

## New auto shows on Netflix

The streaming-video service has two new programs in the works for subscribers to binge on. **Car Masters: Rust to Riches** features Mark Towle and his team at Gotham Garage taking clapped-out classic cars bought for less than a grand and turning them into vehicles worth upward of six figures. It launches Sept. 14.



Charlize Theron

The other show, **Hyperdrive**, hosted by actress Oscar-winning actor **Charlize Theron**, has drivers from around the world competing on one of the largest automotive obstacle courses ever constructed, at the Eastman Business Park in Rochester, NY. The 10-episode series is currently filming in Rochester and will premiere in 2019.

And Netflix's first original automotive production, **Fastest Car**, returns for a second season next year. The docu-series takes an up close and person look into the 2018 FIA Formula One World Championship, and will serve up seven episodes.



## Alfa's new flagship sportster

Sources indicate that **Alfa Romeo** will build a follow up to the limited-edition — and expensive — **8C coupe** that arrived in North America a decade ago. The exotic second-gen Alfa that launches in 2022 uses a twin-turbocharged 2.9-liter V-6 (the same engine available in the Giulia and Stelvio Quadrifoglio models) positioned behind the cockpit, plus an electric motor connected to the front axle. The combined output is expected to be about 800 horsepower. To keep the weight down and the performance up, the 8C will be built with a carbon fiber chassis, which is also how the current **4C** sports car is constructed. Anticipation is high: The original 2007 8C Competizione has been called one of the most beautiful production cars ever made. For the new version, a price somewhere north of \$300,000 is probable.

Alfa Romeo is also planning a new Giulia-based **GTV coupe** and two new SUV/crossovers, with one of those smaller than the current **Levante**.



This 1940 Cadillac LaSalle hearse was used for music legend Aretha Franklin's funeral.

PHOTO: ANGELA WEISS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

## Aretha Franklin's final ride

When musical icon **Aretha Franklin** took her final ride for her funeral last week on Friday, Aug. 31, she did so like she lived... in style. Escorting the Queen of Soul to her traditional "homegoing" ceremony at the 4,000-capacity Greater Grace Temple in Detroit was a white **1940 Cadillac LaSalle hearse**.

It was the same vehicle used to carry her father, the Rev. C.L. Franklin, after his death in 1984. It also served for the funerals of Temptations baritone David Ruffin in 1991 and civil rights icon Rosa Parks in 2005.



Here's just one of the more than 100 pink Cadillacs that took part in Aretha Franklin's funeral procession.

Owned by the Swanson Funeral Home of Detroit since 1958, the two-door, three-speed (with the shifter on the steering column) Cadillac is usually kept in storage, and used only for special occasions.

LaSalle were manufactured from 1927 to 1940 as a lower-priced luxury alternative to Cadillac-branded vehicles, but were still the second most prestigious entry into the General Motors stable. Despite some design differences, for most of their production they were Cadillacs in all but name.

In addition to the LaSalle, than 100 actual **pink Cadillacs** also served as part of the funeral procession for Franklin, who after moving to Detroit from Memphis at a young age was a lifelong resident of the Motor City.



Burt Reynolds had an Oscar, but he never strayed far from the Pontiac Firebird Trans Am.

## Burt Reynolds (1952-2018)

In other sad passings, no self-respecting auto news could let this Thursday's death of **Burt Reynolds**, 82, go uncommemorated. Though an Oscar winner (for 1977's "Boogie Nights"), the mustachioed star will always be known as the Bandit from 1977's "Smokey and the Bandit," scripted by auto journalist Brock Yates. The Florida native will also be forever associated with the equally iconic **1977 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am** and its "screaming chicken" hood graphics. Sequels followed throughout the 1970s and '80s. In 1981, he starred in another auto epic, "Cannonball Run," which proved popular enough to launch a sequel of its own. *Godspeed, Bandit.*

### TEST DRIVE

## 2019 Kia Forte

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Forte has runabout power; fine in 'round town driving, comfortable when cruising and only taxed in high demand situations. My standard small-displacement engine rule applies: passing takes planning. Though loud at wide open throttle,



engine noise isn't very noticeable otherwise. The new design squelches CVT drone nicely, and thicker window glass in Forte 3.0 also contributes to what is generally a quiet cabin, for a compact class car.

Forte's compact footprint and Kia's motor-driven power steering combine for a nimble feel. Aside from some impact

harshness on broken pavement, the suspension (McPherson strut/coil spring front, coupled torsion beam axle rear) provides a comfortable ride.

Slide inside and you find an 8-inch color touchscreen front and center. It's standard in all Fortes. S and EX models upgrade to Kia's UVO eServices connectivity system.

Forte is smartphone friendly — all trims are compatible with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. A bank of dials and buttons mid-way up the center

stack allow for HVAC adjustments. Media/audio controls are accessed via the touchscreen and neighboring buttons. It's a bit slower go here (more steps needed to get where you're going), but a straight forward process nonetheless.

The roster of standard equipment across the board also covers niceties like dual zone HVAC controls and a tilt/



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The design of the 2019 Kia Forte's headlights and air curtains — and the "tiger nose" grille, above — reflect elements from Kia's sporty flagship Stinger model.

telescoping steering column. EX options include a wireless charging tray for your smart phone, and a 320-watt Harmon Kardon sound system with eight speakers and Clari-Fi (the latter is music restoration technology that rebuilds audio signals that are lost during digital compression). It's a higher grade of audio than is normally found in this segment.

Forte can fit six-footers in both rows. The redesigned front seats are lighter and more supportive than the ones they replace, and are comfortable over the long haul. They straddle a center console that's now positioned slightly higher than before, as are the rear seats. Those seatbacks fold flat forward when accommodating long items, but you'll need to open the trunk first to access the levers. Cargo capacity is very good — the trunk measures a healthy 15.3 cubic-feet.

Standard driver safety technology on all levels includes Forward Collision Avoidance Assist, Forward Collision

Warning, Lane Keeping Assist, Lane Departure Warning and Driver Attention Warning. The list of driver assist features expands (on EX models) to include Lane Change Assist, and Blind Spot Warning/Rear Cross Traffic Warning. Pedestrian detection is also added to the Forward Collision Warning feature. Adaptive Cruise Control, Parking Distance Warning and High Beam Assist are all available optionally on EX.

While the 2019 Forte is on sale now, the special Launch Edition won't join the lineup until fall. These models are fully loaded (all EX level standard and optional equipment) and set apart visually by a model-exclusive Fire Orange paint job, deck lid spoiler and 17-inch graphite finish alloy rims.

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.

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