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Aston Martin DB11

Now Offered with V8 Engine



Maserati Levante S

The return of a sporty Italian SUV

BMW M550i xDrive Sedan

The quickest 5-Series for now

Porsche 911 GT2 RS

Title of most powerful production Porsche goes to...





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Aston Martin DB11

Now offered with V8 engine



After its successful global introduction in 2016, Aston Martin's definitive GT - the acclaimed DB11 - is now available with a 4.0-litre twin-turbocharged V8 engine. Perfectly complementing the DB11's existing 5.2-litre twin turbocharged V12 engine, this new powerplant has provided the opportunity to reveal more of the DB11's sporting character, while expanding its global appeal with a combination of exceptional performance and improved efficiency.

Producing 510PS (503BHP) and 675Nm of torque,

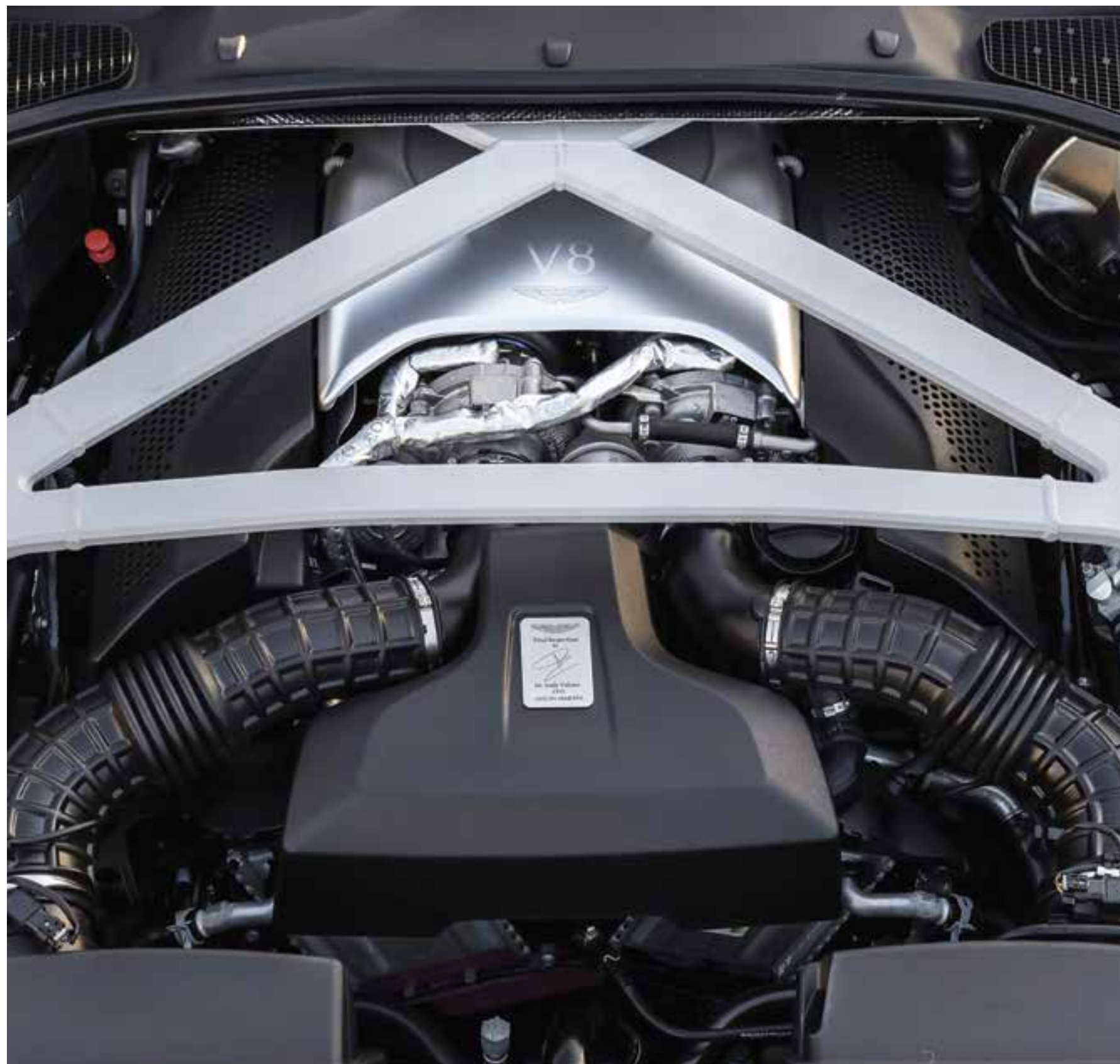
the V8 engine's potency is beyond question, propelling the DB11 from 0-62mph in just 4.0sec and on to a top speed of 187mph. This exceptional performance is matched by impressive efficiency: CO2 emissions of 230g/km1 and an EU Combined fuel economy figure of 28.5mpg1. This new V8 derivative brings further significant benefits in markets where car taxation policy is structured around engine capacity, such as China. Aston Martin Chief Technical Officer, Max Szwarz, commented: "As an engineer I find the DB11 a fasci-

