



The new Genesis G90 has an imposing new grille.

Genesis retools the G90

The top model in Hyundai's **Genesis** luxury division, the **G90**, undergoes significant updating for the 2020 model year with mostly all-new body panels as well as a large V-shaped grille.

The big rear-wheel-drive luxury sedan still rides on the same platform as before (when it was a Hyundai Equus). Engine choices continue with a twin-turbocharged 3.3-liter V-6 and an optional non-turbo 5.0-liter V-8. All-wheel-drive is also optional. A \$70,000 list price is the likely starting point.



Waymo will be buying a fleet of 62,000 Chrysler Pacifica minivans for its self-driving cab fleet.

Robot taxis in Phoenix?

Look out Uber: Last week, Google's autonomous vehicle division launched its driverless taxi service **Waymo One** in Phoenix, Arizona. The rivalry between ride-hailing service **Uber** and Google's **Waymo** has been bitter, abounding with personnel poaching and lawsuits, one settled only a couple months ago to the tune of \$245 million. Though both companies were founded in the same year (2009), Uber has hit many roadblocks lately on the way to creating a viable autonomous livery service, including being forced to ground its driverless fleet after an autonomous-equipped Volvo XC90 struck and killed a bicyclist in Tempe, Arizona. (It's planning to resume testing in Philadelphia soon.) Though this summer a Waymo vehicle was involved in a non-fatal crash in its hometown of Mountain View, Calif., the state of Arizona had already granted Waymo approval to begin commercial ride-hailing service in the state, and it has been testing self-driving cars in Phoenix since 2017. The new Waymo One service is open to only a few hundred customers who participated in a test program last summer, and the service area is limited to 100 square miles, including the suburbs of Chandler, Gilbert, Mesa and Tempe, with rides supervised by trained human safety drivers.



To make a name for itself, Lynk and Co. will go racing with its 03 model.

Lynk & Co. ramps up to race

What does a company intent on selling its vehicles in Europe and North America need to do to establish its cred?

If that company is **Lynk & Co.**, it goes racing. Word is that the emerging, China-based automaker will enter its 03 sedan (in race-prepped form) in the new World Touring Car Cup series in 2019.



Lynk & Co. will modify its 03 sedan with a 350-hp engine to participate in next year's World Touring Car Cup series in 2019.

Racing is done with it, the Lynk 03's turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine will make about 350 horsepower. Lynk and Co. is expected to begin selling cars in North America by 2020.



Honda's new Passport: smaller than the Pilot and maybe a bit more off-road capable.

Honda's Passport reboot

The nameplate was retired back in the mid-1990s, but Honda apparently believes in second chances. The five-passenger **2020 Passport** resembles the seven-seat Honda Pilot, but the new model is about six inches shorter. Perhaps surprisingly, the Passport gets the Pilot's 280-horsepower, V-6 and nine-speed automatic transmission and not the turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder from the Acura RDX.

The Passport will be available in front- and all-wheel-drive models and in trim levels ranging from somewhat basic to full-on luxury. A Sport model with blacked-out wheels, grille and trim will also be offered. With identical tow ratings, it will be interesting if the Passport's estimated \$3,000-\$4,000 lower base price (it arrives next spring) will cannibalize Pilot sales. However, the Passport is more likely to attract buyers in need of more room than the smaller Honda CR-V provides.

TEST DRIVE

2019 Ram 1500 Rebel

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previous edition had standard Air Lift Suspension. The 2019 edition goes with steel coil springs with a one-inch lift, and the aforementioned Bilstein monotube shocks. Air ride is optional. I've driven Rams with both coil and air suspension, and found little difference in ride quality. The difference is adaptability. The \$1,795 add-on offers five height adjustments, accessed via dash-mounted toggle switch. Ride height can be raised (for greater ground clearance) or lowered (for improved aerodynamics, or just to make it easier to get in and out of).

Speaking of cab access, my test truck was fitted with the optional (\$695) black, tubular side steps. As is frequently the case with side steps and running boards, they're mounted too snugly to the rocker panel, leaving too little room available to be stepped upon. If you have big feet (or worse, big feet in boots), there's only enough real estate available to get your toes on, which limits its value, as an aid

to entry and exit.

Aside from the big 'ol tires, visual cues unique to Rebel include higher stance, blackout trim, fender flares, a bulging, vented hood and a grille that looks like a de-chromed shout out to the 1955 GMC pickup (and if you've ever seen one, you'd know that's a compliment, because that was a one cool truck).

Inside, Rebel call-outs include model specific badging, red stitching on the dash, steering wheel, seats and center console. Seats are a mixture of vinyl and cloth and mildly bolstered. The gear selector is once again an easy to use knob. The center console is large and versatile, in that it can be configured to hold a combination of items, large and small.

Controls are generally easy to access, though your choice of options have a bearing on that. The standard setup Uconnect interface has a 5-inch display screen. In this case, HVAC controls are just below, in a simple, three dial array. Step up to the Uconnect 4 NAV (\$795), and you get



TEST DRIVE this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

SARMORY 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



a bright, 8.4-inch screen on which to view said nav., along with voice command capability, Android Auto and Apple CarPlay compatibility, Bluetooth streaming audio and available, Sirius satellite radio. There's also a Rebel 12 package that gives you a tablet sized, 12-inch touch screen, with associated dials and buttons.

This bundle also includes leather trim upholstery and a 900-watt, 19-speaker harmon-kardon sound system. But opting for either of the larger screen options brings with it a control redesign, in which part of the HVAC controls are standalones, while the rest are absorbed into the touchscreen. So it takes longer to make simple cabin climate adjustments with the big screen setup than it does with the small screen. Not a big deal if you want the features,

just bear in mind that you're trading off one of the traditional virtues of pickups — straight forward switchgear.

Crew cab models offer more rear seat leg room (40.3 inches) than you'll find in most luxury cars. On Quad cabs, that number drops to 35.6 inches, which is big enough for kids, if those in front are tall.

However, if you're more interested in what you carry in back than who, the more compact cab brings with it a longer cargo box — 6'4", compared to 5'7" on Quad Cab models.

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.