

Changes for the next-gen Prius v

Toyota's dedicated gasoline-electric hybrid vehicle lineup (it's members are not converted gasoline models) is the most successful of its type in the world. Sources say, however, that the next-generation **Prius v** will grow in size when it launches for the 2019 model year, becoming more of a tall wagon than the current version. Building the Prius v on Toyota's latest multi-use platform means



2017 Toyota Prius v

the vehicle will have a lower center of gravity for improved ride and handling. There's little change expected for 1.8-liter engine, but improvements to the battery pack are expected to yield significant fuel-efficiency improvements.



Hyundai's small crossover Kona will feature quirky styling, along with optional four-wheel-drive and a 147-hp four or 175 turbo powerplant. It's expected to hit showrooms in early 2018, with an electric version to follow in 2019.

Hyundai's shift to trucks, SUVs

According to reports, the Korea-based automaker is embarking on wholesale changes and updates to its lineup over the next two to four years.

Hyundai has greenlighted a **pickup truck** based on the Santa Cruz concept unveiled in 2015, which will most likely be a front-wheel-drive model targeting younger "urban adventurers," and aimed at stealing some of the market from Honda's Ridgeline pickup, whose own sales are up 253 percent over last year.

Hyundai is also keen on competing in the hot crossover segment, so buyers can count on the arrival of the small-size, funky **Kona** tall wagon in early 2018, followed by major changes to the **Santa Fe** and **Tucson** lines.

There are also new, yet-to-be-named car-based tall wagons in the works. Equally important, Hyundai will increase the number of models equipped with turbo-diesel, plug-in hybrid and electric drivetrains. The company will also dabble in **hydrogen-powered** models.



This 2015 Santa Cruz concept might become the basis for Hyundai's first pickup.



Bugatti recall for faulty welds

In a move that may make any airbag owners feel better, elite automaker **Bugatti** is issuing a recall of its \$2.64 million **Chiron** hypercar. The Molsheim, France-based maker informed U.S. safety regulators the issue involves faulty welds in the front-seat recliner brackets.

This isn't a Takata-scale recall: Only 47 vehicles worldwide are affected, with 12 of those in North America (out of 500 total made). And as befitting a car with this price tag, Bugatti will retrieve the suspected Chirons and transport them via enclosed carrier to one of 12 registered dealers in the U.S. for inspection and, if needed, repair. And now some other numbers: The Chiron's V-16 8.0L puts out some 1,500 horsepower. The car's top speed is might be 288 mph, but a governor limits it to 261 because there are currently no tires capable of safely withstanding that velocity.



The 2017 Neiman Marcus Christmas gift book has two Rolls-Royce Dawn convertibles in it, ready to order for under \$450,000. The Walmart Toy Book this ain't.

A new Rolls-Royce under the tree?

Each year, upscale department-store chain **Neiman Marcus** puts out a Christmas gift book that usually contains an exotic vehicle for its well-heeled customers to drool over. The 2017 edition is no different, with the inclusion of two specially-commissioned **Rolls-Royce Dawn Drophead Coupés** in bespoke Lago di Como-inspired Coniston Blue and Saint-Tropez Orange as its top gifts.

The orange model features a "sumptuous interior of Seashell leather, accented with Dark Spice and Mandarin, with a dashboard and doors paneled in rich Canadel open-pore wood, along with luxurious lambswool floor mats." That model will put you out \$445,750, but for each Dawn purchased, Neiman Marcus will donate \$1,000 to its own Heart of Neiman Marcus Foundation. How generous.

In light of the holiday spirit, what would Dickens say? He'd say go down to Maserati of Albany, pick up a brand new, plenty luxurious GranTurismo Sport for around \$150,000, and drop the remaining 295 grand in the Salvation Army kettle.

TEST DRIVE

2018 Chevy Malibu

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The screen's location makes it subject to some sun/light reflection issues. Android Auto and Apple CarPlay compatibility are standard on LS, LT, Hybrid

Teenagers take note: Chevy's parental control feature is standard equipment on all Malibus in LS trim and above.

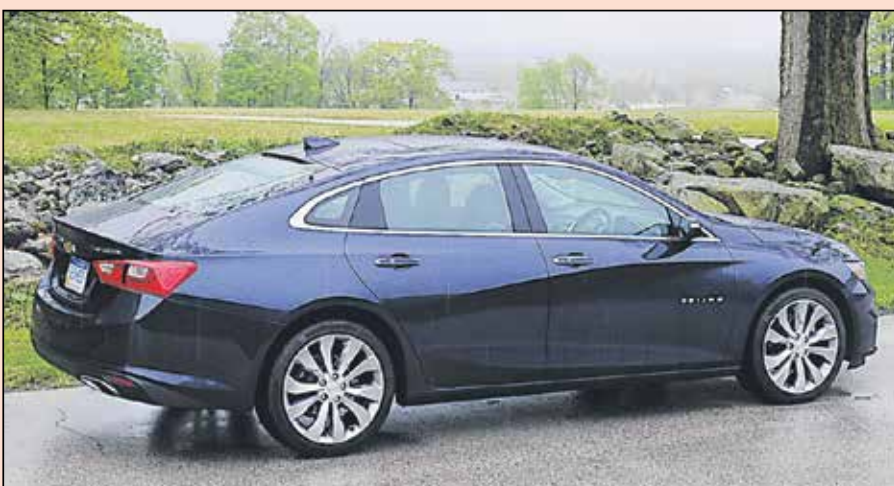
and Premier (for easier access to your smartphone apps) as is an OnStar 4G LTE Wi-Fi hotspot. Wireless charging for your phone, dual rear seat USB ports and a 110v power outlet are standard on Premier, available on LT. Heated, leather-trimmed front seats are standard on Premier as well, and also offered on Hybrid

and LT models. Premier models also get two upscale touches — a heated steering wheel and ventilated front seats.

Fresh air lovers take note: a dual pane, power moon roof is optional on Premier, LT and Hybrid. It's part of the Sun and Wheel package that also includes 19-inch aluminum rims and front/rear floor mats and an universal home remote control (\$2,270).

Teenagers take note: Standard equipment on all Malibu's LS trim and up is Chevy's parental control feature. Teen Driver allows the parents to review driving habits and set controls even when they're not in the vehicle.

Malibu has adult-sized room in both rows, though taller rear passengers must be mindful of the sloping roofline when entering and exiting. Trunk capacity is a useful 15.8 cubic feet in gas powered models. It's 11.6 cu. ft. in the Hybrid, where the trunk space is shared with the



TEST DRIVE
this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

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

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

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

battery pack. Roof pillars and a tall tail challenge the driver's rear view.

Standard rearview camera (all trims but L) help with straight back parking visibility. Lane change and blind spot alerts are part of the Driver Confidence Package. Bundled along with front and rear park assist, following distance indicator, auto high beam controls, forward collision alert, rear cross traffic alert, lane keep assist, front pedestrian braking and low-speed front automatic braking,

it's a lot of safety technology for \$1,195.

A sequel package is also available to Premier buyers. The Driver Confidence Package II adds adaptive cruise control, an electronic parking brake, a forward collision avoidance system and a parking assist system (\$995).

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.