inating car. One with great depth of character and ability. Of course the V12-engined variant is an icon - an ultimate, if you like, but the V8 is very much its own car. One with a distinct and carefully crafted character that's truly seductive. It has been hugely rewarding to put our stamp on this new engine - both in the way it sounds and performs - and to use its impressive attributes as the impetus to reveal a little more of the DB11's sporting character.

"To be able to offer not one, but two exceptional GT

DB11 now available with choice of twin-turbocharged 4.0-litre V8 or 5.2-litre V12 engines
New V8 delivers 503bhp and 675Nm with a CO2 figure of 230g/km1





cars is terrific for Aston Martin and our customers. I'm particularly proud that this car is the first to receive an engine supplied by our technical partner, Mercedes-AMG. Not least because thanks to the nature of our relationship with AMG we have been given complete freedom to tailor this exceptional power unit so that it meets the particular needs and demands of an Aston Martin."

The inherent qualities of this light, compact and

characterful power unit make it the ideal choice to sit alongside the existing V12 engine. Aston Martin's engineering team has tailored the V8 engine perfectly for its application in the DB11 with bespoke air intake, exhaust and wet sump lubrication systems. Electronic calibration of the V8 engine has included creating new ECU software and reprogramming the engine and throttle mapping to ensure it possesses the all-important feel and sound for which Aston Martins

are renowned.

With its rich reserves of effortless performance, the V12-engined DB11 already fulfills the role of consummate high-performance luxury Grand Tourer. This provided the ideal opportunity to explore the more dynamic side of the DB11's character and capabilities with the V8-engine option.

To this end Aston Martin engineers designed new engine mounts, which together with the bespoke, slim-





line wet sump system enables the V8 to be mounted as low as possible for an optimised centre-of-gravity. The V8 engine is also lighter and more compact than the V12, which contributes to a saving of 115kg and a kerbweight of 1760kg.

With more of that mass centred within the wheelbase, the V8-engined DB11 has an increased sense of agility - a quality that has been fully exploited with detailed revisions to the suspension bushing, geometry, anti-roll bars, springs, dampers and ESP software. By carefully crafting its dynamic character to be distinct from that of the V12, the V8 appeals to those customers drawn to a refined and comfortable GT with a more sporting

bias.

There are subtle visual differences between the two variants that include a unique alloy wheel finish, dark headlamp bezels and a pair of bonnet vents instead of the quartet featured on the V12. These vents come in a choice of black or titanium-finish mesh, again different from that fitted to the twelve-cylinder variant. Inside, both V8 and V12 customers have the same standard equipment levels and the same extensive choice of colour and trim options. They can also elect to enhance the specification of their car via the same Option Packs and Designer Specification packages, plus a suite of Q by Aston Martin - Collection options.

Aston Martin President and CEO, Dr Andy Palmer said of the V8-engined DB11: "The DB11 is the most complete and sophisticated car Aston Martin has ever made. Now, with this new V8 engine option we have broadened its appeal by offering a car that will bring the DB11 to more customers around the world while still blessed with the exceptional performance and memorable character that sets Aston Martin apart from its rivals. Having driven the car during its development phase, it is not just the engine that has changed the character of the car, but also the resulting dynamic changes to create a remarkable GT car with its own distinct personality from the V12."

