

# Tahoe's mad hatter is back

By Melissa Siig, Moonshine Ink

Look around your mudroom or closet or living room. How many hats do you have? If you are like most people, you have a lot. Trucker hats, baseball hats, flat billed hats, you name it – you most likely have one or two or three. And you probably have room for more.

That's what Tahoe's newest hat company, We the Trees, is banking on. Started in 2015 by bigtruck founder Kelsen Thompson, We the Trees takes a mindful approach to headwear. Thompson's goal with his latest endeavor is to help people connect to nature and express themselves, and for him to get back into the business he loves.

Thompson, 35, grew up in Tahoe City and graduated from North Tahoe High School in 2000. He learned to sew from his mother, whom he calls an incredible seamstress, and the first thing he made was a bag for his ice skates. He created his first hat in high school, hand stitching a small truck on the front. One day while he was talking on the phone, Thompson's father, who owned a garbage company advertised simply as a "guy with a big truck," doodled the image of the now iconic bigtruck logo, which features a truck with the bed lifted up – exactly as he would park it in their driveway. Thompson trademarked the logo in 2000.

**Read the whole story**

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# Road Beat: Kia Forte just keeps getting better



The Kia Forte will impress those wanting a compact or compact plus. Photos/Larry Weitzman

**By Larry Weitzman**

Kia is the nation's newest major upstart brand, being in the United States for 24 years with a market share increase in every year since their inauspicious beginning in 1993. Sales for 2016 exceeded 647,000 units, besting another fast-growing upstart, Subaru, which like Kia, manufactures a large portion of their production in the United States.

In the case of the Forte, the assembly plant is neither in the United States nor Korea, but Pesqueria, Mexico, and most powertrain components are also manufactured there as well. While it may not be a favorite ride of our new President

Trump, it is one of my new favorite rides and a new contender for the title of best compact car.

First is the new taut Kia body, obviously, a design shepherded by Kia's CEO and head designer, Peter Schreyer. The body panels are pulled tight from its signature Kia grille rearward. It uses a gorgeous coupe-like window line terminating with a small Hofmeister "kink." It also uses a smooth dip along the lower front of the window line for a bit of character. Because the windshield is so sloped, it is probably longer than it is wide. Check it out and you will find it simply huge as it adds to the Kia's taut design. The only other detail is a lower body mild "V" sculpt. Headlights and taillights are oversized and slick. It all adds up to a simple great looking body which challenges for the looks title in compact cars, now vying with the Honda Civic and Mazda 3 in that category.



### **Specifications**

Price \$22,000 to about \$26,500

### **Engine**

2.0L DOHC, 16 valve direct injected inline four cylinder 164 hp @ 6,200 rpm  
151 lbs.-ft. of torque @ 4,000 rpm

### **Transmission**

Six speed torque converter

automatic

### **Configuration**

Transverse front  
engine/front wheel drive

### **Dimensions**

Wheelbase 106.3 inches

Length 179.5 inches

Width 70.1 inches

Height 56.3 inches

Ground Clearance 5.3 inches

Track (f/r) 61.3/61.8 inches

Cabin volume 96.2 cubic feet

Trunk volume 14.9 cubic feet

Fuel capacity 13.2 gallons

Steering lock to lock 2.96  
turns

Turning circle 34.8 feet

Wheels 17X7 inch alloys

Tires 215/45X17

Weight 2,908/3,029 pounds

### **Performance**

0-60 mph 7.17 seconds

50-70mph 4.07 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 6.14  
seconds

Top speed way beyond sanity

Fuel economy EPA rated at  
25/33/28 mpg

city/highway/combined.

Expect 33 mpg in moderate  
suburban driving and 40 mpg  
on a level highway at legal  
speeds.

Size-wise it's pure compact with dimensions of 180 x 70 x 56 inches (length, width, height) on a 106-inch wheelbase.

