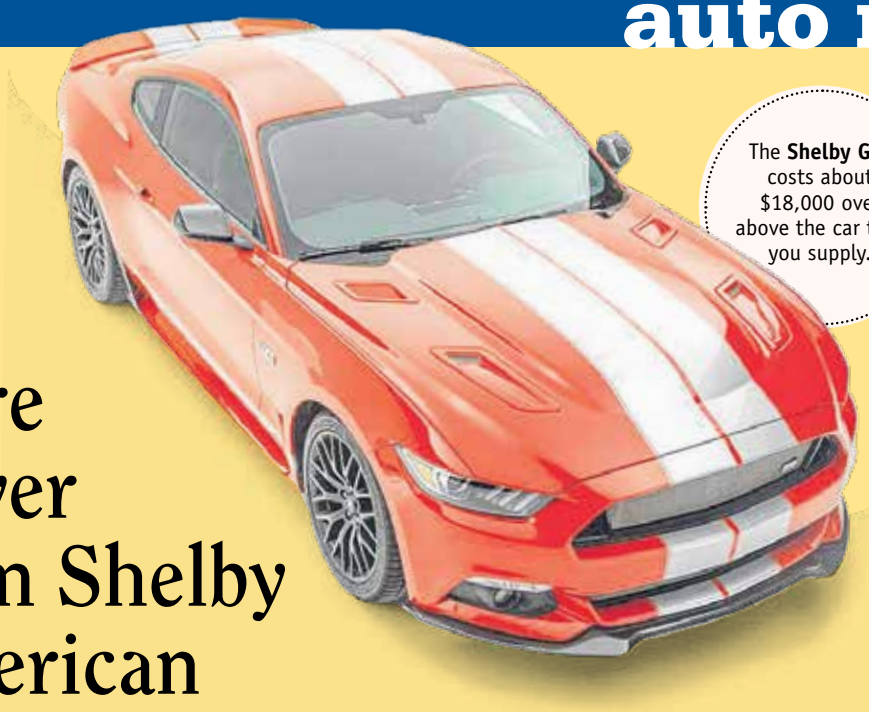


The **Shelby GTE** costs about $18,000 over above the car that you supply.

More power from Shelby American

These peach-colored pages were pleased to discover that the Las Vegas-based company founded by racing driver and sports car builder **Carroll Shelby** has developed a number of upgrades for Mustang owners who drive either the 5.0-liter V8 GT or the turbocharged 2.3-liter four-cylinder versions. Collectively called the **Shelby GTE** (E for "enhanced"), both models get more performance: An increase to 335 horsepower from 310 for the turbo four-cylinder, and 21 more horses (to 456) for the V8. The boost comes mainly from the Ford Performance catalog, with V8's getting the factory-approved Power Pack, and EcoBoost models a Shelby-specific engine tune. A custom hood, carbon-fiber rear spoiler, sport exhaust system and unique matte-black 19-inch wheels are also included with either upgrade. Plan on spending at least $18,000 (plus the cost of a new or used current-generation Mustang) for the turbo or V-8 upgrade. Yes, some Shelby American mods offer up to 750 horses, but if that's your bag, you can think of the GTE as the starting point for your power cravings.

The Supra looks, well, super

From the disguised images of the **Toyota Supra** revival, we can't wait for the unmasking to occur. That likely won't be for at least another year, but in the meantime speculation runs rampant concerning the upcoming sports coupe. Best guesses have the car arriving with a twin-turbocharged inline six-cylinder engine with some 450-plus horsepower.

You'll have to wait for a real glimpse, but best guesses have the Supra taking design cues from Toyota's 2014 **FT-1 concept**.

Others claim that that's simply a starting-point engine and that an optional plug-in hybrid version will place even more power into the hands (or right foot) of owners.

Whatever powerplant(s) the car winds up with, **BMW** will be tagging along as well, since the related **Z5 roadster** is expected to launch about a year after the Supra.

Ford + BlackBerry = Self-driving Car?

As companies rush to get ahead of the self-driving car curve, **Ford** has announced it will be partnering with tech company **BlackBerry** to develop an autonomous vehicle of its own.

The two have a history: Ford's current Sync3 infotainment system uses BlackBerry's QNX operating system. And hey, the whole phone thing isn't working out for BlackBerry so well anyway.

The partnership will first work on advancing the use of QNX and BlackBerry's Certicom security tech — whatever its market failings, BlackBerry did have some of the most secure mobile devices on the market — to address growing concerns of the hacking of autonomous cars, a concern that will surely rise as self-operating cars' technology becomes increasingly complex, and vulnerable. The company has said it will be getting out of the phone business to concentrate on software.

And Ford is looking to the future of transportation, as opposed to car selling. It's looking to put a fully-autonomous ride-sharing fleet on the road by 2021, with a consumer product to follow by 2015.

The move seems to be a response to General Motors' recent $500 million investment in ride-sharing company Lyft. In fact, GM announced last week its Maven car-sharing division had struck a deal with Lyft rival Uber to provide discounted short-term leases on GM vehicles to Uber drivers.

One competitor that Ford, BlackBerry and GM won't have to worry about in the short term: Apple. In September, the tech giant with the unlimited cash reserves was reported to be canceling its Project Titan, the not-so-secret plan for a self-driving Apple Car, laying off hundreds of automotive designers and software experts.

There appears to be an increasing number of hiked-up wagon offerings, such as this new Mercedes-Benz E-Class.