Elegance is an attitude

Simon Baker
Simon Baker

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Porsche 911 GT2 RS

Title of most powerful production Porsche goes to...



Simply put: the new Porsche 911 GT2 RS is the most powerful production model Porsche has built — ever. Just how powerful? The German automaker broke records at the famed Nürburgring Nordschleife circuit in the fall for the road-approved sports car category, clocking a blazing time of 6 minutes and 47.3 seconds, which is even faster than anticipated.

“At the start of the development process, we set ourselves a lap time target for the GT2 RS of less than

7 minutes and 5 seconds. The credit for beating this target by 17.7 seconds goes to our development engineers, mechanics and drivers, who demonstrated an exceptionally strong team performance. This result makes it official: The GT2 RS is not only the most powerful, but also the fastest 911 ever built,” says Frank-Steffen Walliser, motorsport and GT cars vice president, in a news release.

GT product line director Andreas Preuninger points

out that the achievement was not a one-off, as the feat was accomplished twice, in two different cars piloted by two different drivers.

“It’s not just the record time achieved by the GT2 RS that demonstrates the vehicle’s class, but also its consistent performance in every lap. We’re particularly proud of the fact that this was achieved with two different vehicles and two different drivers, as this underlines the GT2 RS’s ability to reproduce this record result over





and over again," says Preuninger.

European reveal

The 911 GT2 RS first debuted late last summer during the Goodwood Festival of Speed in England. Not just sitting pretty on display, the vehicle participated in the famous twisty 1.16-mile hill climb giving visitors a glimpse of the impressive piece of road-legal machinery.

Let's start with its specifications: under the hood beats a biturbo 3.8-litre flat six motor churning out an incredible 700 horsepower and 750 Nm of torque.

That's a full 80 horsepower and 50 Nm of torque more than the outgoing model. This upgraded setup is good for reaching a top speed of 340 km/h. The list of improvements includes larger turbochargers, an additional cooling system and a titanium exhaust weighing seven kilograms less.

Mated to the fire-breathing mill is a customized version of the company's seven-speed double-clutch Dop-

pelkupplung (PDK) transmission designed to allow power transfer with uninterrupted traction, essential for helping get the RS from 0 to 100 km/h in a scant 2.8 seconds.

On rails

Like any Porsche, the handling department is just as polished as the engine bay. The vehicle features rear axle steering and wheels wrapped in wide ultra high performance tires, 265/35/20 at the front and 325/30/21 rear. Available Porsche Stability Management is specifically tuned for the application to maintain stability even at the limit. There are sensors constantly and carefully measuring factors such as direction, speed, yaw velocity and lateral acceleration to calculate the precise travel direction, then using that information to initiate braking on individual wheels. In other words, smart stuff.

The GT2 RS has taken the classic lines of the 911 and turned it up several notches, incorporating aggressive

track-inspired functional aesthetics. Just look at those massive air intakes on the front bumper, wheel housings and behind the doors. A towering wing sits above the trunk and the hood is crafted out of carbon-fibre reinforced plastic (CFRP), the sides left unpainted to show off the gorgeous weave. Other weight-reducing items are the magnesium roof and the colourful Porsche Ceramic Composite Brakes peeking out from behind the wheel spokes.

Customers have an opportunity to shed an additional 30 kilograms by purchasing the optional Weissach package. The roof, anti-roll bars and axle coupling rods are made from CFRP rather than conventional metals, and the wheels magnesium reducing both gross and undesirable upsprung weight.

Business cabin

Although sparse for the purposes of keeping things light, the interior is purposeful and utilizes plenty of red Alcantara, black leather and carbon fibre. Gearshift



paddles are mounted to the racy steering wheel, and passengers are held tight in gorgeous full bucket seats. As with all modern 911s, the latest Porsche Communication Management infotainment system centered on a gorgeous high-resolution 12-inch monitor that accepts smartphone-esque touch gestures.

Fancy some merch to go with the new ride? A special Porsche Design 911 GT2 RS Chronograph has been crafted by the subsidiary of the luxury manufacturer exclusively for owners. The watch houses Porsche Design's first in-house made clock movement that took three years to develop. Made of lightweight titanium, the calibre 01.200 includes a flyback function, a load-path-optimised movement bridge and an official COSC certificate of authenticity.

