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MAGAZINE

Mercedes-AMG Project ONE

Straight from F1 to street



2018 McLaren 720S

Here come the British

2019 Lamborghini Urus

Finally a Lambo that the whole family can enjoy

Rolls-Royce Phantom VII

The newest pinnacle in luxury





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Publication of Al Badia

Agents Distribution

Lebanon: Al Nasheron Distribution Co. +9611277007 | UAE: Dar Al Hikma, +97142665394 | Bahrain: Al Hilal Corporation, +97317480800 | Jeddah: Alkhazindar Co. +96626838025 | Muscat: United Agency for the media, +96892113295
Qatar: Arabian Establishment for Commerce., +9745518898 | London: General Co. for the distribution, +447818088777 | Jordan: Jordan Distribution Agency Co. +96265358855 | Kuwait: United Distribution Co. +9652412820 | Cairo: Today News Corporation, +20225782700
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Mercedes-AMG Project ONE

Straight from F1 to street



Automobile manufacturers often talk about taking technology parts they've developed for racing purposes and putting that into their road-going cars, whether it's a new engine innovation or a few pieces of body aero. Mercedes-AMG, however, has gone whole hog with the debut of Project ONE — the pièce de résistance of AMG's 50th anniversary celebrations — a two-seater mid-engine concept benefitting from fully-fledged Formula 1 hybrid engineering.

Shown to the world in Frankfurt during the fall at the International Motor Show, development of the vehicle was a collaboration between experts at both Mercedes-AMG High Performance Powertrains and Petronas

Motorsport, based in Brixworth and Brackley, England, respectively. Its purpose is simple: boldly show what is possible, as well as tease how a forthcoming production model may take shape. "The hypercar is the most ambitious project we have every undertaken. It marks yet another pinnacle of the successful, strategic development of Mercedes-AMG towards a performance and sports car brand. Project ONE raises the bar in terms of what is currently technologically feasible and thanks to its combination of efficiency and performance it represents an absolute benchmark. At the same time, Project ONE provides an outlook on how AMG will define driving perfor-

mance in the future," says Tobias Moers, the Head of Management at Mercedes-AMG GmbH.

How many motors?

Not your typical hybrid, the powertrain consists of a turbo 1.6-litre V6 internal combustion engine (ICE) driving the rear wheels and bolstered by a total of four (!) electric motors.

One of them is integrated inside the turbocharger to assist in eliminating turbo lag, and is powered in part via unused energy the exhaust system generates. Another 120-kilowatt unit is attached directly to the ICE, which is capable of spinning up to an F1-approved 11,000 rpm. The remaining pair is hooked up to the





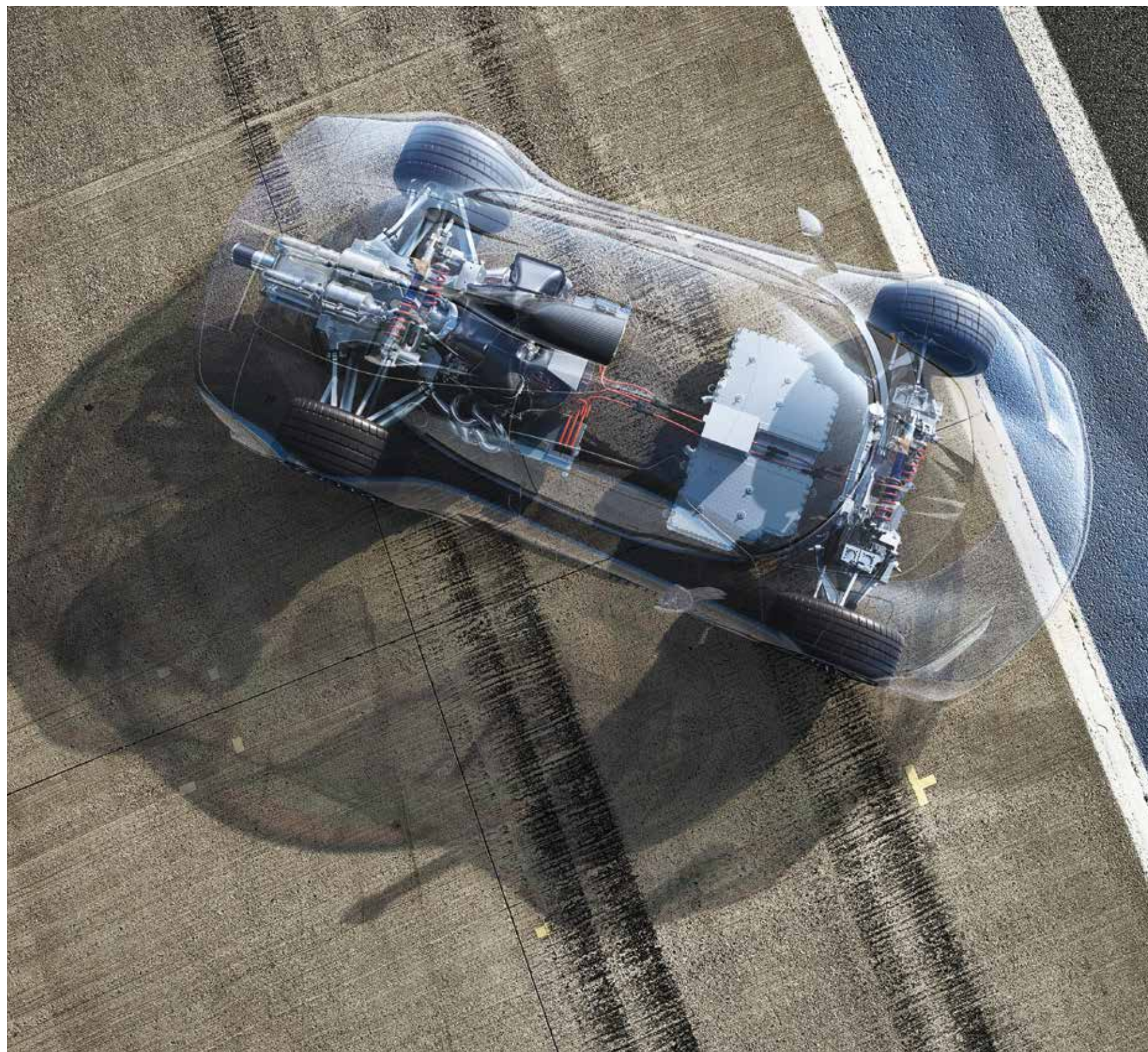
front axle responsible for rotating the front rollers, together effectively forming a torque-vectoring all-wheel drive system. An estimated 80 per cent of braking energy can be recaptured through these two motors and stored in the battery to be utilized during all-electric mode, good for a maximum range of 25 kilometres. Ola Källenius, member of the Daimler AG board of management responsible for group research and Mercedes-Benz Cars development, marvelled at the

achievement.

"The Mercedes-AMG Project ONE is the first Formula 1 car with MOT approval. Our highly efficient hybrid assembly stems from motor racing and the electrically powered front axle generates a fascinating mixture of performance and efficiency. With a system output of over 1,000 horsepower and a top speed beyond 350 km/h this hypercar handles exactly as it looks. It takes your breath away," says Källenius.

The in-house developed a manual eight-speed transmission from scratch specifically for the concept, activated hydraulically and operable in automatic mode or manually using steering wheel mounted shift paddles. As always the case in such applications, lightweighting is the name of the game. The monocoque body is constructed out of high-strength carbon fibre, and the 10-spoke wheels made from forged aluminum with an aerodynamically-shaped carbon fibre semi





cover mounted to optimize airflow, thus lowering the coefficient of drag.

All dressed up

While all the specifications are indeed impressive, the sports car maker wasn't going to craft a product that was all go and no show. Certainly looking the part, the exterior is highlighted by the enormous air front air inlets, roof-mounted air scoop, ground hugging silhouette, towering wing and extendable airfoil and two-part rear diffuser. Not enough? The side door and adjacent panel feature a bright Petronas green paint-

brush design, a signature of the artist who also created the graphics for the Formula 1 racing car.

In staying true to the spirit, the cockpit is minimalist and understated. The F1-style flattened top-and-bottom steering wheel and pedals are fully adjustable for finding a perfect driving position, and the centre tunnel visually separates the two occupants. A "floating" dashboard, two free-standing 10-inch displays and carbon-fibre door panelling complete the racy and modern aesthetic.

Gorden Wagener, Daimler AG chief design officer,

sums it up simply.

"The Mercedes-AMG Project ONE is the hottest and coolest car we have ever designed. It combines our design philosophy of Sensual Purity with the performance of our Formula 1 racing cars and is the perfect embodiment of Performance Luxury," says Wagener. "This hypercar's extreme design marks a milestone in design - there are no lines, and the interior is stripped down to the essentials."



2019 Lamborghini Urus

Finally a Lambo that the whole family can enjoy



As the saying goes, good things often come in threes. Following on the heels of its scissor-door-equipped, V12-powered Aventador supercar and the “baby” Huracan, Lamborghini had big shoes to fill. After many years of speculation, Automobili Lamborghini has just officially launched its third model, the Lamborghini Urus. But don't just call it an SUV. Indeed, Lamborghini calls it the world's first super Sport Utility Vehicle (SSUV). Why? Because they made it possible, as their hashtag says. On a more pragmatic note, one could

also say that it was a strategic decision to limit losing SUV-shopping customers to Range Rover, Bentley, and more. Lamborghini insists that the Urus is no ordinary SUV, but indeed elevates the SUV-segment to a level not previously possible. Judging from its specs and its design, it is certainly very believable. “It is a true Lamborghini in terms of design, performance, driving dynamics and emotion as well as drivable every day in a range of environments,” says Stefano Domenicali, Automobili Lamborghini Chairman and

Chief Executive Officer. “The Urus fits perfectly within the Lamborghini family as a high performance car. It is the culmination of intensive development and passionate skill to create a new breed of bull: a Super SUV that transcends the boundaries of expectations and opens the door to new possibilities, for both our brand and our customers.” Let's take a deeper dive into the bullpen. **Undoubtedly Lamborghini** Lamborghini says that the Urus is named after a large Spanish fighting bull. Its unmistakable styling means it





will be instantly recognisable on the road and is sure to be the hottest new must-have vehicle around.