My EX tester came with a standard 2.0L direct injected, DOHC, 16 valve inline four that pumps out 164 hp at 6,200 rpm (160 hp with the SULEV version) and a stout 151 pounds of twist at 4,000 rpm. Kia also makes an Atkinson cycle version of this engine which uses multipoint fuel injection that achieves 147 hp at 6,200 rpm and a lesser 132 pounds of twist at 4,500 rpm. It improves fuel economy a bit. More on that later. Coupled to a six-speed auto torque converter cog swapper, this Forte is a high-performance automobile demonstrating its moxie with a 0-60 mph average time of 7.17 seconds. Passing times back up the 0-60 mph time as no fluke in a 50-70 mph simulated pass requiring just 4.07 seconds and the same run up a steep grade only slowing that time by two seconds to 6.14 seconds.

Throttle response is very strong; so much so that this little Kia is fun to drive. Most compacts can't share that attribute. It will surprise most drivers. Fuel economy while rated by the EPA at 25/33/28 mpg city/highway/combined is much better than expected. At a constant 70 mph two-way run on a level highway the Kia averaged 40.4 mpg. In a round trip from Placerville to Carson City the Kia averaged 37 mpg and in a suburban/urban drive to Roseville the Forte averaged 33.7 mpg in moderate to heavier traffic. Overall it should average well over 30 mpg. Considering its level of performance, that is excellent fuel economy. During the 67-mile test run flogging which included over 20 full throttle applications of four to seven seconds, the Forte averaged 28.8 mpg.

With the Atkinson cycle engine EPA ratings go up by about four mpg and it should return at least a couple of more mpg in the same driving. I hope to test one soon to experiences the differences, if any.

Handling is small car smart, perhaps even a little smarter. Suspension is like most other compacts, with MacPherson struts up front and a semi-independent coupled torsion beam system in the rear. Steering is by a reasonably quick electric power rack that is three turns lock to lock and a tight turning

circle of just under 35 feet. Adding to the mix are 17 x 7 inch alloys and serious 215/45 series rubber on a car that tips the scales at between 2,908 to 3,029 pounds depending on equipment.

Needless to say, steering is accurate, the attitude is flat, turn in is crisp and there is great grip, even in the rain. It makes driving even more fun (see comment above) while doing an accelerated tango in the twisties. I'll bet they race these things.

Ride quality is good with a compliant ride over the rough stuff. Where the Kia shines is in the level of quiet or the lack of road, wind and engine noise even with the engine spinning 2,300 rpm at 70 mph. With the hp it has, I would like to see another gear dropping that number to 2,000 rpm for better fuel economy. Might pick up a couple of extra mpgs. Considering its small car 13.2-gallon fuel tank (it seems many small cars have the same fuel capacity. They must share vendors.), a couple of more gallons would improve the ownership experience. Who likes going to the gas station?

Standard safety equipment for this top of the line Forte EX includes all the acronyms, TCS, ABS, VSM, etc., plus at least six airbags. My tester had the \$4,480 Premium package which added the NAV system, emergency braking, Lane departure warning and lane keep assist, rear traffic alert and more. It also included HID lights which were very good on low beam and good on high (halogen). More distance would have been nice, but they do improve your safety at night.

Inside is a standard perforated leather interior. I found the seats comfortable for two-hour stints. A passenger found them a little too firm, but after about an hour in the saddle, he realized that they were more comfortable than he realized, especially after some bolster adjustment. The back seat should be good for two comfortably and three in a pinch (pun intended).

Instrumentation is complete by today's standards, with a big tach and speedo plus a fuel and temp gauge divided by a center info display/trip computer, all tastefully done. The center stack has everything you need and is easy to use. No three-unit college course required. The balance of the interior is done with high quality materials and finishes.