The new Porsche 911 GT2 RS is on sale now for a cool AED 950,000.

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BMW M550i xDrive Sedan

The quickest -5Series for now



In order to survive in the automobile industry today, manufacturers have had to diversify and find niche markets (and audiences) like never before. This extra segmenting has resulted in the creation of Lexus' F division expanding to F Sport models, as well as the addition of BMW's "M Performance" variants. BMW M's chief executive Frank van Meel has said that pure M models have to satisfy rigorous criteria to be considered full blown M models. And thus these pure M models will remain limited to just a few key lines. These pure M models are also said to have to truly fulfil BMW's motorsports philosophy. Enter BMW's M Performance models, offering sporty

performance without necessarily being as track-ready as the pure M cars. Moreover, these "M performance" cars also help to bridge a price gap between standard BMW models and the full-fat M cars.

What is it?

OK, so the M550i is not quite the full blown BMW M5, but there is certainly no reason to sell it short. Think of it as an extremely competent 5-Series with unlimited everyday usability and comfort. There is no mistaking that this M550i has been sharpened to be much sportier, more burly, and made on the track for everyday use. It sits slightly lower, with its Adaptive M suspension at

a 0.4-inch lower ride height than a standard 5 Series. There are also automatically adjusting anti-roll bars specific to just this model. The reputation of the 5 Series has always been that it has been an understated European mid-sized sedan that is a jack-of-all-trades. The M550i carries on that tradition in helping you complete your everyday mundane tasks. However, lean on the loud pedal with your right foot and it's highly engaging enough to encourage you to take the longer way home. Part of this winning formula is thanks to what is under the bonnet. Currently the only V8 powered 5 Series currently available for sale (till the M5 arrives), the





M550i is fitted with basically the same aluminum-block V8 that powered the previous generation F10 550i.

There are two twin-scroll turbochargers, variable intake-valve lift, the ubiquitous Double VANOS system, and direct injection. Power is now at 456 hp at 6,000 rpm, and peak torque of 480 lb-ft (651Nm) at a delightfully low 1,800 rpm. This is 121 more respective horses than the turbocharged six-cylinder 540i.

How quick is it?

Zero to 60 mph flashes by in just 3.9 seconds, or roughly almost a full second quicker than the 540i.

Thanks to better traction and reduced weight, the M550i is actually even slightly faster (by around two-tenths of a second) than the previous generation F10 M5.

Speaking of traction, xDrive all-wheel-drive is standard on all M550i models. M performance engineers have

also equipped the M550i with launch control, allowing you to rev the engine to 3,000 rpm when you perform a brake torque. Despite the addition of xDrive, the M550i is about 100 pounds lighter than the rear-wheel-drive-only F10 M5.

Okay, there isn't a double-clutch transmission on the M550i, but that reduces weight, costs, complexity, and the eight-speed autobox is very quick. At full throttle, it clicks off very positive and satisfying gear changes, keeping the engine revs up and exhaust noises to levels you would expect. Downshift with the steering-mounted flappy pedals and the autobox also rev matches perfectly each and every time.

Jack-of-all-trades

It's hard to believe that the very first E28 M5 was introduced back in 1985, which many believe invented the sports sedan segment.

Consumer tastes have changed over the years, and

more and more buyers still want the look and feel of a sports sedan but without any compromises to tech and convenience gadgets, luxury, or ride quality.

This seventh generation 5 Series is blessed with an advanced chassis management system that allows the M550i to be a bit of a strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

In Comfort mode, incidentally the default setting, the suspension is plush, the steering effort light, and the engine hushed. The eight-speed automatic transmission is suitably creamy in its shifts, and the M550i is a wonderful long distance cruiser that just eats up motorway miles.

In Sport and even Sport+ mode, the ride is much less plush, at least on rougher roads, but by no means harsh. This is where BMW's experience in chassis engineering shines. Body roll is minimal, and there is just enough to let you know what is going on at each



corner of the vehicle.

Like the transmission, xDrive has also been tuned for each mode, distributing torque as the situation demands, intelligently and with a rear-wheel-drive bias.