But because it fits within the Lamborghini family, its styling, albeit a lot more conservative than the cars, might also not be to everyone's tastes. With its sharp creases, deep cuts, and swooping roofline, it is a completely unique design, but also one that may be too loud for everyone. However, this is a Lamborghini after all, and this is what a supercar brand is all about, isn't it?

Look a bit closer and you'll see why the Urus is undoubtedly a Lamborghini. There are design cues inherited from the brand's other iconic models including the 1980's school boy bedroom wall pin-up, the Countach supercar.

From the side profile, it's easy to see that the Urus' wedge-nose fastback design roughly shares a silhouette inspired by its supercar siblings. You'll also see that the designers have paid homage to the LM002 SUV by the design of the Urus' power dome and steeply angular

wheel arches.

Since Lamborghinis are also about extreme proportions, wide and low, the Urus gives the perception of both. Look at it dead-on from front or back and it's clear that the designers have kept this up with the Urus' tight volume proportions and streamlined shape. Yet they insist that there is no trade-off between design and spaciousness.

Impressively, the Urus has been designed to accommodate a person up to 6.73 feet tall up front, and up to 6.23 feet in the rear seats. There is also enough room to transport up to 3 golf bags in the 616-litre luggage compartment. If you're really trying to call on your Urus for its true SUV hauling ability, the rear seatbacks can be folded down in 40/20/40 sections to further broaden the cargo area.

The Lamborghini Tamburo and more

One look inside the cabin and you'll see that the Urus' interior design is totally driver-focused, as in typical

Lamborghini tradition.

Lambo says that the intent is for the driver to feel like a pilot, and that he/she is surrounded by the latest in technology for better vehicle control, safety, and convenience. Of course, as with other Lamborghinis, interior design exclusiveness is also stated by the widest customization possible, and there is plenty of use of the finest leather, aluminium and wood trim.

Other niceties include a vibrant digital cockpit display, ambient lighting, Lamborghini's third generation infotainment system, as well as a 3D B&O advanced sound system.

Finally, to tie in with the "pilot" concept, Lamborghini has created a vehicle control centre, literally mounted in the centre of the vehicle's console. Known as the Lamborghini "Tamburo", it is inspired by aeronautical design and acts as the command and operations hub for the vehicle dynamics settings.

Housed within the Tamburo is the Engine Start/Stop control, the gearshift selector, the ANIMA driving

mode selector (of which there are 6 modes), as well as the EGO mode controls (for individualizing the traction, steering, and suspension settings).

OK, just how fast is it?

3.6 seconds 0-100 km/hr. That's the long and short of it. Lamborghini proudly claims that the "Super" in "Super SUV" also means that the Urus offers true super sports car performance to go with its supercar-inspired good looks.

Some other best-in-class numbers also include a 12.8 second 0-200 km/hr run and a 305 km/hr top speed. Stopping power hasn't been left unchecked either. Thanks to its massive carbon ceramic brakes, 440 mm (17.32 inch) up front and 370 mm (14.57 inch) aft, the Urus stops from 100 km/hr to 0 in an astonishingly short 33.7 metres. To give you some context, this is even shorter than the Lamborghini Gallardo supercar. This is no accident, of course. Lamborghini says that the Urus has been designed and fitted with the biggest

and most powerful production Carbon Ceramic Braking system on the market.

More technical go-fast goodies

Part of the reason for the Urus' best in class figures is its significant use of aluminium. 100 per cent of the body is aluminium, as well as more than 40 per cent of the chassis. With a curb weight of less than 2,200 kg, the Urus comes in at best-in-class for power to weight ratio.

Under the aluminium bonnet is an atomic bomb of an engine. With 650 horsepower, 4.0-litres, 8 cylinders, and twin-turbos, the Urus' engine has the higher specific power for a V8 engine in the SUV/sedan segment.

Torque is rated at 850 Nm (or 627 ft-lbs) and the engineers have tuned it to peak at a low 2,250 rpms to ensure typical SUV usage such as overtaking manoeuvres or when towing.

The turbos are of a central twin-scroll configuration to improve responsiveness, and the engine is also

equipped with direct-injection for the best performance while reducing consumption. As with most V8s these days, a cylinder deactivation system is also standard to improve fuel economy.

Transmission is not a dual-clutch unit, but in fact an 8-speed gearbox with what Lamborghini has dubbed as a "sport torque converter". Evidently this unit accommodates higher starting torque for much better engine response than a conventional torque converter.

Very short low gears also help in the blisteringly quick sprint from 0-100 km/hr. Finally, as with other Lamborghini models, the Urus is also equipped with launch control.

Who will buy it?

Roughly one-third of the Urus' prospective buyers are thought to be current Lamborghini owners who are looking for that second Lambo on their driveway, but one with everyday usability. The company hopes to steal these customers away from the likes of Bentley,





Land Rover, Porsche, and Mercedes-Benz. Until now, there was nothing else in the Lamborghini portfolio that could offer them what they desired. This leaves the other 70 per cent or so of Urus customers, who will be completely new to the Lamborghini brand and are looking for the Lamborghini secret sauce, but without sacrificing on daily usability, ease of driving, and the latest in performance and safety technology.

Final Thoughts

Back in the day when Porsche unveiled plans to produce their Cayenne SUV, Porsche purists were up in arms complaining about the dilution of the brand's sports car ethos. These days, the Macan and Cayenne SUVs comprise of roughly 70 per cent of the manufacturer's sales volume.

There is no doubt that a portion of those profits have

gone into funding more Porsche sports car development. Therefore the enthusiasts should actually be embracing this turn of events rather than opposing it. Lamborghini, also owned by Volkswagen (the same parent company as Porsche) is hoping that lightning



will strike twice. With the Urus SSUV, Automobili Lamborghini is looking to double its production volume. With its low-line coupé styling, a commanding road position, as well as a luxurious cockpit, Lamborghini certainly seems to have a winner on its hands!



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2018 Rolls-Royce Phantom VII

The newest pinnacle in luxury



In the past, expensive used to mean luxury. But no longer is that the case. Luxury items are now all about storytelling. Authenticity, rarity, and the story of the brand must all meld together to create a collage that makes an object or a place worthy of being a true luxury item.

Nowhere is this truer than with luxury automobiles. With advances in technology, and the accompanying mass consumer acceptance of driver aids drastically driving down the price of electronics, even point A-to-B everyday appliance vehicles have been equipped with modern conveniences that would've been reserved for top tier luxury vehicles only a few years ago.

As a result, luxury manufacturers such as Rolls-Royce have had to innovate even more in order to continue to reign supreme in the luxury motoring space.

Luxuriously Phantom Number Eight

In 2016, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars sold 4,011 cars globally, 389 of which were Phantoms. Although the Phantom may only represent 10 per cent of the company's sales, Rolls-Royce is perfectly happy with this proportion as this model represents the pinnacle of its model range - Accessible to only the elite few who want to reward themselves with the ultimate in luxury.

However, the typical Rolls-Royce customer has lately

also become not only more international, but also a lot younger. On the back of a complete range of new cars, the Ghost, the Wraith, the Dawn, and especially the Black Badge equivalents of those models, the company has managed to attract a younger demographic that has an average age in the mid-forties.

This means that despite the Rolls-Royce Phantom having the distinction of the longest-lived model name on the market today (through 7 previous generations starting from 1925), the modern day Phantom patron would not only like to be driven in a Phantom but would also like to drive it.

This means that Rolls-Royce has not only had to design





the latest Phantom as more of a driver's car, but also one with far more gesture and flow. Not an easy task to accomplish while still retaining the previous Phantom's sense of formality.

Rolls-Royce's Director of Design, Giles Taylor, has stated that he is a true believer in something that has timelessness – modern classicism. And that it all comes down to ensuring that Rolls-Royce is an expression of modern classicism to appeal to its customers, both new and more traditional. The new Phantom is designed to do so through its proportions, beauty in lines, and simplicity. But yet, Mr Taylor has drawn inspiration from the Phantoms of the 1930s and 40s, spiritually capturing the gesture and poise of those cars.

The end result is a car that has a great deal of advanced technology, yet exchanging any elaborate bling bling jewellery for a much more luxurious precise, fresh, and optimistic feel. The Phantom VIII certainly elicits the same shock and awe brought about from its predecessor, the first produced under BMW's control of Rolls-Royce. However, this car is almost entirely new.

The Architecture of Luxury

Rolls-Royce's new aluminium spaceframe is actually officially called the "Architecture of Luxury". The 2018 Phantom is the first car to use this platform, which will also be shared with the upcoming high-body (aka Sport Utility Vehicle) Rolls-Royce vehicle, codenamed "Cullinan". Rolls-Royce invested a lot of money into development of the platform, and it has been designed to also accommodate future electrification efforts. Overall, the wheelbase and length of the Phantom shrinks slightly compared to the Phantom VII, allowing the long wheelbase version to avoid the unsightly looking mid-body side marker lights that were legally required in some countries due to the vehicle's length. The slightly shortened dimensions were also done to accommodate avoiding certain vehicle road tax brackets in some countries. Nonetheless, the Phantom remains a mammoth vehicle, which is longer than a Chevrolet Suburban even with the shorter non-extended wheelbase Phantom VIII model.

The Sound of Silence

Those who are lucky enough to ride in the Phantom VIII will undoubtedly enjoy the lengths to which Rolls went to improve refinement. This latest Phantom can boast that it is the quietest car in the world. How does it attain this status? Through efforts such as triple glazing on all windows and around 300 pounds of sound insulation.

While the new bodyshell is both lighter and 30 per cent stiffer than the old one, the 5,840 pound based curb weight is higher than that of the previous model due to much more equipment.

