

## Mazda 6 sedan goes turbo

Sources say that Mazda's updated midsize **Mazda6** sedan that's due in 2018 (as a 2019 model) will be available with a significant power "boost." The turbocharged four-cylinder engine that was



2019 Mazda6

originally introduced in the new-for-2017 CX-9 tall wagon will also find its way between the fenders of the Mazda6 sedan. It's expected to produce the same 250-horsepower using premium gas (227 on regular) and 310 pound-feet of torque as it does in the CX-9 and will be matched to a six-speed automatic transmission. The standard four-cylinder engine makes 184 horsepower and 185 pound-feet. The Mazda6 is also being treated to new front- and rear-end designs, a better grade of interior seat and door-panel materials, and improvements to the available dynamic safety technologies.



Toyota's FT-4X concept (above) might be a cue for a replacement for the popular FJ Cruiser (left), itself a paean to the classic FJ-40 Land Cruiser (far left)



## Toyota: Back to its rugged roots

There appears to be a seismic shift occurring within Toyota's design department. It appears that the gone-but-not-forgotten **FJ Cruiser** remains a point of influence for the automaker, especially with used versions selling for big bucks these days. Last spring, Toyota showed off the outdoorsy **FT-4X concept** and more recently followed it up with the similar **FT-AC** "design experiment" that appears nearly ready for production. There were even hints originating from Toyota's PR department that a hybrid powertrain would be ideally suited for the all-wheel-drive FT-AC, providing the car is green-lighted. At this point, it's safe to expect an FJ Cruiser replacement — but in a more affordable format — within the next year or so.



The Boxster dropped its six-cylinder engines, but this performance GT4 version will get a six-cylinder from the 911 model.

## The Porsche 718 Boxster and Cayman will add six-cylinders

Not two years ago, the German automaker replaced the six-cylinder engines used in the **Boxster roadster** and **Cayman coupe** sports cars with turbocharged four-cylinder engines.

Sources are now reporting that a revived higher-performance Boxster/Cayman **GT4** offshoot will include a non-turbo six-cylinder engine that comes from the rear-engine 911 model. Although no official output numbers are available, there are whispers that the GT4 will be rated at a minimum of 400 horsepower (that's 50 ponies more than and Cayman S and Boxster S, which are the current top models) and as much as 430 horses.

Also apparently in the cards is a standard six-speed manual gearbox, which is something that would certainly bring a huge smile to the faces of Porsche fans.

2017 Porsche 718 Boxster S convertible



The 2019 Lincoln MKC replaces its "wing" grille (inset) for a brand-new mesh version.

## Lincoln MKC loses its wings

Not everyone loved the winged grilles that Ford's premium division **Lincoln** was attaching to nearly all its vehicles. Fortunately, common sense and good taste now prevails in the Lincoln design studio as the **Continental** and **MKZ** sedans and the Navigator luxury utility wagon are the recipients of more attractive mesh-style fresh-air intakes.

The next model to change noses is the MKC. This otherwise fetching compact utility model has sold relatively well since its 2016 model-year introduction and will likely do better for the 2019 model year with subtle sheetmetal changes.

Left untouched are the base and optional turbocharged four-cylinder engines rated at 245 and 285 horsepower, respectively.

### TEST DRIVE

## Ram 1500 Limited

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Regular (two-doors, seats three), Quad cab (four-doors, seats six) and Crew cab (four bigger doors, seats six). The standard pickup bed (6'4") is offered on Regular, Crew or Quad (where it is the only choice). A short box (5'7 inches) can

"Luxury truck" used to be a contradiction in terms.

be had only on Crew models, while the stretch box (8') is Regular cab only. One of my favorite features on Ram trucks is the optional RamBox cargo system. Available on all trim levels (not with the 8-foot box), it makes use of previously unused space in an ingenious manner,

with integrated bins along the side rails of the cargo bed. They're lockable, drainable, weatherproof and handy. The system (\$1,295) also includes four adjustable, cargo tie-down hooks, and a bed cargo divider/extender.

Three engines are available, starting with a 3.6L V-6, delivering 305 horsepower and 269 lb.-ft. of torque, and returning an estimated 18 miles per gallon city, 25 highway. The 5.7L Hemi V-8 offers 395 h.p., 410 lb.-ft. of torque, with estimated fuel economy of 15/22.

Finally, a 3.0L EcoDiesel V-6 checks in with 240 horsepower, 420 lb.-ft. of torque and an estimated 21 mpg's city, 29 highway.

All motors are matched with an eight-speed automatic transmission. The 5.7 Hemi is standard on Tungsten (with the diesel optional). As befits the motor for



TEST DRIVE this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

**ARMORY CHRYSLER DODGE JEEP RAM SRT FIAT**  
926 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12206  
518-641-7777 [www.armoryauto.com](http://www.armoryauto.com)

**GOLDSTEIN CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM**  
968 New Loudon Rd., Latham, NY 12110



the top trim model, there's ample thrust available, evenly distributed by the eight-speed, and accompanied by a pleasantly rumbling exhaust note.

Air suspension was added to my test truck, as part of the \$3,200 Limited package. With coil springs rather than leaf springs, base Ram trucks are arguably the best riding of the current crop of full size trucks. Absent the ability to load up two trucks so equipped, and test them back to back though, I'm hard pressed to feel the difference between the standard and air suspension setups.

This being the season for sloppy, slushy roads, four-wheel-drive comes in handy, and is standard on Tungsten trim Rams. The electronic, two-speed AWD transfer case provides on-demand traction, and four operating modes (2WD High; 4WD High Auto; 4WD Drive High (Locked); 4WD Low (Locked) plus Neutral.

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.