

GM: More EVs for China

General Motors announced it will be adding 10 more electrified vehicles to the previous list of 10 it was already planning to introduce to the Chinese market through 2023. Policymakers in the smog-filled cities of the Dragon Kingdom have been pushing EVs,



The electric-powered Buick Velite 5

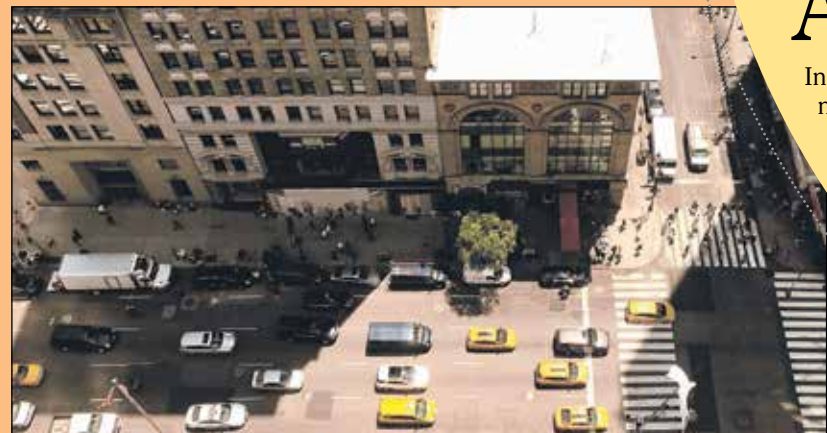
China announced it would remove foreign ownership restrictions on companies producing alternative fuel vehicles. The list of electric GM vehicles slated for release in China — the world's largest automotive market — includes the **Cadillac CT6 Plug-In**, the Volt-based **Buick Velite 5** and the tiny **Baojun E100 EV**.

Plug-in Hybrids and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles as an alternative to gasoline-powered cars by introducing alternative fuel vehicle quotas. In April,



Alfa Romeo GTV returns

In Italian, the letters stand for *Gran Turismo Veloce*, or fast grand touring, and the legendary designation has been through numerous iterations at Alfa Romeo gracing the Giulia, Alfetta and Spider roaster. The last GTV was a 2+2 coupe, of which 41,700 were built from 1993 until production wrapped in 2004. But now the GTV is back as an all-wheel-drive, four-passenger coupe with more than 600 horsepower, courtesy of a hybrid E-Boost system. This promises to be a driver's driver version of the Giulia, which has already made a name for itself after arriving in America as a 280-hp turbo and 503-hp twin-turbo Quadrifoglio versions. Putting more than 600 horses into a performer that already won *Motortrend's* 2018 Car of the Year sounds like a great idea to us. This GTV is most likely intended by Fiat Chrysler Automobiles — which owns Alfa Romeo — to compete with such vehicles as the BMW 8 Series and Polestar 1, the latter being the new hybrid from Volvo's racing division. Alfa's plans also include bringing seven new models to showrooms by 2022, including a new version of the 8C. Unconfirmed rumors suggest that there might also be an Alfa GT with a range of four- and six-cylinder powerplants.



First we take Manhattan. The view down on Fifth Ave. in New York City. There are apparently too many German luxury cars parked there for President Trump's tastes.

Trump: Ban German cars?

The German business magazine *Wirtschaftswoche* is reporting that during his April visit to Europe, U.S. President Donald Trump told French President Emmanuel Macron he wanted to keep America safe from German vehicles.

The magazine cited several unnamed European and American diplomats in saying that Trump wants to implement a restrictive tariff on German cars entering the U.S. Germany exports more vehicles than any other European country, shipping more than 650,000 cars to the U.S. in 2017. Two weeks ago, Trump assigned the Department of Commerce to examine the possibility of tariffs on all foreign vehicles, citing their import as a national security issue.

Trump suggested in January that Volkswagens Golfs and Jettas made in Puebla, Mexico, should face a 35 percent tax on heading north, and accused German automakers of driving a one-way street on imports.

"When you walk down Fifth Avenue, everybody has a Mercedes-Benz parked in front of his house," Trump said, according to a *Wall Street Journal* translation of his comments to German officials. "You were very unfair to the U.S.A. It isn't mutual. How many Chevrolets do you see in Germany? Not many, maybe none, you don't see anything at all over there. It's a one-way street."

