

### Going, going... gone!

The story behind the Saratoga Auto Auction

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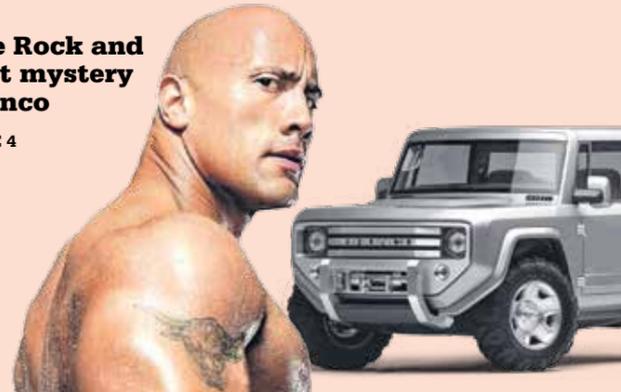
Is the tech giant back in the self-driving car game?

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### The Rock and that mystery Bronco

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## TEST DRIVE

# Civic Virtues

## 2017 Honda Civic Si Sedan

DAN LYONS | text and photos  
Special to the Times Union

Civic first arrived in this country in 1973, just before the onset of the Arab Oil Embargo. The Honda (and select other imports) found a toehold in this market by providing quality economy cars at a time when U.S. automakers were still coming up to speed in that segment.



The 10th generation of Honda's veteran compact rolled out in 2016. Eight of those 10 gens have included a Civic Si model. Traditionally, this has been a showcase for Civics' sporty side, often based on a hatchback body style.

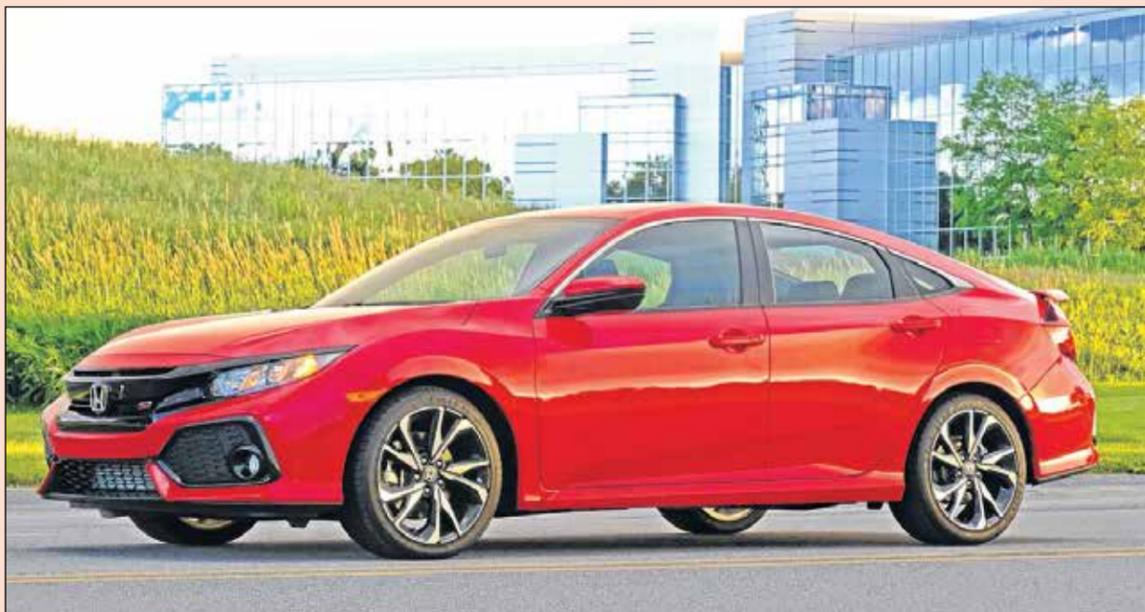
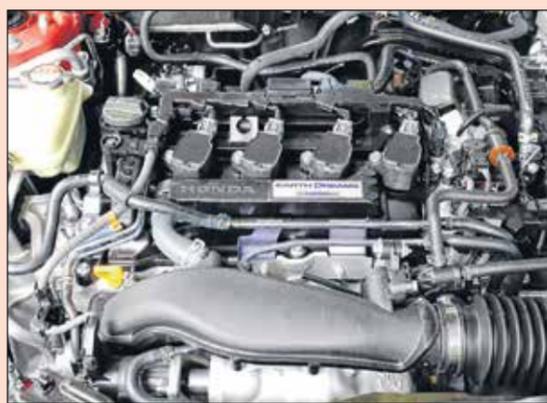
Often, but not always. The 2017 Si is available in two body styles — two-door coupe and four-door sedan. No hatchback version is offered: a departure from Honda's past, and a distinction from perennial hot hatch rivals

### 2017 Honda Civic Si Sedan

MSRP: \$23,900 As Tested: \$24,97

like the Volkswagen Golf GTI and Ford Focus ST.

Both Si variants are offered basically "monospec." Aside from a few dealer-added options (e.g. wheels, moldings) the only available extra is summer performance tires. A set of Goodyear Eagle F1's add a mere \$200 to the bottom line. It's a nice price for a sticky set of meats, and hence a tempting offer. But, unless you plan on parking your car in winter, you're kicking the can down the road; you'll need to add four all-season tires before the flakes start flying.



THE 2017 HONDA CIVIC SI is available in four-door sedan and two-door coupe, but not a hatchback. Both are powered by a 205-horsepower, turbocharged four-cylinder that's an improvement over the previous model's motor.

Considering the car's major market (which skews young and male), the slate of color choices offered on the sedans is surpassingly sedate: only the red and blue hues are really bright. Coupe versions get the same shades plus one — an eye-popping shade called Energy Green, which was used on the concept car that made the show circuit rounds a few years back.

Visual cues of Si status start with a gloss black front fascia with larger air intakes. Eighteen-inch alloy rims are shod with low-profile tires, and discrete, model-specific badging is found front and back. The rear end also gets a unique fascia. Below is a chrome, hexagonal center exhaust outlet. Above is a low-rise deck lid spoiler (coupes get a more prominent wing).

In a way, the engine choice in the Si is similar to that found in the latest Porsche Boxster (no need for a breathalyzer, bear with me). Both models feature new, turbocharged four-cylinder engines that are undeniably more powerful than their former motors. But each has a different feel from the one it replaced, and the changes

The shifter for the six-speed has a crisp, short throw. If you like to shift, you'll like this powertrain.

in the new cars may make some drivers pine for the previous editions. I agree in the case of the Porsche (I miss the sounds and the torque of the former flat six). I disagree in the case of the Honda (the new engine is quicker and more drivable than the previous version).

The Si's engine is a variation of the turbo four that rolled out in last year's Civic lineup. In Si trim, it's tweaked to the tune of 205 horsepower @ 5,700 rpm, and 192 lb.-ft. of torque @ 2,100-5,000 rpm, thanks to a larger turbocharger and increased exhaust flow. The new motor's responsiveness has more to do with torque than horsepower. Peak torque is available from 2,100-5,000 rpm. This compares to a 4,400

rpm peak in the former Si. So the power arrives much sooner and stays later with the new turbo four.

In contrast, the former motor was a peaky performer. You had to keep the revs up to wring the power out. I'd guess that the new Si is mid-six second quick from 0-60; fast enough, certainly, and well matched with its transmission.

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# Going down the road feelin'...good!

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