Final thoughts

The M550i's exterior modifications are subtle. There is a small rear spoiler, satin finished trim pieces on the front fender vents, mirrors, grille surrounds. Look closer and you'll also see blue-painted brake callipers featuring M badging. If you're looking for a car that shouts "look at me, I'm special", the M550i may be too discreet.

However, since 2012, BMW has managed to shift over 70,000 M performance vehicles worldwide. The truth is in the sales numbers and there is no doubt that the M550i will do well...at least until perhaps that M5 arrives.

Lexus RX350L

“L” as in even more space than before



When the fourth generation Lexus RX SUV first made its debut at the 2015 New York International Auto Show, it stunned the world with its design.

Sticking with a recipe that had proven so successful, Lexus engineers designed the RX to be a luxury crossover, combining the flexibility of a sport utility vehicle with the driving comfort of a luxury sedan, all wrapped in an elegant and sophisticated package.

Two years later, you might wonder how the top-selling Lexus RX can get even better, albeit not necessarily tremendously more innovative. The short answer is to make more of it, literally.

The all-new 2018 RX 350L, now featuring three rows, made its World Premiere at the 2017 Los Angeles Auto Show.

What's under the bonnet?

Power comes from an upgraded direct-injection 3.5-litre V6 engine delivering 290 hp and mated with

an 8-speed automatic transmission. A hybrid RX450h also continues to be available with Lexus Hybrid Drive. Combined with the electric motors, the three-row RX450hL offers up 308 hp while offering even lower fuel consumption and emissions.

To further improve driving performance as well as feedback to the driver, the RX350L is available with Adaptive Variable Suspension. This system controls the damping force of the shock absorbers at each individual wheel in response to road surface conditions and driver inputs. For example, when cornering, the damping is firmed up to help reduce body roll. Combined with the newly available F Sport configuration, the RX is elevated with a sporty image that has never been available before.

As on the two-row RX 350, the RX 350L is available with standard Dynamic Torque Control AWD. Under normal cruising conditions, the system engages front-

wheel drive to help reduce fuel consumption.

Continuously taking input from various sensors (such as wheel speed, engine RPM, steering angle, throttle opening angle and yaw rate), Dynamic Torque Control AWD actively governs torque distribution to the rear wheels using an electromagnetically controlled coupling in the rear differential. When the vehicle is accelerating, the system automatically shifts to AWD to help prevent front-wheel slippage. While cruising, the system reverts to FWD, and when sensors detect wheel slippage, it can vary front to rear torque distribution from 100:0 to 50:50.

More of the same and then some

Like its shorter / original RX, the longer RX-L shares the same platform but with a body that is slightly longer and styled slightly different from the B-pillars onwards. It's perhaps not necessarily more seductive or dynamic looking, but still retains enough styling





attributes that loyal RX guests love about the vehicle. The RX-L makes a distinctively powerful visual statement at first glance with its front end highlighted by Lexus' signature spindle grille with a chrome-plated border and Bi-LED headlights. Triple L-shape-LED headlamps are optionally available as a premium extra. Through the mastery of vehicle packaging, Lexus extended the body length 110 mm (4.3 inches). Presumably to ease construction and to cut down on production and development costs, the wheelbase for both the regular and extended length RX's remains unchanged.

At the rear, the RX350L uses a steeper tailgate window angle than on the two-row models – ensuring good headroom for third-row passengers and greater cargo room behind the third row than competitors offer. The RX-L models maintain the blacked-out C-pillars for a floating-roof effect.

Inside, as befits the Lexus brand name, the new RX's cabin is one of comfort and luxury. A large 12.3 inch infotainment system monitor takes centre stage and the shift lever has been moved away from the front of the instrument panel to optimize operability to create more space for the driver. A large, available heads-up display is also optionally available.

The standard seven-seat version uses a 60/40 split

bench-type seat. Access to the third row is made easy with the touch of a lever that slides the second seat forward. Lexus designed the third row of the RX-L models to offer the same comfort and luxury as in the middle row. The positioning of the second row is actually slightly higher than the third row, creating more foot room for rear passengers.

The third row seats are fully power operated, though not the fastest to rise or drop. Folding the seats down takes about 14 seconds of button holding, and raising them up takes about another 17 seconds. This is accomplished via buttons in the cargo area or on the passenger-side door.

