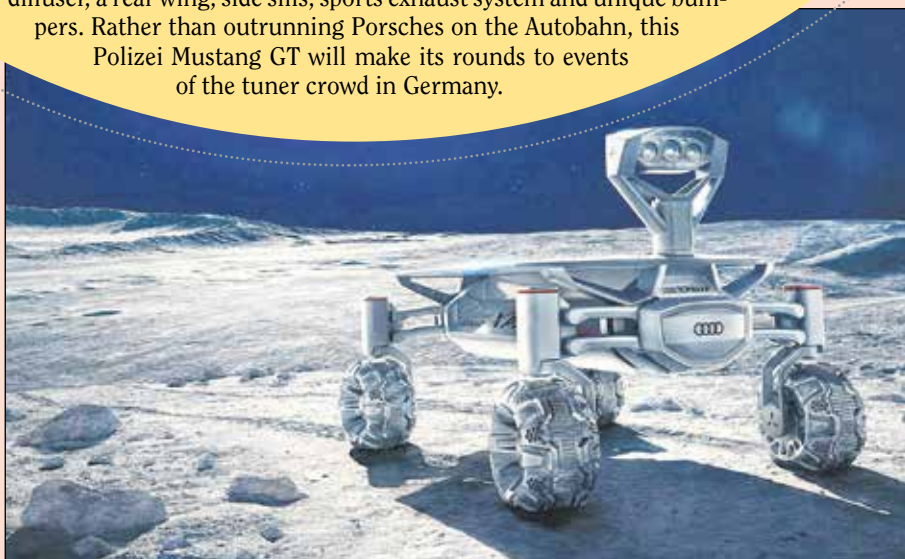




German Polizei tune an American Mustang

The German police are now using a special **Ford Mustang GT** for their “Tune it! Safe!” campaign promoting safe vehicle modification. Commissioned by the Verband der Automobil Tuner (VDAT) — think of it as Germany’s version of the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) — the vehicle was sponsored in part by Germany’s Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure. The Mustang was built by Wolf Racing, which tuned the GT’s 5.0-liter Coyote V-8 engine to 440 horsepower and added custom 20-inch alloy wheels wrapped in Hankook Ventus S1 Evo² tires, a height-adjustable coilover suspension, a body kit with front splitter, rear diffuser, a rear wing, side sills, sports exhaust system and unique bumpers. Rather than outrunning Porsches on the Autobahn, this Polizei Mustang GT will make its rounds to events of the tuner crowd in Germany.



Audi’s Lunar Quattro may be headed to the lunar surface late next year. Though we’re pretty sure this trip is way past the allotted mileage on its lease.

To the moon, Audi

Audi’s latest vehicle uses its e-tron electric powertrain, Quattro all-wheel-drive system and lightweight materials like aluminum and 3D printing. But unlike the Audi A4 Allroad, this one only weighs 66 pounds.

And, oh yeah, it’s headed to the moon.

The **Audi Lunar Quattro** was designed to withstand the rigors of space travel and wildly fluctuating temperatures of the moon’s surface. It features remote piloted technology and four cameras for 360-degree view of the lunar landscape, and can travel at 2.2 mph powered by solar panels and a lithium-ion battery. It’s all for science. And money.

Audi, along with a team of 70 scientists and ex-NASA recruits from three continents, is assisting the Berlin-based engineering group Part-Time Scientists in competing for the Google Lunar XPRIZE of some \$30 million.

The winner must be at least 90 percent privately funded and able to transport an automated vehicle 236,121 miles to the moon. As of press time, there are 16 teams still in the running. In late 2017, Audi expects the Lunar Quattro will reach that destination, possibly aboard Elon Musk’s Falcon 9 private spacecraft.

TEST DRIVE

2017 Honda Accord Hybrid

Continued from page 1

down the road. The electric power steering makes the car easy to maneuver at low speeds, yet has a nice heft under way.

