty of room in the centre console for an armrest, two large cupholders, and the array of drive mode switches.



The Driving Experience

The XE has received myriad global awards thanks to its unrivalled balance of ride, handling and refinement and it's not difficult to see why. The light, stiff, advanced aluminium architecture, sophisticated suspension and powerful, efficient engines make the XE the driver's car in its class.

There is available diesel power from a new engine called "Ingenium" – designed from scratch by Jaguar, and on the other end of the spectrum a 340 hp 3.0-litre supercharged V6 engine also shared with the F-Pace and F-Type.

Jaguar stood by its hydraulic steering systems until it felt that electric power-assisted steering technology was ready. And now that time has come. Even though the XE's electric system isn't quite as communicative as the company's old hydraulic setup, the weighting is natural and the rim is talkative. In fact, I think that it's best in class. Yes, even better than that in the 3-Series juggernaut.

All-wheel drive was engineered into the XE from day one to enhance vehicle dynamics and provide greater traction. Torque is only transferred to the front wheels when needed, maintaining the XE's inherent agility and rear-wheel drive character. The rear-wheel drive chassis always seems firmly planted but there's a definite sense of the car being pushed from the back and steered from the front – great balance, in other

words. The XE's available Adaptive Surface Response (AdSR) also makes the AWD system even better by changing the mapping of the powertrain and Dynamic Stability Control system according to the conditions. Together with class-leading chassis design, the unique combination of AWD, AdSR and the revolutionary All Surface Progress Control system gives the driver greater confidence in adverse conditions. The XE is the definitive all-weather sports saloon. First developed for the F-TYPE, Configurable Dynamics is also offered in the XE and enables the driver to tailor the car's character by selecting individual settings for the throttle response, transmission shifts and the Adaptive Dynamics continuously-variable damping system.

The now ubiquitous ZF eight-speed automatic is very good indeed, shifting gears quickly and unobtrusively so that the power feels as uninterrupted as possible. While not quite as crisp as a double-clutch gearbox, the auto is snappy enough to suit a more aggressive driving style when you want it.

Final Thoughts

The XE's fun-to-drive factor makes up for its shortcomings, namely its smaller back seat and boot space. Jaguar wants its XE to be known as the driver's car in the class and in my opinion they have succeeded. By putting driving dynamics at the top of the list while still lowering the brand to a more accessible price



point, the answer to "which compact luxury car should I buy" isn't an automatic answer that points to the BMW 3-Series.

The XE is virtually as accommodating as the 3-Series and crucially, for the most part better to drive. In other words, Jaguar has done what Lexus and Infiniti could not.

Will buyers flock to Jaguar dealers to check out the new car? That remains to be seen. But they would certainly be doing a disservice to themselves they didn't

Mercedes-Benz GLE

One big, fast coupe



Before we get started, let me address a point of possible confusion. Although Mercedes-Benz' GLE 63 S has "Coupe" in its description, it's not what you're probably imagining. The German manufacturer is keeping with a prevailing automotive trend of calling certain four-door vehicles coupes due to their curvy form factors — some examples that come to mind are the BMW selection of Gran Coupes, and the Volvo S90 also featured in this issue.

New name

On the topic of names, GLE is part of the company's revised nomenclature where the first two letters describe the model's sport utility nature, and the last letter identifies where it falls within the lineup, just as with the passenger cars: the executive E-Class, the

compact C-Class, and so on.

Officially replacing the former M-Class in 2015, the GLE comes in three all-wheel drive flavours — the 350d diesel 4MATIC, 450 AMG 4MATIC, and the spiciest of the bunch, the Mercedes-AMG GLE 63S 4MATIC.

In press materials introducing the crossover, Tobias Moers, chairman of the board of management at Mercedes-AMG GmbH talks about an evolution of the automaker's utility vehicles.

"We see great potential in this vehicle segment, which is new to Mercedes-AMG. The GLE 63 Coupe is the logical progression of our ambitious growth strategy — after all, in 1999 with the first high-performance SUV ML55 AMG, we established a completely

new segment. The new GLE 63 Coupe will inspire SUV fans focused on dynamics while at the same time representing a new interpretation of driving performance," says Moers.

The side profile of the GLE reveals a turtle-esque shape caused by the steeply sloping rear roofline, also common on competitors like the BMW X6. While this does provide a sporty visual element, from a usability standpoint, visibility out of the sliver of a back window is reduced to nearly nil.

It might be called a coupe, but the 63 S is no small animal, even though it may appear so. I was surprised I was barely able to squeeze into my fairly spacious apartment parking spot. At 4,851 millimetres long, 2,151 mm wide and 1,760 mm tall, its 25 mm



lengthier than the X6 and nearly 41 mm higher.

Styling

There are all sorts of neat styling cues that indicate its place in the AMG family, such as the chrome blade running down the centre of the mesh grille; the sculpted “A-wing” in the front bumper separating the air intakes; red brake calipers; and 22-inch AMG alloy wheels wrapped in 285/40/22 (front) and 325/35/22 (rear) tires.

Other exterior highlights worth a mention are 3-D LED headlamps; a tailgate lip spoiler; rear air inlets (serving to improve the coefficient of drag besides looking darned cool); lower bumper diffuser with integrated twin exhaust tailpipes; and of course, prominent AMG badging.

The emblems carry over into the passenger compartment as well, inset into the supple nappa leather seat upholstery. Items like the three-spoke steering wheel, paired with aluminum shift paddles, and racy instrument cluster housing a 4.4-inch display help the interior strike a good balance between luxury and sporty.

Under the hood of the big swoopy beast rests a 5.5-litre V8 twin-turbo engine developing 577 horsepower and a whopping 761 Nm of tire-shredding torque. The massive powerplant is capable of getting this 2,300-kilogram GLE from 0-100 km/h in a mere 4.2 seconds, which is about the same time it takes a Porsche 718 Boxster S or a Maserati GranTurismo.



Equipped with a sports exhaust system, the 63 S emits an unmistakable AMG growl. Personally, I would opt for the available performance exhaust system that takes the exhaust note to an entirely new level.

Completing the powertrain is an AMG SpeedShift Plus 7G-Tronic seven-speed automatic gearbox coupled with paddle shifters, as touched upon earlier. The driver can select from the following five different transmission modes: Slippery, Individual, Comfort,

Sport and Sport Plus using a rotary dial on the centre console. The settings are pretty self-explanatory, and each one affects engine response, shift points, stability management, steering feel and suspension stiffness.

In addition, there is an M button that, when pressed, restricts automated up and downshifting, handing complete shift control over to the driver. When you gear down, the transmission blips the throttle for a smooth, rev-matched transition.



Surprisingly agile

Given the vehicle's size and height, one could assume handling isn't a strong suit. I certainly wasn't expecting too much, but the 63 S has all-wheel drive, amongst other gadgets, to ensure the rubber stays on the road.

An optional Ride Control sports suspension with AIRMATIC package allows a highly customizable

height and dampening adjustability, and adds active roll stabilization to minimize body roll during turning. Even though it's a bit of a weird sensation sitting in an elevated position while carving corners, the SUV stayed always felt planted.

In terms of safety, there are lots of standard features including, but not limited to, automatic braking,

collision mitigation, tire pressure monitoring, 360-degree camera and a function that keeps the GLE inside the proper lane markers during high crosswinds. In conclusion — the 2016 Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 S proves it's quick and nimble enough to deserve having Coupe in its title. Even if it resembles a turtle.





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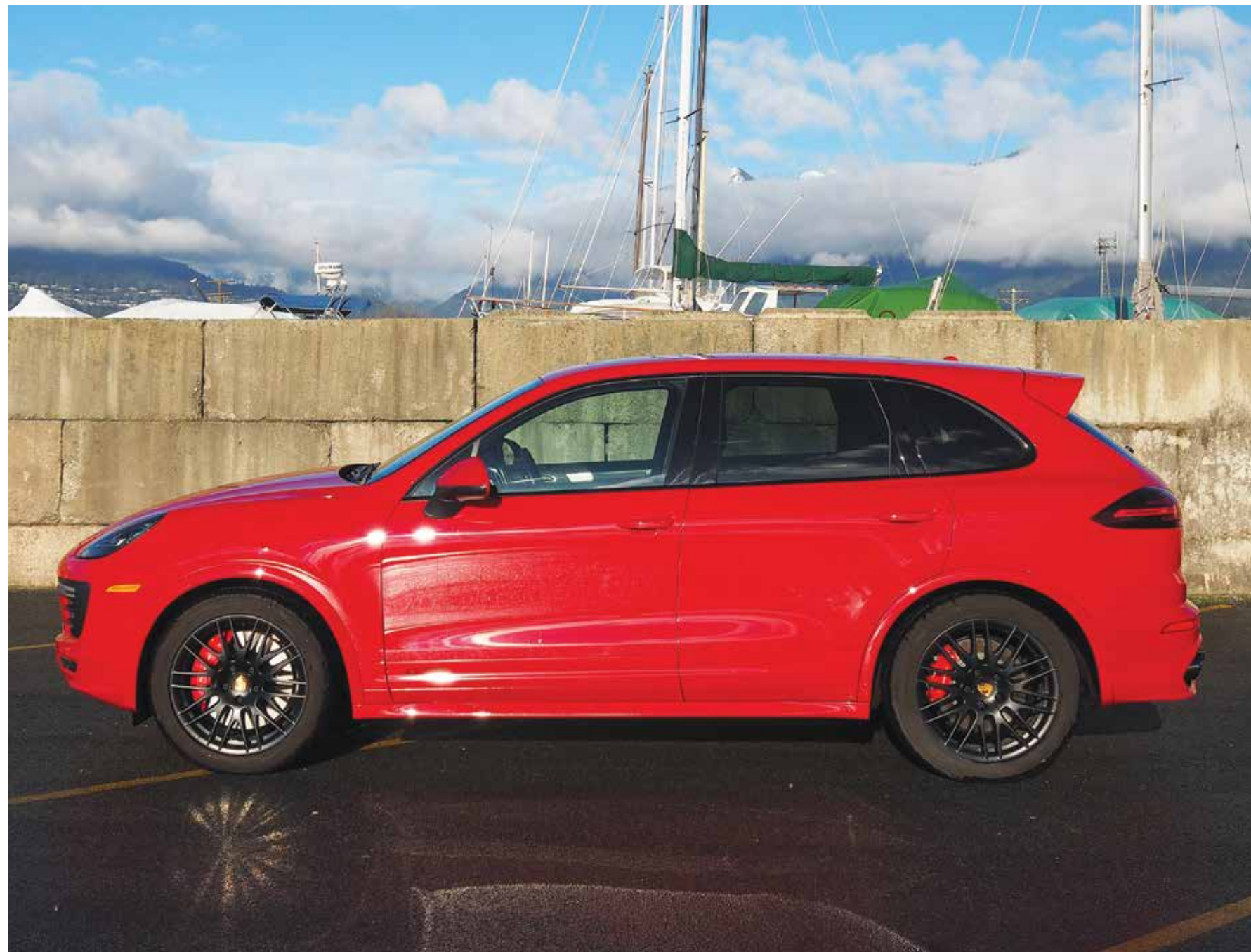
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2016 Porsche Cayenne GTS

Same crossover, new tricks



In a time long, long ago, Porsche only made what some might call “pure” sports cars. Now though, it is not uncommon to see Porsche Cayennes and Macans roaming city streets in any given neighbourhood. In fact, the former enters its 14th year of production for 2016, and now comes in an impressive seven different variants (although it’s still got nothing on the double-digit number of 911 models) ranging from a plug-in hybrid to a twin-turbo V8. I recently had the chance to get behind the wheel of one of the newest offerings in the lineup, the Cayenne GTS.

Porsche originally introduced the GTS designation —

which stands for Gran Turismo Sport — on the 911, and its purpose is to fill a gap in-between performance and ultra-high performance grades. In the case of the Cayenne, it slots in after the 420-horsepower S and before the monstrous V8-endowed 520 hp Turbo.