To make the new Phantom discernibly quieter than before, the engineers tested 180 different tire designs before settling on the final choice. In contrast, a typical new car development program normally just goes through 25 of these prototype designs before engineers are satisfied.

After a great deal of testing, the engineers decided on "Silent-Seal" tires, which Rolls-Royce co-developed





with Continental. These use a layer of foam inside to reduce tire noise by up to 9 decibels.

A billionaire's interior complete with an Art Gallery

At first glance, the new Phantom's interior may not look all that advanced compared to something like the latest Mercedes-Benz S-Class Maybach. However, as with the previous car, much of it is deliberately old-fashioned.

The driver still faces three traditional instrument dials, although they're now all virtual / digital LCD dials versus actual needles. And in true Rolls-Royce form, there is nothing as vulgar as a rev counter. Instead, there is a "power reserve" meter. Despite being one of the most expensive production vehicles on the market, the Phantom purposefully still uses rotary mechanical controls for heating and ventilation.

Traditionally, Rolls-Royces have been designed for the back seat occupants forward. But what may really get the company's billionaire patrons' fingers reaching for their chequebooks is what Rolls calls "The Gallery". This is truly one of the main highlights of the Phantom VIII, and there is no other car or manufacturer on the

market, that would be bold enough to try something like this.

Spanning the width of the dashboard, the Gallery is a glass-covered art space that reaches across two-thirds of the dashboard. Apparently, engineering it safely was the single greatest challenge in the development of the new car, since it sits right in the impact zone between the front-seat passengers' airbags and the interior. This striking new interior feature allows owners to individually commission artwork that can be positioned in the hermetically sealed compartment behind the glass dashboard. The Gallery is transformative as it literally turns the vehicle into a rolling art gallery. It's a stage for the Phantom's customers to form their own on-the-road exhibition, and a platform for self-expression.

Rolls-Royce figures that customers driving these cars all have egos and characters that need expressing, so what better way to reward their artistic and creative sides than by sending a message that "this space is for you". For customers lacking creativity, the company will help with inspiration if none is forthcoming. For example, Rolls-Royce has already worked with a

number of artists to create examples of what's possible: Porcelain roses by Nymphenburg, a gold-plated, three-dimensional interpretation of an owner's DNA, or even a stunning piece of fluid metalwork. There are literally unlimited possibilities available with only time, money, and one's imagination being the barriers.

Aside from The Gallery, there are still the requisite special touches in the Phantom such as the coach doors. Notice how they're positioned forward to become a gesture of embrace. Step into the interior and you'll discover that the passenger benches can be tilted to encourage social interaction. Look around and be wowed with the starlight headliner and the new power-folding tray tables built into the back of the front seatbacks. Optional 12-inch displays can also be ordered, as can crystal decanters and cooled glasses made bespoke by Rolls-Royce.

Just to cover all bases

As this is a car review, after all, we should mention that the Phantom's prodigious power is provided by the latest generation 563-hp 6.8-litre twin-turbo V12 paired with a satellite-guided eight-speed automatic transmission and rear-wheel-drive. This represents a

110 horsepower improvement relative to the previous Phantom's naturally aspirated V12 engine, and facilitates a 0-62 mph dash in just 5.3 seconds. But the real eye opener is the 664 lbs-ft of torque available at just 1,700 rpms. Apparently engineers did consider offering all-wheel-drive as well, but discounted it as it was not sufficiently refined for their standards.

In order to achieve the decadent magic carpet ride, the car sits on an aluminium-intensive suspension with electrically disconnecting anti-roll bars front and rear,

as well as high-capacity air springs at each corner. This latest Magnetic Carpet Ride system even uses a stereo camera system to help preset the adaptive dampers for bumps before the car even rolls over them.

And finally, to help with manoeuvrability, rear-axle steering has been fitted to help with parking tasks at low speeds.

Final Thoughts

Like in other Rolls-Royce motor cars, every single interior element in the Phantom has been hand-trimmed. Because it bears the signature of the crafts

people that work at the factory, there is no surprise that driving a Rolls-Royce is a uniquely emotional experience.

Silence is part of this emotional experience because as soon as the doors close, the Phantom driver can ride with no noise pollution. There is a sense of privacy, sanctuary, and the Phantom is a space where one can find inner solace.

It is no wonder then that the Phantom continues to be regarded as the pinnacle status symbol, and the Holy Grail of handcrafted luxury automobiles.



2018 Honda Accord Touring sedan

10 generations going on strong



When Honda first introduced the Accord back in 1976, one has to wonder whether the company thought that the nameplate would span over four decades.

Originally intended as a platform of the smaller Honda Civic, the Accord sold well due to its moderate size and great fuel economy. The Accord has almost the longest-running automotive nameplate in Honda's history, second only to the Honda Civic.

Over nine generations and 42 model years since its introduction, the Accord has arguably become a household name with 13 million units sold in the U.S.A. alone.

All-new from the ground up

With the introduction of the 10th-generation model, virtually everything is new or has been substantially re-engineered.

Let's start with the styling as that is the biggest departure from previous models. Elegant and modern exterior detailing compliments the Accord's new, more dynamic design. The bold and upright front fascia is highlighted by Honda's signature chrome wing front grille positioned above a large main air intake and flanked by available 9-lamp full-LED headlights and

LED fog lights.

The list of major new engineering features and technologies is much too long to state in this review. But here are a few highlights from a performance and safety standpoint.

- 29 per cent ultra-high strength steel content – the highest ever for a mass-produced Honda
- Lighter by 42 pounds, 24 per cent improve in torsional stiffness and 32 per cent improvement in bending stiffness
- 6 per cent lighter chassis
- Laser brazed roof skin





- First use of structural adhesives in Accord
- First application of acoustic spray foam

Honda's designers stayed true to the company's "Man-Maximum-Machine Minimum (MM)" design philosophy, shrinking the Accord's footprint while expanding its interior space. At the same time, the car's physical proportions were adjusted to be more premium and athletic.

This means that the new Accord has a longer wheelbase (+2.16 inches), a lower overall height (-0.59 in.) and wider body (+0.39 in.), wider wheel tracks (+0.20 in. front, +0.79 in. rear), a shortened overall length (-0.39 in.) and a lower, sportier seating position (-1.0 in. front, -0.79 in. rear).

The combined effect of these changes is a more premium look, highlighted by shorter overhangs, a bold front fascia, a long and low hood, and a visual centre of gravity moved closer to the rear wheels.

A new laser brazing process that joins the roof to the body side panels creates a clean exterior appearance with no need for a garnish over the rain channels.

Overall aerodynamic efficiency is improved by approximately 3 per cent, making the 10th generation car the most streamlined Accord yet.

What's under the hood?

Honda's move to 4-cylinder engines across the line-up is a key component of this MM design philosophy. It allowed designers the ability to create a shorter engine

bay while also reducing weight and improving dynamic performance.

At launch, two engines were announced. First, a base 1.5-litre VTEC turbocharged 4-cylinder (as fitted to our test vehicle) that is shared with the Honda CR-V SUV as well as the Civic.

This new 192 horsepower engine generates 260 Nm (192 lbs-ft) of torque and is mated to a Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT). While there is still the requisite slight whine from a CVT unit, there is a pleasant lack of the rubber band-like sensation that plagues most CVT-equipped cars. This combination

of powerplant and transmission delivers ample power, but the CVT does exacerbate engine noise during high power demands when the driver steps on it.

An uplevel turbocharged 2.0-litre 4-cylinder producing 252 horsepower is also available, and exchanges the CVT automatic transmission for a conventional 10-speed automatic transmission. A hybrid version is also available, but will only be launched at a later date. A short-throw 6-speed manual transmission is available for both turbocharged engines in Sport trim.

A technology lovers' cabin

A hushed cabin hasn't historically been a Honda trade-

mark, but the new car is very nicely dampened and muted other than some intrusion when travelling over coarser road surfaces.

Honda's newest infotainment system is a big improvement, and finally includes knobs for tuning and volume adjustment. This is much more user-friendly than before, with an available 8-inch touchscreen featuring vivid, colourful graphics. As with with premium European vehicles, the instrument gauge cluster now features a configurable LCD screen, which is clear and easy to use.

Further enhancements to the infotainment system include more intuitive, smartphone-like features and functionality including customizable app tiles and home-screen shortcuts, along with available Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility and Wi-Fi-enabled over-the-air system updates.

On the safety technology front, commendably, the Honda Sensing suite of advanced safety and driver-assistance features is standard. It includes forward-collision warning, automatic emergency braking, lane-keeping assist, adaptive cruise control, and automatic high beams across the board.

The driver is rewarded with a panoramic forward view that is enabled by its lower cowl and by front roof pillars that are 20 per cent narrower than the previous generation accord. The new soft-touch instrument panel features an ultra-thin profile and three-tier design with a strong upper deck that describes a continuous arc from its outboard section through the side doorsills. Honda says that this gives the cabin a sense of strength and visual continuity. Whatever the marketing-speak may be, the end result is an attractive and modern space to spend clawing away at the daily commute, or on cross-country road trips.

Compared to its predecessor, the new Accord's seats have been moved slightly inward, contributing to improved hip, shoulder and head room. The longer wheelbase also allowed designers to move the second-row seats substantially rearward, giving Accord 1.9 inches of added rear legroom. The inboard positioning of the seats provides for improved freedom of movement and is complimented by longer, wider and more deeply padded arm rests, front and rear.

The driver's seat now has available 12-way power adjustment with height-adjustable lumbar support, and

available new heated and ventilated front seats further enhance passenger comfort.

It may not look like it from the outside, but the trunk is also more spacious than before. However, there are some exposed wires and slightly cheap carpeting.

Final Thoughts

Nimble and adept in the corners, the Accord doesn't feel overtly sporty but has very capable handling and well-controlled body roll. It strikes a happy compromise between family-friendly ride comfort and sporty-enough driving fun.

