



Tesla pickup

The silver lining dept.

General Motors announced this week that it will be taking five North American plants off line (see page 3), but you know who needs more production capacity? Tesla Motors, whose struggles to keep up with demand for its new Model 3 made headlines. And of course, the electric startup's got more models on the way, including the Model Y, Roadster 2.0 and two trucks: a pickup (above) and a semi.

In fact, the current Tesla Factory in Fremont, Calif., was a former NUMMI plant (New United Motor Manufacturing was jointly operated by GM and Toyota) that Tesla purchased in 2010 for \$42 million. Maybe it's a lark, but hey, the automotive world has seen crazier ideas implemented. The Pontiac Aztek, for one.



The price of the Aston Martin Vanquish Zagato Shooting Brake is \$2million... but only 99 will be made.

Aston Martin's drool-worthy brake

Though the **Aston Martin Vanquish Zagato Shooting Brake** was announced late last year as a limited run, the company recently showed off new photos of the vehicle just this week. The Instagram post was meant to announce that production had started on the vehicle, but mostly served to set automotive mouths drooling, since the run is limited to 99 units. This work-of-art edition adds to the Vanquish model a naturally-aspirated 5.9-liter V12 engine producing 433kW, mated to an eight-speed auto gearbox. Headquartered in Italy since 1919, Zagato is the coachbuilding design firm that partnered with Aston Martin, which is itself the British luxury sports car firm founded in 1913. Starting in the late 1940s under David Brown's guidance, the company began to be known for its posh grand touring cars and, of course, James Bond's iconic **1964 DB-5**. The shooting brake name was coined in the 1890s for horse-drawn wagons transporting hunting parties and their equipment, and now denotes a sleek combination of station wagon and coupe. The style has been revived since GM's 2004 unveiling of the **Chevy Nomad concept wagon**, the **2005 Dodge Magnum station wagon** and **2012 Mercedes Benz CLS-Class Shooting Brake**, and lives on in the new **Porsche Panamera Sport Turismo**.



The 2020 Jeep Gladiator will arrive in time to heat up the midsize pickup market.

Meet Jeep's new pickup

Jeep's highly anticipated pickup was unveiled last Wednesday at the Los Angeles Auto Show, which opened to the public on Nov. 30. The **Gladiator** will be available only as a four-door crew cab, riding on a Wrangler chassis with a wheelbase lengthened to 19.4 inches to accommodate the five-foot bed.

Though it will be the longest vehicle in Jeep's line up when it hits showrooms in early 2019, it will retain the Wrangler's off-road capabilities, including being able to ford 30 inches of water. Which is great when you need to get a load of sheetrock through the woods and across a flooded stream.

The 2020 Gladiator will get its 285 horses and 442 lb.-ft. of torque from a 3.6L V6, with a six-speed manual transmission as standard. (An eight-speed automatic is optional.) With styling similar to the JL Wrangler, the Gladiator will be available in premium soft top or two hard top options.

It will be Jeep's foray into the midsize pickup market led by Toyota Tacoma, with fierce competition from Nissan Frontier, Honda Ridgeline, Chevrolet Colorado and GMC Canyon, not to mention the new Ford Ranger unveiled at this year's Detroit Auto Show. The Gladiator will surely present itself as a rival in the rugged offroad pickup market virtually created by the Ford Raptor.

The Gladiator will be assembled alongside the Wrangler in Toledo, Ohio.



The electric eCOPO Camaro's 700 pounds of batteries create more than 700 horsepower.

GM electrifies its race Camaro

A new trend appears to be brewing in the world of drag racing. General Motors' Bowtie division recently revealed an electric **COPO Camaro**. The acronym stands for Central Office Production Order, the form ingenious Chevy dealers figured out in 1969 they could use to special order Camaros with Corvette engines from GM. Let's just say that, for those who like to race fast Camaros, it caught on in a big way.

The so-called **eCOPO** swaps out the race-prepped gas-powered V-8 for a pair of BorgWarner electric motors plus an 800-volt battery pack that weighs 700 pounds.

The resulting combo makes "more than" 700 horsepower (that's as specific as Chevy is getting for now) and 600 pound-feet, which is sent to the rear wheels through a three-speed automatic transmission. Actual production plans are unknown.

TEST DRIVE

2019 Ford F-150 4x4

Continued from page 1

bins, tie-downs, aluminum tool box, tailgate remote, bed liner, tailgate step, stowable loading ramps and bed extender).

Unlike those of years ago, modern pickups are quite comfortable inside, with few traces of their Spartan roots. Range-topping trim levels like my latest test truck are all that and a bag of chips. The interior is that of a luxury car, behind which happens to be a cargo bed.

However, Ford's approach to controls in the F-150 is — in the tradition of trucks — pretty straight forward. Even when packed with a plethora of bells and

whistles, making system adjustments isn't overly distracting.

The supersized center console looks big enough to hold a bowling ball, while stowage space for smaller items are sprinkled about the cabin.

Rear seat room in SuperCrew models is exceptional. There's ample room for adults to spread out, and when not needed for people, the rear seats fold up and back to the cab wall. The process is one-hand easy, and frees the floor space for everything from a box from a big box store to lounging room for a dog or two.

A crew cab pickup is a big animal. A SuperCrew 4x4 like my test truck



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stretches 145-156.8 inches long, depending on the bed size. The turning radius is wide, and you don't park one so much as moor it. So there's a lot of real estate for the driver to monitor visually. The design of the front windows helps. They dip down near the mirrors for a better look from the tall-in-the-saddle seats.

As for what's behind and alongside, blind spot protection is very useful (covers both truck and trailer, available in packages on Lariat level and up) as is

the bird's-eye view from the 360-degree camera (offered as part of the Technology package on King Ranch level and above).

And staying with the safety theme, newly standard on all models for 2019 is forward collision warning with emergency braking.

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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