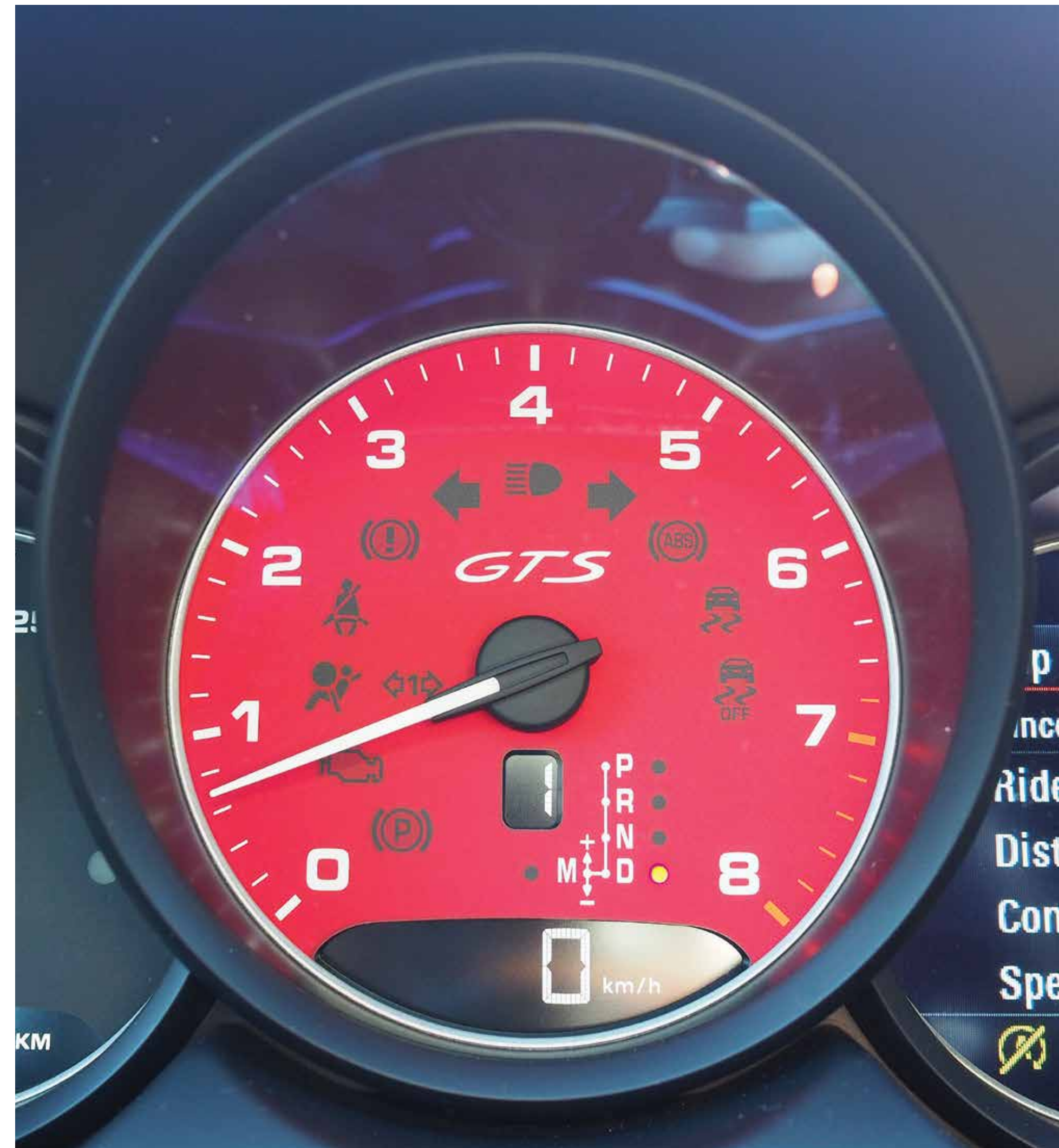
Stands out from the crowd

Without looking at the rear badge or peeking in the engine bay, it’s pretty easy to pick out the GTS’ from the rest of the flock. Glossy black accenting is the name of the game here, and there’s plenty of it. Headlights and taillights, badging, tailpipes, front door sills and the exclusive 20-inch “RS Spyder” wheels are all

finished in the menacing colour.

Other differentiating factors include larger air intakes on the front bumper and more aggressive side skirting and wheel arches courtesy of the standard SportDesign Package. Combined with the retina-blasting Carmine Red paint colour found on my press tester, to say this vehicle stands out in a crowd would be a woeful understatement.

This is a bold claim, but the interior is almost as attention grabbing. The Alcantara eight-way power adjustable sport seats somehow manage to achieve a high level of comfort and support simultaneously, two





attributes that are often mutually exclusive. And the stitched “GTS” logos on the headrests are a nice touch. The centre console area can be intimidating for the casual Porsche driver, as it’s literally covered with dials and switches. That’s because almost every function has its own individual button, and the GTS has all the bells and whistles like hill descent control, adjustable suspension height and other off-road-friendly gizmos. It’s not as bad as it initially looks, and the ability to press a physical button, and have it immediately do something rather than forcing navigation through endless submenus, is an endearing quality.

Smaller and faster

For 2016, the Cayenne GTS has actually downsized its engine from a V8 to a twin-turbocharged 3.6-litre V6. Porsche wouldn’t be Porsche if the change resulted in a power decrease, and indeed the motor now makes 20 additional horsepower and 63 additional Nm of torque compared to before, bringing the totals to 440 hp and

601 Nm.

Acceleration from 0-100 km/h happens in either a hair-raising 4.9 seconds, or 4.8 seconds if equipped with the Sport Chrono package that adds a SPORT PLUS mode further amping up engine and chassis dynamics. Perhaps what surprised me even more than the quickness of the Cayenne is a) how good it sounded with the optional sport exhaust system (especially if you press the sport exhaust button to funnel extra noise into the cabin) and b) how well it handled for a mid-size SUV.

Partial credit goes to the standard air suspension with Porsche Active Management System, tuned with sporty pretensions and which reduces the normal Cayenne ride height by 20 millimetres. Driving the crossover in a manner usually reserved for a low-slung coupe presents little issue.

For those that like to measure everything by the standard of the legendary ‘Ring racetrack,’ the folks

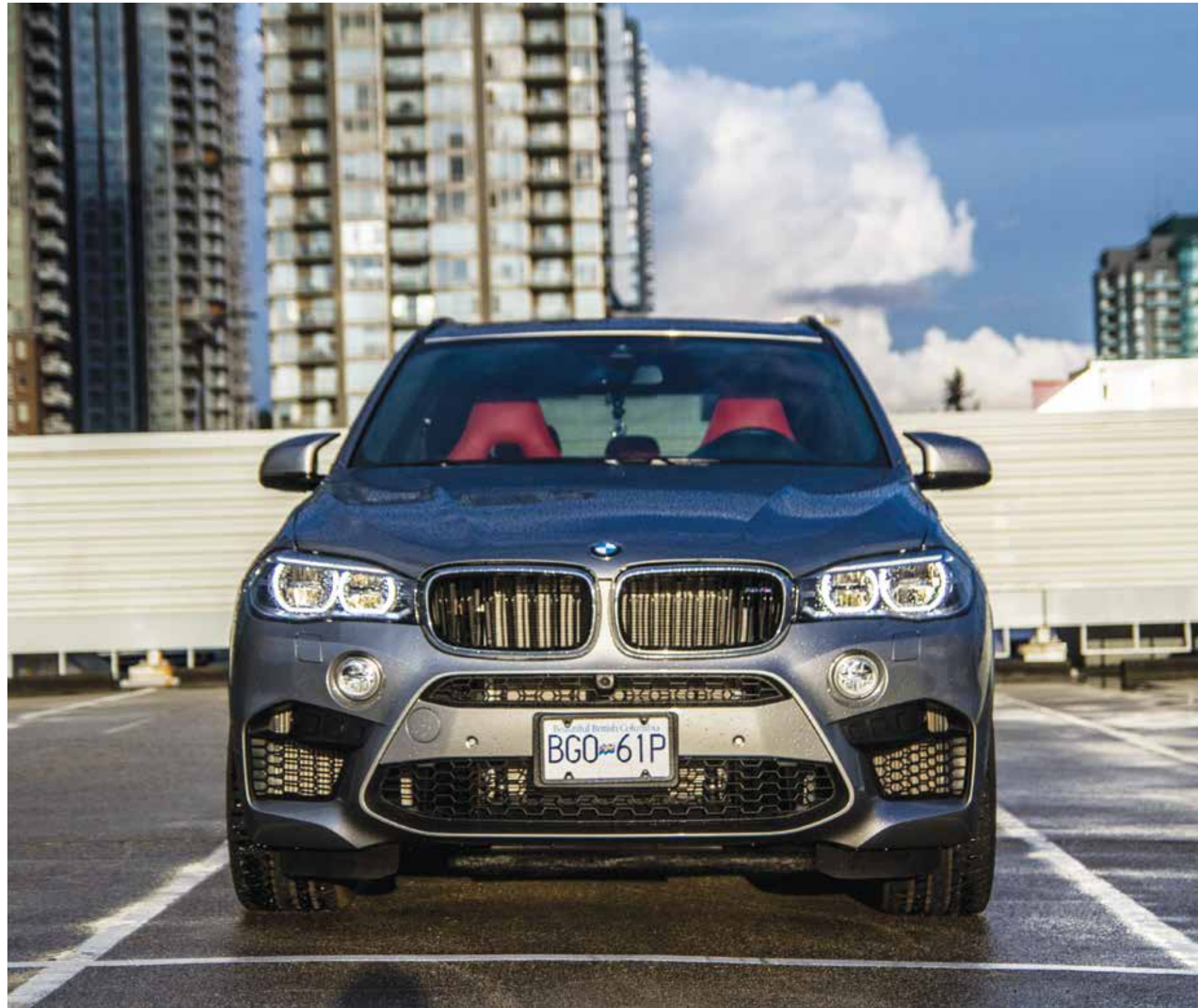
at Porsche clocked the GTS around the Nürburgring North Loop in eight minutes and 13 seconds — as a point of reference, the 911 Carrera does it in seven minutes and 30 seconds.

The 2016 Porsche Cayenne is built in the company’s factory in Leipzig, Germany.



2016 BMW X5M

Fireball quick from BMW's M division



When BMW first released their X5 SUV, they were so adamant that it bore the company's sports car DNA that they invented a new category, self-proclaiming the X5 as the world's as the "Sport Activity Vehicle". Unlike the truck-based SUVs that ruled the market back in the late '90s and early 2000s, the X5 was the answer to the question that nobody asked. Whether an SUV could handle as well as a car. And not just any car, but a BMW.

Given the popularity of performance crossovers these days, perhaps it was a question that did need to be asked after all. As it turns out, for many, the answer to modern motoring is combining an elevated seating position with an abundance of horsepower.

Astounding M Power

While BMW might have taken the first step in the SAV direction, they did initially miss the boat when it came to building supercar-fast versions of their

contemporary SUVs. Therefore rivals Mercedes-Benz and Porsche were able to sweep in before BMW realized the error of its ways.

And upon realising said error, BMW instructed their M division to remake the X5 in its own Motorsports image. The first generation X5 M was impressive and among the quickest SUVs ever built. However, it was an unforgiving machine to live with and run. With the latest F15 variant of the X5, the M division has





returned with a second stab at what their engineering boffins believed should be representative of their fastest X5.

Power comes from BMW's latest 4.4-litre twin-scroll turbocharged V8 with variable valve timing and lift. This explosion of an engine produces 567 hp and 553 lb-ft (750 Nm) of torque, and wins in a game of top trumps, even when using the X5M's two most obvious rivals as yardsticks - the Porsche Cayenne Turbo and the Range Rover Sport SVR. The BMW handily beats the Range Rover Sport SVR's 542 hp and 680Nm of torque. And while the Porsche matches the X5M's 750Nm of torque, it can only manage a "paltry" 513 hp.

BMW is keen to point out that the revised V8 is also more efficient than ever, claiming a 26 per cent improvement in range. Despite this, I never saw better than 17L/100 kms fuel consumption.

In order to control the abundance in power, the M division also retuned the suspension for M-level dynamics. Firmer bushings, modified upper wishbones with revised geometry, stiffer springs, and a 10 millimetre drop in ride height are just some of the improvements. A unique set of 21-inch wheels mounted on absolutely gargantuan 325-width (rear tires) are standard equipment.

Interior

Despite the atomic bomb of an engine under its hood, driving the X5 M as a daily driver is totally possible. Operating it in a polite manner is even conceivable.

The interior of my test car, with its Mugello Red Merino leather upholstery, satisfies most of the conflicting demands that are made by the owners of a fast SUV. These buyers expect a supportive driving

position with a heavy dose of performance peppered in. However being a BMW, those buyers may also expect the X5 M to include outstanding comfort and convenience features, plus the latest in technology. Fortunately the X5 M checks the boxes in all of the above.

The red Merino leather may look a bit crass to some, but other colours are also available. Regardless of what colour of the rainbow you might want to taste, the hide is beautifully supple, soft, and attentively finished. My test car even had it swathed in the entirety of the dashboard and door panels. The optional carbon fibre inlays were a nice and sporty touch.

Like other M vehicles, the X5 M's centre console is

populated by BMW's stubby M-only gearshift lever and a wide array of buttons to individually configure the car's gearbox responsiveness, engine power, power steering and damping systems. It may all look rather fiddly and busy, but BMW's position on all of this is that its M division clientele embrace the opportunity to endlessly tailor and tweak the settings. They're not at all discouraged by such complexity. The truth of the matter is that you can leave everything in its default setting and the X5 M still feels very special. Compared to the Range Rover Sport SVR, the X5 M has a load bay that is both longer, taller, and the rear cabin is equally as spacious. A split tailgate mimics that of the full-sized Range Rover and adds to the cargo area's ease of use.

On the Road

In its sportiest settings, the X5 M can embarrass some so-called sports sedans thanks to its high levels of xDrive grip, agility and body control. BMW's engineers have demonstrated that Porsche certainly doesn't have the monopoly on bending the laws of physics in the shape of an SUV. With its big brakes, big wheels, performance tires, and sporty suspension, the X5 M's ride is as expected noticeably firmer than that of its more pedestrian X5 stable mates. However, I never found the ride to be uncomfortable or crashy, even over poor road surfaces. The X5 M drives and feels like a much lighter vehicle that it is. The big "wagon" maintains its composure throughout manoeuvres that would have easily caused rollover accidents in SUVs from just a few years ago. Much of the credit for this good behaviour goes to its excellent xDrive system which continuously allocates up to 100 per cent of the available engine torque to the front and rear axles as needed.



