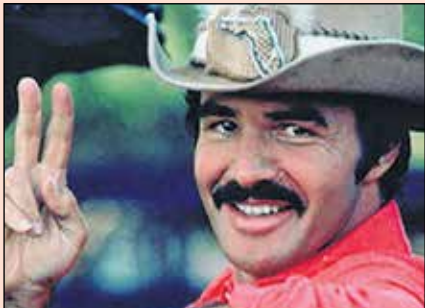


So long, Bandit

The sad passing of Burt Reynolds, Hollywood and automotive icon.

PAGE 2



Lyft off

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Alfa Romeo's new flagship sporter

PAGE 2



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TEST DRIVE

First Drive: 2019 Kia Forte

DAN LYONS | text and photos

Special to the Times Union

If “Forte” is defined as a strong point, then the car that bears that name can make that claim, for the company that produces it. Last year, some 117,596 Fortes were sold, making the compact sedan Kia’s top seller. This, in the fifth year of the car’s second generation.



You could see where results like these would make an automaker wary of changing things. But to stand still in business is to get passed, so 2019 brings us the third generation Forte.

The new Kia shows an intentional, family resemblance to the Stinger — Kia’s handsome high-profile flagship.

You see it mainly in the design of the headlights and air curtains, and the “tiger nose” grille.

The only potential downside I see in the new design concerns the rear view. The tail end lighting includes a

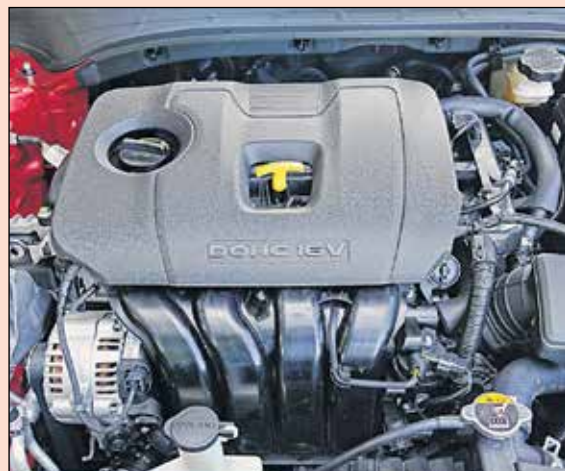
First Drive: 2019 Kia Forte

MSRP: \$17,690 - \$25,200

separate location for the directional; one which is arguably too low for optimal visibility.

The latest Forte edition is longer, wider and slightly taller than the outgoing model.

It rolls on a modified version of the chassis it shares with its corporate cousin, the Hyundai Sonata. Kia has stiffened the platform for this application, and



THE 2019 FORTE is Kia’s entry in the compact segment, a stylish corporate cousin to the Hyundai Sonata that’s powered by a 2.0-liter four-cylinder rated at 147 horsepower. An EX Launch Edition will join the trim lineup this fall.

claims a 26 percent increase in torsional rigidity over past versions.

Forte will be offered in FE (MSRP \$17,690), LX (\$19,090), S (\$20,190) and EX (\$21,990) trim levels, as well as a special EX Launch Edition (\$25,200). Base cars are available with a six-speed manual transmission. A CVT is optional for \$900 on FE, and standard on all other trims.

The 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine carries over from the 2018 model. It’s rated at 147 horsepower and 132 lb.-ft. of torque. The EPA estimates promise good fuel economy. FE models with manual transmission are expected to return 27/37/31, and improve to 31/41/35 with the Continuously Variable Transmission. All other trim levels

check in with a predicted 30/40/34.

The CVT is a new design. Developed by Kia, it’s built with a chain style belt instead of a push belt — a first for the compact segment — and it incorporates adaptive style shift logic. Basically, it’s a CVT, but it behaves like a traditional automatic transmission. Shift-like steps are programmed in, and evident at wide open throttle or when the automatic is used in manual mode.

Three drive modes (Normal, Sport and Smart) can be toggled through by the driver, via console mounted button. Sport holds the engine rpm’s longer, before “shifts.” Smart switches between the other two modes as driving needs dictate.

Continued on page 2

The new Kia shows an intentional family resemblance to the Stinger, Kia’s handsome high-profile flagship.



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