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Automotive

Attention tightwads How did American cars get to be so fuel-efficient? PAGE 18

TEST DRIVE

Chevy Two 2016 Chevy Sonic LT Sedan

DAN LYONS | text and photos Special to the Times Union

Spark in Chevy's 2016 model lineup. The subcompact is offered in two body styles (four-door sedan and five-door hatchback) and four trim levels (LS, LT, LTZ and RS).

With automatic transmission, my LT tester had an astested price of \$19,020. LT trim cars expand on the base LS models with a bundle of interior/exterior features. The outside additions include bright work trim, heated rear view mirrors and alloy wheels.

Inside, LTs include an upholstery upgrade, power windows, cruise control and a remote ignition (on

2016 Chevy Sonic LT Sedan Base: \$14,345 · LT: \$17,630 As Tested: \$19,020

automatic transmission models). The head unit for the six-speaker sound system includes Bluetooth, smartphone integration, a USB port and Sirius/XM satellite radio.

Chevy's MyLink infotainment system with its 7-inch touchscreen interface is now standard on LT trim levels and up for 2016. Highlights from the option sheet include the Driver Confidence package (lane departure warning and forward collision alert: \$395) and a Rear View Camera (\$200).

The standard engine in LS and LT models is a 1.8L four-cylinder. Rated at 138 horsepower and 125 lb. ft. of





THE 2016 CHEVROLET SONIC is second in line behind the Spark in Chevrolet's 2016 model line up. Optional on LT models (and standard on LTZ and RS) is GM's turbocharged 1.4-liter four-cylinder engine, rated at 138 hp.

torque, it can be paired with a five-speed manual transmission or available six-speed automatic.

Optional on LT and standard on LTZ and RS is a turbocharged 1.4-liter four-cylinder. The turbo motor makes the same amount of horsepower (138), but it

reaches its power peak sooner (@ 4,900 rpm vs. 6,300 rpm) and it produces more torque (148 lb. ft. @ 1,850 rpm, vs. 125 lb. ft. @ 3,800 rpm).

As fitted in my tester, the base four performs adequately around town. But in high de-

mand situations, it's far from a barn burner, and drivers

This sort of performance isn't uncommon in the subcompact class, and it's tolerated because it's usually accompanied by above average fuel economy numbers. In the case of Sonic, the EPA says you can expect 24 city/35 highway with a 1.8L/automatic. These are

It boasts a simplicity of design for interior controls. You can find everything easily, and it's all within arm's reach. 1.8L/automatic. These are respectable numbers, but off the pace of segment leaders. Though my test drive skewed heavily on the highway side (about 90%/10%), I managed 29 miles per gallon. Sonic shoppers considering

a step up to the turbo motor

will see that the 1.4L adds \$700 to the bottom line on

must plan accordingly. Like the Chevy Trax — a model that shares its basic chassis design with the Sonic — when you need speed (like lane merges and especially when passing) you have to be aware of what you have (or more precisely, don't have) under foot.

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LT trim cars (it's standard on LTZ and RS), and bumps up the mpg's slightly (25/33 with the automatic transmission). It's unlikely that many will drive long enough to recoup the engine upgrade costs in fuel savings, but

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