

A Ford Mustang SUV? You're kidding, right?

Well yes and no, sources claim. You won't be seeing some jacked-up Franken'stang in your rearview mirror, but a tall wagon with front and rear design cues that might resemble those of the current Mustang. The all-wheel-drive vehicle that's in the works for 2020 will apparently be a mid-size five-passenger carryall. The model will also be powered by twin electric motors instead of the Mustang V-8 and, due to negative reaction from Mustang fans, will *not*, as previously rumored, be called the Mach 1. It will be built on a brand new platform that Ford is prepping for a number of new electric models.



Released last month, this teaser shot is all Ford is giving us of its planned sporty utility

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Rolls-Royce's SUV will get a hybrid

The Cullinan Diamond is the largest gem-quality stone ever found at 3,106 carats. The namesake **Rolls-Royce Cullinan** sport ute is no slacker, either, at 563 horsepower, more than rival Bentley's Bentayga SUV. But the venerable British uberluxury maker's 6.75L biturbo V12 may get some company in the form of an even more powerful engine option when deliveries begin in the early part of 2019. What is confirmed is that the \$325,000 vehicle will get a hybrid powertrain version as well, making it Rolls-Royce's first foray into the burgeoning world of electrified vehicles. It can't come too soon for parent company BMW, whose CEO was quoted recently as saying "our future is definitely electric." Both companies are no doubt feeling a little pressure from the fact that Bentley is already offering a plug-in hybrid version of the Bentayga.



Jeep's new convertible pickup Scrambler bears the name of a 1980s model.

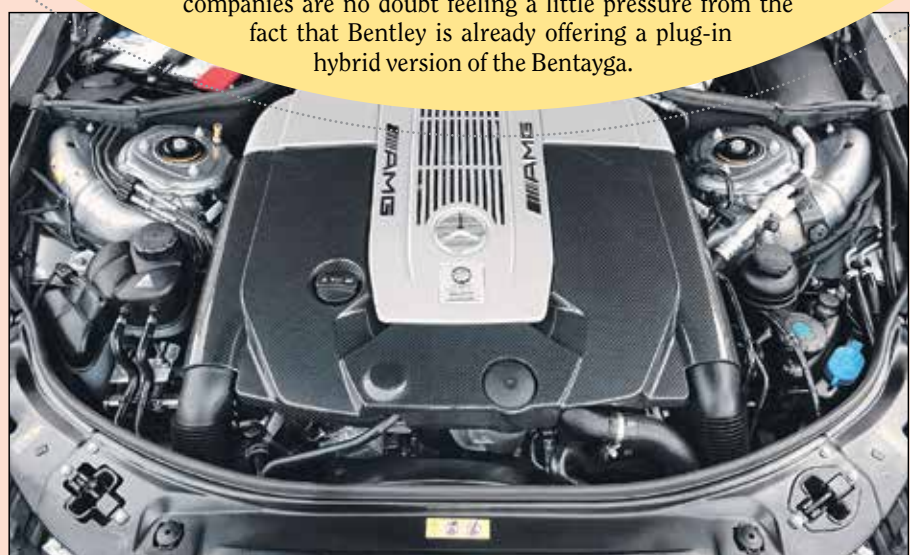
Jeep's convertible pickup

Intel indicates that the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles division will introduce an all-new **Jeep JK Wrangler truck** either late this year or in early 2019. The model, to be called the **Scrambler**, revives a name attached to a previous pickup that dates back to the early 1980s.



1982 Jeep Scrambler

Word has it that, as is the case with the current two- and four-door Wranglers, buyers will be able to remove the Scrambler's roof and its front and rear doors, and fold down the windshield, thus providing an experience unlike that of any other pickup on the market. It's expected that both the 285-horsepower V-6 and the optional (and torquier) 270-horsepower partial hybrid four-cylinder will be available. Pricing has not yet been announced, but a base Scrambler is expected to sticker in the mid-\$40,000 range.



The S65 AMG is currently the only Mercedes-Benz sporting the 6.0-liter V-12 engine.

