

Mercedes-Benz pulls the plug on gas-powered Smart Fortwo

For 2018, the only Smart models available in North America will be the Fortwo Pure, Passion and Prime trim levels with electric drivetrains.



Smart Fortwo

As a result of the cancellation of poor-selling gasoline-powered Smarts, two-thirds of the vehicle's dealer network in the United States will stop selling the cars. That leaves just 27 franchise outlets that are primarily located in states and cities where electric car sales are relatively strong. The brand was begun in 1998 and is a division of Daimler AG. The name derives (somewhat) from the collaboration between Swatch and Mercedes: Swatch Mercedes ART.



THE LINCOLN MOTOR COMPANY

LYNK & CO



By any other name...

Sources are revealing that Ford is none too happy with automaker Geely these days. Apparently the concern is that the China-based company (which bought Volvo from Ford in 2010) plans to launch an offshoot brand to be marketed globally under the name **Lynk & CO**. Ford has announced it will oppose any U.S. trademark applications by Geely, claiming that, when spoken, Lynk & CO sounds too much like their own luxury brand **Lincoln Motor Co.** Before the end of the decade, Lynk & CO, or whatever name it will eventually go by, plans to launch the **01 crossover** (above) and **02 sedan** in North America. Both models will be built in China and will use the Compact Modular Architecture platform, originally designed for next-generation Volvo XC40. Geely is angling this car to be compatible with future technologies such as ride-sharing, including a shared digital key that can enable owners to allow other Lynk & CO vehicles. Ford has been granted an extension by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and has until Nov. 15 to file a formal opposition to the name.



The first generation Honda Insight hybrid (1999–2006) was too futuristic-looking and, as a two-seater, too impractical to give it the edge over Toyota's Prius.

Honda gains new Insight

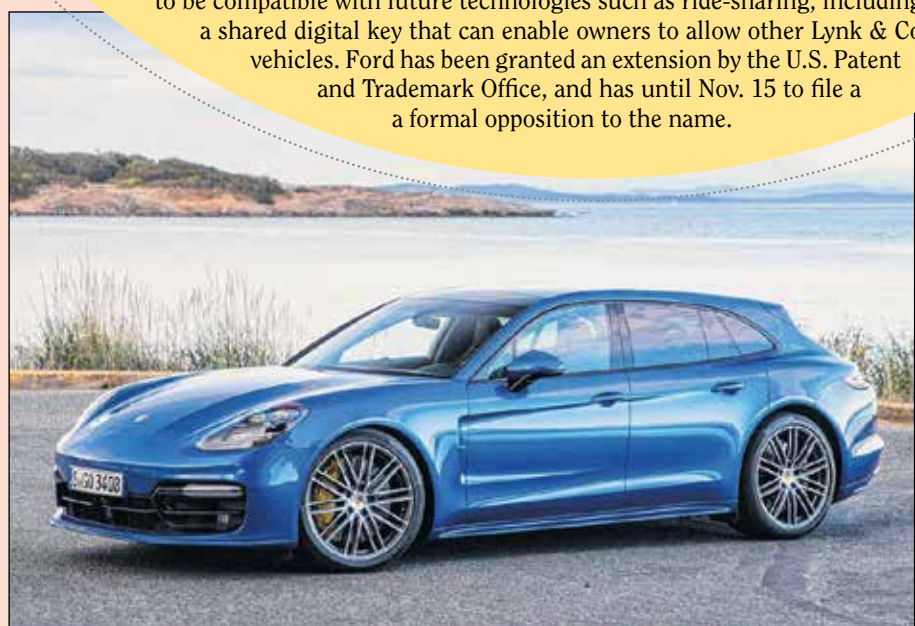
We call this one the Model That Refuses To Die. The too-futuristic **Insight** hybrid hatchback was perhaps ahead of its time, and maybe (in its original two-seat configuration impractical), but there are reports that Honda is reviving the name that was previously attached to a cute little hybrid hatchback, followed by a four-door gasoline-electric that appeared to be based on the previous-generation Toyota Prius.

This time, it appears that the Insight hybrid will have its own unique shape, but will remain on the small side (i.e. much smaller than the 2018 Honda Clarity hydrogen-fueled vehicle). Plug-in and non plug-in versions will likely be sold, but whether both will make it to North America is unclear.

The Insight is part of Honda's announced 2030 Vision Strategy that specifies two-thirds of the company's cars will be partly or fully electrified by that year.



The second-gen Insight (2009–2014) gave us two more doors, but its design was suspiciously similar to the Prius, by then the dominant market hybrid.



A Porsche station wagon that's actually cool? Oh, yes. Meet the Panamera Sport Turismo.

Porsche finds its wagon groove with the Panamera Sport Turismo

For years we've been hearing that a somewhat more practical version of the Porsche Panamera hatchback would soon be arriving, and now that model has finally come to pass. The **Panamera Sport Turismo's** primary feature is a mildly squared-off rear end that's designed to provide a bit more stowage space.

To our eyes, however, the new variant is considerably more attractive than the hatch. The Sport Turismo also comes with a roof spoiler, a portion of which tilts upward at high speeds for increased downforce.

The all-wheel-drive 2018 Sport Turismo will initially be available with a 330-horsepower turbocharged 3.0-liter V-6 or an optional 550-horse 4.0-liter twin-turbo V-8. Pricing including destination charges starts at \$97,250.

TEST DRIVE

2017 Jaguar F-Pace

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its tall-in-the-saddle stance, the F-Pace handles with a confidence that belies its size.

The giveback for the adaptive suspension's drivability (and the 20-inch wheels on S) is ride quality. Smooth on smooth roads, the ride turns choppy on rough roads, with noticeable impact harshness. If you find the "S" too stiff for your taste, the bottom three trim levels may be better bets. All have the standard suspension, and are fitted with 18- or 19-inch wheels.

The cabin is sized such that six-footers

fit easily in front, but are a tight squeeze in back, with the front seats so set. Rear seatbacks fold mostly flat, expanding the cargo capacity from 33.5-63.5 cubic feet — very good numbers for this class (better than Macan, X3 or GLC). Less so inside. The covered center console and various stowage spots in the cabin all run small.

Even in premium cars, extras are there for the taking. Highlights from the top four packages on my test car are as follows. The Comfort and Convenience package (\$1,800): ventilated front seats, power reclining rear seats, hand's-free



The Jaguar F-Pace's upgraded InControl Touch Pro interface features a touch screen large enough for easy driver control, with HVAC functions conveniently separated in a control deck just below the screen. The system is customizable.

power lift gate); the Luxury Interior Upgrade package (\$2,200: ambient lighting for the cabin, a chilled glove box, rear seat vents and four zone climate control and (upgraded) carpets/headliner); the Driver Assistance Package (\$3,200: automatic parking system with three additional cameras, forward collision warning and adaptive cruise control, and the Technology Package (\$3,200: onboard Wi-Fi (3G), 825 watt, 17-speaker surround sound audio system, LCD instrument cluster, 10.2-inch touch screen infotainment system interface).

Though I will confess to having spent rather more time exploring the F-Pace's

drivability than I did plumbing the depths of its infotainment capability, my first impression of the upgraded InControl Touch Pro interface was positive. HVAC functions are separated out in a control deck just below the touchscreen, which makes for quicker adjustments. The virtual buttons in the InControl Pro screen are large enough to be quickly engaged by the driver, and the display is customizable to suit your preferences.

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.