

# 2018 Dodge Durango

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Typical  $\frac{3}{4}$  rear blind spots are present. Their impact can be eased by folding the second row headrests and third row seats down. Blind spot monitoring and cross path detection are offered as part of the \$2,495 Technology Group, and are recommended. That package also includes adaptive cruise control with stop, advanced brake assist, full-speed forward collision warning and lane departure warning.

A 7-inch touchscreen radio system with backup camera is standard on all Durango models. The upgrade is an 8.4-inch Uconnect touchscreen interface, which — as of this year — is compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. Some of the switchgear for

HVAC and sound system functions are split between a deck of conventional controls and the touchscreen, which slows access time slightly, compared to conventional controls. That said, the 8.4-inch display gets mainly good marks for visibility and usability — including the available navigation system — although the screen doesn't accept input from a winter gloved hand. Other new features in the cabin this year include a sport steering wheel with paddle shifters, and a new, electronic t-shifter. Front park assist is now part of the park sense system, standard on R/T, Citadel and SRT.

Rear-wheel-drive is standard on all trim levels except SRT. AWD can be added to all other models for an ad-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

## 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

ditional \$2,600. Each engine has its own, respective all-wheel-drive setup. The V-6 has a single speed system, with 50/50 front/rear torque split, while the 5.7 Hemi has a two-speed transfer case with a low range, and a variable torque split. The “big” Hemi in SRT models gets a Quadra-Trac on-demand system. Wintry road conditions and light off roading are well within Durango's comfort zone.

No full size SUV feels truly sporty in terms of handling, but R/T models have a Sport suspension with rear load leveling. It corners confidently given its size, and (with trailer sway damping) feels stable when towing.

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.

## detroit auto show opens this week

The 2018 North American International Auto Show kicked off for the press and industry insiders on Jan. 13 in Detroit, and already there was some excitement generated.



2019 Ford Ranger

On Monday, Ford finally made it official that it will be bringing back the much-missed **Ford Ranger** mid-sized pickup (left), seven years after the last one rolled off the Twin Cities plant in St. Paul, Minnesota. Designed in Australia for the U.S. market, the 2019 Ranger will go into production with a 2.3L EcoBoost engine later this year at the Michigan Assembly Plant.

It was a banner week for trucks at the show, with the **Chevy Silverado** showing off its new weight loss (450 lbs.) and its two V8 options (5.3L and 6.2L, with a 3.0L inline-six diesel option possibly on the way. The new **Ram 1500** debuted with a longer wheelbase and two engine options: a 3.6L V6 or the 5.7L Hemi V8. The show opens to the public today, and runs through Jan. 28.



Also unveiled Monday was the **Hyundai Veloster** set to appear in the upcoming Marvel movie “Ant-Man and the Wasp.” Blah, blah. More importantly, Hyundai announced that its **Veloster N** would be hitting the U.S. market this year, marking the Korean maker's first performance model.