Good-bye to 'Benz V-12 engines

Long a staple of the German automaker's higher-end models — especially AMG-designated versions — **Mercedes-Benz's** 6.0-liter V-12, rated at 612 horsepower and 738 pound-feet of torque, is being phased out. Its more-fuel-efficient twin-turbocharged 4.0-liter V-8 replacement is nearly as powerful, however, registering 603 horsepower and 664 pound-feet.

Currently, the **S65 AMG** coupe is the only Mercedes car fitted with the V-12.

TEST DRIVE

2019 Challenger SRT Hellcat

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Driver selectable Street, Sport and Track modes offer myriad adjustments for driving dynamics, and can be customized. The latter two are most useful if you find your way to a road course, less so for regular street duty, as the settings that make a car behave better on a track make things a bit harsh on the street. In the



mildest mode, Redeye still maintains admirable grip, with a stiff (but streetable) ride. Even when soft pedaled, engine noise is a constant part of the soundtrack, with exhaust boominess in the cabin, as you work through the gears. In a normal street car, that's a problem. In a car with this kind of jaw-dropping performance capability, it's expected. All in all, Redeye is surprisingly civilized.

Being around classic era muscle cars for many years, I still marvel at how even tempered modern muscle cars are, by comparison. No overheating, no loading up, no traffic jam anxiety. Even with air

conditioning, for heaven's sake. AC was very rarely seen in any classic era muscle car, because it added weight, cost, and if used, it provoked boil over. In Redeye, AC is not only present, it multitasks, channeling refrigerant from the interior to a chiller unit that keeps the supercharger cool. An after-run chiller keeps the cooling fan and coolant pump running after engine shut off, so the blower can chill out.

Another carryover from Demon is the transmission — singular. While all models up to and including Hellcat in the Challenger lineup can be had with a stick shift, the 8-speed TorqueFlite automatic is the only Mopar gear changer capable of handling the torque output of the engine in Redeye. So, as with Demon, it's automatic only. This is disappointing for the minority of drivers who like to shift, and also from the standpoint of tradition (a big Hemi and a pistol grip shifter are part of the Mopar muscle car tradition). That said, modern TorqueFlites — like their old school equivalents — are stout gear changers, and put the power down smoothly. The transmission in Redeye has been tweaked for 18% more torque multiplication than Hellcat.

Though it lacks the limited production cachet that Demon had, Hellcat Redeye has swagger to spare. It's set apart from other Challenger models by a number of



TEST DRIVE
this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

ARMORY CHRYSLER DODGE JEEP RAM SRT FIAT
926 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12206
518-641-7777 www.armoryauto.com

GOLDSTEIN CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE RAM
968 New Loudon Rd., Latham, NY 12110
518-785-4156 www.goldsteinchryslerjeep.net

things — some for show and some for go. The widebody option (\$6,000) is both. A Redeye Widebody is fully .3 seconds faster through the traps, compared to the standard body version.

Aside from that, the 3½-inch width gain courtesy of those fender flares just plain looks cool. Especially when the wheel wells are packed with 20-inch "Devil's Rims," shod with 305/35ZR Pirelli P-Zero tires. Nice too are the satin black spoilers (watch it, lest you scrape your chin on a curb). Redeye-specific badging on fenders are deck lid also provide a "do not disturb" notice to other performance cars, though don't count on it to dissuade the occasional dolt from trying to pick a stoplight fight.

Unique to the Redeye interior are a 220 mph speedometer, and Hellcat Redeye logo on screen startup, key fobs and the black chrome instrument panel. The option sheet offers Laguna leather seats and door panels (well bolstered, comfort-

able, \$1,795), as well as a power sunroof (\$1,995), dual, gunmetal gray stripes

(retro, nicce, \$995) and a harman/kardon premium sound system (you'll need those 900 watts to hear your tunes over all that motor, \$1,595). Also remember to check the option box for Driver's Convenience Group (\$1,095). It includes blind spot and rear cross traffic detection, and you need them.

If you value your license, Hellcat Redeye's 797 horsepower on the street is mainly about bragging rights, not burnouts. But, once you get this car out to a road course or drag strip on an open track day (and if you don't, you don't get this car), you're reminded of the famous Muhammad Ali line — it's not bragging if you can back it up.

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.