German automakers have manufacturing plants in the U.S. as well. Daimler AG makes Mercedes-Benz GLE-Class, GLS-Class and C-Class vehicles in Vance, Alabama. VW's Chattanooga, Tennessee, facility produces the Passat midsize and Atlas SUV. And BMW's Spartanburg, South Carolina, factory is the world's sole source of X4, X5, X6 and X7 crossovers.

For the record, out of 45,071,209 cars registered in the Federal Republic of Germany in 2016, 258,760 wore a Chevrolet badge, according to the country's Federal Office of Drivers and Vehicles.

Ford chimed in with 3,352,642. Joint American-Italian FCA was represented by 81,948 Jeeps and 78,115 Chryslers. Not surprisingly, two-thirds of all cars on German roads are native (Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Opel, Audi, Porsche, etc.), with around 10 percent from Japan, and 8.4 percent from France.

Last year, General Motors sold off its Opel and Vauxhall brands to France-based PSA Group after experiencing nothing but losses in Europe since 1999.



OOPS, I DID IT AGAIN. On May 29, this Tesla Model S, operating on its Autopilot function, struck a police vehicle in California. Last month, a Tesla hit a fire truck in Utah.

Tesla hits parked police car

There's making a screw up while driving. And then there's making a screw up and hitting a cop car.

That's the problem one driver found herself in after crashing her **Tesla Model S** into a parked police cruiser in Laguna Beach, Calif., on May 29, while using the vehicle in Autopilot mode. The driver suffered only minor injuries, though there was extensive damage to her vehicle's front end, as well as damage to the side of the police vehicle.

This may be a trend. A few weeks before, a driver using the Autopilot feature on her Tesla hit a fire truck stopped at a light in Utah. Tesla has been clear that Autopilot is not a true autonomous feature, and drivers must keep aware of their surroundings.

On better news, Tesla's new, more affordable **Model 3** won *Consumer Reports* coveted recommendation after a brake update improved stopping time by almost 20 feet.

TEST DRIVE

2018 VW Golf R 2.0

Continued from page 3

I'm always partial to a manual gearbox, especially in a sporting car. But if your driving life involves a lot of traffic jams, or you'd just plain prefer to let the car shift its own self, VW's DCT is hard to argue with.

Now with seven gears to work with, it spreads the power out smoothly. The rapid-fire shifting response in manual mode is very engaging for the driver. Downshifts are rev-matched in sport mode, and shift point spacing is widened. The engine cruises easily at highway+ speeds and never sounds taxed, even when throttled.

The Golf R is high four-second fast from 0-60. Compared to its competition, that trails the Ford Focus RS, but tops

the Subaru WRX and shades the Honda Civic Type R. Looking in house, the Golf R is a second and change faster than the GTI. However, that still qualifies as rapid transit, and the GTI has a notably lower sticker price and better gas mileage. The Golf R checks in with EPA estimates of 22/29/25 (I logged 26 mpg's overall), while GTI posts 25/33/28 (manual), and 24/32/27 (automatic).

External cues for the new Golf include redesigned bumpers, LED lighting (adaptive, in front) and fresh, model-specific, 19-inch "Englishtown" rims.

Typically, the tapered box styling of hatchbacks is more functionally friendly for people and cargo than are sleeker designs. That's true for Golf, where there's ample headroom in both rows,



The 2018 Volkswagen Golf R's cockpit gains a notably larger (8-inch) touchscreen display and a customizable dashboard display that's Android Auto and Apple CarPlay compatible. Safety features include a pedestrian monitoring capability.

even with the moon roof.

Leg room is fine up front, and will (just) fit six-footers behind same in back. The front sport seats are praiseworthy: Glove-like fit, 12-way adjustable, with headrests that curl forward to cradle your cranium. Cargo capacity ranges from 22.8-52.7 cubic feet. Split rear seatbacks fold and the load floor can be raised or lowered about 4 inches.

The two main changes for 2018 are both best viewed from the first row. The former 6.5-inch touchscreen infotainment system has been replaced by an 8-inch display. As before, the system is compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. Also new is the debut of

the digital cockpit — a customizable dash display. And pedestrian monitoring capability has been added to Front Assist — part of Golf's suite of standard safety technology features.

The 2018 model year also brings with it a warranty upgrade for Golf. Volkswagen's People First warranty provides bumper-to-bumper coverage for six-years or 72,000 miles, and it's transferrable to subsequent owners throughout its duration.

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.

