

## BMW to launch new Z

The Bavaria-based automaker and its new best friend Toyota have been busily plugging away on their joint-venture sports cars. From the intel that these peach-colored pages have picked up, BMW's version will be called the **Z5** while Toyota is reportedly reviving the **Supra** name.



2018 BMW Z5 rendering

It will be larger than the current Z4 (think Jaguar F-Type) and will come with a soft top in place of the Z4's retractable solid roof. A turbocharged four-cylinder engine will be standard,

while an inline six-cylinder (also turbocharged) will be optional. All-wheel-drive will likely be standard with six-cylinder Z5 models.

The least expensive version is expected to cost significantly more than the Z4, which in the United States begins in the low-\$50,000 range. The Z5 is expected to launch in early 2018.

For now, the base engine in the new four-door **Porsche Panamera** is a 440hp turbo V-6



## P stands for Panamera and power

We're all big fans here of the **Porsche Panamera** four-door hatchback sedan, but his mind has been blown by the second-generation model that's due out for the 2017 model year. From every angle the Panamera's mostly aluminum body is considerably sleeker and from the front the car now resembles the 911. The Panamera also gets a brand new platform, resulting in slightly more distance between the front and rear wheels as well as in terms of overall length. Initially, North American buyers can choose from a twin-turbocharged 2.9-liter V-6 that makes 440 horsepower, or optional twin-turbo 4.0-liter V-8 with 550 horses. Both engines come with eight-speed transmissions and all-wheel-drive is standard. Pricing is expected to start in the \$100,000 range. A plug-in hybrid Panamera as well as wagon body style will arrive later.



If this boxy Mercedes-Benz G-Class looks familiar, it should since it has been around for decades. A new model is in the works that will be significantly wider, but not longer.

## G, a new Mercedes-Benz

The German automaker's boxy, military-spec off-roader has been around in one form or another for decades, but we can confirm that a completely new **Mercedes-Benz G-Class** will make its debut in 2018 as a 2019 model. This time the super (as in powerful and pricey) off-roader will gain about four inches in width, apparently to accommodate new suspension pieces. Surprisingly, though, body length has been slightly reduced. That, along with greater use of aluminum body panels and various components and smaller and lighter inline six-cylinder engine choices,

is expected to take a 450-pound bite from the current model's 5,600-pound base curb weight.



The Salon Privé at Blenheim Palace, England: Why decide between classic cars, supercars, megacars or hypercars, when you can test drive them all?

## Palatial test drives

If today's Jaguar show on the pristine lawn of the Saratoga Automobile Museum isn't posh enough for you, then next weekend you might want to jet off to the English countryside for the Sept. 1-3 test drive weekend at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

The 11th annual **Salon Privé Automotive Excellence** event will put you behind the wheel of the Lamborghini Huracán, Bentley Bentayga, Morgan EV3, Abarth 124 Spider and BMW i8, among other cars you probably can't afford to even test drive in any other setting besides the palace where Winston Churchill grew up. Concours exhibitors are broken down in categories of Classic Car Specialists, Supercars/Luxury Cars (Ferrari, Bentley, Spyker) and Hypercars/Megacars (McClaren, Koenigsegg, Pagani).

For the curious, visit [www.salonpriveconcours.com](http://www.salonpriveconcours.com). Tickets for the weekend of boutique motoring and shows start at \$400. Not including air fare. See you there.

### TEST DRIVE

## 2016 Dodge Challenger

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This week's test car packed the 392 Hemi, which generates 475 lb.-ft. of torque to go with that 485 h.p. Dodge says that it tops out at 182 mph, and makes 60 mph from a standstill in the low four-second range. You don't need a stop watch to tell you that it's enormously quick, and it's easy (too easy) to spin the tires, even on routine tasks like pulling out of your street on a busy morning.

For those who want to spend some of their spare time at the drag strip, the Super Drag Pak option includes tweaks to steering, brakes, tires, suspension, paddle shifters and performance-related trip computer functions. The motor is also completely at ease pattering around town. This only seems like a big deal if you've ever owned a classic era big block car, in the days before technology overcame the problem of overheating. Getting caught in summer traffic and watching the temperature gauge creep up was (and is) enough to raise a bead of sweat on your forehead in no time.

Interior upgrades in the 2015 refresh updated the available technology and

improved the cabin's looks (though a white interior option would be a cool, retro option on Plum Crazy cars like this one). A media hub was added in the center console, and includes an SD card slot, USB outlet and auxiliary input jack. The dashboard is sectioned off by aluminum-stamped bezels, and a bank of controls are angled toward the driver. The available 8.4-inch Uconnect touchscreen is a cabin highlight; legibly large and more user friendly than most.

Front and side visibility is generally good; this generation of Camaro feels rather claustrophobic by comparison. However, the combination of thick c-pillars and fat headrests create big ¾ rear blind spots. Blind-spot monitoring and rear cross-traffic alert are included as part of the Driver Convenience Group, along with rear parking sensors, HID bi-xenon headlights, power folding mirrors and remote ignition (on automatic equipped models), so the \$1,095 option package is highly recommended.

Challenger's size pays dividends in passenger and cargo room. You can fit adults in the back seat if you choose to,



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](http://www.armoryauto.com)

**GOLDSTEIN CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM**  
613 Loudon Rd., Latham, NY 12110  
518-785-4156 [www.goldsteinchryslerjeep.net](http://www.goldsteinchryslerjeep.net)

**LIA CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM**  
2116 Central Ave., Schenectady, NY 12304  
518-579-3300 [www.liachryslerdodgejeep.com](http://www.liachryslerdodgejeep.com)

and cargo capacity measures a generous 16.2 cubic feet. Both rear seat and trunk room are best in the pony car class by a wide margin.

Talking about non-performance issues may seem strange, when the topic is muscle cars. But, when all the entries you're considering look good, sound great and go like stink, other factors play into the decision.

Modern muscle cars are priced such that they're far more likely to be bought

by middle aged parents than they are by younger drivers. Having a muscle car that can also hold passengers and gear for trips can help make a Plum Crazy choice look downright practical.

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](http://www.TimesUnion.com).



Don't miss newweek's Test Drive: **2017 Mercedes-Benz 450SL**

