

Jeep's compact Compass

As we heard some time ago, the name chosen to replace the Jeep Patriot and Compass compact-wagon duo is... **Compass**. Although the junior Jeep's styling (especially the rear roof pillar) is unique, the grille has a decidedly Jeep Grand Cherokee look to it. The sole engine is a 180-horsepower 2.4-liter four-cylinder, while a variety of transmissions — including



2018 Jeep Compass

a six-speed manual — will be used, depending on the model and whether you choose front- or four-wheel-drive. As with the larger Cherokee, the Compass will come in a off-road-capable Trailhawk model with more ground clearance, underbody protection and a dual-range four-wheel-drive system. The second-generation Compass will arrive by the spring.

This Brazil-only **Ford Troller T4** could be the basis for the new Bronco.



More Bronco-busting news

It appears that Ford will be taking direct aim at the Jeep Wrangler with the return of the **Bronco** utility vehicle. It, and the also-returning Ford Ranger pickup, are expected to arrive sometime in 2018 or 2019 and will be built the traditional way (i.e. body on frame). Ford made the official announcement at the recent Detroit Auto Show, but skimped on details. However, our sources say that chassis testing is currently taking place far away from prying eyes in Australia, although the bodies will be penned in North America. Some rumors have the Bronco's design being based on the Brazilian **Ford Troller T4** (shown above), which is roughly the size of the original Bronco, or the Australian **Ford Everest** SUV. Or, as Ford tech head Raj Nair suggested, it could be an entirely original vehicle. There's no word yet on engines, but turbo four- and six-cylinder powerplants are most likely.



A lower-priced entry-level model of Porsches four-door Panamera is in the works, as is a high-end Executive model (below) with a stretched platform.

Pick your Panamera: Basic or stretched

Porsche recently launched the second-generation **Panamera** four-door hatchback sedan with a couple of loaded-up models, which is a common tactic with new or heavily revised cars (eager buyers pay the most). We've since discovered that an entry-level Panamera will be released as well as a stretched version.

The former will come in rear- and all-wheel-drive variations, powered by a twin-turbocharged 330-horsepower V-6. The Executive has an additional six inches between the front and rear wheels, which means more legroom in back. Expect to shell out close to 100 grand for the 440-horsepower AWD Executive and a lot more once you opt for the 550-horsepower engine plus assorted extras.



I can't quit you, Golf. Could a revamped Golf make us all forget Volkswagen's diesel cheating scandal? Shown here is the 2018 Volkswagen Golf European Spec hatch, a suggestion of what we might get.

VW ups its Golf game for 2018

Attempting to put the embarrassing and expensive diesel-engine-cheating scandal in the rearview mirror, Volkswagen has let the word slip that a revamp of the **Golf** hatchback will likely be unveiled by the summer.

The Golf will receive a fresh nose, bumpers, fenders, headlights and taillights while the already well laid-out interior gets larger base and optional information touch-screens, the latter combining with the latest 3D navigation system.

Although the Golf's turbocharged 170-horse 1.8-liter four-cylinder will likely carry over, the turbo 2.0-liter four-cylinder in the sporty GTI model will see its output increased to 230 horsepower (245 for the performance version) from the current 210/220 horses. A new seven-speed paddle-shift transmission replaces the current six-speed. Rumor is the Golf will be available in at least four trims levels including the Golf R, electric e-Golf, GTI and the standard Golf.

TEST DRIVE

2017 Ford Escape

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of precipitation accompanied my test period with the Escape, and there's less slip and more grip driving an AWD-equipped vehicle, which makes for less stressful traveling.

Escape was the first Ford model to roll out the new, Sync 3 infotainment system in 2016. Sync 3 allows you to use the same, pinch/swipe moves familiar to tablet and smartphone users to interact with various systems. This year, Escape offers Apple CarPlay and Android Auto integration with the SYNC 3 system, along with a vehicle interaction application. The app — FordPass with Sync Connect — enables owners to locate, lock, unlock and start their vehicle via their smartphone. Overall, Sync 3 is an improvement over the outgoing system, though here as with other, feature-laden infotainment systems, it still takes longer to get many tasks done than would conventional controls.

Multi-adjustable headrests and a tilt/telescoping steering column allow you to personalize your seating. There's ample room for six footers in front, and with seats so set, like-size passengers will fit (snugly) behind them, provided that those up front are reasonable with their reclining.

Escape's front and rear leg room measures 43.1 inches and 37.3 inches respectively. That's a little better in both rows than RAV-4 (42.6/37.2); better in front/worse in back than CR-V (41.3/40.4) — two perennial benchmarks in this class. Ford has increased the number of front cabin stowage spots for 2017.

For larger items, Escape's rear seat-backs fold to a flat load floor, which expands the cargo capacity from 34 cubic-feet to 68 cubic-feet. While that trails CR-V (39.2-75.8 cu. ft.) and RAV4 (38.4-73.4), I found it large enough to swallow two reeally big boxes from a big box store, with rear hatch closed. Lift over



TEST DRIVE
this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

JACK BYRNE FORD 1003 Hudson River Rd., Mechanicville, NY 12118
518-664-9841 jackbyrneford.dealerconnection.com

ORANGE FORD 799 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12206
518-489-5414 www.orangemotors.com

height in back is low, and you can open the tailgate with the sweep of a foot — provided that you're in a Titanium model.

Other standard features in the top trim level include a 10-speaker Sony sound system with HD radio, keyless start/stop/entry, memory seat settings for the driver and ambient cabin lighting. Lane departure warning and intervention have been added to the list of available, driver assist technologies. They're bundled in the Titanium Technology package (\$1,995), along with an enhanced, self-parking system,

xenon headlights, automatic high beam control, rain sensing wipers and a heated steering wheel.

Notable among the stand-alone options this year are the navigation system (\$795), a panoramic sunroof (\$1,495) and adaptive cruise control (\$595).

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.



» Don't miss next week's Test Drive:
Jeep Wrangler Sahara 4x4