Final thoughts

Viewed through the eyes of BMW purists, the X5 M is everything that a sporting BMW shouldn't be. In other words, something this heavy, large, and SUV-esque should not be this perplexingly dynamic or fast. However, judging by the number of X5 M and X6 M vehicles on the road, many affluent consumers do not share the conflicting views of the BMW traditionalists. Indeed, to these people, the X5M is a 5299 pound luxury family wagon which combines traditional day-to-day utility but yet mind-bending performance numbers.

As far as its mission to be all things all at once, the X5 M succeeds. Although the purists among us may be conflicted, the X5 M proves that you can indeed have your Black Forest cake and eat it too.



2016 Nissan Murano

Nissan's futuristic-looking crossover gets a whole lot better



When the Nissan Murano first arrived over a decade ago, “crossovers” were a new term. Introduced in 2002 for the 2003 model year, the original Murano shook up the then-new category with its curved lines and unique look. Its concept car looks certainly proved that Nissan wasn't afraid of trying new things, unlike some of its more conservative Japanese counterparts.

Love it or hate it, the Murano has truncheoned on for the past 12 years and is now on its third generation platform. And wow what a new vehicle it is! With its carefully sculpted character lines, the all-new 2016 Murano sure makes an impression once again in this ever-crowded segment.

Concept Car Styling

Styling is obviously a big part of what made and continues to make the Murano a standout in the marketplace. In fact you can tell that styling was high on the priority list from the origin of the model name itself. The original vehicle was inspired by the elegance of the famed Italian Murano glassware.

For this latest effort, Nissan's designers took its cues from the future, expressed in the form of the Nissan Resonance concept vehicle that was unveiled at the 2013 Detroit Auto Show.

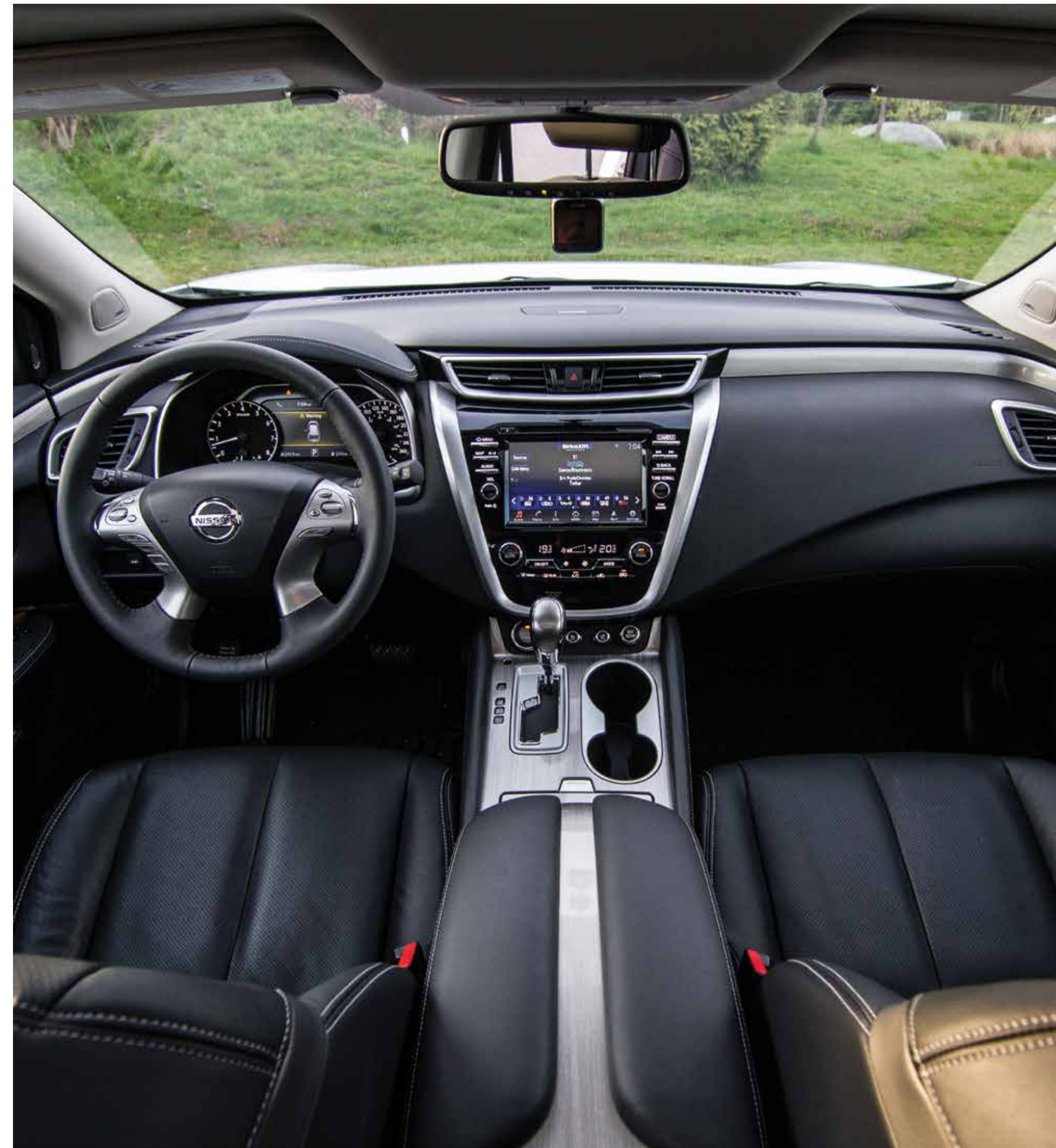
One look at the Resonance concept vehicle compared to the 2016 Murano and you'll clearly see the shared

design themes and key attributes. The Nissan Z-car inspired front and rear boomerang LED lights, the V-Motion front-end grille, and the floating roofline have all made it into the production vehicle.

They say that copying is the arguably the best form of flattery. So clever are some of these design cues that even something like the blacked out C-pillars have been replicated by Lexus on their latest RX crossover SUV.

Interior comfort

Nissan's research projects that Murano owners are more likely to carry two extra adult friends in the back versus children. In contrast with the typical Nissan



Pathfinder owner that is likely to be 34 years of age, married and with two kids, Nissan expects that the Murano owner will be 45 years of age, married and possibly even empty nesters.

It's an interesting play because with its edgy styling, the Murano looks a lot more attractive to me than the Pathfinder. It's surely a vehicle that many young parents would want to be seen in as it stands out much more in the school parking lot than the Pathfinder.

As extroverted as the exterior styling is, take a look inside and you'll find that the Murano's interior designers stuck with something a lot more conventional but still upmarket. There is a whole lot of passenger space, reasonably good cargo versatility, and a quiet but refined ambience much like an upscale social lounge.

The driving position is just right, and the low-set dash allows a wide variety of drivers of all shapes and heights to find their sweet spot.

In today's tech hungry world, what is sure to be popular is an aft compartment that houses the rear occupants' smartphones. There is also an available USB port for the rear seats that allows for separate control of music and display.

Rather than the traditional wood or metalized interior accents, Nissan also offers the use of two different and unique pearlescent glossy trims. I was more of a fan of the accents that were paired with the Graphite colour theme rather than the Cashmere (light beige).

Nissan also made a big deal about their next generation NASA-inspired advanced Zero Gravity seats. The 2016 Murano is the first Nissan vehicle in which both front and rear outboard positions have these seats. The level of padding, the type of foam, and the seat designs themselves are there to help to support a neutral posture, ensuring hours of fatigue-free driving and comfort.



Technology

Since Nissan considers the Murano to be a premium vehicle, there are quite a few niceties offered as standard or available equipment.

LED headlamps are available, as is a fantastic 11 speaker Bose premium audio system. Advanced safety features that were previously only available on Infiniti vehicles have also propagated to the Murano. There is a whole alphabet soup of safety system acronyms to keep you safe. These include BSW (Blind Spot Warning), FEB (Forward Emergency Braking), PFCW (Predictive Forward Collision Warning), MOD (Moving Object Detection), and CTA (Cross-Traffic

Alert).

Nissan's new Drive-Assist Display is standard equipment on all Muranos and includes a large 7.0 inch high-resolution centre colour display between both analogue gauges.

Flanking the centre console is Nissan's new 8.0 inch capacitive touch display with smartphone-like configurable icons. The interface is clean, clear, and reasonably intuitive. Like other advanced touch-based infotainment systems, the icons are re-arrangeable on the home screen so that the features that you use the most are the features that you see first.

Unfortunately, the screen doesn't always make the best use of the available real estate and can only display four Shortcut icons and one Widget at a time. Sometimes it can appear unusually blank and requires touching an arrow on either side to see if there are more options. Nonetheless, I did like that the system's large screen supports the ability to use smartphone-like touchscreen features such as swipe/flick to move within menus, and pinch-to-zoom for navigation maps.

Power to move

The Murano is powered by Nissan's corporate 3.5-litre DOHC V6 engine producing 260 hp and 240 ft-lbs of torque. This is the only engine choice available and delivers much of what matters to its target buyer. Strong, refined, and confidence performance when you need it. There is power whenever you demand, and the vehicle never feels out of breath.

Nissan's latest Xtronic CVT transmission has also been retuned for quick response and smoothness. This latest iteration adds new D-Step Logic, adding the sensation of gears in a traditional stepped automatic



transmission. I just wish that there were steering wheel paddles to create a more sporty driving experience. Largely thanks to the 145 pound diet, fuel economy also increases by roughly 20 per cent versus the outgoing Murano.

Ride, Handling, and Comfort

Like previous Muranos, the 2016 model offers responsive handling and a comfortable ride through its front Macpherson strut/rear multi-link suspension. The ride is still biased towards comfort versus sporty handling, however I was surprised at how well the vehicle acquitted itself on twisty bits of tarmac. My only complaint is an electric steering feel that seems overly boosted for my taste. There is a good, relaxed feel on centre and the system loads up nicely, but it's just a wee bit too light. I suspect that Murano customers like it tuned this way as it fits with the whole relaxed driving experience.

Speaking of relaxation, the interior is pleasantly quiet thanks to a wide variety of sound dampening efforts including an acoustic laminated windshield and acoustic absorption roof trim.

Nissan says that a hushed cabin environment was especially important considering the high likelihood of adult passengers sitting in the back. Providing easy front-to-rear conversations was one of the goals set out by the engineering team.

Final Thoughts

Smooth, quiet, and comfortable, the Nissan Murano checks off all the right boxes as a competent crossover SUV. It stands out from the typical crossover crowd with its daring and futuristic design, and is sure to win over many buyers with its new premium interior appointments.

If comfort, safety, and styling are higher on the totem pole than sportiness or off-road capability, the Murano is a good choice to add onto your shopping list!



2017 Kia Sportage

CUV pioneer continues to evolve



Making its first appearance way back in 1993, the Kia Sportage compact crossover utility vehicle debuted at a time when there wasn't anything else like it on the market. Released a year ahead of the Toyota RAV4, five years before the Honda CR-V and eight years before the Ford Escape, all, and now many more, are competing fiercely for a slice of the immensely popular small SUV pie.

