



The BMW i8 Spyder goes on sale in 2018 as a 2019 model.

Cadillac's big XTS cruiser

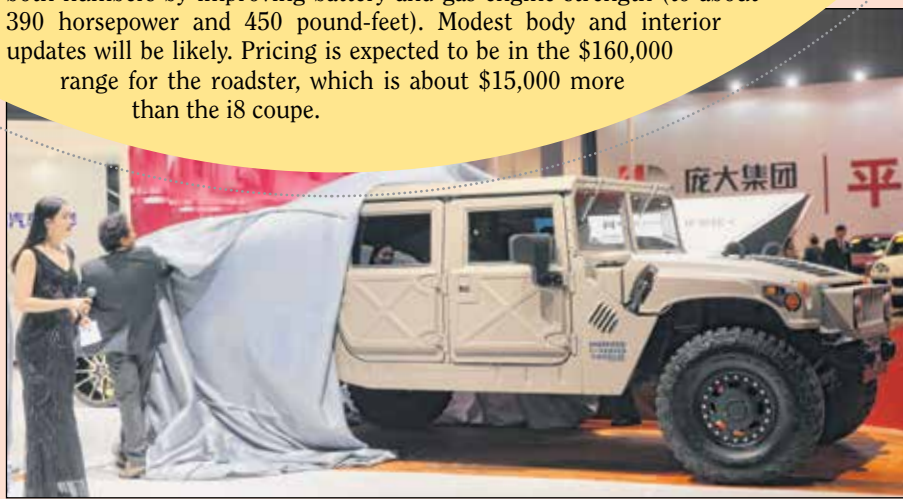
Word has it that our favorite mode of transport when traveling to and from airports will be updated for the coming year. The front-wheel-drive **XTS sedan's** lists of improvements begins with a new front- and rear-end design that mimics the nose and tail of the rear-wheel-drive CT6 sedan (both models can be had with AWD). Also in line for updating is the base 304-horsepower 3.6-liter V-6, which will be bumped to 310 ponies. A nine-speed automatic transmission replaces the current six-speed, while XTS V-Sport's 410-horsepower twin-turbocharged 3.6-liter V-6 stays the course.



2017 Cadillac XTS

BMW aims big with the i8

BMW's competitor to the Acura NSX hybrid is one gorgeous number and we believe it will only be better looking once the **BMW i8 Spyder** (roadster) goes on sale in 2018 (as a 2019 model). A turbocharged 1.5-liter three-cylinder engine plus two electric motors propel the all-wheel-drive luxury sports car. Total system output 362 horsepower and 420 pound-feet of torque, but BMW is expected to increase both numbers by improving battery and gas engine strength (to about 390 horsepower and 450 pound-feet). Modest body and interior updates will be likely. Pricing is expected to be in the \$160,000 range for the roadster, which is about \$15,000 more than the i8 coupe.



The Nineties called, they want their Hummers back: Here's the "new" Humvee C-Series being unveiled at the Shanghai Auto Show.

Lutz brings Hummers back

The HMMWV (High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle), better known as the Humvee, has been the indispensable workhorse of the U.S. military for years. But back in the day, General Motors' civilian **Hummer** version became shorthand for 1990s excess. The Great Recession of 2008 trimmed that back, and with carbuyers' tastes moving to smaller crossover SUVs, GM killed off the Hummer brand in 2010, unloading all remaining stock of the H1, H2 and H3 models.

Now, VLF Automotive — a company headed by former General Motors "car guy" honcho **Bob Lutz** (85-years-old, god bless him) — is producing what's called the **Humvee C-Series**. It's essentially a kit Humvee made by AM General. VLF then installs the powertrain and ships the finished product through an intermediary to China. (Its legal name is the Humvee C-Series, since GM still owns the Hummer brand.) Prices will range from \$60,000 to \$77,000 optioned up. Note that options are for winches and tire inflation systems; this is not the luxury civilian Hummer of yore. VLF also sells copies of the deceased Viper and markets the Destino, basically the defunct all-electric Fisker Karma now paired with a gas-chugging 6.2L V8 Corvette ZL1 engine.

Maybe the Hummer is an outmoded dinosaur on today's roads. But in a world where enterprising companies give drivers the chance to buy a "new old stock" Delorean, it's nice to know you have options.



President Donald Trump's decision to pull the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Accord created a unanimous reaction among American car manufacturers.

Makers protest Paris pull-out

Despite the after-this-commercial-break tease, President Trump's ultimate decision to pull the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Accord to reduce greenhouse gases was no shock. But it did create shockwaves in the auto industry.

