

Financing a new car company isn't easy, but the maker of the **Elio P4** is selling its own cryptocurrency to do so.

Porsche dumps diesel

The German sports car maker announced this week that it would drop diesel-powered vehicles from its lineup. The move follows the arrest in Germany some five months ago of a senior



The Taycan: Just in time to quit diesel, Porsche's first EV debuts next year.

Porsche manager in connection with the diesel emissions rigging scandal by Volkswagen, Porsche's corporate owner.

More than legal issues, however, Porsche is following a global trend toward electric and hybrid powertrains. It hasn't had a diesel-powered vehicle in its lineup since February, and hasn't offered a diesel option in the U.S. since November of 2015. But next year, Porsche will introduce the **Taycan**, its first all-electric obviously intended to compete with Tesla. The 600-hp Taycan is expected to hit 60 mph in 3.5 seconds, and have a 250-mile range from a 15-minute charge.



Two Bits for a three-wheeler

Insolvent carmakers have gone to outrageous lengths to keep their companies afloat... remember John DeLorean in the 1980s? Or any American maker besides Ford in 2009? **Elio Motors**, the hopeful three-wheeled car manufacturer that's in dire need of money to take its two-seat **P4** model to production, has a novel solution: Make its own money. The company is now offering a pre-sale of a new digital "cryptocurrency" like Bitcoin that it calls, well, **ElioCoin**. Hey, if you're maverick enough to go for a three-wheeled car, you're probably in the market for a new form of unregulated security, because that worked out so well in 2008. But CEO Paul Elio, who founded the company in 2009, says he's got at least one taker: Elio Motors investor Patrick Byrne, founder of Overstock.com, announced he would be the first buyer. Still, the company has a deficit of some \$49 million standing in its way of producing the P4, which would retail for \$7,450, or a little more than the cash reserve it listed last year. Still, we wish them the best of luck, because the more car choices the better. The ElioCoin pre-sale runs through Oct. 15.



2019 Hyundai Kona EV

Who stole these EVs' grilles?

That's the burning question on our minds, prompted by the recent reveal of the newly redesigned **Hyundai Kona EV**.

It's as though the designers of these all-electric vehicles (and we're also talking about you here, **Kia Niro EV** and **Tesla Model 3**) who might otherwise be sketching eye-catching front ends have been given some other mandate. We're all for driving into the future (or past: see the early '60s Studebaker Avanti on facing page), but will the classic grille look be outlawed in the electric near-future?



This Kia Niro EV (above) is losing its grille, while the Tesla Model 3 (right) lacks anything even resembling one.

Probably not. Kudos to the second-generation **Nissan Leaf** and the

new **Jaguar I-Pace** for upholding the traditional grille-like nose-pieces. But if you're an iconoclast, the Kona EV's 201-horsepower electric motor and 64-kilowatt-hour electric battery will give you a maximum range of 258 miles. It launches in California by the end of the year and elsewhere throughout 2019.

Tesla Model 3



Small trucks are big at Ford: Could this be the new, as yet unnamed mini-Ranger model?

Ford on track with small utilities

We recently reported that Ford was contemplating a subcompact pickup that would be one size below the upcoming **2019 Ranger**.

Now there are rumors that Ford is planning a new utility vehicle that would be joined along with the upcoming **2020 Bronco**. What's more, it would be built using the platform from the new Ford Focus Active that's been tarried out of the U.S. market. Word is that prototypes of this "baby Bronco" recall the blocky shapes of the original Escape.

To date, Ford remains mum as to the name, but the Blue Oval has already registered both **Timberline** and **Maverick** with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Also possibly in the running is **Cou-rier**, a label that adorned Ford's 1970s and '80s mini-pickups, and was last used in 2013 on a Brazilian-made model.

TEST DRIVE

2019 Mazda CX-3 Grand Touring

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Apple CarPlay or Android Auto — a disadvantage, considering the smartphone usage rates of the car's target buyers.

Smart City Brake Support is standard on all levels and CX-3 buyer can avail themselves of a wide array of safety

In the case of the Mazda CX-3, the value pick is the base model.

technologies. While the content level rises with the trim levels, even base models can opt in. For example, the Sport i-Activsense package (\$1,100) adds Advanced Smart City Brake Support with Pedestrian Detection, Radar Cruise

Control, Lane Departure Warning, High Beam Control, Adaptive Front Lighting, Active Driving Display, rain sensing wipers and LED head and taillights.

The interior's main issues have to do with height and space. On the storage front, CX-3 has few spots to empty the contents of your hands or pockets. And as noted above, it's rock/paper/scissors for the one cup holder up front not covered by the center arm rest.

Cargo capacity in back ranges from 12.4-44.5 cubic feet, depending on how the rear seatbacks are configured. That's on the low end of this segment, and the lift over to reach the cargo bay is rather high. So it is for stuff.

As for people, if the driver or any of your passengers are six feet or taller, you'll be short on front seat leg room. Someone that size will also be unable



Road handling is a strong point of the 2019 Mazda CX-3. While it's one of the quicker cars in its class, fuel economy estimates are 27 city/32 highway/29 combined.



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to fit in back, if those in front share a similar inseam.

Cargo capacity is what it is, and whether it's a matter of concern depends on what you carry and how often. Passenger leg room is situation specific too. If your crew runs tall, it's an issue. If not, it isn't. There are bigger cars in this segment, if you need the cars/cargo space and want to stay with a subcompact. The other option is to step up to a compact crossover.

Price is often what keeps people in a smaller class, all things being equal. But the more options you add to a subcompact, the more quickly you reach the

entry price for compacts. In the case of the CX-3, the value pick is the base model. A Sport trim — with AWD and the i-Activsense package — stickers for \$22,890.

As you step up in trim/options, though, you pass the base price of Mazda's CX-5 (MSRP \$24,150; FWD/\$25,450 AWD). So for the same money, a base model CX-5 might literally be a better fit than an up-level CX-3.

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.