The current fourth-generation model is targeted towards the coveted Millennial demographic, seeking attributes like value — the Sportage starts at

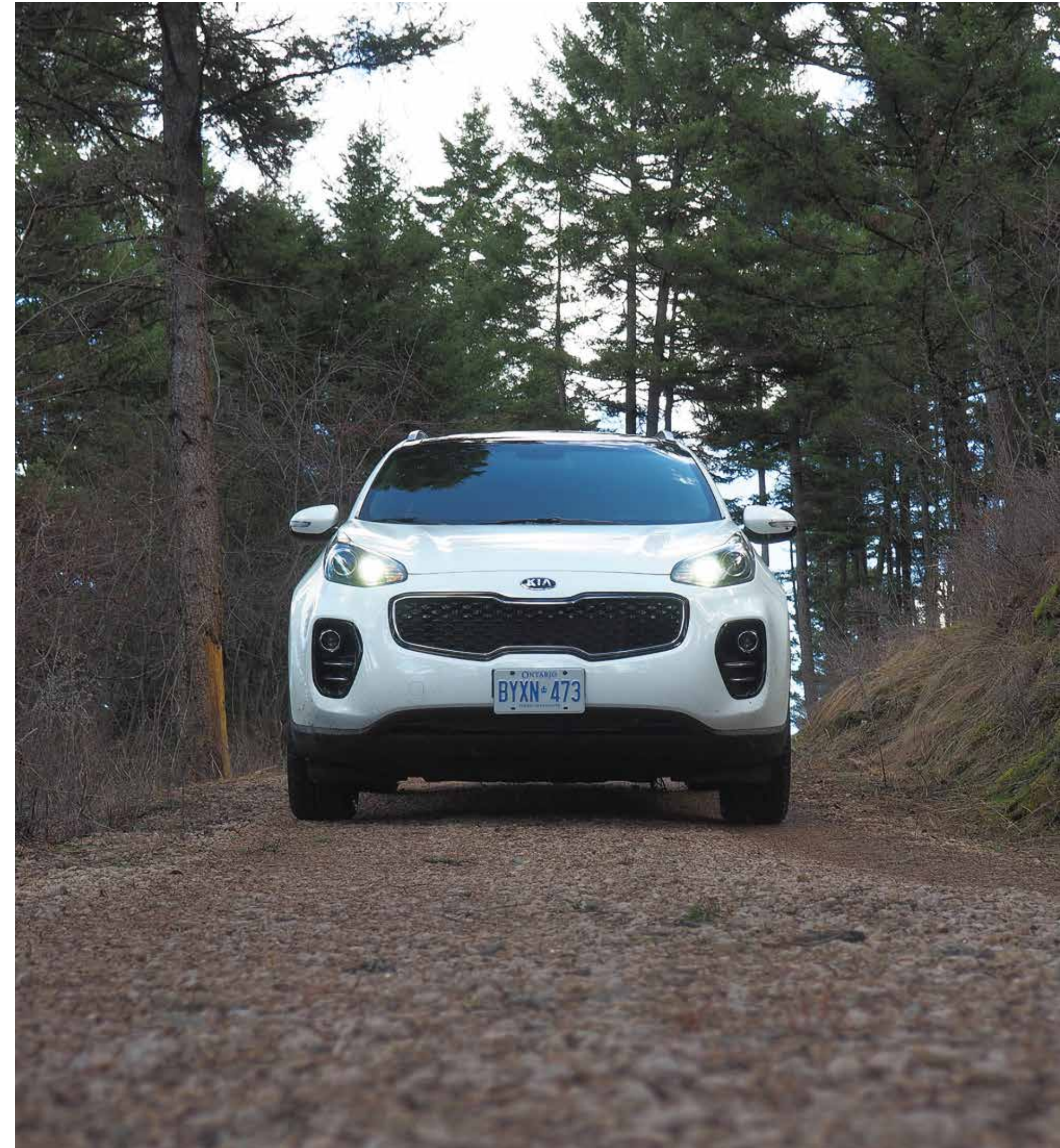
\$24,795, priced in-between a Nissan Rogue and the aforementioned RAV4 — reliability, all-wheel drive safety and of course, tech. Lots and lots of tech.

New look

The face of the vehicle is radically different from the former version and oozing with influence from Kia's chief designer Peter Schreyer. The signature Tiger Nose grille finally makes it onto the CUV, and here's a fun fact you might not otherwise learn: there are two subtly different grilles, one containing smaller openings in the mesh installed on base trims and another using bigger

spaces in-between to facilitate better airflow on turbo variants.

Perhaps the biggest point of conversation on aesthetics comes from the introduction of the optional "Ice Cube" LED foglights. Comprised of a cluster of four lamps arranged in a square on both sides, the foglights sit on top of functional air ducts encased in glossy black plastic. Although distinctive, it adds to an already busy front fascia that incorporates new combination headlights housing halogen projection or HID lamps, tri-LED daytime running lights and turn signals. Like I



said, there's a lot going on.

The vehicle has grown modestly in size, increasing its overall length by 40 millimetres, while maintaining the same width. The front overhang is 20 mm longer, the rear 10 mm shorter, resulting in a more athletic profile and greater visual presence.

The slightly bigger footprint provides a bit more head and legroom all-around. During our test drive, I was perfectly comfortable sitting in the driver's seat and operating all the controls, but my heftier co-pilot commented the shifter was poking his right leg. The storage area behind the rear seats boasts a neat "Dual Floor" function allowing the cargo floor to be lowered for more space. In the regular position, 798 litres of space is yielded, or 868 L when lowered, an increase of 128 L over the outgoing model with a fixed floor.

Full of gadgets

Earlier I talked about copious amounts technology in the Sportage, and here is some of what I mean. On the mid-level EX and grade-topping SX trims, Android Auto smartphone connectivity lets users plug in their devices to access music apps, text-to-speech and vice versa messaging, Google Maps, etc. There's also wireless charging for phones that support it, and a Harmon/Kardon premium stereo on EX Tech and above.

The base engine is a 2.4-litre four cylinder, producing 181 horsepower and 237 Nm of torque, available on all LXs and EXs. The SX receives the same turbocharged 2.0 L four found in the Sorrento and Optima, making 237 hp and 353 lb-ft. We had a chance to drive both in almost every type of environment likely encountered by buyers, and there were no major complaints. A few thoughts: the 2.4 tends to get loud as the rpms climb



in a passing or uphill situation; the turbo has loads of power, even climbing steep inclines, after a brief moment of turbo lag as the boost builds. A six-speed automatic transmission is standard, and all Sportages have a choice of front-wheel or Dynamax Intelligent All-Wheel Drive, except the AWD-only-equipped SX. Again, we had no problems with either. Regardless of drivetrain, the vehicles gobbled up twisty corners demonstrating cat-like precision, and on a

small off-road course, locking the AWD to 50:50 we ploughed easily through giant puddles and muddy ruts. Estimated fuel economy on front-wheel models is 10.4 L/100 km in the city, 8.0 L highway, and 11.3 L/100 km city and 9.5 L highway for all-wheel. A full range of safety and driver assistance features are offered, including forward collision warning, emergency braking with pedestrian detection, lane departure warning, and front and rear park assist.





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Bugatti Chiron

The world's newest and fastest production car



When it comes to hypercars (one step over supercars), acting quickly is usually the name of the game. These ultra limited production vehicles are usually pre-sold to well-heeled customers before the rest of us plebs even know of the official model's name.

While the LaFerrari, McLaren P1, and Porsche 918 Spyder have all come and gone, the folks at Bugatti have announced another opportunity for hypercar owners to add yet another vehicle to their "stables." The new model, named the "Chiron", is limited to a production run of just 500 cars.

What's in a name?

The car is named in honour of the Monegasque driver, Louis Chiron, who was the oldest driver ever to have raced in Formula One, having taken 6th place in the

1955 Monaco Grand Prix when he was 55. Chiron retired after 35 years of racing, achieving the greatest number of podium finishes in Bugattis.

Topping the Veyron

So how does one top a Veyron? According to Bugatti boss Wolfgang Dürheimer, "the Chiron will set new standards in every respect. We will continue to produce the world's most powerful, fastest, most luxurious and most exclusive production super sports car. This is the claim of Bugatti and our customers."

The Chiron still uses the carryover turbocharged 8.0 L W16 engine and all-wheel drive, but power is up 50 per cent at almost 1,500hp (ok 1,479 hp to be exact) compared to the Veyron.

Not only is the Chiron the fastest production car, but

its is also the most powerful production street car the world has ever seen. It might not have had the hybrid electric power that the last wave of contenders used, but the Bugatti Veyron supplanted that with sheer animal brutality and the Chiron will undoubtedly do the same.

Expect a mighty price tag, too

Have US \$2.6 million in spare change lying around? Well this may be just the ticket you're looking for! Bugatti says that over 170 customers have already put their hands up during role call, which probably leaves 300 or so cars left over for the taking.

What the \$2.6 million buys you is an atom bomb of an engine. The W16 tortures its seven-speed dual-clutch transmission with 1,180 lb-ft (1,600 Nm) of



torque. That torque peaks at 2,000 rpm and plateaus until full horsepower is delivered at 6,700 rpm. The new turbos themselves are now larger, capable of cramming in more air at higher pressures. The entire breathing and cooling system are also all new. There's a new carbon-fibre inlet manifold, six catalytic converters and a titanium exhaust system that reduces the back pressure.

Yes, it is true that the Chiron is about 340 pounds

heavier than the Veyron. Bugatti claims 4,400 pounds dry weight, without gasoline licking the top of the 98.4 litre tank.

Acceleration that will "tear" your face off

The Chiron will accelerate from 0-100 km/h (62 mph) in less than 2.5 seconds, 0-200 km/h (124 mph) in under 6.5 seconds and 0-300 km/h (186 mph) in under 13.6 seconds. That's 2.9 seconds faster than a

McLaren P1 and a second quicker than the Veyron Super Sport.

Top speed is electronically limited to 420 km/h (261 mph) for safety reasons, though the anticipated full top speed of the Bugatti Chiron is believed to be around 463 km/h (288 mph).

At full speed the 100 liter fuel tank would be empty in 8 minutes, that is a ridiculous 190 l/100 km or 4.5 kg CO2/km.



Volvo S90

Luxury goes four door



Volvo tasted success when they introduced the XC90 into the marketplace, a luxury crossover that has been highly praised by automotive media and consumers alike. The Swedish automaker is hoping lightning strikes twice with the recent announcement of the upscale sedan equivalent S90, which also signals a new direction and era for the company. “With the launch of the XC90 we made a clear statement of intent. We are now clearly and firmly in the game. With \$11 USD billion of investment over the past five years we have not only reimagined what

Volvo Cars can be — we are now delivering on our promise of a resurgent and relevant Volvo Cars brand,” says Håkan Samuelsson, President & CEO at Volvo Car Group in a news release.

Vintage inspiration

Described as a four-door coupé, the long and lean S90 features a large concave chrome grille pays homage to the P1800 sports car of the 1960s and 70s. Aside from the premium fit and finish one would expect from a vehicle in this class, Volvo is touting its latest model as being chock full of cutting edge

technology, such as semi-autonomous driving functionality. Dubbed Pilot Assist, the S90 can automatically navigate within lane markings on the road at speeds of up to 130 km/h. Unlike adaptive cruise control, the system does not have to rely on following another car ahead to work. Another new safety innovation is the ability to detect large animals, part of the City Safety package. For example, if an elk, horse, moose or other equally sizable mammal wanders onto the highway, day or night, a warning is issued and then brake support will kick in



to help avoid a collision.

Fancy cabin

Exact design specifications have not yet been released, but Thomas Ingenlath, Volvo Car Group Senior Vice President Design, hinted that consumers can expect an interior at least as plush as the one offered in the XC90. Infotainment will be provided by the same Sensus infotainment hardware built around a massive

nine-inch tablet control centre.

“Our idea was to bring something entirely new to this rather conservative segment and deliver a visual expression that exudes leadership and confidence on the exterior. On the inside we have taken the S90 to the next level, delivering a high-end luxury experience that promises comfort and control,” says Ingenlath. As in the XC90, the range-topping T8 plug-in hybrid

mill is available, producing 400-horsepower and 640 Nm of torque. The partially electric powertrain is comprised of both a turbo and supercharged four-cylinder gasoline engine, a 9.2 kWh lithium-ion battery pack and an 80 hp electric motor. The Volvo S90 is expected to arrive in stores the latter half of this year.



2016 Range Rover Sport HSE

Fit for the Queen herself



To many, yours truly included, British cars are as exciting as they are charming. They have class and character that the Japanese manufacturers still pine for. The original Land Rover is one of the Queen's all-time favourite vehicles, which is largely why it is a motoring icon even till today. She has not only been pictured being chauffeured around in them, but has even been behind the wheel of scores of them.

The royal relationship with the brand goes as far back as 1948 when the Queen's father, King George VI, was presented with the 100th production Land Rover. Over the years, Land Rovers have ferried both glitterati