What's the damage? Base price for this top of the line EX is \$21,200, plus \$850 for the train from Mexico. Are there trains that run to and from Mexico? The standard equipment list is long including full power and leather. The aforementioned Premium package which was described above adds \$4,480 to the bill bringing the total damage to \$26,540, which is actually less than most other loaded up compact cars which the Forte actually isn't. By virtue of its 14.9 cubic foot trunk and 96 cubic foot interior puts it in the EPA mid-size category. But the Premium package adds a sunroof which reduces the cabin interior volume to 95 cubic feet missing the mid-size category by one tenth of a cubic foot. If you are thinking compact or compact plus, Kia Forte should be on your short list.

*Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.*

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## **Tahoe yoga studio giving back to community**

Tahoe Yoga Shala has been raising money for area nonprofits since September through two weekly donation based yoga classes.

Donation classes meet on Monday from 3-3:45pm and on Wednesday from 9:30-11am. All are welcome and no one is turned away for lack of donation.

The Monday class with Kacey Davy is focused on yoga philosophy, giving students an opportunity to connect with Sanskrit's timeless sounds through the chanting of the Bhagavad Gita and other selected texts. The Wednesday Ashtanga Level 1 class explores basic yoga postures and breath practices with the Shala owner Laura Josephy.

All donations made in place of Shala membership fees benefit a rotating organization. To date the Shala has collected more than \$2,500 in donations that have benefited the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Mitch Underhill Mountain Fund, Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless, and Sierra Avalanche Center.

During April and May, the Shala will be raising awareness and funds for Firefly Yoga International, a no-profit whose mission is to develop the first international network of yoga teachers trained to provide yoga to trauma survivors at the point of care.

Tahoe Yoga Shala is located at 585 Tahoe Keys Blvd., Suite F1A, South Lake Tahoe.

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## **Whooping cough alert in Carson City, Carson Valley**

An outbreak of whooping cough, or pertussis, in the Carson City and Douglas County areas has been reported by Carson City Health & Human Services.

CCHHS is reporting the outbreak as an isolated event, however, the health department is encouraging families in the community to take preventive measures.

Whooping cough is a very serious respiratory infection caused by the pertussis bacteria. It causes violent coughing you can't stop. Whooping cough is most harmful for young babies and can be deadly.

If you believe that you or your child has signs and symptoms of whooping cough or have questions about the illness, contact your healthcare provider immediately or the health department at 775.283.7220 or [CCHHSinfo@carson.org](mailto:CCHHSinfo@carson.org).

Whooping cough starts with the following symptoms:

- Runny or stuffed-up nose
- Sneezing
- Mild Cough
- A pause in breathing in infants (apnea).

After 1 to 2 weeks, coughing, which can be severe, begins. Children and babies may then begin to develop these more serious problems:

- Coughing, very hard and continual.
- Gasping for breath after a coughing fit. Babies may not cough or make this sound—they may gag and gasp.
- Difficulty breathing, eating, drinking, or sleeping because of coughing fits. These coughing fits happen more at night.
- Turning blue while coughing from lack of oxygen.
- Vomiting after coughing fits.

Coughing fits can last for 10 weeks, and sometimes happen again the next time the child has a respiratory illness.

Whooping cough spreads easily through the air when a person who has whooping cough breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Almost

everyone who is not immune to whooping cough will get sick if exposed to it. A person can spread the disease from the very beginning of the sickness (when she has cold-like symptoms) and for at least two weeks after coughing starts.

The best way to protect children against whooping cough is by having them get the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis shot, also called the DTaP shot. For everyone 11 years of age and older, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the tetanus- diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap) shot.

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## **Poker tables keep decreasing in Nevada**

**By Regina Garcia Cano, Associated Press**

When the Monte Carlo casino closes its eight-table poker room in about a month as part of a \$450 million overhaul, the Las Vegas Strip will be down nearly a quarter of the tables it had a decade ago.

Casinos constantly adjust their floors to meet customer demand. Some casinos have made their poker rooms smaller. Others have eliminated them entirely.