Predictably for the CEO of an all-electric manufacturer, **Tesla head Elon Musk** promptly tweeted that "Climate change is real. Leaving Paris is not good for America or the world." Further, the head of SpaceX and Solar City announced he would be resigning from his seat on the President's Strategy and Policy Forum, comprised of 18 prominent business leaders. (Uber CEO Travis Kalanick also stepped down.)

Less predictable were the reactions of other American automakers. **General Motors** stated that it "will not waver from our commitment to the environment and our position on climate change has not changed. International agreements aside, we remain committed to creating a better environment." While Italian-controlled **Fiat Chrysler Automobiles** issued a more wishy-washy reaction, **Ford Motor Co.** brass reasserted that they "believe climate change is real, and remain deeply committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in our vehicles and our facilities." Ford took the occasion to reiterate its "commitment to sustainability," and less altruistically tout its baker's dozen of electric vehicles in the development pipeline.

And that's the rub; these makers not only feel that alternative-fuel and hybrid vehicles are the future of the industry, but they also sell a lot (if not most) of their vehicles outside the U.S.

GM's CEO **Mary Barra**, however, will cling to her position on the Strategy and Policy Forum to provide her company "a seat at an important table to contribute to a constructive dialogue about key policy issues."

Those issues surely include convincing the president to loosen federal mileage standards for auto manufacturers. The Trump EPA has already ordered a review of those standards, set during the last months of the Obama administration.

TEST DRIVE

2017 Kia Soul Exclaim

Continued from page 3

has good reflexes, and the lively new engine gives an added dimension to the car's funky personality. All Soul models are front wheel drive. While drivers have and do get by with FWD in winter around here (and, if you'll forgive a flickering, black and white reference, some of us even managed fine with rear-wheel-drive), the lack of an AWD

version takes a bite out of potential Soul sales in Snowbelt states like ours.

The car's overall dimensions are compact and easy to fit in parking spots or merging lane openings. Blind spot detection and rear cross traffic alert (available on Plus and Exclaim trims) are recommended to improve the driver's rear $\frac{3}{4}$ awareness. In an option oddity,

lane departure warning and forward collision warning are optional on mid-level Plus but unavailable on top rung Exclaim. Ride quality gets progressively stiffer as you go from 16-inch wheels (Base) to 17-inch (Plus) to 18-inch (Exclaim), though it never rises to the level of objectionable, even on I, the model with the shortest sidewalls. The car's boxy form isn't very aero-friendly, so it's two hands on the wheel on windy days.

Boxy shapes are, however, very friendly for holding things (if you doubt me on this, go try and pack something in a round box, or maybe a triangular one. I'll wait). Cargo capacity measures 18.8 cu. ft., expandable to 61.3 cu. ft. Split, rear seats fold nearly flat, liftover height is manageable low, and there's hidden storage space below deck.



The Kia Soul Exclaim's infotainment interface is easier to use than most, and is compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. The Soul's squared-off shape lends itself to more cargo space (left): in this case, a capacity of 188 cu. ft., expandable to 61.3.

People, too, benefit from vehicles with upright lines when it comes to fitting in them. Soul will hold adults in both rows, and there's sufficient headroom even with the optional (\$1,000), panoramic sunroof.

Other options of note include the harmon-kardon 315 watt, 8-speaker sound system. The tunes maker is part of a pricey-but-lengthy list collected in the \$3,000 Technology package. Other items included here: navigation system with 8-inch touchscreen, speaker lights, projector beam headlights, LED fog lights, taillights and positioning lights, power mirrors and front seats, heated front and rear seats and steering wheel, blind spot detection and USB chargers.

Kia's infotainment interface is easier to use than most. The system is also compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, so it's smartphone friendly, too. Front cabin storage spots are plentiful, but run small — especially the covered

center console bin. Speaking of which, the lid on said bin doubles as the inside arm rest. It would be more useful for more people if it adjusted, which is still does not.

Kia's built in numerous turbo "tells" — ways you can tell a turbo from other models. Up front, it's a chrome grille surround. Along the sides, red accented body trim and model-specific, 18-inch rims. Out back, a red, tailgate badge and twin, chrome exhaust tips.

No word yet on how the new engine will effect product advertising. Past Soul commercials have famously included hamsters. Hamsters, in my experience, act pretty caffeinated in their normal state. I'm not sure that I want to see what happens when you turbocharge one!