An E-Class wagon with off-road flair?

Our crystal ball shows a trend in taller tall wagons developing, and also suggests Mercedes-Benz cashing in on this burgeoning movement. OK, so it wasn't a crystal ball but an official announcement from Mercedes-Benz.

The automaker recently revealed the **E-Class All-Terrain**, a name that seems to have been created by a product planner who has more than a passing familiarity with his thesaurus (a similar Audi vehicle is called the A4 Allroad). The All-Terrain is essentially an E-Class wagon with more travel in the air suspension system for increased ground clearance. It also has different stability control and skid control systems, protective underbody skid plates and off-road-capable tires.

A four-cylinder turbo-diesel is standard on European versions, but a more robust gasoline powerplant is likely for North America. M-B has yet to actually confirm its arrival, but since Audi, Volvo and Subaru already sell similar hiked-up wagons here, our crystal ball figures that's a foregone conclusion.

TEST DRIVE

2017 Chevrolet Impala

Continued from page 1

The Driver Confidence package (blind spot monitoring/rear cross-traffic alert, lane-departure and forward collision warning) sounds like a good value at $595. The Convenience package, less so. The $1,045 price (LT only) includes rear parking sensors, remote engine start, carpeted mats, universal home remote and auto-dimming rearview mirror and a rearview camera — the latter a feature found standard on many cars (and one that is standard on Impala Premier).

Base (LS) and mid (LT) trim levels get Chevy's 2.5-liter four cylinder engine. Standard on top (Premium) trim (and optional elsewhere) is a 3.6L V-6. The six generates 305 horsepower and 264 lb.-ft. of torque. The four is rated at 196 h.p. and 186 lb.-ft. of torque. Both engines in the Front Wheel Drive Impala are connected to a six-speed automatic transmission.

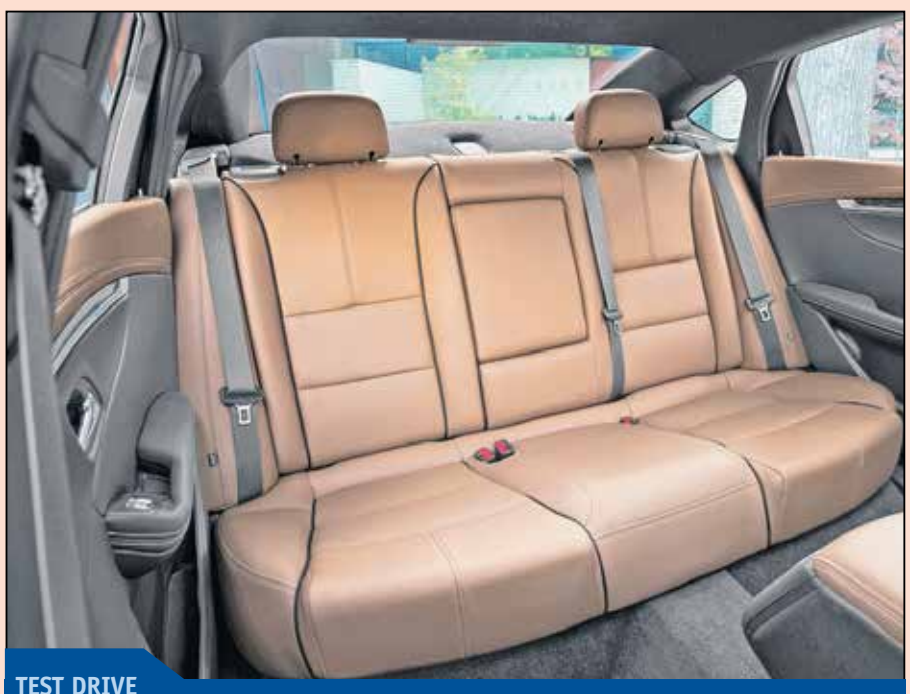
According to EPA estimates, fuel economy differences between the two motors are minimal. The four is expected to return 22 miles per gallon city and 30 highway; the six, 19/28. These numbers are in line with others in the class — for example, the Kia Cadenza (V-6) tested last week lists 20/28; Charger (V-6) is 19/30; and Maxima (V-6) is 21/30.

My test drive car was equipped with the four cylinder engine, which I found satisfactory for all normal driving situations. On-ramp merges into heavy traffic were a non-issue, and the Impala cruised easily at highway speeds. The six is probably a mid 6-second car from 0-60 mph, and the four is likely about two seconds behind that.

A more responsive engine is part of what makes a car feel luxurious, which is why this is frequently an option on larger cars.

So, while it's not necessary in Impala (unless you regularly pack a fully loaded car), the $1,095 upcharge for the V-6 may be worthwhile if you like the feel of extra power (and since there's little mileage penalty in switching from the four to the six), Impala's ride and handling are dialed towards the comfort side of the equation; more road trip than race track.

The car is maneuverable and handles with confidence, but steering and suspension don't feel very athletic. It does, however, have a fine, big car ride and a quiet interior. Long trips are easy passage.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

TEST DRIVE
this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

DENOOYER CHEVROLET 127 Wolf Rd., Albany, NY 12205
518-458-7700 www.denooyerchevrolet.com

DEPAULA CHEVROLET 785 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12206
518-489-5551 www.depaula.com

NORTHSTAR CHEVROLET 400 Clifton Park Rd., Clifton Park, NY 12065
518-371-5400 www.northstarchevrolet.com

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.