

Passat goes sporty for '18

Word is that Volkswagen will add a trim level to the Passat sedan for the coming model year. The GT, which was first shown at the 2016 Los Angeles Auto Show in November, is clearly an attempt to spice up the car that has yet to achieve top-tier status alongside the Toyota Camry, Honda Accord, Ford Fusion, et al. Exclusive to the GT will be a honeycomb grille with red piping, a rear spoiler and exclusive color schemes. The interior will be fitted with sportier front seats and identifying GT trim. The ride height has been lowered and there are GT-exclusive alloy wheels. The front-wheel-drive GT will be fitted with VW's 3.6-liter "VR6" engine that produces 280 horsepower and 258 pound-feet of torque, mated to a six-speed automatic transmission.



2018 Volkswagen Passat GT

Meet the most expensive Porsche:

Chassis 917-024, used in the 1971 film "Le Mans" starring Steve McQueen, just sold at auction for \$14 million.



McQueen's \$14m Porsche 917

The racecar made famous by actor **Steve McQueen**, who drove it in the 1971 film "Le Mans," recently sold at auction for **\$14 million**. The world's most famous **Porsche 917K** was put on the block at the 2017 Pebble Beach auction in August, making it the most expensive Porsche ever. With its flat-12 engine, Chassis 917-024 was the first Porsche to win at Le Mans outright in 1971, but its final auction price was no doubt pushed up by the "McQueen effect" and the actual car's on-screen presence. In order to get actions shot for the movie, the film's producers had to enter the car in an actual race. It was piloted on camera by Porsche factory driver Jo Siffert. He kept it until his death in a crash later that year, after which it went missing until its rediscovery outside Paris in 2001. The car had been set up for vintage racing, but fortunately had its original frame safely held in storage before being restored. Talk about the McQueen effect: In 2011, the Le Mans racing suit worn by actor in the film fetched \$984,000 at auction.



Hyundai unveiled the concept in 2015, but the Santa Cruz pickup might be out by 2020.

Hyundai's pickup picks up steam

It's a go for the Korea-based **Hyundai's** continuing plans to expand beyond building traditional sedans, and these peach-colored pages aren't one bit surprised. The **Santa Cruz concept** that was a surprise hit at the 2015 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Mich. will apparently form the basis for the actual production version that's expected for the 2020 model years.

As with the successful Honda Ridgeline, the Santa Cruz is expected to arrive with a tool belt's worth of innovative stowage areas and accessories with the professional as well as urban truckers in mind.

The turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder — or some variation on that engine — is expected to provide the necessary grunt, while all-wheel-drive will be available.

TEST DRIVE

2017 Ford Edge Sport

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also appreciate having an on-board backup plan. Otherwise, most people who live in an area where they have to parallel park usually learn how to parallel park.

The 180-degree front camera sticks

The engine choice exclusive to Sport models is a 2.7L turbocharged EcoBoost V-6 that delivers 315 horsepower.

its (virtual) neck out to allow you to see what you can't see. It's useful when pulling out from between two parked cars, or if you're emerging from a Manhattan parking garage, and wishing to avoid a close encounter with a cycling courier.

Edge's trio of engines includes one carryover from the first generation and two new as of 2015. The veteran motor is a 3.5L V-6, rated at 280 h.p. and 250 lb. ft. of torque. It's expected to return 17 miles per gallon city, 26 highway (FWD); 17/24 (AWD), and is not available on Sport models. A 2.0L turbocharged EcoBoost four cylinder is Edge's standard engine (except for Sport). The twin scroll four makes 245 h.p. and 275 lb. ft. of torque, and returns fuel economy of 20/29 (FWD), 20/27 (AWD).

The final engine choice — exclusive to Sport models — is a 2.7L turbocharged EcoBoost V-6 that checks in with 315 h.p. and 350 lb. ft. of torque. Fuel economy is estimated to be 17/24 (AWD). All engines are coupled to a six-speed automatic transmission.

Maximum towing capacity is rated by Ford at 2,000 lb. for the 2.7; 3,500 lb. for the 2.0 and 3.5L engines. The 2.7 in Edge has an enjoyable surplus of power



Shown at last month's Frankfurt Auto Show, the Mercedes-Benz GLC F-Cell is the world's first plug-in fuel-cell vehicle. Headed for pre-production, the GLC F-Cell has a range of 301 miles from just 9.7 lbs. of hydrogen and a 13.8-kWh battery.

Future unveiled in Frankfurt

We've taken stock of a plethora of upcoming models announced at the recent **Frankfurt International Auto Show in Germany** and we're now even more convinced that vehicles powered by fossil fuels alone will be a thing of the past, and sooner than you might think.

With few exceptions, most show cars were either electric- or hydrogen-powered or of the plug-in hybrid variety, meaning they can operate in electric mode for several miles before their ranges are extended by on-board gasoline engines.

Although many of the cars revealed in Frankfurt were of the higher-end variety, it was obvious that the technology could — and eventually will — be adapted for more practical and affordable automobiles. To further prove the point, many European countries as well as China are considering legislating gasoline-powered cars out of existence before the mid-century mark.



Audi debuted its Aicon concept at the show: A self-driving vehicle with four doors but no steering wheel.



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when called upon. The turbo six rolls out smoothly from a stop, accelerates briskly and cruises quietly. My experience driving other second generation Edge models suggests that the 2.0L turbo four is the preferred ticket in lower trim levels, if only for the added mpg's.

Sport models gain some suspension tweaks over other trim levels. Thicker springs and stiffer front/rear anti-roll bars are designed to improve road holding, though the differences between, say, Sport and Titanium is hard to feel. Sufficed to say, Edge handles well

for its class and road ride is comfortably smooth on all trim levels. AWD is a \$1,495 upcharge over FWD, is offered with all three engines, and is arguably the preferred option for northeast drivers. The system is automatic, transferring up to 100 percent of available power fore or aft as needed to improve traction, and is a confidence booster for winter travel.

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.