For those looking for more even more of a luxurious executive seating feel, there is also an available six-seat configuration featuring second-row captain's chairs that make third-row ingress/egress easier with "walkin" convenience.

Regardless of which package you choose, thanks to its longer cargo floor area behind its third row than competitors offer, the RX-L exceeds their cargo capacity. In fact, this is counter-intuitively the true value of occasional-use three-row crossovers like the RX-L. Not in those extra third row seats, but indeed in the extra cargo space available when the third row is folded down.

To keep things fresh and comfortable for all passengers, a trizone climate control system gives third-row passengers separate rear air conditioning and dedicated vents, and for convenience.

Lexus' novel way of opening the power tailgate also carries over on the RX-L. One just has to place a hand near the Lexus emblem to open or close the tailgate.

Safety

In the 2018 three-row RX L models, the full-length side curtain airbags cover all three rows.

The Lexus Safety System+ that is standard for most markets includes Pre-Collision System (PCS) and Pedestrian Detection, Lane Departure Alert (LDA) with Steering Assist, Intelligent High Beam (IHB) and All-Speed Dynamic Radar Cruise Control. Blind Spot Monitor (BSM) with Intuitive Parking Assist and Cross-Traffic Braking is available.

Closing Thoughts

Slotting neatly in between the standard RX and the trucky (and much more expensive) GX or LX SUVs, it is likely that Lexus will convince thousands of buyers to make the financial jump to the RX350L. Despite the smallish size of the third row seats, the RX-L remains a sound vehicle and carries over much of what has made it a success four generations strong.



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Range Rover Velar

Style Dynamism like never seen before from Land Rover



Almost half a century later, Land Rover thinks that their spirit of innovation will result in future success once again with the introduction of the fourth member of the Range Rover family, the Range Rover Velar.

What's in a name?

Since 1948, Land Rover has been manufacturing 4x4s. However even as far back as 1951, the Rover Company, the originator of the Land Rover marque, was experimenting with a larger model than the Land Rover Series.

The idea lay dormant until 1966, when engineers Spen King and Bashford set out to design a new model. The intention was to take the Land Rover utility vehicles more upmarket than their military or humble farmyard roots. When they needed to hide the true identity of the 26 pre-production Range Rovers, they chose the name "Velar", derived from the Latin word "velare", meaning to veil or cover.

Thus the Velar company was registered in London and produced pre-production prototype vehicles that were

built between 1967 and 1970. Most of these Velar pre-production vehicles have actually been accounted for and have even survived with some preservation. Little did King and Bashford realize that years later, their actions would eventually spawn into the profitable luxury sport utility vehicle category that is what it is today.

Form over function

The Range Rover Velar is truly the SUV of the moment. While its bloodline is unmistakably Range





Rover with its floating roof and unbroken waistline, it also prioritizes some form over function.

Styling is one of this vehicle's biggest draws and there is no doubt that it is a design-led vehicle. The sloping roofline does cut into some rear headroom, but boy does it look fantastic.

The Velar is also the first Land Rover model to receive flush door handles that pop open when touched, then closed when the vehicle is on the move. With a drag co-efficient of just 0.32, thanks in part to those motorised flush door handles, the Velar is the most aerodynamic Range Rover yet. Don't be surprised if you'll see these door handles on other Range Rover models in the future, such as the next generation Evoque.

Whereas Land Rover's "Discovery" models are focused

on the active, rougher-terrain lifestyle and family orientation portions of the ever-crowded luxury SUV market, the Range Rover Velar emphasises elegance, sophistication, on-road performance, and ride quality. Range Rover says that the minimalistic interior design is the product of "reductionism". Hidden until lit controls are supposed to offer up an uncluttered environment and add to the calming effect of the interior. Despite the lower price of the Velar when compared to the Range Rover Sport, the materials are similar in weight and quality to those of the pricier Range Rovers.

A stunning interior

The styling highlights continue in the interior. One step into the cabin and you'll understand why.

With its three-screen setup and minimalist interior design, the Velar moves the Range Rover brand up a notch with a level of tactility and technology that we've never seen on a Land Rover product before. All but the entry-level 'S' get three screens as standard. There's a 12.3-inch display ahead of the driver just like you'll find on the Range Rover, and Land Rover's new Touch Pro Duo System which consists of a 10-inch touchscreen in the middle of the dash. When you get in and touch the starter button, the screen tilts forwards as much 30 degrees and it looks very smart as it does its business. Below it is a 10-inch display where the buttons would normally be on the fascia.

