



The U.K. TVR Tuscan model may never make it to the States, but that doesn't mean we can't dream about it.

Share and share alike

We came across two separate news items that have implications for the future of the automobile. The first was a prognostication that by 2050 fully **two-thirds of the world's population will be living in cities**, up from the current 54 percent.

The second was the news that **General Motors is teaming up with ride-sharing operation Lyft** to create a future network of autonomous (self-driving) vehicles to be used as short-term rental cars, but without the need for its occupants to have drivers' licenses. GM has committed \$500 million to the project, which will include supplying self-driving vehicles with the automaker's OnStar concierge and directional assist service.

From our perspective, The General accepts that with fewer (and younger) city dwellers inclined to actually buy a car, they might as well cash in by providing the cars they ride in.

A new British sports car headed our way?

Maybe this one is a long shot, but in this age of automotive globalization anything can (and often does) happen. Specialty car builder **TVR**, which has bounced in and out of solvency since the company was founded back in 1954 now has new ownership plans to build four new models over the next decade. The initial 2017 TVR will have a 5.0-liter Ford V8 that engine builder Cosworth has fiddled with to produce an estimated 450 horsepower (not too shabby for a 2,400-pound coupe). Additionally, former McLaren Cars designer Gordon Murray is responsible for the TVR's attractive shape. The initial run of 250 cars, which are priced at 55,000

British pounds each (about US \$75,000), are already sold in Great Britain, but the potential for greater volumes elsewhere likely exists.



The most interesting fact you might not know about the new Infiniti QX30 is that it's based on the Mercedes-Benz GLA, engine and all.

Infiniti plays the rename game

Originally, Nissan's premium division planned on launching two separate but similar new compact hatchbacks based on the Mercedes-Benz GLA (yes, you read correctly) that arrived for the 2015 model year. The **Infiniti Q30** was to be strictly a front-wheel-driver, while the **QX30** would come with a slightly elevated ride height and all-wheel-drive.

Before either car reaches Infiniti dealer showrooms, we've been informed that all-versions will simply be labeled QX30s. Regardless of drivetrains, the standard powerplant will be a turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine (same as the GLA) with 208 horsepower on tap.

What it boils down to is that if you prefer your ride with slightly more conservative sheetmetal, go with the GLA. But for something a bit wilder, the QX30 should easily suffice.



2016 Scion FR-S

Updates in store for the Scion FR-S, Subaru BRZ

Word has been leaked to us that at long last there are a number of enhancements in store for Toyota's Scion-badged **FR-S** sport coupe and the closely related version sold in Subaru stores as the **BRZ**. Beginning in the 2017 model year (six years following the car's launch), engine output will be increased to 216 horsepower and 160 pound-feet of torque, now 200/151.

A reworking of the powerplant's internal components is responsible for the increase, but still there's no turbocharger option on the horizon (the aftermarket can help if you really want one). In addition, there are revised dashboard and trim bits, while a new set of wheels and aero kit components will dress up the exterior.



2016 Subaru BRZ

TEST DRIVE

2016 Buick Cascada

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is stationed between the rear seat head rests to blunt return air flow. A much larger screen (standard on Premium) can also be fitted behind the back seats to further block unwanted breezes. When not needed, the big screen folds and stows in a vinyl bag that fits neatly in the trunk pass-through space behind the rear seats.

I logged most of my test drive miles with top down, in 60-ish degree weather, and high crosswinds. I found the combination of front windows up and the small blocker worked fine. The only time that wind flow rose beyond modest levels was during some unusually strong gusts.

If you live in the northeast and like top-down driving, you try to extend the convertible season as long as you can. So when those sunny, spring or fall days turn a little nippy, you simply compensate by adding a little heat. Roll up the front windows, pipe in some HVAC warmth, flick on the seat and steering wheel heaters, and you've got all you need to stay comfortable while getting your recommended daily dose of Vitamin D.

The front cabin has an upscale look and feel. Perforated leather trimmed seats share top-stitching with the padded dashboard. Buick's Intellilink infotainment system is accessed by a 7-inch color touch screen.

The majority of the car's controls are clustered below, in a busy but workable bunch. Some initial study time on control location will cut down on the time your eyes spend away from the road.

Cascada is well appointed, even in base trim. Standard features include Intellilink (with text alerts and Siri Eyes Free), navigation system, OnStar 4G LTE with Wi-Fi hotspot, rear vision camera, remote starter, rear park assist and a 7-speaker sound system with enough juice to be heard over noisy, top-down conditions. Premium models add forward collision alert, lane departure warning, automatic headlight control, front and rear park assist, rain-activated windshield wipers and front/rear air deflectors.

Rear seating is of the +2 variety. By the numbers, Cascada's 32.8 inches of rear seat leg room compare with 31.9 inches in the A3. Headroom in back is not an



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

TEST DRIVE
this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

D'ELLA CADILLAC BUICK GMC, INC.
293 Quaker Rd., Queensbury, NY 12804
518-793-3871 www.dellacars.com

GOLDSTEIN BUICK
1671 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12205
518-869-2291 www.goldsteinbuick.com



issue, but leg room is quickly erased if those in front are tall. Folding the rear seatbacks/opening the pass-through converts the space into a convenient storage spot for hand bags, briefcases, shopping bags and what-have-you.

Fifty percent of all convertible sales are drawn from five states. Surprisingly, New York is one of them. So too is New Jersey, while the top three states are — predictably — found in the Sunbelt: Florida, California and Texas. Since most convertible buyers are open to changing brands, this small market is fairly wide open for new models. And, because Buick has no

current convertible, every sale will be a conquest from competitors.

Priced favorably and well equipped, Cascada — Spanish for waterfall — makes a nice addition to the Buick lineup. The classy convertible should add showroom traffic, and widen the brand's appeal.

A regular contributor to the Times Union for more than 20 years, Dan Lyons is the award-winning author of six books, and photographer of 165 calendars. Read Dan's recent reviews online anytime at Timesunion.com/vehiclereviews.