

New 3 series BMW to

Word is that a new version of the automaker's cornerstone model will be revealed to the public sometime in 2018 and go on sale in early 2019. Although the latest 3 series won't change significantly in appearance, it will use a new light-weight scalable platform originally used by the latest BMW 7 series and 5 series models. The 3 series is expected to achieve a weight reduction of close



A rendering of the 2019 BMW 3-Series G20 sedan is all we have... for now.

to 100 pounds when compared with the current architecture. The current turbocharged four- and six-cylinder-engine lineup is expected to carry over, however it's likely that the returning plug-in hybrid model will have better power and range.



Silverado gets an in-line four

The hard details were scarce when Chevrolet unveiled the **2019 Chevrolet Silverado 1500** earlier this year at the Detroit Auto Show, but now General Motors is revealing that the new pickup's drive-train options will include a 2.7L turbocharged four-cylinder that produces 310 h.p. and 348 lb-ft of torque, with that peaking from 1,500 to 4,000 rpm. GM's head of global product development Mark Reuss did hint in January that a possible four-cylinder might be part of a hybrid Silverado, but it appears that an electric isn't on the horizon yet. With updates such as a longer stroke length, twin-scroll design and an exhaust manifold integrated into the cylinder head to reduce turbo lag, GM expects the four-banger's payload capacity to be equivalent to the Ford F-150 XLT's 3.3L V-6 and the Ram 1500 Big Horn's 3.6L V-6. The Silverado will still come with a 4.3L V-6 as the base engine, giving 285 horses to the model's Work Truck, Custom and Custom Trail Boss variants. Other returning powerplant options remain the 5.3L V-8 (355 hp/383 lb-ft) and 6.2L V-8 (420 hp/460 lb-ft). These engines will come with the GM Dynamic Fuel Management system's stop/start technology that can shut off as many as seven cylinders at a time.



Cadillac's new compact XT4 crossover will eventually be joined by the much larger XT6. The midsize XT5 is the company's utility anchor.

Cadillac covers both ends of the utility spectrum

Up to now, Cadillac has been relying solely on the midsize **XT5** for volume utility sales. The company will continue to offer the **XT4** compact utility model for the 2019 model year, but there's even more coming.

Sources are confirming that a much bigger tall-wagon test vehicle has been spotted wearing the usual camouflage. The **XT6** will come with three rows of seats, but it will have a somewhat smaller profile (i.e. lower and shorter) than the larger truck-like Escalade. The platform will borrow from the Chevrolet Traverse and Buick Enclave.

Both of Cadillac's turbo and non-turbo V-6s are expected to be available, along with a full suite of dynamic-safety and semi-autonomous driving aids. Expect the XT6 for the 2020 model year.



Amazon will deliver packages to your vehicle without you even being there.

Special delivery, to your vehicle

We wonder how many owners of late-model General Motors and Volvo vehicles will sign on to the **Amazon Key** in-car's parcel delivery service.

This program allows authorized delivery personnel to unlock your car's hatch or trunk and place whatever you've ordered inside. Of course Amazon Key includes a number of safeguards and smart-phone monitoring to ensure nothing goes wrong. Still, just like the company's Key in-home service, you'll have to accept the fact that a perfect stranger will be invading your personal space while you're not around.

Amazon also has to realize that the first time something goes awry, such as a reported theft or damage to property by a delivery person, both traditional and social media outlets will explode...figuratively, of course.

TEST DRIVE

2018 Chrysler Pacifica

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two hours. Top speed in electric-only mode is 75 mph (above that, the gas engine chimes in). The trip from 0-60 mph takes about 7.8 seconds in the 260 h.p. hybrid; about a half second behind the gas-only, 287 h.p. Pacifica. These numbers trail both the Honda Odyssey and Toyota Sienna gas-powered vans, which make the run to 60 in the high six-second range.

Practically speaking, the hybrid had no problem keeping up with anything on the highway, and the added oomph provided by the electric motor means that when you need to get off the dime smartly, you can. The cutover from electric to gas power is seamless; the sole giveaway is sound. The golf cart quiet of all electric mode is replaced by normal engine noise when the gas kicks in.

With the batteries fully charged and a tank full of petrol, hybrids can run almost exclusively on electric power for about 30 miles. Industry data shows that's enough for most commutes or most family driving per day, so many people can potentially do a day's worth of driving, without touching the gas supply.

Once the charge is depleted, the hybrid system switches to the V-6 gas powered engine, and you're good for roughly

500 miles more before you recharge or refill. Plug or pump powered, Pacifica rides comfortably. Like all minivans I've encountered, it feels its size and that size must be factored into parking decisions. But available electronic aids like park assist and a surround view camera system take a lot of the guesswork out of such matters. Handling is stable and confident, though not sporty.

Designers spend more time on space efficiency in minivans than they do in any other segment, and it shows. No type of vehicle packs more people and cargo. In Pacifica, cargo capacity is 32.3 cubic-feet behind the third row, 87.5 aft of the second row, and 140.5 behind row one.

Getting to that max cargo number is a different process for the different Pacifica's. The standard, gas-powered version features Stow 'n Go seats in rows two and three. When not needed for people, they can easily be folded and tucked away below deck.

In the hybrid, the battery packs reside in the space below the floor in the second row, so that row is fitted with "quad" seats. They are comfy, adult sized, have adjustable travel and flank a movable (and removable) center console. But for maximum cargo, the second row seats in the hybrid have to be removed from the



TEST DRIVE
this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

ARMORY CHRYSLER DODGE JEEP RAM SRT FIAT
926 Central Ave., Albany, NY | 518-641-7777 | www.armoryauto.com

GOLDSTEIN CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM
968 New Loudon Rd, Latham, NY | 518-785-4156 | www.goldsteinchryslerjeep.net

vehicle. You release the seats (two simple steps), and pull them close to the doors, so you can get your legs into the lift (each weighs 68 lb.). Whether or not this is an issue depends on who's doing the lifting, and how often you expect to be in max cargo mode.

A bench seat is not offered for the second row for the hybrid, so it holds a maximum of seven. Third-row seats fold and stow below the floor in back when not needed, as in the standard Pacifica. The 140.5 cu. ft. cargo maximum compares with 150 in Sienna, 145 in Odyssey and 142 in the Kia Sedona. Front cabin storage spots are numerous.

For 2018, all models get Chrysler's latest (Uconnect 4) infotainment system. Android Auto and Apple CarPlay compatibility are standard, as are blind spot monitoring, rear cross traffic detection and rear park assist with stop.

Models fitted with the 8.4-inch touchscreen have available 4G Wi-Fi.

The dash display provide hybrid-specific information to the driver. The 8.4-inch touchscreen has pages of information on power flow, charging schedules and driving history. The programmable, 7-inch cluster display also includes a charging/power gauge and an "efficiency coach," to encourage efficient driving.

Chrysler says that half of all minivan sales transactions fall between \$31,000-\$38,000.

While all Pacifica Hybrid models are north of those numbers, when you add the delivery charge (\$1,095) and subtract the available federal tax credit (\$7,500) from their MSRP, the net bottom line (\$33,590 Touring Plus, \$35,590 Touring L, \$38,590 Limited), places the hybrid squarely the segment's sweet spot.

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.

