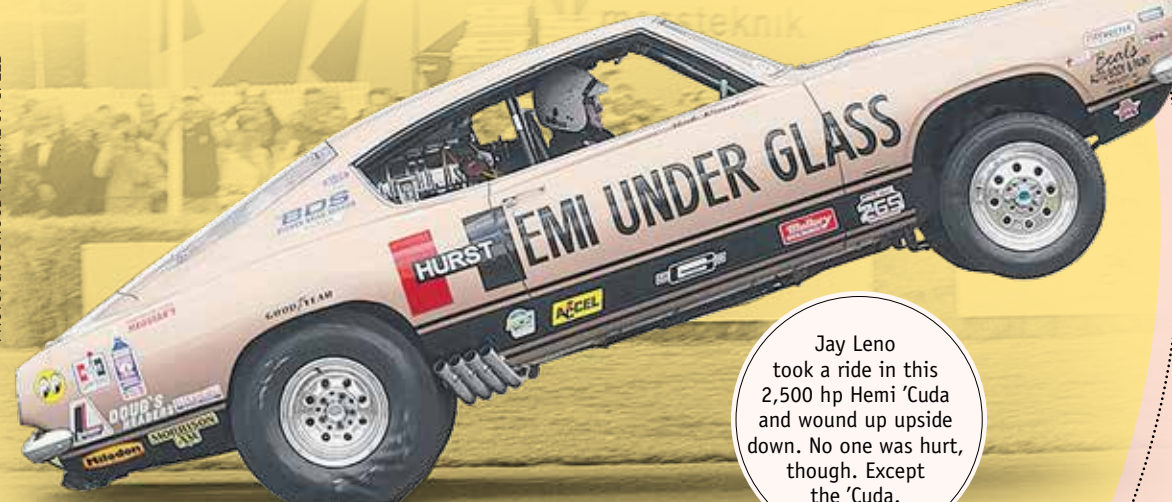


PHOTO: GOODWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED



Jay Leno took a ride in this 2,500 hp Hemi 'Cuda and wound up upside down. No one was hurt, though. Except the 'Cuda.

Leno survives Hemi Under Glass crash

Obsessive car collector and former “Tonight Show” host **Jay Leno** recently survived the roll-over of a **1968 Plymouth Barracuda** two weeks ago. Leno was in the co-pilot’s seat as famed driver Bob Riggie demonstrated how his 2,500-hp dragster could be driven on its rear wheels only. Unfortunately, Riggie turned too sharply at the end of his run, causing his car to flip several times. Leno and the 80-year-old Riggie were unhurt, but the Barracuda suffered extensive damage. The stunt was being filmed at the Irwindale Speedway in California for CNBC’s “Jay Leno’s Garage,” which airs Wednesdays at 10 p.m. The car gets its name for the Chrysler Hemi engine, which was moved to the rear, and is visible under the rear plexiglass backlight. Leno has said the car was a favorite of his growing up, and it was an honor just to sit in the passenger’s seat. The car will most likely be repairable.



Oh, it’s going to happen. Chevy will move to a mid-engine platform for its flagship sports car.

Mid-engine Corvette is a go

It’s definitely game on, these peach-colored pages can confirm. We’re referring to the next-generation Corvette that will debut at the 2017 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Mich. Initially, the **mid-engine C8 Corvette** will use the same V-8 engine from the current front-engine model. Down the road, however, are plans to introduce more exotic power systems that will likely include gas-electric hybrid hardware. It seems that the GM intends its sportiest model to carry the ball as a lower-priced global competitor to the **Nissan GT-R**, **Audi R8** and **Acura NSX** as well as more exotic cars from **Porsche** and **Lamborghini**. Expect a mid-2018 launch for the C8 'Vette, and a sticker price of around \$80,000, up considerably from the current C7’s MSRP of \$55,400. But then again, we knew that GM wasn’t switching to a mid-engine platform to save money.

Paving with pig manure

According to *Scientific American* magazine, researchers at North Carolina A&T State have devised a process whereby excrement produced by swine is turned into a non-odiferous bio oil state. The resulting product can then be used to replace petroleum-based products in the manufacture of asphalt. A pilot plant is being built to test the commercial viability of pig-poop-based road surfaces. We can appreciate the ironically nicknamed Tar Heel state’s commitment to cutting down fossil fuel usage, but there’s an element of self-interest, too: After Iowa, North Carolina has America’s largest number of hogs and pigs. So that’s a lot of highway paving material in the making.



Doing their part for cheaper roads.