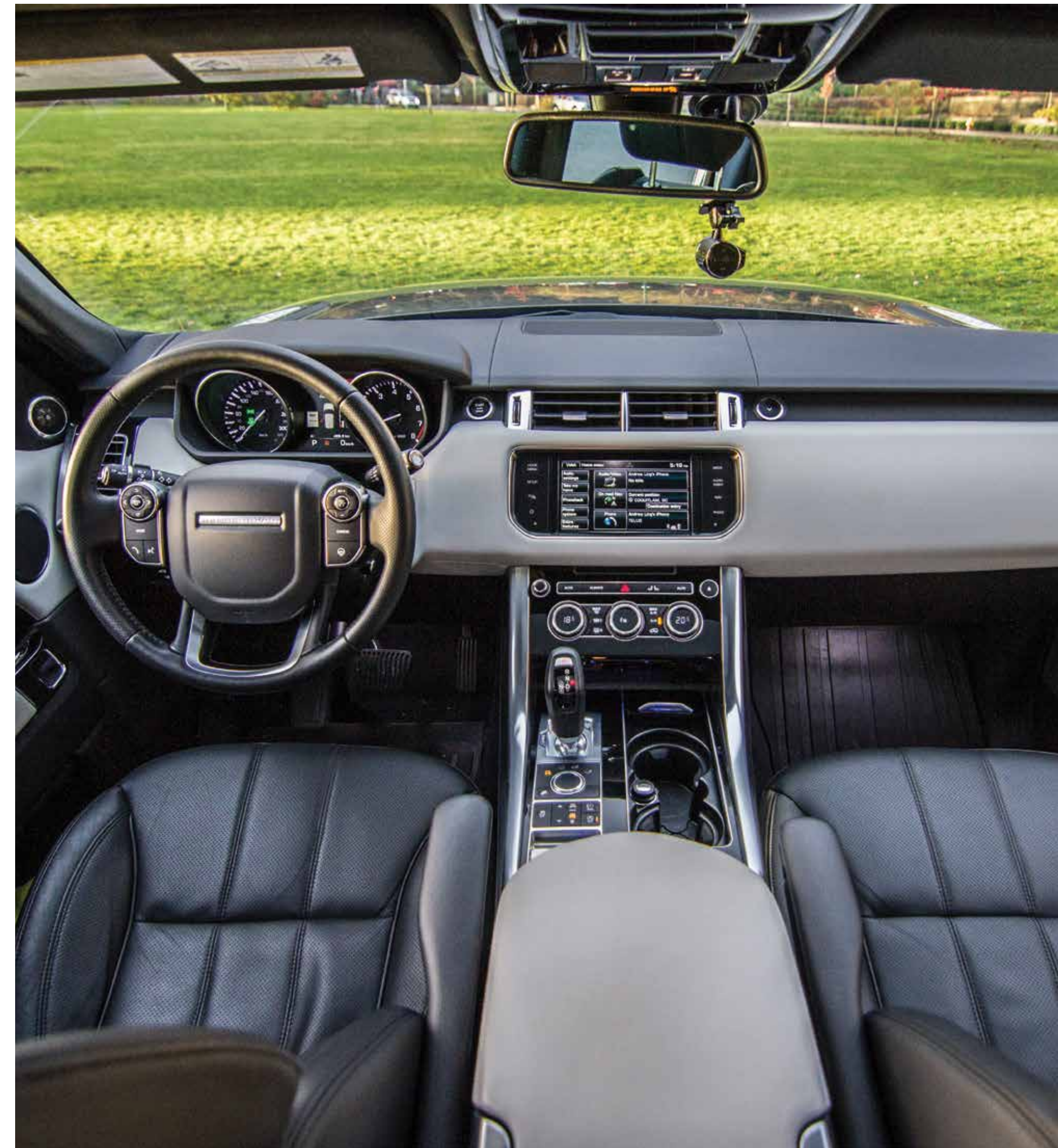
and royalty to and from countless ceremonial events. Land Rovers and Range Rovers have also seen their fair share of time on the silver screen, including in the last few instalments of the 007 James Bond movie series.

Athleticism and luxury

Despite being the smaller sibling to the full-sized Range Rover, the "Sport" nomenclature speaks to its more diminutive stature. The key is its aluminium super structure. Unlike the previous generation Range Rover Sport, which shared the LR3/LR4's steel ladder frame, the current generation Sport also uses an aluminium unibody much like the full-sized

Range Rover. Land Rover says that this cuts off up to a whopping 800 pounds of weight compared to the previous generation Sport.

The aluminium unibody makes the Sport feel totally at home whilst on the tarmac. A similar adaptive air suspension setup as the full-sized Range Rover muffles rough pavement down to a murmur, and the electrically assisted power steering has a surprising amount of precision. Is it as sporty as BMW's X5? No, but it comes surprisingly close and the steering weighting feels a little bit more natural to me than BMW's setup.



Add the active-roll control system, the optional rear electronic locking differential, the torque-vectoring unit, and the Sport has the ability to change direction in ways that would shock the Queen herself.

The expansive greenhouse and commanding view out keep the driver on top of just about everything, with the dynamic response to react to anything. There's a lot of space and true British luxury, pragmatically presented in high style.

Performance

My HSE spec Range Rover Sport test vehicle was equipped with the base 3.0-litre supercharged V6 engine producing 340 hp and 332 lb-ft (450 Nm) of torque. Spring for the higher spec HST version and the same supercharged mill is uprated to 380 hp and 332 lb-ft of torque.

If a V8 is more to your liking, or if you have towing needs, Land Rover offers two choices including a 5.0L V8 producing 510 hp and 461 lb-ft (625 Nm) of torque. However, the cream de la crème Range Rover Sport SVR is equipped with the Jaguar F-Type R's 550 hp 5.0L V8 producing a stump pulling 502 lb-ft (681 Nm) of torque.

Both engines are mated to ZF's excellent eight-speed automated gearbox. Shifts are polished and relatively quick, totally befitting the upmarket experience that Range Rover customers expect.

Offroadability

The Sport offers two permanent all-wheel-drive systems. My Supercharged V6 test vehicle was equipped with a Torsen centre differential splitting the



power evenly front and rear. A more serious system is available with an electronic centre differential and low range gearing.

As with every Range Rover, standard are aggressive approach, departure, and break-over angles, and at least 11 inches of ground clearance.

While most owners will never experience the breadth of its capability, the Range Rover Sport is still equipped

with Land Rover's latest Terrain Response 2 all-wheel-drive system that analyses the terrain ahead and automatically determines which of the five settings (general, grass/gravel/snow, mud/ruts, sand, or rock crawl) is appropriate. A next-generation air-suspension system provides four different ride heights, and other systems such as active roll control, a dynamic active rear-locking differential, and torque vectoring all integrate together to enhance control and agility.

Final Thoughts

The Range Rover Sport was Land Rover's top seller last year, finding more buyers than any of its other four models by significant margins.

With its handsome looks, the ability to seat seven in a pinch (a feat that the full-sized Range Rover cannot accomplish), quality interior trim, and its go-anywhere, do-anything image, it's not difficult to see why the Sport has sold in large numbers.

Land Rover estimates that of the two million examples of the classic Land Rovers it built, an estimated 75 per cent have survived over the 68 year production run.

Will as large a percentage of Range Rover Sports survive? Almost definitely not. But in the present day, for those who are looking for a luxurious road trip vehicle that is useful in the practical everyday sense, the appeal of the Range Rover Sport is unmistakable and undeniable.



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Cadillac ELR

Green meets luxury



You might think that the plug-in hybrid Cadillac ELR coupe is nothing more than an expensive wolf dressed in electrified sibling Chevrolet Volt's clothing, both being the product of parent company General Motors. Beyond sharing some underlying technology and a similar environmentally conscious purpose, however, Caddy's offering is a completely different (nicer) animal aimed at the luxury market.

For comparison's sake, the ELR and Volt are fairly close in size, although the former appears lower, sleeker and possesses sharper lines and a slightly menacing demeanour making it clearly the better looking one

of the pair. Attention to fine detail is apparent on the Cadillac, boasting vertically stacked LEDs in the headlamp housing, flashy 20-inch blade wheels wrapped in specially engineered low-rolling-resistance tires, recessed touch-sensitive door handles and the "Cadillac" script strategically etched all over the vehicle.

Thoughtful interior

Inside, there's real carbon fibre trim, and plenty of it. The rear view mirror is frameless, and the Opus semi-aniline leather seating is among the best I've ever sat on or touched. Cut-and-sewn leather covers almost every possible surface from the door panels — which

also house a button to open the door rather than a traditional handle — to the dash, and the headliner is covered in a suede-like material. Homage to the Cadillac crest is found throughout car, for instance the small metal garnishes in the middle of each seat, are a nice touch.

Like other models within the brand, infotainment is displayed and controlled with the CUE system that relies on touch controls. Successful receipt of a touch command is rewarded with vibrating haptic feedback that in my experience can be a hit-or-miss situation. There are ways to skirt around completely relying on

pressing the screen with your fingers, like using the steering wheel audio switches or talking to an OnStar agent to help with navigation input. Unlike some other EVs, the Volt included, there isn't a constant reminder that you're operating a green-mobile. Rather than inundating the driver with over-the-top eco information, the ELR just feels like a really nice car that happens to be partially electric.

Now in its third year of production, there have been quite a few updates directed at the powertrain, made up of two electric motors, a 1.4-litre gasoline engine-generator and a 17.1 kWh lithium-ion battery. Horsepower and torque numbers see a boost of 25 per cent, to 233 (total output) and 506 Nm, respectively, resulting in a one-plus-second faster 0-100 km/h time. Engine and transmission dynamics can be managed through one of four different modes such as the default Tour setting, Sport, Mountain, and a Hold mode that forces the car to use its gas-powered generator so you can save the battery charge during energy-hungry highway trips. In pure EV mode, ideal for city commuting, there is a maximum 60-kilometre range, subject to change depending on the terrain, driving style and ambient temperature.

Press to recharge

A fantastic invention is that of two small regenerative paddles hiding behind the steering wheel, where paddle shifters normally reside. Pressing on them activates a brake-energy-recoup function that siphons the kinetic energy from slowing down back into the battery. It's much more intuitive than, for example, the Mitsubishi



i-MiEV that requires you to shift the gear lever into a B mode to accomplish the same task.

The handling department receives a handful of upgrades as well, including stiffer suspension components and retuned steering calibration for a sportier feel.

The bottom line is that it is not necessarily fair to

compare the Cadillac ELR to the Chevrolet Volt simply because they are both made by GM and share a few parts. My two cents: if you're looking to make a statement about EV ownership, the Chevy makes a great choice. In the market for a true luxury automobile that has the bonus of being kinder to Mother Nature? Take a closer look at the Caddy.



2016 Mitsubishi Montero Sport

Redesigned SUV gets innovative



Did you know that the Mitsubishi Montero — which means mountain hunter, and is also known in other markets as the Pajero or Shogun — has been around since the early 1980s? When the vehicle was initially launched, it was marketed as the only four-wheel drive SUV that had mass cross-market appeal, just as suitable for around-town driving as it was for going off-road. Undergoing a complete overhaul following the last refresh in 2008, the 2016 Montero Sport still retains the original model's character and appeal, mixing in contemporary good looks along with several innovative firsts for the Japanese company that we discuss below.

New face

There's a lot more chrome and polished bits used in the exterior design of the vehicle than ever before, especially on the front bearing the automaker's "Dynamic Shield" fascia replicated across its lineup. The headlights are integrated into the grille and the frame of the "shield" that borders the bumper's large central mesh opening. Equally as visually striking, at the back the taillights extend far down the sides of the tailgate resembling a pair of fangs, ending right above the rear bumper housing a built-in diffuser.

Inside, the design aesthetic is a little more conventional, featuring optional comfortable leather seating for up to five occupants. Surprisingly there is no third-row add-on, something offered by competitors and even Mitsubishi itself in the Outlander. The updated dashboard is now finished in gloss black, and surrounds an infotainment system supporting the latest Android Auto and Apple CarPlay smartphone connectivity interface, a relatively recent development not yet commonly found in other vehicles. Users can connect their compatible mobile devices via a USB cable to manage navigation, music and other functions

directly from the main display.

On the performance side, the 2016 Montero Sport utilizes a 2.4-litre MIVEC diesel engine, although we wouldn't be surprised if a version of the 3.5-litre petrol V6 motor from the outgoing SUV eventually comes out. The diesel makes a peak 178 horsepower @ 3,500 rpm and has a torque rating of 430 Nm @ 2,500 rpm. Mated to the mill is a newly developed eight-speed automatic gearbox, created with efficiency in mind and allows for a manufacturer-estimated 9.8 L/100 km of combined city and highway fuel economy.

Off-road ready

It's questionable how many owners intend to take their shiny purchase off the beaten track, but if they do they can take advantage of another Mitsu first: a terrain control system with four modes including Gravel, Mud, Sand and Rock. The different settings alter engine, transmission and differential settings to provide maximum traction depending on the type of challenging physical driving environment one encounters.

For those already making off-road plans, it might be useful to note the vehicle boasts a maximum approach angle of 30 degrees, departure angle of 24.2 degrees and wading depth of 700 millimetres. If toting a braked trailer, the towing capacity is 3,100 kilograms. While the redesigned Montero will be available in different trim levels, plenty of safety equipment comes



standard such as the Super Select II 4WD system with lockable centre diff, hill descent control, hill start and trailer stability assist, LED headlamps, seven airbags, backup camera and parking sensors. Move up in grade and you get rain sensing wipers, 360-degree camera, blind spot monitoring, forward collision mitigation

and more.

Like the Montero 1.0 conceived way back when, the new example does a good job of carrying the SUV's original spirit into the modern age by blending practical usability with off-road capability, while adding some innovation to boot.



Infiniti Q70L V8

The V8 flagship has arrived



In common naval terms, the word “flagship” is typically assigned to the ship used by the commanding officer of a fleet of ships. This vessel is typically whichever ship the admiral’s flag is being flown from. Admirals usually need additional facilities such as a place to make up plans and draw up orders, or a meeting room large enough to hold all the captains of the fleet. As such, the flagship is typically a first-rate vessel.

The importance of the individual on-board generally means that the “flag” ship is also the first, the largest, the fastest, the most heavily armed, or the best known in the fleet.

It is no surprise then that this term has been borrowed in the metaphorical sense by industries such as

broadcasting, architecture, or automotive, in reference to their highest profile or most expensive products.

What is in a name

Previously known as the Infiniti M, the Q70L V8 is the new flagship car of the entire Infiniti range. Taking a page from the Germans, the “L” designation refers to the car’s extended wheelbase, which offers an extra 5.9 inches of legroom and a best-in-class 32.4 inches of knee room.

Infiniti is positioning the Q70 to compete with the Audi A6, the Mercedes-Benz E-Class, the BMW 5 Series, and the Jaguar XF. None of which offer a long wheelbase version outside of the Chinese market.

