

Reach Valhalla with
Aston Martin

PAGE 2



The mad
genius of
Malcolm
Bricklin

PAGE 2



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PAGE 3



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Cherokee gets
a facelift

PAGE 2

TEST DRIVE

Heritage 2.0

2017 Dodge Challenger T/A

DAN LYONS | text and photos
Special to the Times Union

Heritage can come in handy. Proven past work is a solid platform for future products. So it is that Dodge, a veteran maker of muscle cars, can dip into its archives for ideas to keep the Challenger line fresh. The result, for 2017, is a new model with an old name.



The Dodge Challenger T/A joins the lineup with a starting, sticker price of \$37,395.

"T/A" stands for Trans-American, the name of a legendary racing series that began in 1966. In its early years, the Trans Am circuit showcased production-based, factory-backed pony cars, raced by some of the best known wheelmen of the day. The roster of drivers included Donohue, Jones, Foyt, Petty, Revson, Follmer, Gurney and Hall, among others.

2017 Dodge Challenger T/A

MSRP: \$ 7,395 · As Tested: \$42,265

Challenger didn't join the Dodge lineup until 1970. Decidedly late to the pony car party, it jumped in with both feet. So it was that the '70 Trans Am series field (over 2.0-liter) included AMC Javelins, Chevy Camaros, Ford Mustangs, Plymouth AAR 'Cudas and a new entry from Dodge — a Challenger, piloted by Sam Posey.



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THE 2017 CHALLENGER T/A dips into Dodge's deep and muscular heritage for the latest addition to the muscle car segment. This new Trans Am arrives with a package of performance and appearance features based on the R/T model.

Challenger's current generation (2008-present) has already lasted twice as long as that of their famed pony car era cars (1970-74). These days, the Dodge still competes with two other survivors of that era — Camaro and Mustang — but it's not as direct a comparison as it was back in the day.

Today's Camaros and Mustangs are a size smaller than Challenger. That, and Dodge's penchant for raising the horsepower stakes with versions like Demon (840 h.p.) and Hellcat (707)—are the main distinctions between Challenger and the other two legacy muscle car nameplates.

The new Trans Am joins the Challenger cast with a package of performance and appearance features, based on the R/T model. Color choices include several suitably bright, high-impact hues, balanced by some lower key shades. The hood, roof and trunk are finished in satin black, with T/A side graphics and logos. Black, too, are the chin and rear deckled

spoilers, as well as the 20-inch, forged aluminum rims. The gloss black grille surrounds illuminated, air-catcher headlights. An air-grabber hood is standard; black hood pins (\$295) are a cool, throwback option.

Inside, TA equipment includes a white-faced instrument cluster, performance bucket seats and a leather-clad wheel. As in all Challenger models, the combination of thick c-pillars and fat headrests create big, ¾-rear blind spots. The rear backup camera and rear parking assist are standard and useful. Blind-spot monitoring and rear cross-traffic detection are included as part of the Driver Convenience Group, and buyers should

consider this option a necessity. The \$1,295 bundle also adds HID headlights and a universal garage door opener. A navigation system can be incorporated into the Uconnect 8.4-inch touchscreen display for \$1,095. This package also includes Sirius XM traffic.

Continued on page 2

If you like a
stick shift, you'll
like the T/A's.

Going down the road feelin'...good!

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