



The biggest change?
The base V-6 engine will be replaced with a turbo four.

2018 Mustang gets a subtle makeover

Ford staged a surprise unveiling of the next iteration of its famed pony car last month at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit after most of the 5,000 or so media attendees had departed. (The lesson? Never show up on time; never leave early.) What they missed was the introduction of the Mustang's new interior, exterior and suspension adjustments. One of the biggest changes: The base 300-horsepower V-6 will be replaced by the previously optional turbocharged 310-horsepower 2.3-liter four-cylinder (currently selected by about 40 percent of Mustang buyers). An updated 5.0-liter V-8 will remain an optional. Each will be mated to a six-speed manual transmission, or newly available 10-speed automatic that replaces the previous six-speed. It will also offer 12 wheel options and a brand new customizable digital instrument cluster. Both coupe and convertible 'Stangs arrive this fall. Pricing has not yet been announced.



While Subaru BRZ fans would love a little more power, it seems that adding AWD to the "Poor man's Cayenne" would mess with its great handling. Here's a 2016 in Hyper Blue.

No turbo or AWD for BRZ

Despite speculation to the contrary, **Subaru** has confirmed that a turbocharger for its rear-wheel-drive sporty coupe is not, and never will be, part of the **BRZ** program.

The reason, apparently, is that there simply isn't enough room for a turbo under the hood. At the same time, Subaru quashed another rumor concerning the addition of all-wheel-drive in the future, stating that AWD would require increasing the BRZ's ride height, thus disturbing the car's center of gravity and handling abilities.

Mitsubishi readies a new SUV

We've seen a number of concept vehicles from Mitsubishi, only to find out that most are far from production-bound. However, we hear that tall wagon we've viewed only in silhouette form is the real deal and will wind up in dealer showrooms in about a year. The as-yet-unnamed Mitsu will slot between the **Outlander Sport** (RVR outside the United States) and the larger **Outlander**, and will come in four-cylinder-gasoline-engine and plug-in-hybrid variants. With the Lancer sedan due for retirement this year, a new model is urgently needed to bolster the Nissan-Renault-owned automaker's lineup.



2017 Mitsubishi Outlander



Anthony Levandowski, head of Uber's autonomous driving program, shows off a self-driving Volvo XC90, the same model that ran a red light in San Francisco.

Auto Uber runs a red light

In mid-December of last year, a dashboard cam recorded an **Uber** vehicle running a red light in San Francisco. Once the footage came to light, Uber denounced the mistake as human error, and used it as an excuse to underscore their mission of "making the roads safer by building self-driving Ubers."

But it turns out it wasn't a human driving the car. It was a self-driving Uber.

Also, turns out the incident occurred after the City of San Francisco had banned autonomous vehicles from its streets. Double oops.

Last week, the *New York Times* disclosed internal Uber documents that stated the mapping programs used by the car — a retrofitted **Volvo XC90** SUV — failed to recognize six traffic lights, running the last one in front of the city's Museum of Modern Art while red.

We're in uncharted territory with autonomous cars. But Uber seems to view its current model of using "gig drivers" as a temporary stepping stone, and has been particularly aggressive about pushing autonomous vehicles to market. Many of its execs and engineers are ex-employees of Google and other self-driving pioneers who felt their former companies weren't moving fast enough.

Case in point: Uber's new vice president in charge of autonomous vehicles, Anthony Levandowski, came to the company last year when Uber bought the self-driving semi-truck firm he co-founded after growing frustrated at Google.

TEST DRIVE

2017 Jeep Compass

Continued from page 3

stations. EPA fuel economy estimates predict the following: 23 city/32 highway/26 combined (4x2, 6-speed manual); 22/31/25 (4x4 6-speed manual), 22/31/25 (4x2 6-speed auto), and 22/30/25 (4x4 9-speed auto). I logged 26.8 mpg's on my 200+ on road miles, in everything from highways to stop and go city crawls. As the numbers suggest, there's practically no mileage penalty for choosing the 4x4 system.

Considering that and the decided, winter and off-road traction advantage, if you can swing the \$1,500 and you live where we live, I can think of no reason not to go with a 4x4. Jeep says that 85 percent of the buyers of the outgoing Compass models did just that, and believes that number will increase for the new models. Ditto and more so in Snowbelt states like ours.

Jeep Active Drive and Active Drive Low are both full-time, on-demand 4x4 systems. Both can transfer as much as 100 percent of available torque to any wheel to help you maintain your grip. Both include the Selec-Terrain traction system. Drivers select the 4x4 mode (Auto, Snow, Sand, Mud and (on Trailhawk only) Rock) that will provide optimum grip in varying

conditions. The system integrates with all active chassis controls. Trailhawk's Active Drive Low system includes some features of specific interest to off-roaders (20:1 crawl ratio, hill-descent control, Selec Trac "Rock" setting, aggressive tires, front/rear tow hooks).

The body is fitted with unique fascias that boost its angles of approach/break-over/departure to an impressive 30/24/34 degrees, respectively, with 8½ inches of ground clearance.

The undercarriage is fitted with protective skid plates. Ride height is boosted nearly an inch, and Trailhawk models can ford water up to 19 inches deep. On an off-road circuit supplying a generous helping of rocks, ruts, mud and hills, I found that Trailhawk never put a tire wrong. Nothing in this segment has better off-road chops.

When max traction isn't needed, the 4x4 system's disconnecting rear axle and power take-off unit switch to front wheel drive, to minimize parasitic loss and maximize mileage. Compass' off-road prowess tends to obscure its improved, on road performance. The small-wide platform is stiffer, so the suspension can do its thing without having to compen-



TEST DRIVE
this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

ARMORY CHRYSLER DODGE JEEP RAM SRT FIAT
926 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12206
518-641-7777 www.armoryauto.com

GOLDSTEIN CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM
613 Loudon Rd., Latham, NY 12110
518-785-4156 www.goldsteinchryslerjeep.net

LIA CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM
2116 Central Ave., Schenectady, NY 12304
518-579-3300 www.liachryslerdodgejeep.com

sate for chassis flex. Compass handles confidently and has a supple ride quality; soaking up shocks without feeling numb or floaty.

Interior designs show their age at least as fast as exteriors do. The Compass cabin was overdue for a re-do and the 2017 edition is fresh looking, with a straight forward layout of controls. Top-ranging, Limited models have an upscale look and feel.

Depending on the model/options chosen, the fourth generation Uconnect system is accessed via 5-, 7- or 8.4-inch touchscreen. The larger two come with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay connectivity. The menu of standard and available safety and infotainment features is fully stocked and there for the asking. There's more than enough room for six-footers in front, and with seats

set for that size, like size passengers can fit (snugly) behind them. Rear seatbacks fold flat forward for extra storage. Cargo capacity ranges from 27.2 - 59.8 cubic feet. That's bigger than class comparable Crosstrek, smaller than Sportage.

The optional sunroof (\$1,295 on Ltd.) deserves special mention. The size of the dual panes brightens the cabin appreciably when you retract the cover. In tilt mode, it adds fresh air with minimal wind noise. And when you open it wide, there's no need to crack a window to combat buffeting. I can't remember the last time I could say that about a sunroof.

A regular contributor to the Times Union for more than 25 years, Dan Lyons is the award-winning author of six books, and photographer of 180 calendars.

