

Giulia set for her debut

Ever since Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) announced that it would soon import the **Alfa Romeo Giulia** (pronounced Julia) sports sedan to North America, we've been anxious for more details.



Well, as suspected, the first Giulia to arrive will be the high-performance rear-wheel-drive Quadrifoglio version. It uses a twin-turbocharged 2.9-liter V6 that makes 505 horsepower and 443 pound-feet of

torque. Following the launch, Alfa will deliver a tamer version with rear- and optional all-wheel-drive with a turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder making 276 horsepower. Expect the base model will sticker in the mid-\$50,000 range.



The Abarth version of the Fiat 124 looks racy, but it only makes 10 more hp than the standard 124.

Along came a spicy Spider

The **Fiat 124 Spider** — Fiat's version of the Mazda MX-5 Miata — hasn't yet left the starting gate and already the automaker has announced that an **Abarth** (Fiat's performance brand) model is on the way. Although Fiat is being coy regarding North American availability, we're convinced that the Abarth will go on sale here.

Although the engine will receive only 10 more horses (for a total of 170) and torque remains 184 pound-feet, the roadster gets a performance suspension, Brembo-brand front brakes, limited-slip differential and a raspier exhaust note. Other cosmetic changes include a more aggressive front clip and hood, a rear spoiler, special paint and unique 17-inch wheels. Now the question is, will Mazda respond in kind with hot Mazda-speed version of the Miata?



The Subaru Crosstrek may soon be sharing a new, stronger platform with its colleagues.

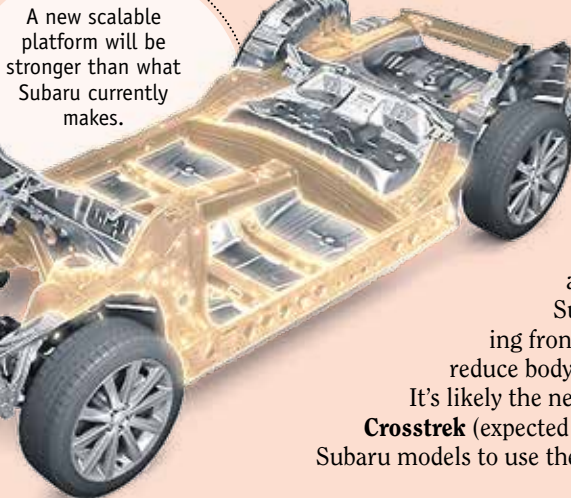
Subaru's new platform policy

We've caught wind of a major development that affects Subaru's entire lineup. A new global chassis will be scalable so that it can be used

for a variety of vehicles as well as for gasoline-, hybrid- and electric-powered models. In addition, the platform is between 70 and 100 percent more rigid than current versions for improved ride and handling plus a lower center of gravity. As a bonus, the design provides significantly better energy absorbency during an impact.

Subaru says that the complementing front and rear suspensions will reduce body roll (leaning) by 50 percent.

It's likely the next-generation **Impreza** and **Crosstrek** (expected in about a year) will be the first Subaru models to use the new platform.



A new scalable platform will be stronger than what Subaru currently makes.



Jerry Seinfeld's 1955 Porsche 550 Spyder fetched more than \$5 million at auction. Also sold were his 1958 Porsche 597 Jagdwagen (top left) and 1973 917/30 Can Am Spyder (top right)

Seinfeld unloads a few Porsches

Yes, we all know **Jerry Seinfeld** as the comedian with the famous "show about nothing." But some of us know him as Jerry Seinfeld, the rich guy with the massive collection of Porsches, an assemblage so voluminous he had to rent an aircraft hangar at the Santa Monica airport to keep some of them at after his \$1.4 million Manhattan garage filled up.



Jerry Seinfeld

Maybe that rent was getting too much, but Jerry decided to put a few of his vintage German autos up for auction at the recent Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance in Florida.

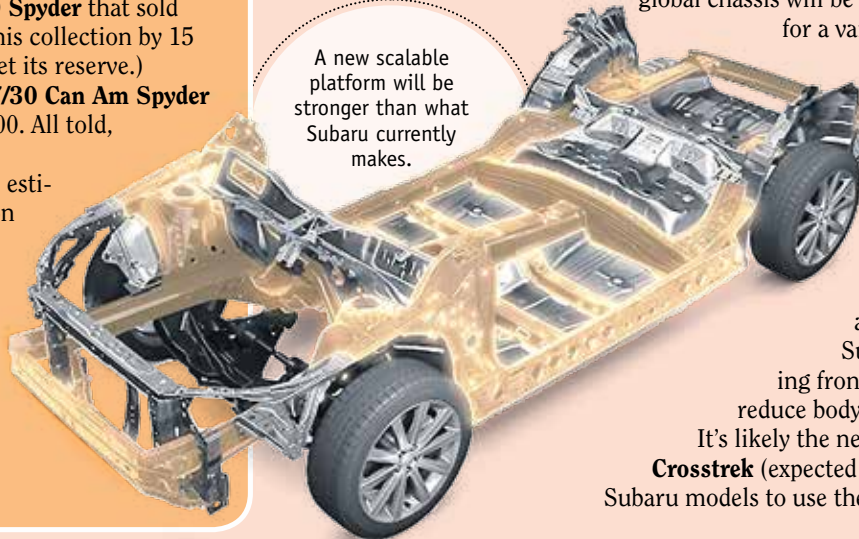
From the silly (a **1958 Porsche 597 Jagdwagen** resembling a VW Thing army jeep that fetched \$330,000) to the sublime (a **1955 Porsche 550 Spyder** that sold for \$5.335 million), Jerry lightened his collection by 15