Like the gas-powered version, Accord’s interior has adult-sized room and passengers enjoy comfortable surroundings. Front and rear leg room are about average for the class. One tradeoff common to hybrids is that the batteries that allow for their flashy fuel economy numbers have to live somewhere, and that somewhere eats into their cargo capacity. With a more compact, battery pack this year, Accord Hybrid has 13.5 cubic feet of trunk room. That’s substantially smaller than the gas-powered model (15.5), but more than the previous Hybrid (12.3), and better than the hybrid versions of the Fusion (12.0), Corolla (13.1) and Malibu (11.6). However, the rear seatbacks on those competitors fold forward and/or have a pass-through. The Honda doesn’t, so

there’s less cargo carrying flexibility here.

Three trim levels are available: Base, EX-L and Touring. Standard on all models is a suite of safety-related technologies known as Honda Sensing. The package includes Collision Mitigation Braking System, Forward Collision Warning, Adaptive Cruise Control, Road Departure Mitigation and Lane Keeping Assist. I find Honda’s lane keeping and road departure systems to be a little heavy handed; useful for night driving when you’re tired, but otherwise intrusive.

The forward collision warning is overly cautious, flashing warnings before they’re necessary, like a nervous copilot. LaneWatch — also standard on all trims — displays a camera-generated image of what’s behind you on the right side, onto the display screen when you switch on the right hand turn signal. It’s useful information, but would be twice as helpful if it worked on left turns as well.



TEST DRIVE this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

LIA HONDA
1258 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12205
518-438-4555 | www.liahondaofalbany.com

MOHAWK HONDA
1780 Freemans Bridge Rd., Scotia, NY 12302
518-370-4911 | www.mohawkhonda.com

EX-L and Touring models augment the 7.7-inch display screen with an additional, 7-inch touchscreen below. The infotainment system now integrates Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and allows streaming audio, smartphone-linked navigation and voice-controlled, SMS text messaging. Upper trim levels also get a 7-speaker sound system, with satellite/HD radio capability, and an added USB port.

The tech boost is a plus, but the touch-

screen is slow to react, and indifferent to input from a winter-gloved hand. The volume control is similarly slower than a basic knob would be, making the secondary controls on the steering wheel preferable to the primary, touchscreen input.

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.

8-series to replace the 6

We fondly recall the V-12-powered **BMW 8 series** flagship coupe (code named E31) that was a definite show-stopper when it was around from 1989-’99. That model, which was available with a V-12 engine coupled to a six-speed manual gearbox, was just about the coolest thing on four wheels.

Our sources are telling him that BMW will revive the 8-Series name — available with a 600-horsepower V-12 as well as a 670-horsepower hybrid powertrain — and will launch it before the end of the decade. The car’s design is expected to be similar to the Gran Lusso Coupe concept. Apparently the 8-Series’ arrival will mean the end of the road for the BMW 6-Series coupe.



A hopeful artist’s rendering of the resuscitated BMW 8-series.



The Lynk 01 crossover will be empowered to take advantage of the ride sharing market.

Not-so-missing Lynk

Sources are confirming that China-based automaker **Geely**, which owns **Volvo**, will create a separate division to be known as **Lynk & Co.**

The first model out of the gate is expected to be a compact hatchback/wagon called the **Lynk 01**, built on the same platform as the upcoming Volvo XC40, but designed at a lower price.

Like General Motors, Ford and a host of established makers, Geely is making this car compatible with the rapidly developing “personal transportation” market. (Think ride-sharing arrangements like Uber and Lyft, both of which are partnering with GM and Ford.) The Lynk 01 has a button that lets others know the car is available for sharing, and virtual keys can be sent to friends via an app, which allows the owner to determine when those “keys” will be active. Whether for profit or not, it sounds like a ride-sharing program to us.



Claiming the 01 will be the world’s most “connected” car, Geely

will also design Lynk & Co. vehicles to share an open API (application programming interface), allowing third parties to design apps for it in HTML5.

Geely/Volvo’s Peter Horbury will oversee the visual styling of the cars, while Lynk & Co. head designer Andreas Nilsson will oversee studios in Los Angeles, Shanghai and Barcelona.

Apparently Lynk vehicles will first be available in Geely’s home market, followed by a rollout in Europe and North America. It’s also quite possible that Geely will sell Lynk vehicles through existing Volvo dealerships.

Don’t miss next week’s Test Drive:
2017 Genesis G90 5.0 Ultimate