Interior comfort

Striking, voluptuous curves and complex surfaces wrap

an interior filled with warm wood, semi-aniline leather, and considerably more personality than you’ll find in comparably stark European alternatives. The interior is a nice place to be on long haul treks.

However, the infotainment system is starting to show its age a bit and could use an upgrade in the quality of both its user interface and screen resolution. Compared with BMW’s excellent iDrive system or Audi’s MMI, Infiniti’s seems to be a couple of years behind the competition.

The Q70L is sure to appeal to those who fittingly want a “limousine” experience out back, or those who intend to transport VIPs in the back seat. Heated rear seats, extra reading lamps, and additional power outlets are among this model’s extras. There is even a soft-close



door feature so that you don't have to slam the extra long doors behind your VIP guests.

Styling

The new headlight design and redesigned Infiniti corporate "double arch" grille are the most evident. There is a 3D look to the complex waved metal mesh that looks decidedly muscular but yet upscale. The Q70 also features LED headlamps, new-design LED foglamps, a flattened trunklid, and signature LED rear lamps.

Even with the stiff competition from Germany and America, the Q70 remains one of the most elegant and lavish large sport sedans. The Q70 strikes its own chord, rivalling the world's best luxury sedans in presentation without copying them—it's a true original in styling and design.

The flagship's engines

Powertrain offerings haven't changed for 2016, and that's just fine. In the UAE, only the rear-wheel-drive version of the Q70 is available, whereas in other markets, all-wheel-drive versions is also offered.

There are two powertrains offered, both of which offer brisk acceleration and responsive handling to match. The Q70 3.7 RWD and AWD share a 3.7-liter V-6 engine rated at 330 horsepower. My test vehicle was equipped with the powerful 5.6-liter, 420-horsepower (or 416 hp for long-wheelbase versions) V8.

All models get a seven-speed automatic transmission with manual-shift mode, rev-matching downshifts, and optional paddle shifters.

Despite the Q70L's large size and increased curb weight, the V8 engine totally transforms the character

of the Q70. There is a delightful V8 burble from under the hood, and the exhaust note is just music to any auto enthusiast's ears. Compared to the V6, the V8 lops off about a second off the V6's 0-60 mph dash. You'll be grinning all the way too, I guarantee it.

Ride and Drive

In any of these models, the suspension calibration is firm and athletic, yet just compliant enough. Ride quality is reasonably smooth, body roll is modest, and there is totally predictable understeer at the limit. My vehicle was also equipped with the available sport package, adding 20-inch wheels, ventilated sport seats, and sportier aluminium pedal trim.

Perhaps the chink in the Q70's armour comes down to its speed-sensitive hydraulic rack and pinion engine. It feels a bit too artificially heavy off-centre, and weighs

up when the wheel is turned more than a few degrees, even at parking-lot speeds.

In previous model years, road noise could be an issue in the Q70, more than other luxury sedans its size. But the addition of more sound insulation and tighter seals, as well as active noise cancellation across the Q70 model line, helps keep the cabin quieter.

The seven-speed automatic does a good job when left to its own devices, responding promptly to throttle and load demands. I just wish that steering wheel flappy paddles were available as pushing the gear lever fore and aft just isn't very satisfying.

Final Thoughts

With its muscular fenders, the Q70L is stylishly voluptuous. Infiniti has always done a good job at creating a recognisable face for its vehicles without resorting to excesses such as Lexus' spindle grille. With its good looks and luxurious interior, the car lives up to its Infiniti flagship designation. The Q70 has much to recommend if you're looking for a large Japanese luxury sedan that isn't a Lexus. Make mine the V8 please!



2016 Honda Pilot

Family's the game, Pilot's the name



In 1984, minivans arrived on the market to great success. Chrysler's "magic wagons" were something new, something different, offering the same practicality and ride quality as a car, but with the higher and more commanding seating position of a full-size van. Within a few short years, the minivan replaced the station wagon as the large passenger car of choice in North America.

However just as the station wagon lost its popularity, the minivan also peaked in its popularity at the turn of the millennium, with sales of 1.4 million units sold in 2000 in North America.

With their rough and tough, go-anywhere, conquer anything image, SUVs replaced the "uncool" minivans. However, consumers soon got tired of the rough ride and poor fuel economy of their beloved trucks. Hence

the crossover was born, blending the four wheel drive capability, commanding seating position and styling of a traditional SUV, while still blending the fuel consumption and more comfortable ride and handling of a minivan or passenger car.

These days, most auto manufacturers have some sort of crossover vehicle in their lineup, save it for specialist supercar companies. Even Bentley and Rolls-Royce have jumped onto the bandwagon as to not have one would mean certain "death" (in sales).

Plethora of choices

We are quite lucky these days. The SUV used to be a slightly less boring alternative to the minivan and most came with a weak V6. If you were lucky, you could convince your wife to let you get the V8, probably under the pretence of "towing ability". In today's

market, we no longer have to suffer when driving a big, heavy, and underpowered SUV.

The all-new, third generation 2016 Honda Pilot looks to make incremental improvements to the segment, with more of what active families seek in a three-row SUV. Building on the solid reputation established from the original Pilot back in fall of 2002, the latest Pilot brings a whole new level of refinement and available content to the Honda "truck" lineup.

The Pilot is certainly a natural step for Honda CR-V and Accord owners with growing families who either need or want the safety and security of all-wheel-drive but aren't willing to touch the Odyssey with a ten foot pole.

Exterior

Compared to its predecessor's truck-like boxy exterior,





the 2016 Pilot looks downright sleek and athletic. The inoffensive exterior is fresh enough to make your neighbours do a second-take if the vehicle is on your driveway, but yet won't be outlandish or controversial enough to make them turn their smiles upside down. In typical Honda fashion, the Pilot's conservative design will wear well with time.

Interior

The Pilot does a commendable job of impersonating a minivan with its flexible seating for up to eight. For 2016, the cabin is roomier, more versatile, and feature-filled than ever before. Thanks to the new less boxy design, the steeply raked windshield is farther away and the hood is shorter than the previous generation vehicle. An overhead convex bus-driver like mirror is sure to please parents who want to see which of their kids are hitting each other. The front and second row seats are well-padded and supportive, with lumbar adjustments for the front

seats. It's too bad that there is only a setting for lumbar pressure and not height. The second row seats are very roomy, with fore/aft adjustments which allow one to slide the seats forward to give more space for third row occupants. There's also a second row minivan-style flipdown console with a roll-top lid. Perfect for a small duffel bag (or McDonalds paper bag, heh). As with most three-row SUVs, the rearmost seats are probably still best left for kids or adults. Quite honestly, there's not much to complain about the Pilot's interior. My only sticking point, as with many of the newer Honda products, is that the touch-screen infotainment system lacks any physical buttons and knobs. Both eyes and fingers are required to operate it due to the lack of tactile feel.

Under the hood

Although the 2016 Pilot still comes with a 3.5 litre V6, this engine is thoroughly revised for more refinement,

power, and fuel-efficiency. Now with direct-injection technology, the engine's peak output rises by 30 hp to 280 horsepower. Torque is also marginally up by 7 lb-ft to 260 lb-ft compared to the previous model. There's also a start-stop system, first time offered on a non-hybrid Honda vehicle, to help squeeze the extra few points in fuel economy. There are two choices of transmission offered. A Pilot-first 6-speed automatic transmission, or on my top of the range Touring model, a Honda-first 9-speed automatic transmission. Honda promises that the top trim 9-speed transmission makes the best of the engine's power band, balancing responsiveness, refinement, and fuel-efficient performance. In reality though, I wonder if 9 speeds are one too many. Under regular driving, I found the transmission to operate as advertised except at lower speeds where there was an atypical amount of jerkiness on the rare occasion. Under spirited driving

or uphill, there was also an unexpected bit of hunting going on on occasion.

Ride and Drive

As expected with any family vehicle these days, the Pilot comes available with the latest collision-avoidance technology. Lane Departure warning, forward collision warning with automatic braking, lane-keeping assist, blindspot warning; my Pilot in the top of the range Touring trim was equipped with an alphabet soup of the latest safety systems.

The ride quality is great, but the brake pedal is a bit vague with the first few centimetres of travel not producing much braking action. The steering is, as you might expect, light and easy to handle, but also minivan-like in its novocaine feeling. Honda also has ditched the trailing arms in its multilink rear suspension and the Pilot now gains Honda's two-stage dampeners. But don't expect it to be as dynamic as a BMW X5 as the Pilot's is still heavily towards comfort versus sportiness.

The Pilot's all-wheel-drive system has now been upgraded with a new Intelligent Variable Torque Management system (called i-VTM4), and an all-new Intelligent Traction Management system. This system, somewhat similar that available in Land Rovers, includes selectable modes including Normal, Mud,



Sand, and Snow.

Wrap-up

The 2016 Pilot is something that the Honda faithful will surely recognize as the family weekend warrior's vehicle to have.

The latest iteration of this crossover showcases how, when built and designed properly, a crossover SUV can indeed perform much of the family-hauling duties of a minivan without being too much of a poster child for a soccer mom-mobile.



2016 MINI John Cooper Works

MINI on steroids



The 2016 MINI John Cooper Works (JCW) may have, well, mini in its name, but don't be mistaken — there is not a whole lot that is small about this car. Recently re-invented again when the current generation standard MINI Cooper three-door, upon which this vehicle is based, was launched, the 2016 is the quickest production version the company has ever built. It's also arguably the best looking one made thus far.

JCW is the manufacturer's in-house tuning arm, responsible for making extra sporty versions of their pedestrian lineup of cars. Sidebar: John Cooper, after which JCW is named, was a carmaker, racing team owner and racecar driver who helped create the original MINI hot hatch over 50 years ago. Long before go-fast

parts were available straight from the manufacturer, Cooper was modifying his own creations putting in quicker engines, better brakes and more efficient transmissions.

So in short, the special models it turns out have historically been quite aggressive in both the aesthetic and performance sense, and it's good to see nothing has changed.

Souped up

While still keeping the compact form that has made MINI Coopers so popular, select tweaks have been made, like the addition of gaping air intakes in the front bumper aiding in cooling the high-output engine and brakes. An upswept rear spoiler helps provide much-needed downforce around corners, and the

centre exit dual tip muffler expels spent exhaust gasses. In addition to the go-fast parts, my press vehicle was sprayed in another JCW exclusive: the new-for-this-year Rebel Green metallic paint colour. Unlike other greens of the past, Rebel has a different appearance depending on the lighting condition. For example the green really sparkles under the sun, but at dusk it can resemble a dark grey or black.

Now for a few notes about the interior — the front seats are among some of the most supportive I have sat in, with quilted centre sections finished in "Dinamica fabric," or suede in lay speak. The driving position is exceptionally durable with easy access to all necessary controls, and the passenger has plenty of legroom. The back seats are another story, cramped but

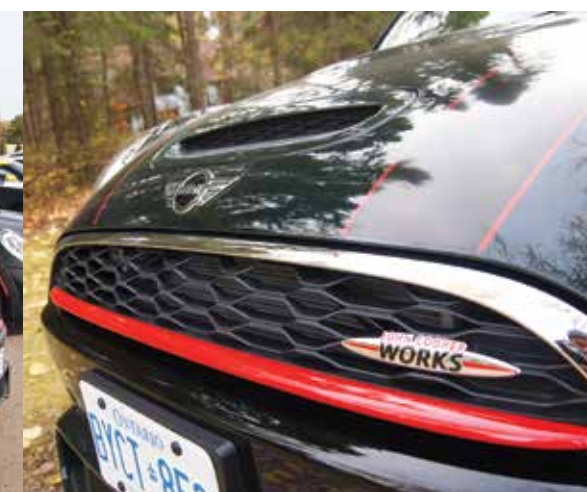
manageable for small persons. Flip up the hatch and there is 211 litres of usable space, enough to accommodate a large suitcase and maybe a carryon bag. The rear seats do fold flat, though, and in doing so I was able to fit some wheels and tires and my entire luggage for a weekend trip.

Earlier I hinted at the JCW's speedy nature, and it is spry indeed, thanks to a 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine benefiting from the BMW Group's favourite Twin Power Turbo Technology. Horsepower, at 228, is an increase of 10 per cent compared to the outgoing version. The 320 Nm of torque represents an even bigger jump, 23 per cent, from before.

Quick off the draw

Zero to 60 times vary, depending on the choice of transmission. It's about 6.3 seconds if equipped with the fun six-speed manual featuring automatic rev matching, or 6.1 seconds when matched with the six-speed Steptronic sports gearbox. Not everyone will be timing their drag strip runs, but the stats give you an idea of how punchy the acceleration can be.

Front-wheel drive gives the average motorist a little more confidence when turning compared to a rear-



wheel sports car, and torque steer has largely been eliminated due to some wizardry programmed into the electronic power steering system. Still, watch your right foot, because getting too heavy on the throttle going around a bend can cause the car to twitch a tad before the computer kicks in.

The JCW is great fun anywhere you take it, and hearing the exhaust burble while cruising down the highway should put a smile on any driver's face. The tuned suspension feels great and allows the hatchback to pivot on a dime, but may give you a bumpy surprise the first time you go over speed hump or pothole. The 2016 MINI John Cooper Works is available in dealerships now.