Honda took a big gamble with its wholesale overhaul introducing the redesigned Accord with a coupe-like silhouette and a lower stance and 4-cylinder-only engines. From far back, the attractive fastback-inspired design looks like it could have even come from a German luxury manufacturer. High praise then, in a market filled with humdrum conservative designs. Although the car market is shrinking every year due to the continued popularity in Sport Utility Vehicles, this latest Accord reaffirms that it continues to be a great choice for sedan enthusiasts in search of an affordable mid-sized family car that is as engaging as it is practical.



2018 Fiat 124 Spider

An amalgamation of the best kind



Like “Brangelina” or “KimYe”, the “Fiata” is a playful way of referring to a powerful celebrity couple. In this case, we’re talking about the Fiat brand pairing up with the fourth-generation iconic Mazda MX-5 resulting in the creation of the unique 124 Spider.

For all the kids reading, Fiat first used the same name for another rear-wheel drive convertible from the 1960s, although the one at that time wasn’t a gussied up Japanese roadster. FCA has done a good job of modifying the exterior enough so it’s not a total clone of the new Miata. Where Mazda’s version is modern and aerodynamic-looking, the 124 is pure retro with

sharp body edges and an overall flatter design.

As they say, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and I behold the front end of the vehicle to be just a tad too busy. Within each headlight housing a three-part signature DRL ring surrounds a projector lamp. Underneath there is a turn signal, and underneath that there is a foglight. A pair of stacked grilles and a huge Fiat badge mounted in the centre of the bumper makes up the rest of the front fascia.

Stylish scorpion

The edgier and slightly quicker grade-topping Abarth trim has a different face than the lower Classica and

Lusso models, wearing a blacked-out lower front apron giving a more aggressive yet cleaner appearance, in my opinion. CarBook tested the mid-tier Lusso sprayed in Bianco Perla (pearl white), which includes larger 17-inch multi-spoke alloy wheels, silver roll bar cover, chrome dual-outlet muffler tips and a classy contrasting A-pillar painted metallic silver. We also had the optional Premium Collection package adding extras such as uprated adaptive auto-levelling LED headlamps.

Conceived in Turin, Italy and built in Hiroshima, the modern 124 pays homage to days past through retrospective styling. Besides the low road-hugging stance,





a long hood with a dual set of bulges called “power domes,” hexagonal mesh in the grille and rectangular taillights evoke memories of a simpler time. Staying true to the original, the top remains cloth and manually operated. Unchanged from the MX-5, the shared soft top is one of the best parts of either vehicle—an ingenious spring-actuated mechanism means opening or closing the unit only requires the use of one hand and about five seconds of time.

Having taken both roadsters out for street drives, I was surprised at the amount of heads that turned when I whizzed by, top down. On a couple of occasions, other motorists shouted verbal praise, probably not knowing what they were seeing.

Lux interior

While the outside may have been changed enough to fool most people, inside is another story. Were it not

for the higher quality materials, like camel-coloured leather-wrapped seating and instrument hood, as well as a Fiat-branded steering wheel and infotainment start screen, the two cabins are basically carbon copies. It makes sense from a cost-savings perspective, but things could have been mixed up a little more. Even the key fob housing is identical.

The similarities don't really carry over to the driving dynamics. For starters, the powerplant is completely different, the Spider opting for a small displacement, force-fed approach. The 1.4-litre MultiAir turbo-charged four cylinder, borrowed from the 500 Abarth, generates 160 horsepower. And with a peak 249 Nm of torque at 3,200 rpm, a lot of the get-up-and-go happens in the lower end, unlike the rev-happy 2.0-litre Skyactiv employed by the Miata making 155 hp and 201 Nm at 4,600 rpm.

Head-to-head

The 124 wins from a performance standpoint by a hair and does so without much pomp and circumstance. The exhaust note is quiet and sounds refined in comparison to its not-so-distant cousin, although I personally enjoy more noise during a blast down a lonely stretch of pavement. Handling is exceptional—give the accelerator a tap going through a tight turn and the rear end swings around to get you pointed in the right direction quickly and smoothly.

There is no problem at all using the roadster in rainy weather, the 205-45-17 summer Bridgestone tires keeping the car planted and in control on slick surfaces. This is a refreshing contrast to some high-output rear-wheel sports cars I've tested where I didn't feel comfortable pushing beyond maybe 35 to 40 per cent of the vehicle's capability under similar conditions.

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2018 Infiniti Q50

Infiniti's sport sedan receives refresh



Four years after the initial launch of Infiniti's luxury sports sedan, the company is giving the Q50 a well-deserved facelift. And the exterior changes differ, depending on whether customers opt for either the Luxe or Sport grades. "Its benchmark performance and athletic styling make it an important cornerstone in our product line. We are excited to get this newest sports sedan in the hands of our fans when it arrives in INFINITI showrooms later this summer," said Infiniti Americas vice president Randy Parker.

Styling updates

Some of the upgrades fall uniformly across all models, like the updated signature double-arch grille that features more texture and detailing in the chrome surround and centre mesh, and slimmer rear LED tail lamps lifted from the Q60.

To separate the two main trim levels, those designed with Sport, which includes the top-of-the-line Red Sport 400, receive accoutrements to increase performance and enhance appearance. The front

bumper contains additional aerodynamic lines, corner splitters and lower, wider side air intakes. The door mirrors are blacked out, and at the rear, a section of dark metallic trim sits between the twin exhaust pipes. Designers have sought to raise the level of refinement inside the Q50, adding authentic, natural wood styled after the 16th century Japanese Urushi painting technique to the dashboard, rather than the usual high gloss veneer commonly seen.



Specially crafted “Kacchu” aluminum accents have been subtly placed, inspired by traditional Japanese Samurai armaments. The instrument cluster is shrouded in double-stitched leather. Further influence from the Q60 is found in the cabin such as a new steering wheel boasting thumb grips and more ergonomically shaped paddle shifters. The “double wave” gauge hood has been reshaped to fit the slightly elongated centre console.

Three upholstery colours are available: Wheat, Graphite and Stone.

Next-level infotainment

The infotainment is controlled by Infiniti's proprietary InTouch system, set up quite differently than those inside most competitors. There are two capacitive touchscreens on the dash, operating similarly to ones

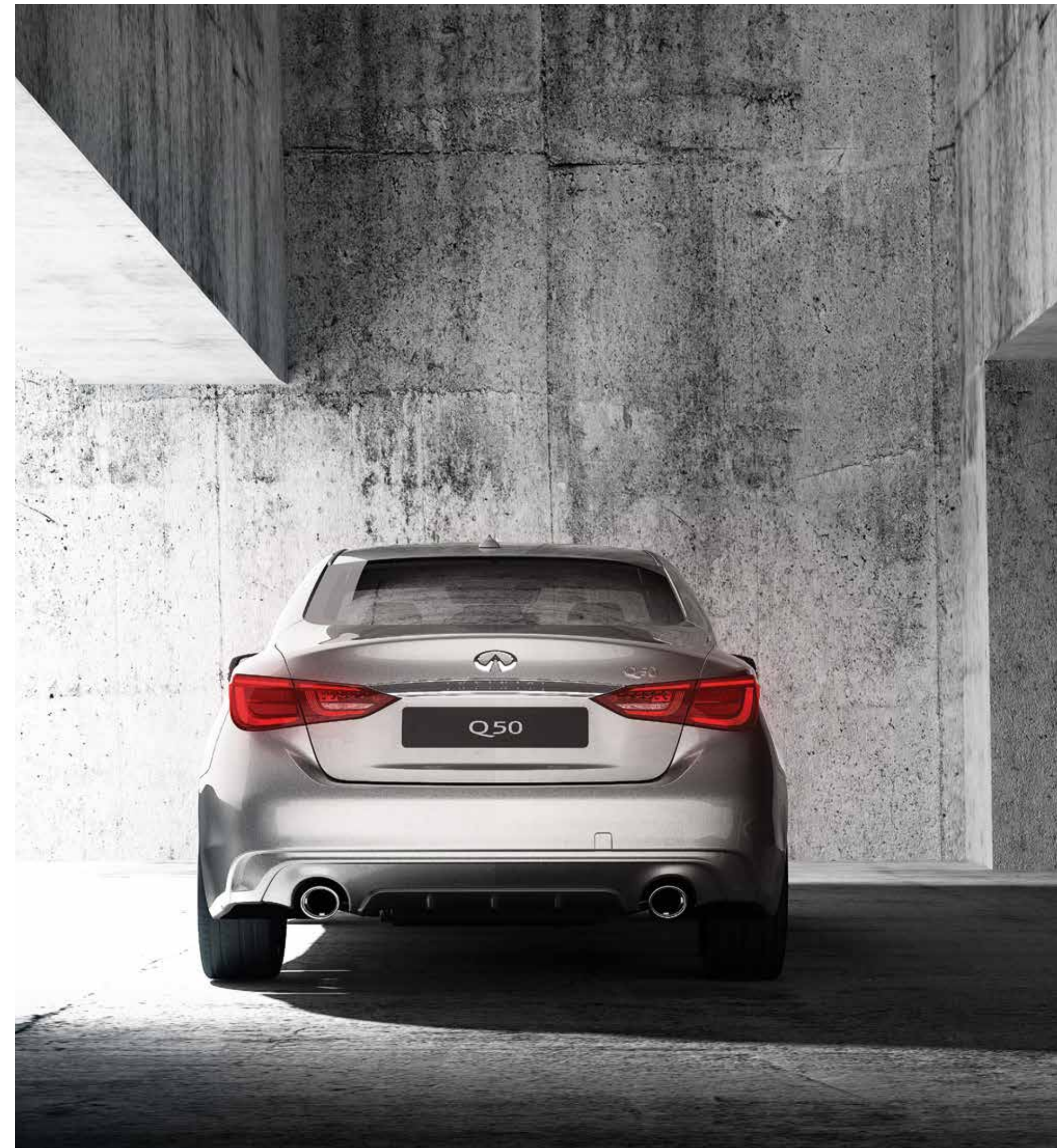
on mobile devices, measuring eight inches above and seven inches below. Vehicle functions and other important information i.e. navigation is displayed up top for easy viewing, and other content underneath. Passengers are also able to tailor the interior to a higher degree than usual for the Q50's class. InTouch can store multiple profiles for different drivers identified via their individual I-key (intelligent key). For example, particularly tall drivers might program the motorized seat to move as far back as possible, and the steering wheel all the way up, to allow easier entry and exit into and out of the car. Afterwards, both return to a custom pre-set position.