“Casinos added more tables in response to popularity, and once it became less popular, they took away the tables,” said David Schwartz, director of the Center for Gaming Research at the UNLV. The peak of the poker room was 2007.

**Read the whole story**

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# Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Ginger

Ginger is a fun little girl. She is about 2 years old, and very affectionate. She will climb right into your lap and snuggle with you. And so pretty. She has beautiful ginger colored fur and big brown eyes.

Ginger is spayed, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

# Road Beat: Toyota Prius Prime is plugged in



The Prius Prime could be a revolutionary hybrid.  
Photo/Larry Weitzman

**By Larry Weitzman**

Prius Hybrid has been around the United States since 1999. As complex a vehicle as it is, it is one of the most reliable and fail-safe vehicles ever sold in the United States.

Even the batteries are almost bullet-proof, with failures even after 10 years being an extremely rare occurrence. Part of

that is due to the strict control of the battery software. In 2006, Toyota had tested the batteries for 150,000 cycles with no significant loss of efficiency. Amazing.

New for 2017 is a plug-in version of the Prius, called the Prius Prime. Instead of about a 1 kWh Nickel-Metal Hydride battery, the new Prime gets an 8.8 kWh Lithium-ion battery that can give the Prime a real-world EV range of about 22 miles according to some reports. While the combined power output from the 1.8L Atkinson cycle inline four and the Prius' two electric motors is limited to 121 hp, Toyota has not released the standard hp available from the battery that powers the electric motors. Subtracting the 95 hp of the gas engine from the total combined output, it leaves just 26 hp as an EV vehicle. But from its performance as a pure EV and its EV top speed of 84 mph, I suspect this number to be higher, but with a co-efficient of drag of 0.25, 84 mph on 26 hp is possible.

Because the EV portion of the car is fairly low hp, it is possible to get engine assistance even though the battery is in a high state of charge as in pure EV mode, performance is a bit lethargic. But with the gas engine available it performs like a conventional Prius hybrid, but pure EV mode is more readily available and for long periods of time.

In my prior Prius tests I longed for more battery. With this plug-in, that wish has been answered and with judicious modulation of the throttle in normal mode, you can EV the plug-in Prius to your hearts content knowing that you are still driving a Prius Hybrid that has an EPA rating of 133 MPGe (equivalent) in pure electric. MPGe/hybrid MPG is rated at 55/53/54 city/highway/combined. And with its relatively large 11.3-gallon fuel tank, 600 miles might be easy.

During my short 10-mile excursion starting a zero mpg, the Prius was up to 42 mpg on the trip computer and climbing and that including some use of the gas engine during some full

throttle runs. I estimate a 0-60 mph time of about 10 seconds, both engines working. And there is little if any guilt when you stomp the throttle.

In my test drive around Roseville and without a full charge I was still able to EV quite handily accelerating to 45-50 mph on pure electric. But this Prius is so smooth and quiet, about the only way you know if the engine is helping or running is to look at the systems operational depiction on the IP. Otherwise you just don't know. The starting and stopping of the engine is also imperceptible, it's that smooth of an integration.

Ride quality is obviously extremely quiet and it is almost cushy. It's certainly not a car for the track, but you could create a new kind of racing, one that requires both speed and fuel economy, sort of an endurance race. Now that could be interesting. We could call it "hypermiling with speed."

Even with its 265-pound battery, Prius Prime tips the scale at a modest 3,375 pounds. Prime is only 183 inches long, but it is classified as a mid-size car by the EPA. Prius Prime has a spacey look to it, futuristic, if you like. It will be polarizing.

Starting at a shade below \$29,000 for a Prime Plus to about \$34,000 for a loaded Prime Advanced, the Prime is well priced considering that a loaded Prius hybrid stickers for about as much. But then again, a "conventional" Prius does have EPA mileage numbers in the 50 mpg range which the Road Beat easily averaged (54 mpg overall) in our recent test.

*Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.*

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# Poetry and politics with the Indigo Girls

By Kim Wyatt

STATELINE – Indigo Girls Amy Ray and Emily Saliers played a tight 22-song set at Harrah's Lake Tahoe showroom March 24 to a full, devoted house. Lyrically rich songs of self-discovery and political anthems spanning 30 years of songwriting punctuated the intermission-free 90-minute show, and by the end an inspired crowd was on its feet.

The Georgia-based duo showcased a mix of tunes old and new from their folk/rock catalog. Violinist Lyris Hung added spice to a full quiver of stringed instruments: acoustic and electric guitar, banjo, mandolin and dulcimer were switched up in between most songs by guitar wrangler Aron Michalski who seamlessly delivered the right tools at the right time.



The Indigo Girls play to an appreciative crowd March 24 at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. Photo/Lotte Colbert

Almost 30 years after their eponymous breakout "Indigo Girls" Ray and Saliers are still working out their lives in song. There is something comforting about seeing a band that carries on, that shows up, that does its job and we are richer for it, the benefactors of life lessons and heartbreak. The world has been a rough place lately, and the Indigo Girls, wielding focus and sincerity, healed some Tahoe folks with their specific alchemy.

With Ray on the mandolin, the reflective toe-tapper "Yield" from their 2002 release "Become You" kicked off the show, followed by "It's Alright" and "Three Hits," featuring Ray's powerful vocals. Ray's tunes have a harder edge than Saliers', but this only complements their body of work: Ray deals in injustice, Saliers in metaphor and unrequited love—together, they lay it all out there and then make us feel like we're going to be OK.

The Indigo Girls are known for activism—they co-created the nonprofit Honor the Earth with Winona LaDuke—but rather than

banter about their political causes they let the music speak for itself. Ray-penned songs “Go” and “Shame on You” packed spark and power, the latter featuring the crowd-pleasing line, “They say we be looking for illegal immigrants can we check your car/I say you know it’s funny I think we were on the same boat back in 1694.” From their latest album, “One Lost Day” they offered “The Rise of the Black Messiah,” a song Ray wrote about a member of the Angola 3 still in solitary confinement. Just as the weight of the world began to sink in, the Saliers’ tune “Power of Two” made it all a little less scary; although her voice was worn, the harmonies carried the night.

The show ended with “Galileo,” and the audience remained on its feet for a two-song encore of “Share the Moon” and “Closer to Fine.” The mixed crowd—women and men, young and old, and everyone in-between—knew all the words. After a week of political chaos, it was good to be at a singalong. Anytime you need a righteous pick-me-up, the Indigo Girls are there.

*Kim Wyatt is the owner of **Bona Fide Books** in Meyers.*

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## Teen stimulant of choice — smart phones, not drugs

By Matt Richtel, New York Times

Amid an opioid epidemic, the rise of deadly synthetic drugs and the widening legalization of marijuana, a curious bright spot has emerged in the youth drug culture: American teenagers are growing less likely to try or regularly use drugs, including alcohol.

With minor fits and starts, the trend has been building for a

decade, with no clear understanding as to why. Some experts theorize that falling cigarette-smoking rates are cutting into a key gateway to drugs, or that antidrug education campaigns, long a largely failed enterprise, have finally taken hold.

But researchers are starting to ponder an intriguing question: Are teenagers using drugs less in part because they are constantly stimulated and entertained by their computers and phones?

**Read the whole story**

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## **Flooded Black Rock may impact Burning Man**

**By Jenny Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal**

Renee Aldrich and several of her friends heard about the shallow lake that has been sitting out on the Black Rock Desert playa for the past month.

So, naturally they grabbed their kayaks and headed north.

The playa is a giant mud puddle right now thanks to heavy rains that fell in Northern Nevada during January and February. At its deepest, the temporary lake is more than a foot deep, and someone has posted a hand-painted “Nude Beach” wooden sign at the shoreline.

**Read the whole story**