



Diesel for the Equinox?

We weren't expecting to catch Chevrolet's next-generation compact tall wagon in the flesh so soon. And he was really caught off guard when discovering that the **2018 Equinox** will have as an engine option what GM hails as the compact SUV segment's first turbo-diesel in North America. The 1.6-liter four-cylinder turbo-diesel engine is rated at 136 horsepower and 236 pound-feet. That engine, as well as the turbocharged 1.5- and 2.0-liter I-4 gasoline engines, will be connected to six- or nine-speed automatic transmissions, depending on the powerplant. All-wheel-drive will also be optional. Other than plenty of available torque, the turbo-diesel will be a fuel miser, with an expected highway rating of 40 mpg.



Ooh-la-la. It's glitz and glamor for this Lamborghini Aventador at 2014's Mondial de l'Automobile in Paris, but the upmarket Italian name is only one of the automakers bowing out this year.

Show stoppers

International auto shows were once considered by carmakers as can't-miss events, but some big names in the industry are cutting back on their involvement.

Absent from this October's Paris auto show (Mondial de l'Automobile 2016) were Ford, Mazda, Volvo, Rolls-Royce and Lamborghini. Some Japanese, British and Italian makers stated their intent to take their wares to smaller events that offer less distraction from other makers and cost less (setting up shop at a large auto show can cost millions of dollars).

While some of the absent makers did cite the dominance of French makers like Renault and PSA Group (Peugeot, Citroën) making it hard to get noticed at the Paris event, Porsche announced that it was skipping the 2017 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Mich., which takes place in January and is considered a true international show with traditional representation from automakers worldwide.

Although public attendance remains strong at these events — they offer a venue for unveilings and get concept vehicles press attention that extends far beyond the venue's walls — there are questions as to whether these shows have any meaningful impact on sales.



Track shot of NextEV's all-electric supercar, said to produce more than 1,000 hp.

NextEV's electric supercar

The China-based startup that currently competes in the Formula E electric racing series unveiled a new all-electric supercar. **NextEV** has launched a new roadcar division it calls Nio, spearheaded by the limited-run, 1,365-hp supercar called the **Nio EP9**.

Debuted at Germany's famed Nürburgring test track last Monday, the all-wheel-drive two-seater with four separate electric motors was developed in conjunction with NextEV's Formula E electric racing team. With a top speed of 194 mph, the Nio EP9 gets from 0 to 62mph in 2.7 seconds.

NextEV plans to build the vehicle in its home country, but sell it in other markets, including Europe and North America. No word on price yet.

NextEV was co-founded by Chinese billionaire William Li in 2014. While it competes in Formula E, its ultimate goal is to offer a range of affordable electric cars with Internet connectivity and, eventually, self-driving capacity.

It plans to sell cars in China, but hopes to eventually branch out into the U.S. and other markets. NextEV has already started an advance office in Silicon Valley led by former Motorola exec Padmasree Warrior. So you can expect the EP9 will aspire to be more high-tech than your average high-price track-burner.

"In the next decade, the car will be the smartest device that people will own," Li said, "and we want to bring the mobile Internet experience to the vehicle."

TEST DRIVE

2017 Volvo XC60 T6 AWD

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includes 20-inch tire/wheel packages, but common sense suggests a try-before-you-buy approach, to make sure that the ride is suitably smooth, when the road aren't.

It's said that one way to tell a person's age is to look at their hands. With cars, the giveaway is usually found in the interior, in details like outdated screen size or unavailable technology. The XC60's clean,

Sensus infotainment system. The system does include a Wi-Fi hot spot (six-month complimentary subscription) along with mobile phone apps and navigation, as well as an eight-speaker sound system with HD and satellite radio and USB/auxiliary inputs.

HVAC controls are fairly intuitive, particularly the "mode man" switches to direct air flow. (Column Digression:

I know that the mode man has been around for a while, but his lumpy profile suggests that he could use a little less time lounging in the comfy seats, and a little more walking, or maybe consider an aerobics class. Just sayin'.) The surrounding sea of buttons, though not as straight forward, are relatively easy to manage once you learn the locations.

The front seats are highly adjustable and quite comfortable. Rear seats are a reminder that you're in the small SUV class. With six-footers up front, like-size passengers will be tightly squeezed behind them. Rear leg room measures 36.4 inches, which compares to 36.8 inches in the BMW X3, 37.4 inches in the Audi Q5 and 38.3 inches in the Acura RDX — three class competitors.

The Volvo's cargo bay capacity is useably large, ranging from 30.8-67.4 cubic feet, depending on how you configure the seats. That's more storage space than Q5 (29.1-57.3) and X3 (27.6-63.3); less than RDX (26.1-76.9). Lift-over height is low, the load floor is relatively flat, and the top hinged lift gate swings high out of harm's way.



The "mode man" on the Volvo XC60's HVAC controls is showing his advancing age, if not weight.

Scandinavian take on cabin design is an interesting departure from its competitors. However, the 7-inch display screen on the "waterfall" center stack looks small compared to competitive models that were designed more recently. While Apple CarPlay is offered on some competitive models (and has been made available on the XC90), neither it nor Android Auto are compatible with the XC60's



The 2017 Volvo XC60 T6 has a clean, expectedly Scandinavian take on cabin design, but its 7-inch "waterfall" center stack seems small compared to the model's rivals.

Notable among the standard features on Dynamic trim T5 models are dual panoramic moon roofs, remote ignition, low-speed frontal collision warning and mitigation, blind spot monitoring with rear cross traffic alert, rearview camera, rear parking sensors, leather upholstery and the Sensus Connect infotainment system.

A power lift gate and 19-inch rims are among the extras that T6 Dynamics get, in addition. My T6 tester was also equipped with the Climate Package & Child Booster Seats package (\$1,550). Along with the dual, outboard, dual-stage booster seats, this package is highlighted

by heat (heated front seats, windshield washer nozzles, steering wheel and windshield). Also on my car was the Advanced Package (\$2,500), which includes adaptive cruise control, collision warning with auto brake, pedestrian/cyclist detection with auto brake, Distance and Driver Alerts, Lane Departure Warning, Active High Beam, and an easy-on-the-ears, 14-speaker, harman/kardon premium sound system.

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.