Audiophiles would do well to opt for the Bose Performance Series stereo. Advanced staging technology immerses listeners in rich sound pouring

out of 16 speakers strategically placed all around them. Bose CenterPoint 2.0 software guarantees top-notch quality produced from any source be it the radio, CD Player or a user's smartphone.

Familiar performance

The powertrain selection remains the same — consumers are still treated to a large selection of engine offerings. Four to be exact: at the top, a 3.0-litre twin turbo V6 making 400 horsepower, a similarly set up mill with 300 horsepower, a turbo 2.0-litre four-cylinder generating 208 horsepower and 3.5-litre V6 hybrid that has a combined output of 360 horsepower. Approximately 210,000 Q50s have been sold since first being released in 2013. The 2018 model is on sale now.



2018 McLaren 720S

Here come the British



McLaren sports cars have always been known for their technical innovations and stunning designs. This is perhaps no surprise as Bruce McLaren, who was not only a competitive driver, but also an analyst, engineer, and team manager, founded the company.

Although Bruce tragically passed away at the young age of 32 whilst on the race track doing what he loved, his legacy still lives on today.

What's in a name?

The 720S is the second all-new car in McLaren's Super Series, replacing the 650S. Launched at the 2017 Geneva Motor Show, the 720S is faster, lighter, and stiffer in contrast to its 650S predecessor.

The 720S kicks off McLaren's new business plan, which includes a £1-billion investment for 15 new products by 2022. Suffice it to say, there will be much

more excitement to come from the Surrey, England-based manufacturer.

Looking back, McLaren's Super Series has had 3 successful years of road-going and race-spec supercars including the 650S, 675LT, and the 650S GT3. If you're thinking that this is the brand's most comprehensive family of vehicles, you would be correct. Despite its success, with the introduction





of the 720S, the Super Series has had a complete makeover after just these 3 relatively short years. If you aren't familiar with the Super Series, think of it as the core of the McLaren business. Combining extreme performance, luxury, and what the company calls "unparalleled driver involvement", the 720S marks the dawn of a new era as it is the first time that McLaren has replaced a full product family. Thankfully, the 720S' model numbers are delightfully simple to decipher. 720 refers to the car's output of 720PS, or 710 bhp, that is generated from McLaren's new midship-mounted M840T 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 engine. Lighter, faster, and more dynamically capable than its 650S predecessor, the 720S has been designed for improved interior space, technological sophistication, as well as a bold new reinterpretation of the McLaren design language.

More on that engine

The new M480T engine powering the 720S continues the lineage of McLaren's multiple-award-winning, twin-turbocharged V8 engine series. The company ditched its ubiquitous 3.8-litre V8 for this all-new powerplant.

The 720S' 4.0-litre engine generates a maximum 660 force-fed horsepower and up to 770Nm (560 lbs-ft) of torque, delivering truly astonishing levels of performance.

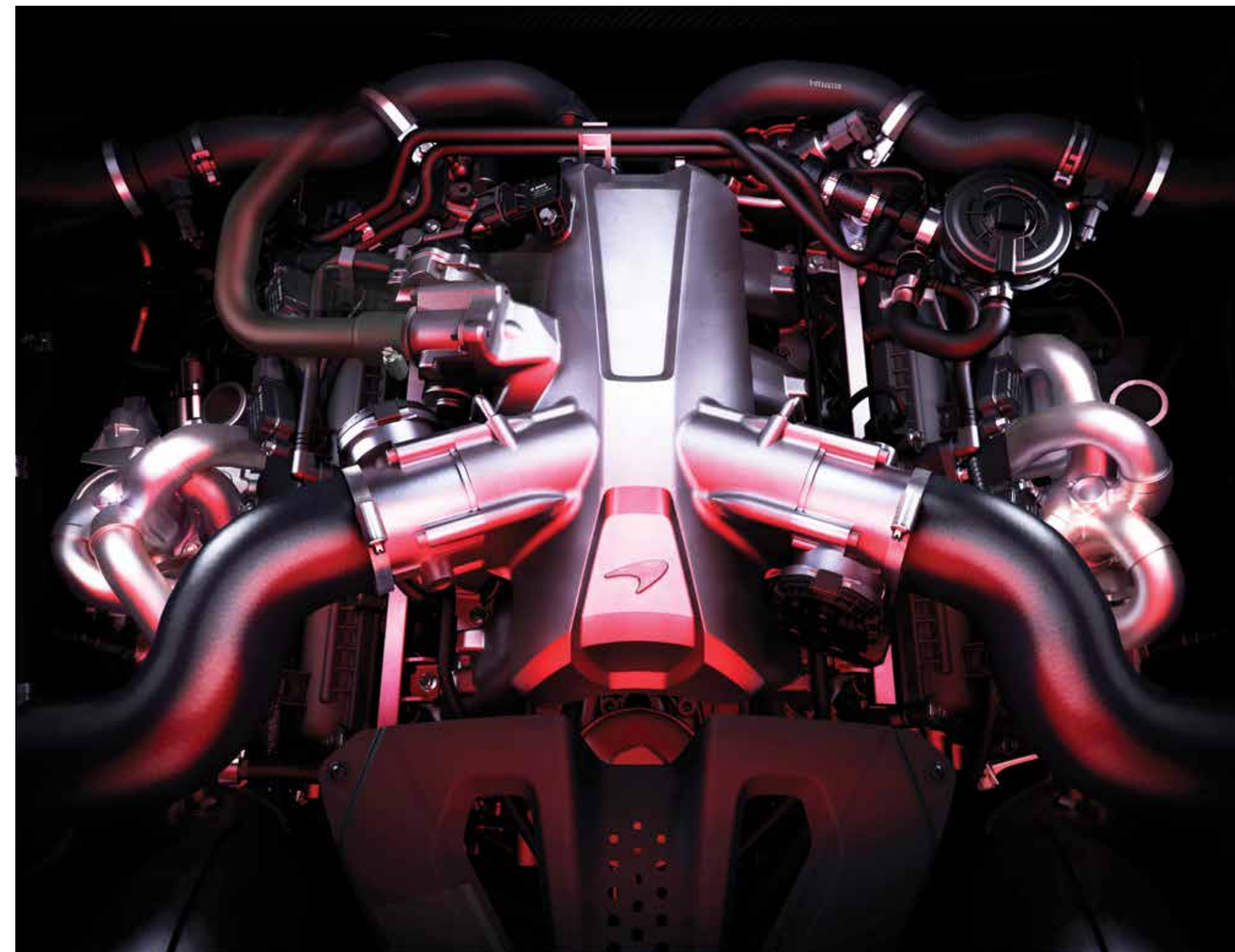
0 to 100km/hr (62mph) flashes by in less than 3 seconds and just 5 seconds later the car has passed the 200km/h (124mph) mark. The 720S tops out well over the magical 200 mph at 212 mph (341km/hr). Braking is equally impressive, with the Super Series car coming to a halt from 200km/hr (124mph) in just 4.6 seconds, covering 117m.

Amazingly, the McLaren 720S still manages to attain 10.7 litres/100km in the official combined fuel economy cycle and CO2 emissions of 249g/km in the New European Driving Cycle (NEDC).

Aerodynamically stunning

Visually, the 720S is a significant stylistic departure from its 650S predecessor. Engineers have incorporated radical active aerodynamics as well as tons of new technology in the cockpit.

Rooted in aerodynamic principles applied to a beautiful form with nothing superfluous about it, the McLaren design ethos has produced some astonishing cars. The new 720S, immediately and undeniably a McLaren, is perhaps the most distinctive and remarkable yet, save for the just announced McLaren Senna.



One of the key points in the design is the absence of radiator intakes on the side of the car. This means that there are no visible engine air intakes to disrupt side profile design of the 720S, allowing for what the company calls a “toned, pinched waistline. Instead, the unique ‘double-skin’ aerodynamic form of the dihedral doors, which channel air to the high-temperature radiators that cool the mid-mounted engine, carries out this function.

Cooling performance is said to have been improved by 15 per cent in comparison to the 650S, despite the apparent removal of the side intakes.

Carbon fibre racing technology in a car you can daily-drive

McLaren’s expertise in carbon fibre structures underpins the construction of the new 720S. In fact, every road car built by the company since the F1 in 1993 has had a carbon fibre chassis. Continuing on with that tradition, the architecture of the 720S is based around a new carbon fibre ‘tub’ and upper structure, the McLaren Monocage II. The layered aluminium bodywork is then “shrink-wrapped” around this tub for a sculpted technical appearance and optimal aerodynamic efficiency.

This technology delivers extreme strength and rigidity in a lightweight structure – the ideal base for any supercar. A range of aluminium alloys are also used

extensively in the chassis, as well as for some body panels.

Supercars have been notoriously challenging to see out of, but not so with the 720S. Due to the inherent structural integrity of the carbon fibre structure, McLaren engineers have been able to create a lean, sculpted body shape that has an instantly recognisable but functional silhouette. The car’s unusually slim windshield A-pillars and glazed see-through C-pillars taper from the roof in a teardrop shape, creating a canopy-like design that offers a jetfighter-like 360-degree feel for its occupants.

Do you see what I see?

Assisting with maximising vision is the 720S’ aggressively contoured front bumper with visually dramatic digital LED headlights integrated within “eye-sockets”. The sockets feature an aero duct to channel air to the low-temperature radiators and cut deep into the front fenders to produce a distinctly predatory gaze. The unit is divided into two portions by sequential indicators that sweep across a thin LED light strip, with LED headlights positioned above and the aero-duct below.