#Selfie While Driving

Add another dubious superlative to driving in the Empire State: We’re in the top 10 for SPWV, **Selfie Posting While Driving**. A report by the Auto Insurance Center ranked the Empire State as eighth in the nation for selfie posts by drivers on the social media app Instagram. Analyzing more than 70,000 Instagram posts with driving-related hashtags — #selfiewhiledriving, #drivingselfie and even the should-have-known-better #hopeidontcrash — the center calculated 1.29 #drivingselfie posts per 1,000 New York state residents. (For the competitively minded, California ranked number one, with 2.53 selfies taken per 100,000 residents, followed by Nevada, Florida and Hawaii.) It’s not all fun and games. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, 660,000 people are using handheld cell phones while they drive at any given daytime moment in the U.S. And drivers aged 20 to 29 accounted for nearly 4 in 10 fatalities due to their talking, texting, web surfing, or photo-taking/posting while behind the wheel. In fact, after the Auto Insurance Center’s study was released, the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles felt compelled last Monday to remind drivers of the dangers of distracted driving, including talking, texting and, yes, taking pictures of yourself and posting them while behind the wheel. “Smartphones can provide nearly limitless entertainment, but activities like taking selfies while driving are just irresponsible,” said Theresa Egan, DMV executive deputy commissioner and Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee acting chair. “It’s never a good idea to be distracted while driving.” Egan’s a busy woman lately. Last month, she had to issue a public statement warning drivers against trying to catch Pokemon while driving. Taking selfies and catching Pokemon while behind the wheel is also illegal. New York is one of 14 states to have passed a **total ban on the use of mobile devices while driving**. Under state law, the use of mobile phones and other portable electronic devices while a vehicle is in motion is punishable by fines and driver’s license points. The maximum fine for a first offense is \$200. Violations can result in five points. Eleven points on a license compiled over an 18-month period can result in license suspension. #dontsaywedidntwarnyou.



660,000 NY drivers are on their cell phones at any point iin the day.

TEST DRIVE

2016 Volkswagen GTI S

Continued from page 1
more grip, you can select summer performance tires as a no-cost extra. I’ve heard some reviewers comment that these tires ride harder than the all-season tread. I’ve driven half a dozen of this generation of GTIs, and I’ve got to say, I don’t feel any appreciable difference in ride quality between the tire choices. One obvious financial factor for northeast drivers is that opting for the summer tread means you’ll also have to buy a set of winter tires. Hatchbacks are handy. While their versatility was long lost on Americans, there are signs that we’re finally getting it. Over 400,000 hatches are sold annually in the states these days. The Golf/GTI’s squared-off form translates into good passenger/cargo room. Head and legroom are suitable for six-footers in both rows. Storage space checks in at 22.8 cubic feet, expandable to 52.7 cubic feet, with a

mostly flat load floor. German cars characteristically have logical, function-first interior designs. They’re also, more often than not, subdued in terms of colors and trims to the point of sleepiness. GTI models are purposeful inside but, happily, their cabins are more colorful than their Golf siblings. Clark plaid cloth inserts were a no-cost option on my test car, a throwback to earlier GTI generations, and a nice break from the usual somber shades. Visibility is good and driving position is top notch. The biggest changes between last year’s redesign and this year’s follow-up are all found inside. A rearview camera is standard on all GTIs, as is an upgraded infotainment system. The touchscreen has been upsized from 5.8 to 6.5 inches (still smaller than the 8-inch display on rival hot hatch Focus ST), and a USB port has been added. The new MIB II system supports Android Auto, Apple CarPlay



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The 2016 Volkswaget GTI S offers a technology package featuring upgraded infotainment system with larger touchscreen, an added USB port and Androd Auto, Apple Car-Play and MirrorLink compatability. On a more whimsical note, Clark plaid seat accents break up the typical Teutonic monotony of the interior.

and MirrorLink connected car systems. Owners of these systems can select apps from their smartphones via the car’s dashboard head unit. GTI’s model lineup is unchanged from last year. Two- and four-door hatchbacks are offered in S, SE and Autobahn models. Starting prices range from \$24,995 - \$31,630. The Driver Assistance Package (SE and Autobahn, \$1,495) expands for 2016. The technology bundle now includes the following features: Adaptive Cruise Control, Forward Collision Warning with Autonomous Emergency Braking, Lane Departure Warning, Park Assist and Blind Spot Monitoring with Rear Traffic Alert. 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 170 calendars. Read Dan’s recent reviews online anytime at Timesunion.



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