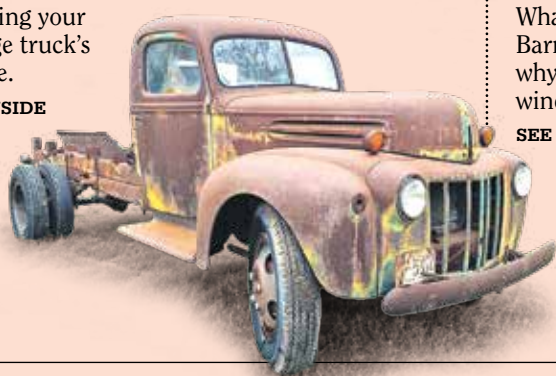


Old and in the Way

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Auughh!

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Does the R stand for ready?

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Look out, Edison!

Which car company scored the most patents this year?

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TEST DRIVE

The Genesis of Genesis

2017 Genesis G90 RWD 5.0 Ultimate

DAN LYONS | text
Special to the Times Union

The Genesis G90 is the flagship of a new luxury car division. The four-door-sedan will (at least for now) be sold on a showroom-within-a-showroom basis, at select Hyundai dealerships.

My first drive in the new venture from Hyundai reminded me of when the company first broke into this market, at the opposite end of the model spectrum. Japan's Big Three had established themselves decades before, gaining a toehold in the U.S. economy-car segment, and slowly expanding outward.

By the Eighties, the growth had created a gap. Years of incremental increases in price and model size had left an opening at entry level of the economy car segment. Hyundai (and eventually other Korean makes) stuck their foot in that open door, and late in that decade, started importing



2017 Genesis G90 RWD 5.0 Ultimate

MSRP: \$69,700 As Tested: \$70,650

cars that undercut the Japanese in the segment that they'd first flourished in here. Using lower prices and longer warranties to keep the door open, they followed up with better cars and bigger cars, and made their place at the table.

Genesis is the same, but different. While not starting from scratch, the idea of creating a separate luxury brand is still a stretch (the company envisions as many as six Genesis models by 2021). But in this case, they're building on a foundation already laid by decades in this country.

As with their initial 1980s launch, Genesis is aiming at the entry level (this time, entry level luxury). Offering a value driven choice, they look to appeal to first time luxury buyers, Hyundai owners moving up, and all the conquests they can grab.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER
THE 2017 GENESIS G90 is the first model from Genesis, Hyundai's new luxury brand. It will initially be available at Hyundai dealerships in both 3.3-liter Premium and Ultimate, with a 5.0-liter engine (below, left). AWD is also an option.

This week's test drive is in the G90. The range-topping luxury sedan is offered in two trim levels (3.3T Premium and 5.0 Ultimate) whose numerical names are derived from the size of their motors. Both are rear-wheel-drive, with all-wheel drive available optionally.

The process of making a name for yourself isn't helped by using a name that's already been in use for seven years. In that regard, Hyundai hasn't done the new flagship division any favors by calling it Genesis. However, the company retired the sedan-formerly-known-as-Genesis last year, and it looks to distance itself with new cars (and eventually, the new lineup).

In keeping with a bang-for-the-buck approach in a well-dressed segment, all G90s are nicely equipped. The sole option beyond trim (which also dictates engine size) is the choice of AWD over RWD. The company expects about half of the car's buyers to opt for AWD (a \$2,500 option); a percentage that will undoubtedly skew higher in Snowbelt regions like ours.

My Genesis was a V-8 Ultimate with RWD, and we

received just enough snow during the test period to allow me to play around in it. It is, of course, possible to survive winters with rear-wheel-drive. Many of us did so for years. But, if you live where we live and you've got the means to buy a luxury car, I know of no earthly reason why you shouldn't spring for AWD.

Luxury marques frequently offer a standard engine with ample power, and an optional motor that's all that and a bag of chips. The 3.3L V-6 is the former, and the 5.0 V-8 the latter. The twin-turbo six makes 365 horsepower and 376 lb.-ft. of torque. The eight ups the ante to 420 and 383. Both are connected to an eight-speed automatic transmission. The 5.0 has the expected, comfortable excess of power and a hint of

a growl when prodded. Power flow is buttery at all rpm levels. There's little difference in fuel economy between engines or platforms, for that matter. EPA says you can expect 17/24 with the V-6 in either RWD or AWD guise. The V-8 is predicted to return 16/24 (RWD) and 15/23. I registered 17 in mixed driving.

Trunk space measures 15.7 cubic feet, with a center

Continued on page 2

As with their initial 1980s launch, Genesis is aiming at the entry level... this time, entry level luxury.

AUTO KNOW

Dangerous counterfeit auto parts flood the market

Counterfeit auto parts are a multibillion-dollar drain on the industry, and it's so pervasive, even carmakers can be ripped off.

Maysa Razavi, anti-counterfeiting manager for the International Trademark Association, said at least one luxury carmaker has fallen prey to ripoffs.

"It's not just consumers, but sophisticated buyers who get tricked," she said, declining to name the carmaker.

In 2015, the United States reported 132 seizures of counterfeit auto parts while Europe reported 637 seizures. In total, the U.S. counterfeit market was about \$1.3 billion in 2015, with automotive worth about three percent of that figure, according to the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

Counterfeiting — when an unscrupulous individual or company puts a recognized brand name on knock-off product that is most likely inferior — has hit car parts of every description, from luxury materials to fasteners, air bags and brake components, Razavi said.

Paolo Rezzaghi knows that all too well. He's the intellectual property rights manager for Brembo, maker of high-end braking systems. As standard or optional for many new sports and luxury cars, and also available in the aftermarket, Brembo brake products are in

demand and command a premium.

It's demand that counterfeiters in China and Europe are only too happy to fill. It's costing Brembo millions in lost sales and in the war against counterfeiting.



Even boutique parts like Brembo brakes are susceptible to being faked. This display shows how hard it is to spot the difference. But if your knock-off Louis Voutton handbag fails, you don't go off a cliff.

Brembo employs two staff at its Italian headquarters in Spezzano, Italy, near Milan, and about 20 more in companies and law firms around the world, just to fight counterfeiting. Rezzaghi estimates Brembo's loss at around \$5 million in the U.S. alone.

Razavi said safety is proving to be a major concern in

the fight against fakes. She pointed specifically to 2011, when a flood of counterfeit air bags hit the market.

"The air bags would go off, explode in the faces of the test dummy and shoot out fire. The videos are kind of scary to watch."

Both experts say online shopping is a minefield.

"If you do buy things online, remember," Rezzaghi said, "if the deal is too good to be true, it usually is."

Yet even that longtime piece of advice isn't necessarily helpful anymore. Rezzaghi said counterfeiters are raising prices, not only to improve their profits, but also as a shield against skeptical consumers.

Rezzaghi said consumers should watch where the parts are coming from. At the retail level for sale to consumers, no Brembo products are made in China. (Even though Brembo does have plants in China, those plants supply only carmakers.) As well, he said Brembo does not sell individual components of braking systems to consumers, such as calipers, only whole kits that include the calipers, pads, rotors and brake lines.

Finally, and it's advice that should apply to any legitimate aftermarket supplier, check the website. Rezzaghi said www.brembo.com will supply a list of legitimate authorized dealers.

— Kelly Taylor, Wheelbase Media