Speaking of these predatory-looking headlamps, the headlamps do not actual swivel like most high-end sports cars. Instead, these Static Adaptive Headlights, optimise headlight performance by changing the

directional light intensity based on steering input. Of the 17 LEDs in each headlight, five provide the base, static beam pattern and the remaining 12 light according to the direction the front of the car is moving in, giving the effect of the beam ‘bending’ and better illuminating that area of road.

Operating from standstill to maximum speed, the McLaren Static Adaptive Headlight technology gives a driver better visibility through corners, increasing comfort and safety. Other road users also benefit from being seen earlier and in greater clarity than would otherwise be the case.

A minimalistic but sophisticated interior

The interior of a McLaren is perhaps the furthest away that one can get from a Lamborghini. Like other supercars, the driver is the centre of the action. However, the cabin of the 720S is sophisticated, luxurious, but yet minimalistic. There is a sense of organic design and flow, similar to the flowing forms of the exterior.

McLaren says that its design engineering expertise has delivered a driver environment that is unparalleled in the supercar section in terms of not just visibility, but also a feeling of space. This perception of space is a result of all of the surfaces having been pushed as far away from the occupants as possible. In addition to

the 150 litres of space under the bonnet, there is an additional 210 litres of space behind the seat backs for two duffel bags or airline carry-on luggage bags.

Driver and passenger sit as standard in sports seats that support and cosset in equal measure – this is a car built for distance-driving as well as short journeys – and of course, owners can choose to replace the standard leather-wrapped sports steering wheel with colour-matched, carbon fibre enhanced or Alcantara options. Perhaps the most exciting part of the 720S’ interior is the Folding Driver Display. Paired with the central infotainment screen, these two high-definition screens together comprise the McLaren Driver Interface, the company’s new and most advanced way of sharing information between the car and the driver.

In Full Display Mode, the Folding Driver Display presents the required array of information on an upright, high-definition TFT panel, with three different layouts and colour variations depending on whether the car is being driven in Comfort, Sport, or Track modes. At either the touch of a button, or automatically if linked by choice to the active dynamics functionality, the display slides down to Slim Display Mode.

In this position, the display rotates around its horizontal axis to provide only the minimum of required information and is displayed in a strip, further improving forward visibility and allowing the driver to place the car even more precisely in a corner.

McLaren says that this is an ideal condition for drivers wanting the minimum of distraction, for example when extending their 720S on a track. No doubt this display also provides a delightful amount of peacocking to other supercar owners when at Cars & Coffee meet-ups.

Final Thoughts

The McLaren 720S fuses supercar visual drama, state-of-the-art technologies, and aerodynamic purity to introduce a new generation of McLaren’s design language. All told, the 720S is the arguably the most aggressive and aerodynamically advanced model to date.



Honda Type-R / The wait is over

Honda has finally released the latest Type R badged Civic.



This track-ready beast is also one of the most powerful models the Japanese manufacturer has ever released - built on a global platform and sold in markets that have never before seen a Honda Type R vehicle, including the United States — pushing out 306 horsepower and 400 Nm of torque.

“The fastest, most powerful Honda ever sold in America, the Type R caps off the incredible success story of our 10th generation Civic lineup,” said Jeff Conrad, senior vice president and general manager of

the Honda Division, American Honda Motor Co., Inc. “We’re happy to inform our U.S. enthusiasts that the long wait for the forbidden fruit of Honda Type R performance is nearly over.”

While we’re on the subject, the Civic Type R (CTR), first teased at last year’s Geneva Motor Show, currently holds the title of the fastest production front-wheel drive vehicle in the world after achieving a lapping record in April 2017 at the famed Nürburgring Nordschliefe racetrack in Germany.

Although based on the hatchback variant of the current 10th generation Civic, it’s clear the CTR is bred for racing with more prominent body aero parts, bigger and wider 20x8.5-inch wheels wrapped in sticky 245/30ZR20 Continental SportContact 6 tires and a towering trunk spoiler. Three exhaust pipes poke out from underneath the rear bumper diffuser. Stopping power is provided by four-piston Brembo front brake calipers mounted onto large cross-drilled rotors. The car sits on a specialty suspension system





capable of continuously adjusting the dampening settings at all four corners using feedback gathered via three integrated G sensors, four suspension stroke sensors and a steering angle sensor. A helical limited slip differential is standard. Drivers have a range of tools available to them inside the vehicle to measure various data. There's throttle and brake application percentage, turbocharger boost pressure and lap time recorder, among many others, displayed on a seven-inch information interface installed inside the instrument cluster.

Under the aluminum hood is a turbocharged 2.0-litre i-VTEC engine responsible for the CTR's tarmac-blazing performance. Mated to a short-throw six-speed manual transmission, rev-matching downshifts can be optionally handled by the computer. Other user-selectable functions include the choice between three dynamic modes, COMFORT, SPORT and +R, tailoring throttle responses for different environments. Stiffness is a key reason why the car is breaking track records, largely due to a significantly reinforced body featuring a generous application of structural adhesive.

Compared to the outgoing Type R, there is a 38 per cent increase in torsional rigidity and 45 per cent gain in bending rigidity. In English, that translates to better steering response and cornering ability, all the while reducing cabin noise and vibration. The new gen is 16 kilograms lighter than before too, thanks to the use of high-strength steel and an aluminum hood. The 2018 CTR is almost entirely built by Honda of the U.K. Manufacturing in Swindon England, with the engine being put together by Honda of America Mfg, in Anna, Ohio.



BMW electrification

BMW all-in for further EV exploration



The BMW Group has made great strides in the area of automobile electrification particularly in the last few years, now holding the title of the world's third-largest manufacturer of electric vehicles and selling over 62,000 units last year alone. The company has confirmed its intentions to continue to invest in the segment with an announcement of a new EV coming in 2021, the iNEXT, as well as the planned expansion of existing plants to handle increased EV output.

"Going forward, the BMW production system will create structures that enable our production facilities to build models with a combustion engine, plug-in hybrid or fully electric drive train at the same time. This will give us unique flexibility and put us in an optimal position on the cost side," said Oliver Zipse, member of the BMW Group board of management. There are already currently nine electrified examples, eight of them plug-in hybrids, rolling out of nine

factories across the globe and many more on the way. In the meantime, here is some additional information on currently available green offerings from the luxury automaker:

BMW 330e

The 330e represents all the great things about the normal 3 Series, merged with eDrive technology. A 65-kilowatt electric motor bolsters a four-cylinder engine producing a total 252 horsepower and 420 Nm





of torque, sent to the rear wheels. A selectable electric-only MAX eDRIVE mode allows the car to travel approximately 40 emission-free kilometers at speeds up to 120 km/h.

BMW 530e

Bigger brother to the vehicle above, the powertrain is similar between the two although the 530e utilizes an all-wheel drive setup perfect for wetter climates like our own. Boasting a big 9.2 kilowatt-hour battery (1.6 larger than the 330e), MAX eDRIVE mode can achieve a slightly higher top speed of 140 km/h. A complete charge using a regular household 120-volt outlet takes approximately seven hours.

BMW 740e/740Le

Whether customers choose the standard or long wheelbase plug-in 7 Series, they will experience a quiet and comfortable ride and simultaneously achieve astounding fuel economy. The 740e/Le may be efficient, but it's certainly no slouch: the combined 326 horsepower and 500 Nm of torque gets both versions of large sedan from 0 to 100 km/h in less than 5.5 seconds.

BMW X5 xDrive40e

Not limiting itself to cars, BMW demonstrates further commitment to a greener portfolio by also electrifying

the X5 crossover. While the shape is different, the concept of mating an electric motor to a TwinPower Turbo gasoline mill remains the same. One feature special to the platform is an intelligent energy management system that works in conjunction with the onboard navigation. When a destination is set, the computer calculates everything from brake energy regeneration to real-time traffic data and determines whether it is possible to travel the entire route on pure electricity.



2017 LA Auto Show

Top three crossover debuts at 2017 LA Auto Show



The City of Angels once again got the jump on other locales for the start of the whirlwind auto show season in late November. This year's spectacle included over 1,000 vehicles on display, 50 of those being debuts seen for the first time either in the country, or globally. Focus continues to shift toward crossovers, which is fitting given it's currently the best selling segment in the industry. We bring you our top three hottest models unveiled at the 2017 Los Angeles Auto Show.

1) 2019 Lincoln Nautilus

If you haven't heard, Lincoln has spent a lot of time and money in shaking up its portfolio to appeal to a younger, hipper audience, all while still maintaining

a reputation for going above and beyond in terms of luxury and convenience. Lincoln CEO Kumar Galhotra elaborated on the subject just prior to the start of the event in California.

"Our philosophy as a brand for several years now has been to create customer experiences that feel warm, human, personally crafted and effortless, and to remove those little annoyances from our customer's everyday lives. These are more than just words — we strive to put that spirit into everything we do. And it's a challenge for a car company, because how do you make a car warm and human?" asked Galhotra.

The answer might lie in the reveal of the 2019

Lincoln Nautilus. This premium utility vehicle is the replacement for the MKX and marks a shift in nomenclature for the nameplate, moving away from a cold alphanumeric system towards meaningful monikers. Robert Parker, director of marketing sales and service described the reboot as an opportune time for a change, explaining, "Nautilus is Latin for sailor, so it fits very nicely with the Continental and Navigator. We find it's easier for consumers to connect with." The Nautilus retains many of the beloved features of its predecessor like Embrace Lighting, where certain exterior and interior lights illuminate sequentially as the driver approaches the SUV, and available lumbar



massage seats constructed under consultation from orthopaedic surgeons.

