



Ford's new police vehicles

Ford's new aluminum-body Expedition will be lightening the pounds for law enforcement agencies as well. For police service, the **2018 Expedition Special Service Vehicle** will be giving the full-sized SUV a twin-turbocharged 3.5-liter EcoBoost V6 coupled to a 10-speed automatic, which then transfers the power to a electronic limited-slip differential with a 3.73 gear ratio. Ford will also issue an **F-150 Special Service Vehicle** pickup with a choice of 5.0-liter V8 FFV or 3.5-liter EcoBoost in XL SuperCab or SuperCrew configuration. We'll have to see how police and government agencies respond. Already, however, Ford's smaller **Police Interceptor Utility** (based on the Explorer) is the best-selling law enforcement vehicle in the country. Maybe it's just the nostalgia that cops have for Ford's venerable but now-discontinued Crown Victoria.



The new Range Rover Velar fills the tiny gap in the lineup between the Evoque and the Range Rover Sport.

Meet the latest Land Rover

We were caught off-guard when the latest member of the **Land Rover** family landed on the automaker's website, ready to buy, with a \$51,000 base price (including destination charges).

The 2018 all-wheel-drive **Range Rover Velar** (from the Latin verb *velare* meaning to cover or veil) borrows some of its styling cues from the Range Rover Evoque, especially the sloping roofline. The Velar can be had with a base 247-horsepower turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder, an optional 180-horsepower 2.0-liter turbo-diesel four-cylinder, or a supercharged 3.0-liter 380-horsepower V-6. An eight-speed automatic transmission is used by all three powerplants.

TEST DRIVE

2017 Lincoln Continental

Continued from page 3

drive only. The AWD system specific to this engine is a torque-vectoring unit, related to the one found on the Ford Focus RS. It defaults to front wheel drive, and pushes the power to the rear axle as needed. Up to 100 percent of the available torque can be directed to any wheel, to maintain traction.

With their lower center of gravity and higher level of civility, luxury cars with all-wheel-drive impart a comfortable confidence to the driver, when dealing with disagreeable conditions. Winter woes aside, Continental is unapologetically a luxury car, and its ride and a handling reflect this. It's comfortable without feeling floaty, and is light on its feet for its size. While there are switchable Drive Control settings — Comfort, Sport, Normal — I found the latter to be the preferred setup.

Luxury cars make their bones on the inside. Black Label Lincolns offer a choice of three interior design themes. My car was outfitted in "Chalet," which

features white leather upholstery (kids/grandkids would have to be sanitized before entering, and checked for candy in their pockets) and Silverwood trim.

The materials, fit and finish are first class. Twenty-four way, adjustable front seats can be replaced by 30-way (!) seats for \$1,500. You'll need to invest a little time in getting the seats to your liking (and if you don't save the settings to memory, and somebody changes them, don't say I didn't warn you).

Or just hop in the back and let somebody else do the driving. Add the Rear Seat Package (\$4,300) to your Continental, and these might be the best seats in the house. The package includes heated, cooled, reclining, massaging rear seats; reading lights, a fold down center console with climate and sound system controls and storage spots, a panoramic sun roof and retractable side and rear window shades.

Factor in the 41.3 inches of rear seat legroom, and these are very civilized quarters. Trunk space measures 16.7 cu-



New Mercedes-Benz CLS outed

Observers have recently spotted the latest edition of the car that began the whole four-door "coupe" craze a decade ago. Of course there are notable differences to report. The roofline of the **2019 Mercedes-Benz CLS** appears not quite so swoopy, which should please those seated in back. The car appears to be larger overall and closer dimensionally to the current E-Class sedan (it will probably use that model's platform). That likely means two turbocharged 3.0-liter V-6s, making 329 and 396 horsepower, will likely be used, while the potent 577-horsepower 5.5-liter V-8 will anchor the AMG version.



2017 Mercedes-Benz E-Class



Tesla's more affordable Model S (starting at \$35,000) is set for release later this year. The figure behind it (129,741) refers to the number of pre-orders for it.

Tesla overtakes Ford and General Motors in valuation

It was a week ago that **Tesla** officially surpassed **Ford Motor Co.** in overall market value. At the end of trading on April 3, the luxury all-electric carmaker had hit a market capitalization high of \$48.7 billion, compared with Ford's \$45.6 billion, according to Bloomberg, with **General Motors** just out of reach at \$51.2 billion.

But this week Tesla's valuation rose by 3.7 percent to overtake GM's worth, which technically makes Tesla America's most valuable automaker.

Not bad, considering startup was only founded by Elon Musk and company in 2003, and didn't deliver its first production vehicle (the Model S) until 2008. Many initially thought it would go the way of Fisker Automotive (founded in 2007), another upscale electric maker that went bust.

Of course, this is all on paper. Market value is achieved by multiplying the total number of shares by the present share price, and may or may not reflect real profitability. Example: GM is on track to earn more than \$9 billion this year, while Tesla is projected to lose nearly \$1 billion. But of course, what the bean counters are looking for is growth, which the smaller, more-dynamic Tesla (which has only sold around 200,000 cars to date) has potential for, especially with their mass-market \$35,000 **Model 3** (above) expected later this year.

The bright spot of this paper-shifting value? At least the usurper is an American company, making quality vehicles people actually want right here in America (specifically, Fremont, California). Another take-away: Not all government incentives are frivolous. For every Solyndra that goes belly up, there's a Tesla success story that pays back its Uncle Sam loans before they're due. Also, if this serves as motivation to Ford and GM, then all the better.



The 2017 Lincoln Continental interior's fit and finish are first class. The Black Label outfitted in Chalet finish, with white leather seats and Silverwood trim.

bic feet: good size overall, but somewhat shallow in shape.

Most controls up front channel through the SYNC 3 touchscreen interface and a cluster of buttons and dials stationed just below on the center stack. Smartphone users will appreciate that SYNC is compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. Each generation of SYNC has shown steady improvement in user friendliness.

Among the options of note is the Continental Technology Package (\$3,105). Bundled here are a handful of useful safety and convenience features, includ-

ing: A 360 degree top-down camera, lane departure warning, adaptive cruise control and active park assistance.

It's nice to see the Continental name back in the game after years of premature retirement. It sounds strange to call a car with this price tag a value pick, yet on a feature-per-dollar comparison with other luxury rides, that's what the latest Lincoln feels like.

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.

» Don't miss next week's Test Drive: **2017 Toyota iM**

