

Hyundai going full-size ute

The Korea-based automaker rarely makes a product misstep, but the full-size body-on-frame **Borrego** utility vehicle that was introduced for the 2008 model year — and was gone one year later — certainly qualifies. However, sources



Design elements from this Hyundai Grandmaster concept will appear on its new Palisade full-size utility vehicle.

are now saying that Hyundai is planning another assault on the category dominated by vehicles such as the Chevrolet Tahoe, Nissan Armada and Toyota Sequoia. The new model,

which will be based on the **Grandmaster** concept that was showcased earlier this year, is expected to be named **Palisade**. The new tall wagon will be constructed using the same unitized (frameless) platform that's planned for Hyundai's upcoming midsize pickup. Expect the Palisade to be revealed in 2019 as a 2020 model.



The world's priciest used car

A **1962 Ferrari 250 GTO**, one of only 36 made, recently sold at auction for \$44 million, claimed to be a record for any car. Including the buyers fee, the total tab came to **\$48.4 million**. The car was sold at RM Sotheby's annual Monterey collector-car auction in August. Chassis no. 3413 came from garage of renowned car collector Greg Whitten, former chief software architect at Microsoft and now chairman of Numerix. The Ferrari 250 GTO represents the pinnacle of development for that famous model, the last front-engine GT car before the design moved to mid-engine. Also, there were only three dozen made, with all chassis numbers currently accounted for. Another '62 250 GTO (chassis no. 4153, from German race car driver Christian Glässel's collection) went for a reputed \$70 million in June, though that was a private sale to David MacNeil, founder of car floor mat maker WeatherTech. The last public auction of a 250 GTO was chassis 3851, which sold in 2014 for \$38.1 million, then a record for the most expensive automotive auction price.



The Toyota Tundra TRD Pro is new off-road alternative to the Ford Raptor.

Tundra challenges the Raptor

The trend to creating extreme off-road-capable full-size pickups continues to grow and Toyota is right in the thick of the action with the **2019 Tundra TRD Pro**.

The automaker has installed the same kind of Fox-brand shock absorbers that Ford uses for the F-150-based **Raptor** off-roader (also the springs that give the TRD Pro an extra two inches of lift). Other specialized content includes a big hood scoop, less restrictive exhaust system, skid plates and Michelin all-terrain rubber mounted on lightweight wheels.

The TRD Pro gets the same 381-horsepower 5.7-liter V-8 (69 fewer horses than the Raptor's turbocharged V-6) as regular Tundra models. Pricing starts at \$51,300, which is only slightly less than the Raptor's (2018) MSRP.



BMW finally unwraps the Z4

For the past few years, fans of the entry-level **Z4** sports car have had to content themselves with camouflaged images of the replacement. The wait is now over, and we can finally see roadster's busy new face and air-extractor bodywork that consumes large portions of the front fenders.

In typical BMW style, the cockpit is all business, with the gauges, touchscreen and various controls angled toward the driver's position. The initial **Z4 M40i First Edition** will come with a 340-horsepower turbocharged 3.0-liter inline six-cylinder engine that

BMW claims will propel the two-seater to 100 km/h (62 mph) from rest in 4.6 seconds. A turbo 2.0-liter four-cylinder will likely follow later in the model year.

TEST DRIVE

2018 Toyota Prius c

Continued from page 1

"Efficiency Leaves" display would help engage the driver in the pursuit of maximum mileage. The gear selector is floor mounted and conventional. This sort of thing wouldn't normally merit comment. But, we're now seeing alternate shifter designs on a fairly regular basis (and many are fairly forgettable), so I now appreciate that which I used to take for granted. Lots of hard plastic populates the dash and door panels — a reminder



of the car's entry-level status.

Prius c's rear seat leg room is, at 35 inches, slightly more than the standard Prius (33.4 inches), and you can squeeze a six footer behind one of similar height, provided that the two parties involved can reach an agreement on an acceptable level front seatback angle. Cargo capacity is 17 cubic feet. Lift over height in back is low. Rear seatbacks fold forward on all trim levels (split and fold, on trim levels Two through Four), though it results in a two-level load floor, and you might have

to push the front seats forward first so the headrests clear. Because of this (and the fact that they cut into rear window visibility), you can do what I did: pop the back headrests off when no one is seated there, and toss them in the cargo bay.

In addition to the Star Safety System (Vehicle Stability Control, Traction Control, Anti-lock Brake System, Electronic Brake-force Distribution, Brake Assist and Smart Stop Technology), an integrated backup camera is standard equipment on all Prius c models, as is Toyota's Safety Sense.

The latter includes Lane Departure Alert, Automatic High Beams and a Pre-collision System. Two, popular safety staples not included here are blind spot monitoring and rear cross-traffic alert. They're offered on the top trim level of the midsize Prius, but aren't available on any trim level of Prius c.

The hybrid powertrain combines a 1.5 liter, Atkinson-cycle, four-cylinder gas engine, with two AC motor/generators and an electronically controlled Continuously Variable Transmission. The combined, net power output from the hybrid system is 99 horsepower. Seventy-three of those horses (and 82 lb.-ft. of torque) are derived from the gas engine.

A battery pack located beneath the rear seats supplies the power for the electric motors. The gas/electric power distribution is governed by a hybrid control computer, in response to driving demands. An "EV" mode allows electric-only power, up to a maximum of one mile.

The first Prius c rolled out with some flashy, fuel economy numbers. EPA estimates for the 2012 edition were set at 53 city, 46 highway. EPA testing guidelines have since stiffened, so the largely identical powertrain yields different numbers in 2018: 48 city, 43 highway, 46 combined. My recent test drive netted 48 miles per gallon. Those mpg's come at the expense of mph. With a torque



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boost from the electric motor, initial, low speed acceleration is respectable (mid three second range from 0-30). However, it takes about 11 seconds to reach 60 miles per hour from a standing start. Sluggish performance like this demands that drivers think twice before putting themselves in positions that require immediate speed.

Two lane passes or on-ramp merges onto a busy highway require considerable advance planning. The "c" in Prius c stands for city, and the car is small and nimble enough to negotiate urban areas easily. With the optional, 16-inch wheels/tires, I found ride quality to be fine, by small car standards.

Prius reached its sales peak in the US in 2012. That year, the brand family expanded to four models, and collectively set the all-time, stateside record for hybrids, with more than 236,000 sold. Times are different now. Hybrids are everywhere. Gas prices are consider-

ably lower and relatively stable. And, the fuel efficiency of some gas powered cars (many with better acceleration) has crept into the levels once reserved solely for hybrids. Toyota's approach to these shifting market sands has been a combination of contraction and expansion.

The company has contracted the number of specific, Prius models (The v wagon did not return for 2018), while expanding the availability of the hybrid technology pioneered in Prius, to other Toyota models. So it is that 2018 Toyota models like Camry, RAV4, Avalon and Highlander are now available with a choice of either gas or hybrid powered versions.

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.