New items include a completely fresh front fascia highlighted by a slick, conventionally shaped mesh grille rather than the former split-wing unit; and updated driver-assist technologies including lane-centering and evasive steer assist that can automatically manoeuvre the vehicle around another in an attempt to avoid a collision situation. Power comes via a choice of two turbocharged engines, either a standard 2.0-litre producing 245 horsepower or a 2.7 litre making 335 horsepower and 515 Nm of torque, both mated to an eight-speed automatic transmission.

2) 2018 Nissan Kicks

The polarizing Nissan Juke has quietly driven into the sunset to make way for the Kicks, the Japanese automaker's latest stab at the compact crossover segment.





Split into familiar S, SV and SR trim levels, every Kicks is front-wheel drive and receives a 1.6-litre four-cylinder mill rated at 125 horsepower and 156 Nm of torque.

3) 2018 Lexus RX L

Lexus' RX lineup continues to prove a fan favourite, particularly among those looking for the practicality of a crossover combined with a dash of style. The 350 and 450h hybrid should become even more popular now that Toyota's upscale marque is gearing up to produce an extended version capable of squeezing in seating for seven, six if optional captain's chairs are selected.

Designers have stretched out the body an additional 110 millimetres and modified the tailgate opening to accommodate the extra passengers. Access to the third row is granted via a lever that slides the middle seats forward. People at the very back won't suffer any loss of comfort since they will have dedicated air conditioning and cupholders.

Performance wise, the 350L still utilizes a 3.5-litre V6 (although curiously producing 290 horsepower, five less than the regular variant) and the 450hL adding two electric motors to the mix generating a combined 308 horsepower. Look for the former to arrive first in early 2018 and the hybrid shortly after.

"As the gateway to Nissan's adventure-ready sport utility line-up — joining Qashqai, Rogue, Murano, Pathfinder and Armada — Kicks is designed to fit the needs of singles or couples looking for expressive styling, personal technology, smart functionality and advanced safety features," said marketing director Steve Rhind.

All the earmarks of a modern Nissan are present on the shrunken SUV: the signature V-Motion grille,

"boomerang" head and tail lamps and the appearance of a floating roof thanks to contrasting blacked out A, B and C pillars. Rugged wheel arches and a higher stance lend the model some street cred.

Inside, occupants are greeted by what the company calls a "Gliding Wing" dashboard, which is uniquely shaped, covered in black leather and houses a 7-inch Android Auto and Apple CarPlay-friendly infotainment display inset right in the middle.



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NEW WIDE BODY VELAR KIT

Aspire to great heights with our bespoke Velar Custom Body Modifications



Aspire Design have proudly released their bespoke Range Rover Velar Body Kits, the first wide body Velar program on the market. The new Range Rover Velar was introduced early in the year of 2017. The phenomenal SUV is denser than the typical Range Rover Evoque. However, at Aspire, they thought it was time to give the new Velar an upgrade. Their custom kit programs are packed with bespoke and luxury body modifications making their designs extremely niche and innovative for the car industry. At Aspire

the decision was made to enhance the Velar by giving it extra width and stance by adding extended wheel arches and lower door mouldings. Aspire Design have already taken pre-orders to over 30 clients overseas, with keen interest from their existing operating markets such as Hong Kong, USA and Saudi Arabia. They also have a waiting list for new and existing UK consumers looking for that unique finish to enhance their Velar. The new Velar kits made by Aspire are said to be in production by March 2018.

Their proud designs are filled with exclusive upgrades including: The Front Bumper and diffuser, the Daylight Running Lights which they have included in previous body kits. They have exclusive extended wheel arches and lower door mouldings to give the car extra width and to improve the shape of the Velar. The Custom Aspire Front Grill with the Aspire lettering. The Custom Aspire Rear Bumper really gives the Velar a more aggressive look and helps shape up the rear end of the Velar along with the quad exhaust system that

just gives it that meaner edge. Added to this, Aspire have added the Performance exhaust system to their velar design which makes the Diesel engine sound like a V8 Turbo Petrol. The Aspire Velar also includes 2 rear spoilers, these 2 spoilers really give the Velar that Aspire Design identity as it has been used on previous kits and

is a consumer favourite. The exterior modifications also include the 22"/23"/24" Aspire Forged Wheels which can be custom to any Alloy finish.

Aspire also offer 2 different interior finishes, wooden and carbon, they are very bespoke and can be altered to the client's specific needs, with the option of leather

interior upgrades. Aspire offer a Carbon Fibre pack to their designs which allow certain exterior components to be modified to Carbon Fibre versions, giving it a more exclusive look.



THE ALL – NEW 2018 - PEUGEOT 5008

THE FRENCH LION CONTINUES TO ROAR ACROSS THE GCC



The all - new 2018 model Peugeot 5008 SUV has roared into the GCC to reaffirm its position as king of all it surveys and is available now across the entire GCC.

In a new era of SUVs, it is sleek with all the very latest technology; a superb blend of big, bruising SUV with a touring car's elegance and performance. This is where power and refined taste meet without conceding any of the attributes you want and expect in your drive.

Cedric Zayoun, M.D., PSA Groupe GCC reflected;

“In such a highly competitive market, it takes something very special to stand out and that's exactly what the all-new 5008 is. Very special. This is the 3rd Peugeot SUV to be launched in the region and we believe we are breaking new ground for a 7-seater SUV. Customers throughout the GCC are going to be delighted and surprised at the new innovations and of course we at Peugeot are proud to be able to provide them.”

At the front, the feline character of the all- new Peugeot

5008 is underlined by the finish of its chrome winged radiator grille and vertical front-end embellished with wide air intakes. At the rear the aerodynamic shape of its angled back screen enhances its muscular build and the three claw marks of the LED lights, incorporated into the bodywork's black strip, emphasise its unique styling.

Moving inside, it's all about your choice. From soft fabrics with intricate stitch detail to full nappa leather have been carefully chosen to provide durability,

comfort and style.

Everything is geared towards confident driving with heightened thrills thanks to, in part, the Peugeot i-Cockpit*. Discover an intense, intuitive driving experience with integrated controls and a one-touch electrically controlled automatic gearbox. The Pure Tech 1.6 L turbo petrol engine on the 5008 is lighter for greater efficiency. It ensures uniquely enhanced driving pleasure and high levels of performance without any compromise in reliability and sturdiness, along with an EAT6 gearbox with 165 hp. The customisable digital Driver Virtual display and 8” capacity touchscreen allows you to follow useful information without taking your eyes off the road. Via the Mirror Screen feature, your smartphone can connect to the touchscreen and recharges automatically

and wirelessly on the centre console.

The all-new Hill Assist Descent Control feature in the Advanced Grip Control pack, standard on the GT Line, automatically controls and regulates speed down rough inclines, making it perfect for out-of-city drives. This roomy 7 – seater is a perfect blend of SUV with a touring car. The best of both worlds. Configure your new Peugeot 5008 to make sure your passengers are as comfortable as possible. At the rear are three identical, separate and entirely adjustable seats and a third row of two fold-away retractable seats can also be added. The supermarket shop is a cinch with loads of room for shopping and family as well and driving to work may just become the best part of your day. Let the latest generation driving-assistance features support you. These include speed-limit sign recognition with

recommendations, Active Safety Brake with warning of collision risk (Distance Alert), lane departure warning, active blind-spot monitoring, driver attention alert and adaptive cruise control with stop feature. Lastly, a boon in the city, manoeuvring and parking assist systems. Safety must be a priority and the Peugeot 5008 SUV offers first class safety features as standard including a body structure optimised to absorb impact, up to six airbags and ESP. Added to these are the multi-purpose camera at the top of the windscreen, twelve ultrasound sensors, radar and visio park 2 system. They said safe. They meant it. The catlike elegance of the 5008 is seductive: athletic, sporty outline, sleek curves, stylish design and high-end attributes from the GT Line label. City driving, school runs, out-of-city fun; Peugeot just do it so much better than anyone else.



The Bentley Bentayga V8

Performance and precision



Since its introduction, the Bentley Bentayga has defined a new sector and set the luxury SUV benchmark, offering customers the ultimate Grand Touring experience unrestricted by landscape or conditions. The award-winning Bentley model is now available in its most sporting guise to date – the Bentayga V8.

At the heart of the latest Bentayga model is a new-generation 4.0-litre, twin-turbocharged V8 petrol engine which combines immense power with impressive fuel efficiency. The addition of a characteristic V8 burble, stylish twin-quad exhaust pipes and optional carbon-ceramic brakes, reveals more

of the luxury SUV's sporting character.

Sitting at the core of the Bentayga range, the new V8 model fuses exquisite luxury with power, usability and extensive sporting ability. Its responsive performance is fully customisable on demand by the driver through Bentley's Drive Dynamics system, from limousine-like refinement to sporting precision.

Inside, customers will recognise Bentley's unique approach to modern luxury tailoring, with the familiar blend of exquisite handcrafted materials and advanced technologies. New styling features include a wood and hide steering wheel and the introduction of a high-gloss carbon-fibre interior panel finish.

Immense Performance, Impressive Efficiency

At the heart of the new Bentayga V8 sits an all-new 4.0-litre, 32-valve, V8 engine featuring dual twin-scroll turbochargers located inside the 'V' of the engine.

The dynamic unit develops 542 bhp (550 PS) and 568 lb.ft. (770 Nm) of torque, resulting in a top speed of 180 mph (290 km/h) and 0-60 mph in 4.4 seconds (100 km/h in 4.5 seconds).

The class-leading performance of the Bentayga V8 is complemented by a range of 464 miles (746 km), with CO2 emissions of 260 g/km. This refined efficiency (24.8 mpg / 11.4 l/100 km combined) comes, in part,





through the ability of the engine to de-activate four of its eight cylinders in suitable conditions, without compromising the drive. The seamless change happens in just 20 milliseconds, making it imperceptible to customers.

The addition of Stop-Start technology, which can activate at 'near-to-stop' speeds, also contributes to the emissions figure.

This unique blend of power and refinement gives the Bentayga V8 a distinct, unrivalled position in the luxury SUV market.