BMW's insane car of the future.

BMW is on a huge global victory lap this year in celebration of its centennial.



To celebrate its 100th birthday, the company presented its "Vision Next 100" concept car at the BMW Group Centenary Event in the Munich Olympic Hall. Given its sporting pedigree, you might expect BMW's vision for the next 100 years to be a sporty sedan. And you would be correct! Despite the popularity of its X5 and X6 crossover

SUVs, BMW says that "Sport Saloons" are still the core of the BMW brand. Although the Vision Next 100 concept looks like a designer forgot to design the tires in, the styling is intentional. With the concept car, BMW is trying to project, longer-term, what the car of the future might look like after autonomous driving technology has

fundamentally changed automotive design. Recall the movie "Fifth Element" anyone? BMW says that although odd looking, the designers strived to create a car that would exist when self-driving cars (and the appropriate infrastructure) is a mature technology. Squint really hard and you can still spot the BMW-ness

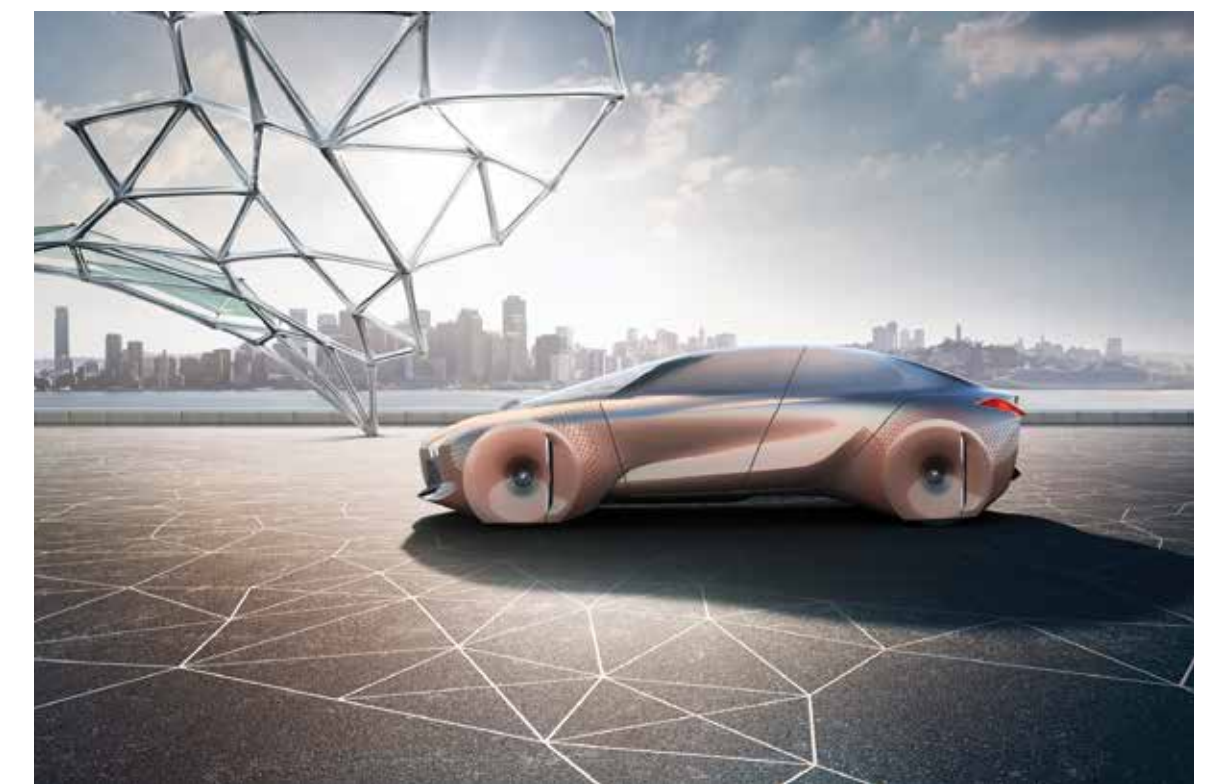


in the design. The iconic kidney grille is present, but beyond that, the details are very much whimsical. Very little in this car is close to production-ready, but it is a very interesting lean into the future that BMW thinks will play out in the next few decades of its existence.

Augmented Reality

The entire windshield is an augmented reality display, taking the place of every single dashboard display. There are also 800 triangles embedded in the dash, which BMW calls Alive Geometry. These multi-coloured polygons apparently communicate "very directly with the driver through their movements, which are more like gestures than two-dimensional depictions on a display."

The augmented-reality display will also project hidden hazards into your field of view. BMW's example is a cyclist obscured by a truck. An image of the cyclist





is projected onto your windscreen, making the truck magically semi-transparent.

Is it fully autonomous?

The short answer is yes. But there's more to it than that. The BMW Vision Next 100 doesn't take sides in the autonomous car debate. It's an interesting stance given the advent of autonomous driving and car sharing.

Instead, BMW proposes technology that can help you when you want to drive, and also when you don't.

In "Boost" mode, the car helps you when you wish to take the wheel, super-imposing the optimal driving line on the windshield.

In "Ease" mode, you let the car take over, and the steering wheel physically retracts into the dash and the seats change shape to better facilitate driver-passenger communication. Instead of the optimal driving line, the BMW Vision Next 100's windshield can now be

used for entertainment.

A Shape Shifter...literally!

The Vision Next 100 concept car is able to alter itself to meet the driver's desires and habits. It literally goes skin deep as the vehicle can physically alter itself on the go so as to anticipate or even improve the driver's performance.

BMW says that the styling of the Vision Next 100 was meant to reconcile the petrolhead and the comfort-loving with "blend of coupé-type sportiness and the

dynamic elegance of a sedan." Its dimensions are those of a compact, but the interior is that of a luxury BMW sedan. It also has a copper color scheme that the designers say symbolizes the connection between the driver and the technology.

For easy access, the scissor wing doors open automatically and the steering column retracts into the dash thanks to sensors that recognize the driver as they approach. Pressing the BMW logo on the dashboard closes the door and extends the column again.



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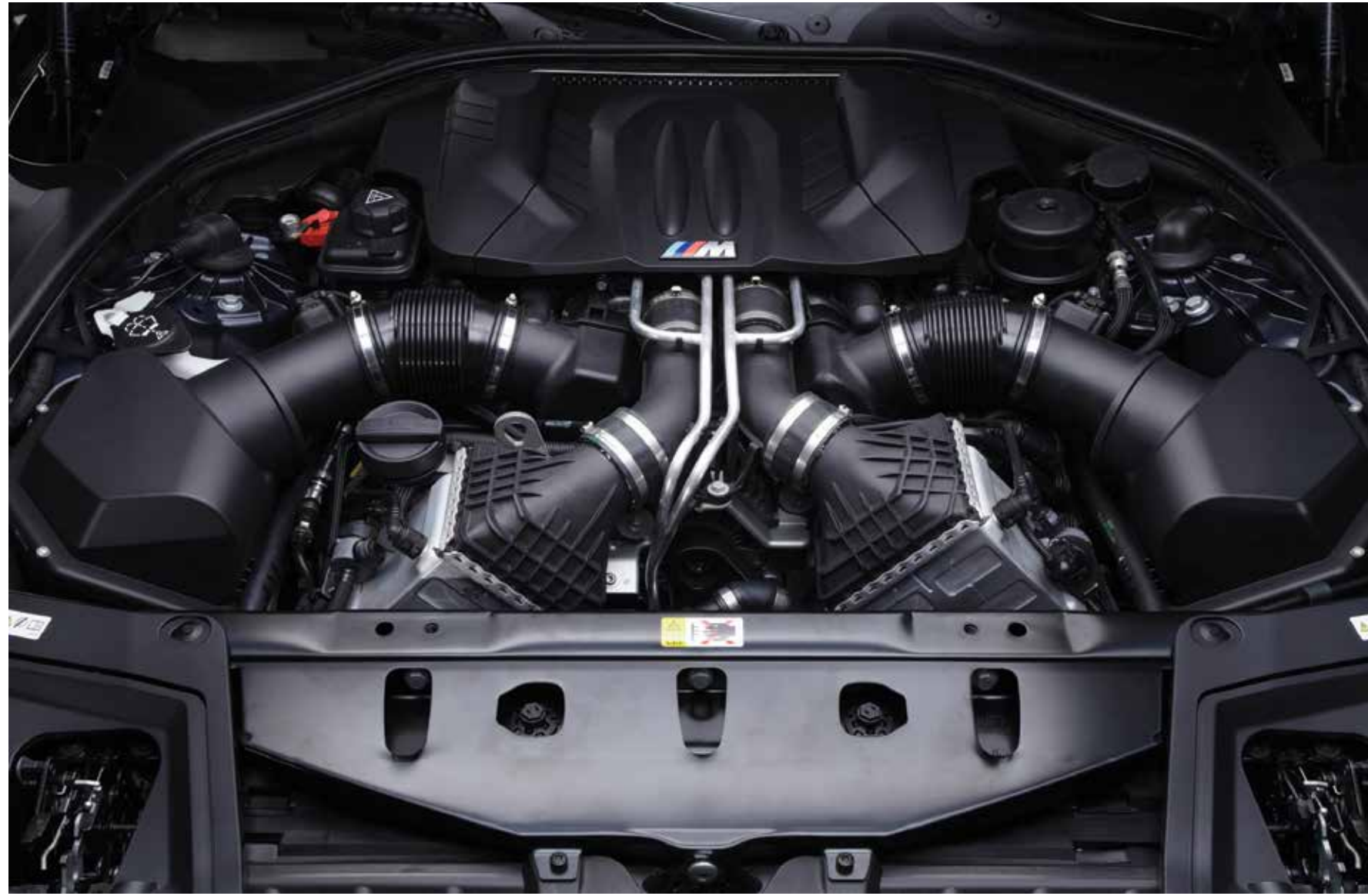


PIERRE
REGULAR-RISE,
SLIM STRAIGHT LEG



SERENA
LOW-RISE,
SUPER SKINNY

Engine sound symposers



Whether you love or hate Auto-Tune, it makes a lot of recording artists sound better than they might otherwise (cue Britney Spears). Along a similar vein, engine sound symposers are helping today's more efficient and noise-isolated engines sound like the gas guzzling, testosterone-infused motors of yesteryear. There are different methods used by automakers to accomplish this task — here are some examples.

Porsche 911

A unique and pleasurable aural experience has been as an important quality to Porsche vehicles as any other design characteristic since the 911 was first introduced. Today's models, however, are bigger, safer and better built overall, and need a little bit of a helping hand in the sound department. To ensure drivers gets the full effect of rising rpms while sitting behind the wheel,

Porsche uses an "acoustic channel," that essentially amplifies the vibrations coming from the air intake chamber and transmits them to the interior. This function is activated by pressing the sport button on the centre console that opens up a valve inside the channel.

Volkswagen Golf GTI

Many owners of earlier generations of Veedubs fondly recall the small amount of separation between the cockpit and motor, resulting in every gear change and throttle input being highly audible. In an attempt to replicate this, VW introduced "Soundaktor," or sound actuator, which is a speaker fitted on the firewall in front of the cabin to broadcast whatever is happening in the engine during a drive. This feature debuted on the Mk6 platform and can be found on other

Volkswagen offerings including the Jetta GLI and Beetle Turbo.

BMW M5

Called Active Sound Design, BMW's sound symposer system takes a more technological approach. On the M5, the stereo and engine management computer are linked so when the large sports sedan accelerates, the speakers play back a simulated engine noise matching the current rpm and speed level. Turning on Sport and Sport+ modes also initiates an increase in sound as you would traditionally expect. BMW has carried Active Sound Design over to other performance-oriented lines like the M3 and M4, causing some dissent among car enthusiasts.

Ford Focus ST

Turbocharging is a modern automotive marvel,



allowing big power to be generated from a small package. Depending on how you look at it, the downfall of the efficient turbine-driven setup is a muffled voice from the engine, emitting only a faint whistle rather than a loud growl. This isn't a problem in the EcoBoost-equipped Focus ST, because Ford engineers have come up with a box that takes desirable sound frequencies straight from the air intake and funnels them into the passenger compartment. A flap inside the box moves under hard acceleration so that sound waves can enter and make their way to people's ears. At normal cruising speeds, no one is the wiser.

Lexus LFA

To convey the perfect driving soundtrack, Lexus joined forces with Yamaha — known for producing everything from motorcycles to pianos — to create the 10-cylinder engine for the LFA. When playing a musical instrument, performers hear the delicate changes in volume, tone, and nuances that they produce themselves. Hearing these subtle changes allows performers to make instant revisions as they play the instrument," reads a description on the Japanese conglomerate's website.

"Feedback is equally important when driving an

automobile. In this case, feedback refers to how the vehicle responds to the driver's actions. In a super sports car like the Lexus LFA, providing a high-grade engine sound that changes with even a delicate operation by the driver can contribute directly to the enjoyment of driving."

No electronic sound processing is used — rather, factors like cylinder firing interval, component thickness and gaps between the engine firewall and cabin were all taken into account during the design.



