



British **Lotus** made its return to North America this year with the **Evora 410**, which hits 0 to 60 in 3.9 seconds.

No V-6 Accord for 2018

We can confirm that **Honda's** redesigned **2018 Accord** coupe and sedan will not offer a V-6 option. The 2.7-, 3.0- or 3.5-liter powerplants (depending on the model-year) have been available in Accords since 1995 and are popular with buyers seeking a bit more muscle. Now, along with a complete redesign, the Accord will come with a base turbocharged 1.5-liter four-cylinder rated at an estimated 200 horsepower. The new optional engine is a turbo 2.0-liter four-cylinder that our guesstimates will make 250 horsepower, but will generate more torque than the outgoing V-6's 250 pound-feet. The 1.5 will be mated to a six-speed manual transmission, or optional continuously variable unit, while the 2.0 will use a 10-speed automatic. Given the shift away from V-6s in this class, the cancellation was inevitable.



2017 Honda Accord Sport

Lotus to change hands

These peach-colored pages hear that the **ZheJiang Geely Holding Group** of China will soon control the British sports-car company **Lotus**, founded by the late Sir Colin Chapman of England in 1952. Geely will purchase 49.9 percent of Proton of Malaysia (the current owner of Lotus) and 51 percent of the money-losing Lotus brand. Geely owns Volvo of Sweden outright and is setting up Lynk & Co as a new global automotive brand that will eventually come to North America. The deal also includes Lotus Engineering, which over the years has provided support for several automakers. We see these transactions as further proof that Geely intends to become a major force in the industry within the next decade. Expect to hear of more acquisitions in the not-to-distant future.



The IDS concept model, shown off here at the 2015 Tokyo Auto Show, may be the template for any electric compact hatchback Nissan produces.



BMW will stick with the same numeral for the next gen of its luxury roadster.

More electrics from Nissan

Our sources hear that **Nissan** will add a second electrified model that will join the compact **Leaf** hatchback, and that it will take the shape of utility vehicle. With the range of Nissan's other SUVs — the mid-size crossover Pathfinder and full-size Armada — this vehicle might make an affordable eco-alternative to the pricey Tesla Model X electric sport ute.

No telling at this point what size the EV might take (our guess is the wildly popular crossover size), but apparently, the new gasoline-free Nissan will be available with a number of semi-autonomous (self-driving) technologies that are gaining traction with automakers. Take *that*, Tesla AutoPilot!

Meanwhile, Nissan is introducing a radically new second-generation **Leaf** electric for the 2018 model year. The compact hatchback will reportedly look similar to the **IDS concept model** displayed at the 2015 Tokyo Motor Show in Japan. Given the demand for utility vehicles, we think it possible that the forthcoming electric will be a much bigger seller than the Leaf, which never caught on despite its functionality.

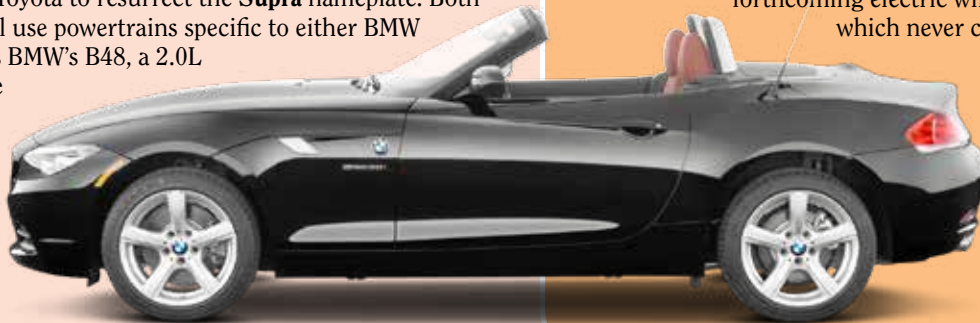
Maybe that was because of its lackluster styling. If the next Nissan Leaf comes close to the IDS Concept pictured above, we'll be the first in line to buy one. However, it makes more sense to build a battery-electric utility vehicle, given the popularity of utility vehicles.

Next BMW Z4 will be called...the Z4

Word has reached these peach-colored pages that the Germany-based maker of fine automobiles will show off its new roadster this August at the Concours d'Elegance car show at Pebble Beach, Calif. The two-seater **BMW** won't be labeled the Z5, as previously reported, but it will retain the **Z4** handle used for the outgoing model.

The second-generation Z4 is a joint collaboration with **Toyota**, which will introduce its version with a coupe body. Expect Toyota to resurrect the **Supra** nameplate. Both models will be built in Austria and will use powertrains specific to either BMW or Toyota. For the Z4 s20i, that means BMW's B48, a 2.0L four-cylinder turbocharged gas engine (B47 denoting a diesel).

The Z4 will be a roadster with a weight-saving soft-top, while the Supra will most likely be a fixed-head coupe bodystyle. Production on the Z4 is set to begin in November of 2018, though some variants may sneak out before that.



BMW Z4

TEST DRIVE

2017 Chevrolet Bolt EV

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(and boosting range). When you take your foot off the accelerator, the car slows, rather than coasts. So much so that you'll come to a complete stop shortly, without having to touch the brake pedal.

The four different settings are progressively more aggressive, and the amount of braking can be controlled pulling the steering wheel-mounted paddle. You soon get the drill of one pedal driving, and find that many trips can be made without touching the brake pedal more than once or twice.

Chevy calls Bolt a Crossover, though it's more accurately seen as a hatchback with a higher seating position. With all seats in place, cargo capacity is 16.9 cubic feet cubic. While that's less than many conventional hatchbacks (Chevy's Cruz, for example measures 22.7), it's usable space. Even more so with the adjustable load floor (\$100), that gives you a flat

loading surface, or hidden, below deck space. Interior stowage spots are in good supply. The interior is functionally fine, overall, though the quality of materials is disappointing at this price point.

Head and legroom is substantial; six-footers can fit in either row. The front seats run a bit narrow; a test sit will tell you if you fit. No navigation system is offered per se. The infotainment system with its 10.2-inch touchscreen is compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, so drivers rely on smartphone-based navigation apps instead.

The approach is the same as in the recently reviewed 2018 Toyota Camry, with the same plus/minus. There are some fine, phone based nav apps, but they depend on your phone having a signal, and they feed off your data plan.

Gear shifting is accomplished via GM's Electronic Precision Shifter. It's of the small, joystick variety, and it doesn't take up much room. But, to the extent that



TEST DRIVE

this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

DENOYER CHEVROLET 127 Wolf Rd., Albany, NY 12205
518-458-7700 www.denooyerchevrolet.com

DEPAULA CHEVROLET 785 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12206
518-489-5551 www.depaula.com

NORTHSTAR CHEVROLET 400 Clifton Park Rd., Clifton Park, NY 12065
518-371-5400 www.northstarchevrolet.com



it requires a finesse move to operate, it requires more of the driver's attention than it should.

Premiere trim models include the always useful, bird's-eye view camera, as well as a rear view camera mirror. The latter can be switched from a traditional, electrochromatic rearview mirror, to a panoramic video display in the mirror. The high resolution image screen gives you a four times greater field of vision than the conventional mirror, unobstructed by passengers, headrests, or roof pillars. So to recap, in pano video mode, you can't see anyone in your back seat.

You can, however, still hear them (hey, technology has its limits).

Bolt impresses with two things not commonly found in EV's in this price range: room and range. Will the latter — at 200+ miles — be large enough to make the new Chevy the Xanax of Range Anxiety? Time will tell. At a minimum, it resets the bar for the mid-priced EV segment.

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.