Striking, Individual Exterior Design

The exterior design of the Bentayga V8 reflects the model's sporting position within the Bentayga family. The shape is defined by the Bentayga's unique muscular, sculptural lines, balancing athleticism with an unmistakable presence on the road. From the four round LED headlamps to the large matrix grille, the Bentayga V8 exudes the Bentley design DNA, while

the overt powerline, large rear haunches and raised ride height reflect the rugged off-road ability of the luxury SUV.

For the first time, optional carbon-ceramic brakes are offered on the Bentayga. The braking system is the largest and most powerful ever fitted to a Bentley, and the largest front brake system available on any production car.

The brake discs measure 440 mm in diameter at the front and 370 mm at the rear, and sit inside enormous Bentley-branded calipers, with 10 pistons at the front. Together these provide a maximum braking torque of 6,000 Nm.

Also introduced on the Bentayga V8 are sporting red brake calipers for the front and rear standard iron brakes. The calipers are painted in special, high-temperature resistant Tornado red paint, and signal strongly the dynamic intent of this performance-oriented Bentayga V8.

In front of these sit a choice of 11 wheel designs, including an all-new 22" five-spoke wheel with black painted and polished finish.

A purposeful black and chrome grille at the front is complemented by Bentley 'twin-quad' exhaust tailpipes at rear, both of which provide a further subtle reminder of the new engine specification.

Sublime, Handcrafted Luxury Interior

The Bentayga V8 continues the Bentley tradition of intricate detailing and fine, handcrafted precision using authentic materials. Customers can specify hand cross-stitching, which highlights the interior styling lines of the seats and door panels, and there is the choice of the Bentayga's four-, five-, or seven-seat configuration, for ultimate versatility.

Three innovative new interior options are offered in the Bentayga V8: a high-gloss carbon-fibre finish replacing traditional veneer surfaces; a wood and hide steering

wheel; and a new rich red leather, Cricket Ball. For the first time in a Bentley, a high-gloss carbon-fibre finish is offered to customers seeking a contemporary, technical feel. Bentley has traditionally offered a matt carbon-fibre surface to replace the veneer on panels including the fascia, centre console and door waistrails, but this is the first time the finish has been offered with a high gloss, which enhances the technical weave. Another first – the wood and hide trimmed steering wheel – can be specified in the Bentayga V8. Uniquely, the new three-spoke, wood and hide trimmed wheel (available in seven different veneer finishes) uses a solid wood base and thus maintains the integrity and

authenticity of interior features offered by Bentley. Cricket Ball leather makes its debut in the Bentayga V8. The evocative new colour is inspired by the traditional and instantly appealing deep chestnut hue of a new cricket ball, and fits perfectly into the inspiring range of 15 interior colours and five colour splits offered by Bentley.

Effortless Bentley Performance, Unrestrained by Climate or Terrain

The Bentayga V8 is available with Bentley Dynamic Ride – the world's first electric active roll control technology that utilises a 48V system. This system instantly counteracts lateral rolling forces when

cornering and ensures maximum tyre contact to deliver class-leading cabin stability, ride comfort and exceptional handling.

Bentley's adaptive and reactive system provides variable torsional resistance, allowing the Bentayga to be both dynamically capable and comfortable for all occupants at all times. The pioneering use of a 48V system results in silent, instantaneous responses to deal with all road surfaces.

The Bentayga V8 offers class-leading ride comfort, steering feel and handling thanks to the partnership of a highly sophisticated chassis and Electronic Stability Control (ESC). In addition to advanced, multi-mode



Traction Control (TCS), the Bentayga also features Hill Descent Control.

Electric Power-Assisted Steering (EPAS) is also featured on the Bentayga. The new system improves feedback to the driver, while providing isolation from steering kick-back both on- and off-road. EPAS also features a variable rack ratio, permitting light and fast steering while manoeuvring at low speeds, as well as a more subdued response for excellent stability at high speeds. The Bentayga offers the widest range of on- and off-road drive settings of any vehicle via Bentley's Drive Dynamics Mode and optional All-Terrain Specification. Up to eight modes (four on- and four off-road) are available, allowing drivers, at the simple turn of a dial, to select the perfect dynamic set-up for any surface or road condition.

All-Terrain Specification allows the customer to select the appropriate vehicle settings for a wide range of off-road surfaces, including Snow & Grass, Dirt & Gravel, Mud & Trail and Sand Dunes. Meanwhile, the Driver Information Panel displays information on pitch, roll, wheel articulation, steering angle, compass bearing and altitude. The Bentayga V8 comes with multi-mode air suspension. The driver has four different modes to choose from: High 2, High 1, Normal and Low. High 2, for example, can be manually selected when tackling more severe off-road surfaces. Customers can also lower

the rear suspension via a switch in the boot, to ease loading and trailer hitching.

Hill Descent Control automatically regulates the vehicle's speed on steep declines, allowing the driver to concentrate fully on steering and obstacles ahead. It can be pre-set at speeds between two and 30 km/h (going in either direction) and works on gradients greater than five per cent.

Innovative Features and Advanced Technologies

A suite of state-of-the-art driver assistance systems and infotainment features designed to enhance safety, comfort and convenience make the Bentayga V8 an innovative, advanced and connected luxury SUV. Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) including Stop & Go, Predictive ACC and Traffic Assist enables the driver to maintain a set distance to the vehicle in front. Predictive ACC uses the navigation data, sensors and cameras to predict upcoming corners, city boundaries and speed-limit changes and can then modify the vehicle speed accordingly, improving both comfort and fuel economy.

In urban environments, there are a number of driver aids available on the Bentayga V8. These systems – such as Traffic Sign Recognition, which detects a wide variety of traffic signs and displays information to the driver; Rear Crossing Traffic Warning, which uses radar

technology to detect crossing traffic when reversing out of a parking space; and Top View, a system which uses four cameras to display an overall picture of the vehicle's surroundings – combine to enhance everyday usability. Park Assist is also available – a system that detects suitable parking spaces (both parallel and perpendicular) before autonomous steering takes over to support parking manoeuvres.

Other innovative systems available include Night Vision, which uses infra-red technology to identify potential obstacles ahead, and a Head-Up Display, which reduces driver distraction and increases safety. The Bentayga's 8" touch screen infotainment system boasts class-leading navigation technology, a 60GB hard drive, and a choice of up to 30 languages. Rear seat passengers benefit from the introduction of the Bentley Entertainment Tablet – a removable 10.2" Android device with 4G, WiFi and Bluetooth for effortless, high-speed on-board connectivity. Customers can choose between three different sound systems for the Bentayga V8: Bentley Standard Audio, Bentley Signature Audio and Naim for Bentley Premium Audio. The latter is the most powerful system in the segment, with 1,950 watts, a network of 18 speakers and super-tweeters for unrivalled recreation of the highest audio frequencies.

Technical Specification



Dubai Duty Free Annual Sales

Soar to Dhs7.05 billion (US\$1.93 billion)



Perfume Sales recorded at Dhs1.1 billion

The New Year began on a high note for Dubai Duty Free with the operation announcing record-breaking sales for 2017 of Dhs7.05 billion (US\$1.93 billion), representing a 5.6% increase over the previous year. The sign that a remarkable year was coming to a close was evident in December when a new monthly sales record of over Dhs801 million (US\$219 million) was achieved. The operation's 34th Anniversary offer of a 25% discount on a wide range of merchandise over three days in December achieved sales of Dhs196 million (US\$54 million).

Reflecting on another memorable year at Dubai Duty Free, Colm McLoughlin, Executive Vice Chairman and CEO said: "We are pleased to announce such a positive year with 2017 marking our 34th year of business. The entire team at Dubai Duty Free has worked hard to provide passengers with a first class shopping experience at both Dubai International and Al Maktoum International and I join our Chairman, H.H. Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, in thanking them for their efforts."

In 2017, the operation recorded a staggering 27.2 million sales transactions which average at 75,000 sales transactions per day, while a total of 73 million units of merchandise were sold.

From a category point of view, Perfumes retained its position as the best-selling category with annual sales

of Dhs1.1 billion (US\$300 million), contributing 16% towards total sales at Dubai Duty Free.

Liquor and Tobacco categories followed with Liquor recording Dhs1.09 billion (US\$298 million) in sales, and Tobacco Dhs690.11 million (US\$189 million), representing an increase of 2% and 19% respectively. Cosmetics jumped to fourth place with sales increasing by 17% to Dhs626 million (US\$172 million) for the year.

Other steep increases were seen in Electronics which rose by 16% to Dhs547 million (US\$150 million), mainly driven by new product launches from the likes



of Apple. Watches rose by 13% to Dhs518 million (US\$142 million), while handbags and small leather sales rose by 16% to Dhs187 million (US\$51 million). Sales in Departures reached over Dhs6.1 billion (US\$1.6 billion), representing 87% of total annual sales while Arrivals sales showed a 3.6% increase over last year and accounted for 10.8% of the total annual sales.

In addition to a remarkable turnover, 2017 provided Dubai Duty Free with another milestones in terms of growth and expansion including the opening of new Perfumes, Cosmetics, Liquor and Tobacco areas in Concourse C to complement the retail area around the Control Tower that opened in the end of 2016, opening of a Bulgari shop in Concourse B, new retail areas for Liquor and Gifts from Dubai in the departures terminal of Al Maktoum International Airport and the opening of a new shop in the Riverland area of the Dubai Parks and Resorts.

From a logistics point of view, Dubai Duty Free has continued to expand its automated warehouse facility and became the first customer worldwide to go live with an upgrade of its Oracle Retail Systems to Oracle Retail Release 16 version in July.

Looking ahead, Dubai Duty Free will continue to maintain its busy events and promotional calendar which includes the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships to be held from 19th February to 3rd March at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Stadium.

TUDOR NORTH FLAG

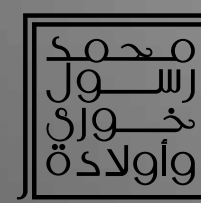
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