How launch control works



What exactly is launch control? It sounds like a setting found only in a Need for Speed video game, and that wouldn't necessarily be a far off description. As cars have become more computerized, it's become possible to create features, like launch control, which assists the driver in achieving the fastest standing start possible. And it's not just for racecars.

If you had a manual car and wanted to set off in a fast manner, you would clutch in, feather the gas pedal to a certain rpm, say 3,000, and then dump the clutch and stab the throttle. On a modern dual clutch

automatic vehicle, like the turbocharged 2016 BMW 2 Series equipped with the eight-speed Steptronic Sport transmission, the approach is a little more civilized. First, ensure the wheels are pointed straight. Then, with your left foot on the brake, press the Dynamic Stability Control button on the centre console to turn it off. Move the gear level down to drive, then nudge it over to the left to activate sport mode. Take your right foot and press the accelerator all the way down. A small checkered flag icon will appear on the instrument cluster, then within the next three seconds, release

your foot off the brake and the car will leap ahead with ideally minimal wheel spin for a quick, clean start. What's happening behind the scenes is that the car's computer has determined the optimal rpm and boost pressure for the job — so by the time the brake pedal is released, everything is precisely pre-set and ready to go. The process varies a little depending on the manufacturer, with some vehicles allowing the driver to manually choose the precise launch rpm. As you can imagine, this process puts a considerable amount of stress on components, especially in the

case of high-performance machines. Take the latest Mitsubishi Lancer Evo, for example. Endowed with large amounts of traction due to its all-wheel drive system, it's difficult to generate much wheel spin, so what ends up happening is the clutch takes the brunt of the abuse.

To counteract this, full power output doesn't happen until the clutch is fully engaged. At the same time, if the clutch temperature reaches a critical point due to multiple back-to-back uses of launch control, the computer will indicate to the driver that a cool-down break is necessary.

Launch control is surprisingly found on a wide spectrum of makes and models besides the couple already mentioned, including Audis like the S5 and TT, the Jaguar F-Type, a handful of Porsches and even Volkswagen GTIs and GLIs.

It goes without saying that this feature should only be used in a controlled environment, and after the engine has reached normal operating temperature.



Dubai Duty Free Wins

Multiple Awards at The Golden Globe Tigers Awards

Dubai Duty Free walked away with multiple awards at The Golden Globe Tigers Awards, which were held in Kuala Lumpur last month and included the “Best Green 4R’s Award (Reduction, Reuse, Recycling and Recovery)”, “Best Green Employee Engagement Award” and “Environmental Best Practices Award”. Hosted by the Asian Confederation of Businesses and World CSR Day and endorsed by CMO Asia, the Golden Globe Tigers Awards recognise individual and organizations who have achieved the highest levels of standards and benchmark in numerous areas such as Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Media & Digital Marketing and Education Leadership Award. Commenting on the awards, Colm McLoughlin, Executive Vice Chairman of Dubai Duty Free said: “We are delighted to receive these three Golden Globe Tigers Awards for our works towards environment



protection which is part of our commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility. We have made a pledge to adopt these principles throughout

the company and have a dedicated Corporate Responsibility department that is very active in driving forward new initiatives.”

A powerful statement

the all-new BMW Lifestyle Collections 2016.



The BMW Group has always stood for trend-setting designs and premium quality. For those who want to extend this experience beyond the road, the BMW

Lifestyle Collections are a further way to experience the typical BMW dynamism and lifestyle at its best. The all-new BMW Lifestyle Collections, presented in the centenary year of the BMW Group now offer an even wider range to choose from, with more than 250 new products and styles.

Always up-to-date with the new watches from the BMW Collection.

An array of new watches joins the 2016 BMW Collection. Sporty features merge effortlessly with sophisticated appeal. Thanks to a large variety of different designs, there is a model to suit everyone’s taste.

While the BMW Day Date model (ladies’ and men’s) with its Swiss Ronda movement, structured dial pattern and leather strap is timeless elegant, The new BMW Chrono Watch, with its angular

stainless-steel case and embossed leather strap, is a powerful eye-catcher. The unisex chronograph also features a round dial with an integrated tachymeter around the rim, a date display (at 4 o’clock position) and a coloured BMW logo at the top of the dial. Luminous indices and luminous hands ensure easy readability.

For those who prefer something even more eye-stopping, the BMW Sport Chronograph has to be the right choice. With a diameter of 43 millimeters, a polished bezel and a bright blue dial, this men’s watch makes the ultimate visual statement. The robust bracelet with links of brushed stainless steel and a butterfly clasp make the chronograph a reliable companion for every adventure. Like all BMW watches, this model is equipped with a high-quality quartz movement by Ronda.

2017 Nissan Altima

Gets A Fresh New Look Inside and Out

The mid-size sedan adopts Nissan’s latest design language, debuts in the Middle East
Dubai, United Arab Emirates – May 15, 2016: Nissan has today unveiled the new 2017 Nissan Altima for the Middle East. The reveal of the new model took place at regional event in Dubai, and comes with a fresh new appearance including the “Energetic Flow” exterior styling theme and “Gliding Wing” interior layout, “Class Leading Fuel Economy” and “Improved Driving Dynamics and Safety Technology”. “We are excited to launch the 2017 Nissan Altima in the Middle East, which compliments Nissan’s range of innovative, exciting cars and represents Nissan’s vision for the design of the modern passenger car,” said Samir Cherfian, Managing Director of Nissan Middle East. “The Altima is a popular car in the region and globally, and the new design elements add to the overall appeal of its reliability and features.”

New Energetic Flow Design

The front end of the 2017 Altima offers the most dramatic change with its energetic flow design, since all panels and pieces forward of the A-pillars are new – fascia, bumper, fenders, hood and lights. Two key elements are the redesigned V-Motion grille and boomerang-shaped headlights, similar to those found on the Maxima. The look is dramatically different from the 2016 Altima design, with a wide, deeply sculpted lower bumper, integrated fog lights (2.5SV, 2.5SL, and 3.5SL models) and prominent chrome-trimmed grille. The reshaped headlight units incorporate halogen high beam and projector low beam lights. LED projector low beam lights and LED signature Daytime Running Lights that sweep into the wide raised hood (available only on 3.5L SL grade)

The rear of the new Altima is marked by a new sculpted bumper with a dark lower accent, a new trunk lid and lower, wider boomerang-shaped combination lights that help provide a more expressive, higher



quality appearance when approaching the vehicle from behind. The four-piece combination lights incorporate the tail- and stop lights, turn lamps and backup lights. Nissan committed to adding value, incorporated customer’s feedback and added comfort features such as the standard Zero Gravity front seats which have been reshaped, the woven cloth seating and door panel materials feature a more open weave pattern, providing a premium look and feel throughout the Altima interior. Twin cup holders on the center console now accommodate mug handles in response to customer input.

The already extensive Altima color palette for 2017 includes Java Metallic, Brilliant Silver, Gun Metallic, Super Black, Cayenne Red and Pearl White and a new 17-inch machine-finish aluminum-alloy wheel designs. **Latest Active Safety and Technology**

The Altima have stepped up the safety technology by

adding its First in Class Predictive Forward Collision Warning (PFCW), the Blind Spot Warning (BSW). Forward Emergency Braking (FEB), and Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA). The new steering has been reshaped and tuned to provide real time road input and precision (available only on SL grades).

The 2017 Altima’s refined interior design follows the new “Gliding Wing” design language. Central to the new look is the revised C-stack with available 5.0-inch and 7.0-inch displays for the Navigation with Mobile Apps.

Finishing off with the Acoustic windshield that provides a new level of cabin isolation and quietness. The Nissan Altima 2017, now offered in five grade levels including 2.5 S, SV, SL and 3.5 SV and SL grades, will have a price ranging between \$21,500 and \$28,900 in the GCC. Prices per market will be revealed at their respective launches and will vary from region to region.

Middle East ranks Top Priority

Markets for Nissan Worldwide



Samir Cherfan, Managing Director, Nissan Middle East.

*Nissan's GCC volume increases 50% between FY11 and FY15; sees market share growth of 25%
Forecasts positive FY16 GCC growth of 12% on volume and 15% in market share*

Sustained growth strategy with focus on Saudi Arabia

Nissan announced today its continuous growth in its business performance over the last 5 years has lifted Nissan Middle East to the Top Priority Markets worldwide. Nissan has seen its volume grow by 50% and market share rise by 25% across the GCC in the last 5 years. Nissan has built its performance in the region on the quantity and quality of its business, customer satisfaction and service excellence, and its brand power investments.

"We haven't just experienced an increase in sales over these past five years," commented Samir Cherfan, Managing Director, Nissan Middle East. "Nissan has grown in terms of volume, market share, customer satisfaction and brand power. We have put in place a game changing plan in our key market, Saudi Arabia, which has been instrumental in achieving our growth strategy."

The first pillar of Nissan's growth strategy in the region is the effective management of its vehicle line-up focuses on its core models: Patrol, X-trail, Pathfinder, Altima, Maxima, Sunny, Sentra and Nissan pick-up, as well as the planning of their life-cycles.

"In the past 5 years, we have managed to achieve

70% of our sales volume through our core models. The increase of Patrol sales by 235% and the X-trail by 440% in this 5-year period a testament that our core model product line-up strategy is effective," said Cherfan.

The second pillar is building leadership in customer service, with the aim to deliver the best experience to customers across the entire sales and after-sales cycle.

Nissan has reached a top group position in all the key GCC markets and came first in more than half.

The third pillar is the brand power performance.

Nissan entered the Top 100 best global brands by Interbrand with a ranking of 49 in 2015. In the last 5 years, Nissan brought innovation and excitement

to its regional customers through unique engagement platforms such as GT Academy, UEFA and more recently, its ICC sponsorship. This was complemented by the introduction of NISMO - Nissan's world famous motorsport and road car performance brand – as well as record-breaking feats that have led to 5 Guinness World Records.

"Our brand has been the most awarded automotive brand in the region, grabbing 32 awards in 5 years, in addition to increasing purchase consideration by 49%, validating that our brand strategy resonates with our target audience," added Cherfan.

Nissan's Revival Plan in KSA has been instrumental to its success in the region. In November 2013, Nissan renewed its bond to the Saudi Arabian market by establishing a direct presence in the Kingdom through the formation of Nissan KSA, and also appointed Alissa Auto as its strategic partner. Both moves showed an immediate jump in market share from 0.4% in FY12 to 7.2% in FY14, the first full year of operation.

In March 2015, Nissan announced the appointment of Petromin as a second strategic partner in the Kingdom. "FY15 was a transitional year during which we had to manage the impact of our exponential growth. We took a decision to slow down our volumes and focus on delivering value through service excellence to retain the trust of our customers," explained Cherfan.

"Perfectly matching the existing synergies that exist between Nissan and Alissa, Petromin's invaluable existing network of successful sales showrooms and service centers will assist in accelerating the growth in sales and customer service levels allowing us to reach 9.5% market share in FY16, while continuing to build our network to reach 54 showrooms, 49 service centers and 550 quick service centers," added Cherfan.

Looking to the GCC in 2016, Nissan listed its business priorities as: growth with focus on Saudi Arabia, sustained customer leadership and continued investment in the Nissan brand including CSR engagement.

Nissan is looking at FY16 positively and is forecasting GCC volume growth of 12% and market share growth of 15%.



Nassib Nassar to compete

in Rally of Antibes cote d'azur France & Dubai International Rally 2016



Lebanese rally driver Nassib Nassar is all set for a high octane rally season in the coming months. Nassar, alongside Lebanese co-driver Rony Maroun, will participate in Rally of Antibes cote d'azur France to be held on 21st and 22nd May 2016. With over 50 years of rallying this fantastic event is a sight to behold for any car enthusiast.

Set on the scenic roads of the French Riviera, top class rally drivers from around the world will be showing their skills and trying to win the top prize. This international race is considered as one of the main events in the French rally championship. Nassib Nassar and his co-driver Rony Maroun both will be representing Lebanon under Motortune Racing Team

and will be driving a Peugeot 208 R2 Class.

With the arrival of cooler months in the UAE, Nassib and Rony will be gearing up for the Dubai International Rally that will be held from 17th to 19th November 2016. The Dubai International Rally is the final round of the FIA Middle East Rally Championship, a round that decides the champion for the year.

One of the critical events in the championship, the rally will have participants mainly from Middle East fighting to win the last round. The competitive action over 12 timed special stages will take place in the remote desert areas in the south of Dubai in parts of the neighboring Sharjah emirate.

Nassib and Rony will be targeting to win again the Group N category by driving a Mitsubishi Evolution 10 prepared by Motortune Racing Team.

Incidentally, the same team finished first last year among the Group N runners in the 37th Dubai International Rally.

Active in the rally circuit since 1999, Nassib Nassar participated officially for the first time in 2005. His best performance till date has been winning in RC4 Class in Lebanon and the Group N Class Dubai International Rally in the year 2015.

The team is sponsored by Al Habtoor Motors, Menchie's Frozen Yogurt, FAF Real Estate and Mass Media Group.



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• King Abdul Aziz Road

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• Kahlia Road
• Al Kabari Road
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• King Faisal eastern Road

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Hafr Al Batin:
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Al Khafji:
• Prince Sultan Road
Al Qatif:
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