

M-B's G is back

And it's going to cost you a couple hundred g's.

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TEST DRIVE

Plum Season

2016 Dodge Challenger R/T Scat Pack Shaker 392 Hemi

DAN LYONS | text and photos
Special to the Times Union

This week's test car is the Dodge Challenger 392 Hemi Shaker. Climbing into it, I'm immediately reminded of the difference in size between the Challenger and its traditional rivals, Camaro and Mustang.

It wasn't always this way. If you'll allow me a Black-and-White Moment, when Challenger first arrived in 1970, it was pretty much the same size as the cars it was designed to compete with: the Chevy Camaro (which had arrived three years earlier), and the Ford Mustang (which Camaro had been designed to compete

2016 Dodge Challenger R/T Scat Pack Shaker 392 Hemi

MSRP: \$37,895 · As Tested: \$46,180

with, and arrived three years earlier still). Challenger was longer and slightly wider than its fellow pony cars, but the differences weren't huge, and in many ways, the cars were more alike than different.

Today's Challenger has grown more with the years than either Camaro or Mustang. Both footprints have their followers. Generally speaking, smaller is more agile than bigger, and Mustang or Camaro can get around a road course faster than Challenger. Bigger is more practical than smaller, and Challenger has more room than Camaro or Mustang.

All three can be had with motors capable of producing the traditional, muscle car calling card — straight



THE 2016 DODGE CHALLENGER R/T SCAT PACK SHAKER 392 HEMI comes in classic '60s Plum Crazy purple paint and, as its name suggests, features a Shaker hood (left) as a tip of the hat to its Mopar muscle car forebearers.



line speed. Deciding which modern muscle car suits you best depends on the value you place on their strengths and weaknesses. Opinions differ, and those opinions, as Mark Twin said, are what makes horse races. Or pony car races, for that matter.

None of the pony car Big Three suffer for want of horsepower. As back in the day, engines can be specified from mild to wild, according to one's needs and the depths of your pockets. Challenger's lineup now stretches 10 models wide, and large engines figure prominently in the choices. A 3.6L, 305 horsepower V-6 is the starting point, and the options spin upward

from there: 375 h.p. 5.7L Hemi V-8, 485 h.p., 6.4L Hemi V-8 and the jaw-dropping, 707 horsepower, 6.2L supercharged Hemi Hellcat V-8. Transmission selections include a six-speed manual or eight speed TorqueFlite automatic.

Now in its first, full year of availability, the Shaker hood is a tip of the cap to classic, muscle car era Mopars. The scoop is affixed to the engine and pokes through a hole in the hood. The package also includes a cold air intake with a conical air filter that's big enough to have its own zip code.

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Having a muscle car that can also hold passengers can help make a Plum Crazy choice look downright practical.

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