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2017 Chevrolet Camaro ZL1

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**Electric Italian**  
Even this lux brand is putting out its own EV.  
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### TEST DRIVE

# Snow Blower

## 2017 Dodge Challenger GT

DAN LYONS | text and photos  
*Special to the Times Union*

To car enthusiasts, winter here in America's Northern Tier is the Season Of Buzzkill. Sports car, muscle car or convertible, many a sunny, summer dream has been doused by a cold, wet blast of winter realism.



So, those who would own a car not suited to snow and sleet either deny the dream, or park their preferred ride, and wait winter out. Time and technology are changing this scenario. Some winter-friendly rides are becoming a skosh less boring. And (more rarely), a summertime car adapts cold weather chops.

The newest member of the latter class is the subject of this week's test drive — the Dodge Challenger GT.

**2017 Dodge Challenger GT**  
MSRP: \$ 33,395 · As Tested: - \$38,965

The two-door Challenger GT joins the four-door Charger AWD in the ranks of Dodge's winter-rated offerings — sports division. Like Charger, Challenger rolls on the company's performance AWD chassis. The system employs an active transfer case with front axle disconnect. Under normal driving conditions, the GT is fully rear-wheel-drive, enjoying all the handling characteristics native to this classic, performance car setup. But when sensors indicate the need for additional traction, the system engages the front axle, and can channel up to 38 percent of available engine torque to the front wheels, as needed.



**THE 2017 CHALLENGER GT**, like its four-door sibling Charger, rolls on Dodge's performance AWD chassis, driving like a rear-wheel-drive performance car under normal conditions, and switching over to AWD when sensing the need.

The GT's AWD works hand in glove with the car's Vehicle Dynamic Control (VDC) and Electronic Stability Control (ESC) systems to maximize grip in any road conditions — wet or dry.

Sensors draw upon a number of variables (ambient, temperature, wheel slip, use of sport mode, auto stick or windshield wipers, etc.) to determine how much power to push to the front treads.

The sole powertrain offering in Challenger GT is the same as in the all-wheel-drive Charger: Dodge's 3.6L V-6. The most popular engine choice among Challenger/Charger buyers, it's linked to an eight-speed automatic transmission, and rated at 305 horsepower @ 6,350 rpm and 268 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4,800 rpm.

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My mid-winter test drive encompassed highways and byways in Maine and New Hampshire, along with snow-covered slalom and straightaway blasts at a New England motor park. The street time confirmed the confidence-adding power of all-wheel-drive in Challenger.

Wet roads wearing a mealy mix of snow would usually be cause for concern with a rear-drive car, lest the tail start wagging. Shod with standard, all-season performance tires (not snow tires), the AWD equipped Challenger took it all in stride. Ditto and more so on the snow covered track, where the car dutifully chugged through bumper skimming depths of snow and — with ESC switched to full-off — drifted happily around corners on a track

*Continued on page 4*



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