Porsches. (A 2000 Porsche Carrera GT Prototype did not meet its reserve.)

The 550 Spyder fetched the most money, but a **1973 917/30 Can Am Spyder** went for \$3 million and a **1979 718 RSK** sold for \$2,860,000. All told, Seinfeld's collection racked up \$22 million in sales.

Sounds like a great haul, but the total was disappointing; estimates had pegged the sales between \$28-32 million. A lesson from your investment advisor: Jerry bought the 1973 Can Am Spyder in 2012 for \$4.4 million, taking a \$1.4 million bath on it. Don't feel too bad, though. Several vehicles fetched above their estimates, and seven cars set new price records for their models, including a **1974 911 Carrera 3.0 IROC RSR** that sold for \$2.3 million.

Even after the auction, Jerry has one of the most enviable Porsche collections in the world, including a super-rare 959 and the first 911 ever built.



TEST DRIVE

2016 Dodge Dart Blacktop

Continued from page 1

performance, if you wish. Stick or automatic, this engine likes to rev; peak horsepower and torque arrive at 6,250 and 4,100 rpm, respectively. EPA says that you can expect 23 mpg's in the city, 35 on the highway, with the automatic transmission. I recorded 26 miles per gallon in my most recent drive.

All Darts ride on an Alfa-Romeo based chassis which, in most models, is tuned softer than its European counterpart. Dart GT's get a model-specific suspension which is stiffer. The result is enhanced handling, but there's a giveback on ride quality. The touring suspension that's part of the Rallye package adds a rear stabilizer bar and is a step stiffer than the base setup, but it feels a couple of notches smoother than the GT. Rallye equipped cars are agreeably agile in normal use. The only noticeable ride downside is some impact harshness on big bumps, which, I suspect, is tied to the 18" rims, with their shorter sidewall tires. So, Rallye cuts an agreeable middle ground on ride and handling. Take the GT package only if the tradeoff of greater grip is worth the harder ride to you.

With its 8.4" touchscreen, Uconnect remains one of the better infotainment interfaces in the marketplace. Its straight forward layout scores points for ease of use and minimal distractions. The basic, Uconnect setup adds \$595 to the sticker, and is packaged with a backup camera, illuminated instrument panel surround, iPod controls, a remote USB port and a

glove box lamp. Double down on that \$595 if you want to add GPS navigation and Sirius Traffic and Travel Link subscriptions. The basic Sirius radio option is \$195, for a year's subscription. Sound system options top out with a 506-watt Alpine head unit with nine speakers and subwoofer. It can be had via the Sun and Sound Group (\$1,395), which also adds the Uconnect gear, along with a moonroof and satellite radio.

Front seat room fits most. Rear seat legroom depends on how laid back the front seat passengers are. That's physically, not psychologically. If the seat-backs are fairly upright, you can (tightly) squeeze a six footer behind a like-size front seater. Cabin storage includes a deep glove box, thin door pockets and a small, hidden storage spot under the front passenger seat cushion. Cargo capacity is 13.1 cubic feet, which is about average for a compact class trunk. Lift over height is comfortably low, and the rear seats fold forward to accommodate long items.

A regular contributor to the Times Union for over 20 years, Dan Lyons is the award-winning author of six books, and a photographer with over 170 calendars to his credit. Read Dan's recent reviews on line anytime, at www.TimesUnion.com.



Inside the Dart Blacktop Edition, there's a special black and Ruby Red cloth interior with Ruby Red accent stitching on the seat bolsters, center console and instrument cluster hood, complemented by Ruby Red accents on the front seats and door panels.

TEST DRIVE this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

ARMORY CHRYSLER DODGE JEEP RAM SRT FIAT
926 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12206
518-641-7777 www.armoryauto.com

GOLDSTEIN CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM
613 Loudon Rd., Latham, NY 12110
518-785-4156 www.goldsteinchryslerjeep.net

LIA CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM
2116 Central Ave., Schenectady, NY 12304
518-579-3300 www.liachryslerdodgejeep.com