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TEST DRIVE

Fresh Trax

2017 Chevy Trax Premier

DAN LYONS | text
Special to the Times Union

Trax entered the market in 2015 — at least here. Prior to that date, the GM import (which first appeared in 2012) was already on sale in 66 countries. It joins the small utility/crossover class that's populated by Juke, Renegade, Soul, Encore and HRV, to name a few.



This is a refresh year for Trax, with a dual port grille up front being the principal visual change for 2017. While the number of trim levels hasn't changed, one of them now goes by a new name. LS and LT and joined by Premier, which replaces LTZ atop the Trax lineup. Beyond the grille change, other exterior changes for 2017 focus on LT and Premier trims, which get halogen projector headlamps,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

2017 Chevy Trax Premier
MSRP: \$26,100 · As Tested: \$27,290

along with a revised rear fascia, tail lamps and LED signature lighting. Trax rolls on the same platform as the Chevy Sonic and the Buick Encore. It has a short (100.6 inches) wheelbase and sits high for its size. Many will find the latter a plus, for visibility purposes. The combination of small and tall typically doesn't lend itself to a smooth ride or sharp handling. However, before the first Trax arrived here, GM



retuned the suspension with an eye toward improving these qualities specifically for this market. Trax feels stable and reasonably agile, for its class. Ride quality is generally good (a bit stiffer with the 18-inch rims fitted on Premiere), and the small footprint means that it will fit in parking spots that other, bigger rides wouldn't even slow down to consider. Front-wheel-drive is standard, and all-wheel-drive is available on all trim levels. Trax AWD is an on-demand system, automatically adding power to all four paws when needed, to improve traction. The option costs \$1,500, and exacts a minor mileage penalty. EPA estimates Trax mileage at 25/33/28 (FWD) and 24/30/27 (AWD).

Trax joins the small utility/crossover class with Juke, Renegade, Soul, Encore and HRV.

One thing for Trax that didn't make the trip from overseas to our shores is engine choices. While some markets see multiple motors on the menu, we get one. I don't know whether this was decided for simplicity's sake or because the other motors were judged to be underpowered for this market. The U.S. spec drivetrain pairs a 1.4L turbocharged, four-cylinder engine rated at 138 horsepower @ 4,900 rpm and 148 lb. ft. of torque @ 1,850 with a six-speed automatic transmission. The engine's peak torque arrives at a low, 1,850 rpm, so Trax rolls away from a stop easily. But gathering speed takes time, so you need to be aware of what you

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