

## More muscle for the Yaris

Automotive bullies won't be kicking sand in the grille of the **Toyota Yaris** much longer if rumors of a hot spin-off model are true. The name currently assigned to this amped-up sub-compact is the GRMN, which stands for Gazoo Racing Masters of Nürburgring.

Gazoo is the name of Toyota's motorsports team. The Yaris will get a supercharged 1.8-liter four-cylinder that makes 205 horsepower, or nearly 100 ponies more than the standard non-supercharged engine.



A sporty Toyota Yaris model called GRMN will get a 205-horsepower supercharged four-cylinder engine.

Other goodies will include upgraded suspension and brake components, racing-style wheels, aero body kit with roof spoiler and special paint. Although the GRMN is not yet 100 percent confirmed for North America, Toyota president Akio Toyoda is such a huge racing enthusiast that a 2018 model-year arrival just might happen.



## Yet another flying car?

Actually, we're not sure what to call this thing unleashed at last week's Geneva Motor Show. A flying car? A gondola carried by a drone? A Transformer's fever dream? The **Pop.Up** concept from France-based aeronautical manufacturer **Airbus** and Italian automotive engineering firm **Italdesign Giugiaro** mounts a carbon-fiber passenger compartment on a skateboard-type wheeled platform or, if airborne travel is required, suspends it from a propeller-powered drone. The concept is to get around traffic congestion in large cities. But assuming that Albany is such a metro center, would you really want to soar away drone-style and leave your wheels smack dab in the middle of I-90 at eight in the morning? And how will the drone ever fit into the state parking garage on Madison? We say it's best to let Amazon perfect this airborne drone delivery system first with your New Balance crosstrainers before you wind up as the package.



Lucid Air

## The latest Tesla killer?

Aside from flying cars and unicorns, another prospective fantasy we enjoy reporting on is that most elusive of creatures: the Tesla-killer.

The latest would-be competitor to the pre-eminent luxury startup electric carmaker is the **Lucid Air**, a new upscale EV from Lucid Motors. The base model's price has now been pegged at \$52,500 (after a \$7,500 government tax credit). The price is suspiciously less than the (soon to be discontinued) entry level **Tesla Model S 60**, which starts at \$68,000 before the tax credit.

That model Lucid Air doesn't sport the 1,000-horsepower engine the company has been showing off, but it does claim 400 horses and (better yet) a 240-mile range on a battery charge. Tesla's Model S 60 has 382-horses and a 219-mile range.

Meanwhile, the previously billed Tesla killer has collapsed. **Farraday Future** revealed its **FF91** electric in January, bragging its 1,050-hp engine would be unleashed by next year. No go there, as the Chinese start-up seems to have fizzled out. Park those prototypes in the barn alongside your Fisker Karma.



Farraday Future's FF91 electric

News from the recently-wrapped Geneva show, however, is that **Volvo** has set 2019 as the date to lunch its own electric, this one with a claimed 250-mile range and \$35,000-\$40,000 price tag. While Volvo already has hybrid versions of its models (including the XC90 SUV and V60 sedan), this would be the first purely electric vehicle from the Swedish maker.

The price seems a little low for Volvo's posh standards, dipping down toward the \$37,500 (pre-credit) MSRP of Chevy's 238-mile range **Bolt EV** crossover.



The Camaro ZL1 1LE adds downforce, sticky tires and improved cooling. Easy now.

## Track-focused Camaro grips

We can't help but be impressed with the latest hot Camaro to hit the streets. The **2018 Camaro ZL1 1LE** doesn't add to the standard ZL1's supercharged 650-horsepower V-8, but it does come with plenty of stuff to make it nearly unbeatable on a racecourse.

That includes fully adjustable shocks, a six-speed manual transmission (your only choice) and 19-inch Goodyear Eagle F1 Supercar tires mounted on forged-aluminum wheels. The 1LE gets an extra-large grille opening for increased airflow to the engine, an aluminum hood with carbon-fiber insert and a rear wing that produces up to 300 pounds of downforce for quicker cornering speeds.

Pricing has yet to be announced, but a 1LE will most likely cost you a few grand more than the \$63,500 base price of a ZL1.

### TEST DRIVE

## 2017 Chevy Trax

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have (and don't have) under foot when you consider passing or merging. Chevy quotes a 0-60 best of 9.2 seconds (FWD) and 10.1 for AWD, and a top speed of 116 mph. It's a vocal motor; not obnoxious, but when you dig your foot into the gas pedal, you'll hear it.

The gearing of the six-speed automatic transmission does a good job of getting the most out of the small motor. Trax corporate cousin — the Buick Encore — is available with an engine upgrade which replaces the standard 1.4L turbo with a higher powered version (153 h.p. and 177 lb. ft. of torque) for \$895 on most trim levels. I wonder if there are any plans afoot to share that option with Chevy, or if it's destined to be exclusive to the Buick.

The 2017 dash makeover looks more modern, though the quality of materials feels budget minded, even on top-ranging

Premiere. Standard on all Trax models is a MyLink interface. It allows you to connect with your smartphone, and offers available apps like Stitcher Internet radio, Pandora and BringGo navigation. Trax onboard technology takes a notable step up for 2017. The MyLink interface now integrates with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. The interface, however, remains inconsistent in its response to touchscreen input, sometimes requiring multiple requests where conventional controls would only need to be asked once — an annoyance.

The cabin's numerous, stowage spots all run small, and it lacks that staple of empty-your-pockets storage — the center console bin. With six-footers in front, like size folks can fit squeeze snugly behind, provided that the front seat recline is minimal. The back seat backs split 60/40 and fold forward, but doing so requires the seat bottoms to be pulled forward



TEST DRIVE this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

**DEPAULA CHEVROLET**  
785 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12206  
518-489-5551 [www.depaula.com](http://www.depaula.com)

**DENOOWER CHEVROLET**  
127 Wolf Rd., Albany, NY 12205  
518-458-7700 [www.denooyerchevrolet.com](http://www.denooyerchevrolet.com)

**NORTHSTAR CHEVROLET, INC.**  
400 Clifton Park Rd., Clifton Park, NY 12065  
518-371-5400 [www.northstarchevrolet.com](http://www.northstarchevrolet.com)



first, and you may need to move the front seats up or you won't get a flat load floor. Cargo capacity ranges from 18.7 - 48.4 cubic feet — about average for the segment. A rear view camera is standard; keyless remote entry is newly standard.

Through trim level and option packages, Trax buyers can opt for a broad array of safety technology. The list of

available features includes rear blind spot monitoring and cross traffic alert, forward collision alert, lane departure warning and rear park assist.

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.