

Verboten!
Will Trump ban German cars?
PAGE 4



Mercedes-Benz CLA

Slow-moving vehicle season has arrived.
PAGE 5



GM = EV
The General ups its electric ante in China.
PAGE 4



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PAGE 5

TEST DRIVE

High End, Low Profile

2018 Volkswagen Golf R 2.0 w/DCC & Navigation

DAN LYONS | text
Special to the Times Union

Golf has gotten simpler. The car, I mean, not the game. In addition to the base hatchback, the Golf family also includes an electric powered version (E-Golf), a hot rod hatch (GTI), and the flagship (Golf R).

Last year, the mainstream hatchback series was tapered from three trim levels to two (S and Wolfsburg), and two door versions were banished across the board, in favor of an all-four door lineup.



Year four of generation seven brings further streamlining: the top-ranging R cars are now offered in a single trim — DCC and Navigation.

We all know what Navigation is (and by the way, where is it more fittingly found than in a flagship?). As

for DCC, the abbreviation stands for Dynamic Chassis Control. It's an adaptive suspension system, in which

2018 Volkswagen Golf R 2.0 w/DCC & Navigation

MSRP: \$39,785 (Golf R) · As Tested: \$41,970

the shock dampers continuously adjust to maximize cornering grip. Three settings (Comfort, Sport, Race) can be selected by the driver, and they're interconnected with five driving modes (Normal, Eco, Comfort, Race, Individual). Each mode has corresponding adjustments for throttle response and (on automatic transmission cars) shift mapping. All Golf R's have all-wheel-drive; the only such models in the extended



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

THE 2018 VW GOLF R 2.0 competes in the performance hatchback segment. The sole engine choice is the 2.0L TSI four-cylinder. The turbocharged, direct-injection engine makes 292 horsepower and 280 lb.-ft. of torque.

Golf family to do so. The on-demand, 4Motion system reverts to front-wheel-drive in normal conditions, but can push up to 50 percent of available torque to the rear axle when needed. An electronic differential lock allows torque vectoring to help guide the Golf around corners. Add in a lowered ride height (even lower than GTI), stout binders (vented discs, front and rear), meaty tread and some suspension and steering tweaks, and you have a very performance-minded, high-end hatchback.

Golf R feels balanced and planted at all times, and feeds relevant, road information back to the driver through the wheels and the steering wheel. Regardless

of the driving mode, the suspension has a stiff feel to it. To drivers used to sporty performance cars, the R's ride will seem like nothing out of the ordinary; a simple tradeoff for the car's advanced driving dynamics. However, if you're new to the breed, the unfiltered feedback (a little jittery on ragged roads, impact harshness on broken pavement) may come as a surprise.

The sole engine choice for Golf R is the 2.0L TSI four-cylinder. The turbocharged, direct-injection engine makes 292 horsepower @ 5,400 r.p.m. and 280 lb.-ft. of torque @ 1,800 r.p.m. A six-speed manual transmission is standard, with a dual clutch automatic available as a no cost option.

Continued on page 4

The 2018 Volkswagen Golf R is a very performance-minded, high-end hatchback.

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