Powertrain and chassis options

The Range Rover Velar and the Jaguar F-Pace are both

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kissing cousins, created from a clean-sheet designed based on JLR's lightweight aluminium architecture. This construction consists of approximately 80 per cent aluminium, with the rest being primarily composed of magnesium and steel. The LED headlamps are reportedly the smallest units fitted to a Land Rover product yet, and are part of the recipe in keeping the overall curb weight of the vehicle down.

The Velar is offered with three engines. A 2.0-litre turbocharged 247hp petrol inline-four cylinder, a 180hp 2.0-litre turbodiesel four-cylinder, and finally a 380hp supercharged 3.0-litre V6 petrol engine. Unsurprisingly, these engine choices are similar to those offered on the Jaguar F-Pace.

Land Rover claims a speedy 0-60mph run of only 5.3 seconds when equipped with the supercharged V6.

As with other Range Rovers, air suspension is available on the Velar. Four-cylinder models utilize steel coil springs, while the V6 Velars get air springs as standard. Land Rover's familiar Terrain Response 2 traction control system is fitted to the Velar, while an electronically control locking rear differential is optional.

Since Land Rover expect that most of the Range Rover Velar's clientele will likely have less rugged pursuits



than the Discovery's clientele, there is no low-range 4WD transfer case available.

Final Thoughts

With its name a nod to Land Rover's heritage, the Velar is a luxurious high-tech SUV with eye-catching looks that truly make it stand out from the herd.

Despite its omission of a low-range 4WD gearbox, the Velar is adept enough off the beaten path for its target customers.

Where it will spend most of its time is on the road, garnering a lot of envious glances from other motorists.

Despite its tapered roofline resulting in some com-

promises, there is still a class-leading 34 cubic feet of storage space behind the second-row seats.

And therefore the Velar's greatest trick is perhaps that it doesn't sacrifice too much practicality on the altar of style.

Mercedes-Benz C300 Wagon 4MATIC

Return of the wagon



Following a long delay after a fourth-gen version of the Mercedes-Benz C-Class wagon was initially shown to the public back in 2016, it has finally arrived to market: the 2018 C300 Wagon.

“The new C-Class Wagon is not only extremely practical thanks to its once again enlarged, variable load compartment. With innovative lightweight construction and its state-of-the-art technical features it also strikes out in new directions in this segment with regard to safety, efficiency and comfort. Worldwide

we are the first to offer a comfortable air suspension in this segment. And both men and women drivers enjoy noticeably more driving pleasure,” says Thomas Weber, member of the Daimler AG Board of Management.

Growing gains

Bigger and bolder than ever before, the gorgeous vehicle has striking bodylines. If you’ve seen the sedan variant, the story is much the same save for, of course, the tail section. Compared to the outgoing model, the 2018 has grown its wheelbase by 80 millimetres (now

2,840 mm in total), overall length 96 mm (4,702 mm) and width 40 mm (1,810 mm). The result is that rear passengers gain quite a bit of extra legroom, and increased headroom to boot.

In terms of cargo size, the news is good as well. There is 490 litres of space behind the rear seats, or if you fold them down, 1,510 litres, an improvement of five and 10 litres, respectively. The back bench is also more versatile, featuring a 40:20:40 split instead of the previous 60:40, meaning two people can still be seated comfort-





ably in the rear while the middle section is folded down to accommodate things like skis or furniture.

The upscale interior is classic Mercedes-Benz, again similar to the one found in the standard C-Class. A neat addition is the touchpad interface built into the hand rest on the centre console. Like a smartphone, the unit accepts finger gestures and is easy to operate thanks to the ergonomic placement. The head-up display is a nice touch allowing drivers to read the current speed, navigations instructions and other important messages without having to take their eyes off the road.

Under the skin

Available in a number of engine configurations, which change depending on the sales region, we tested the scrappy 241-horsepower 2.0-litre variant. The modest

mill feels just fine pushing the German family car around, helped by 367 Nm of torque generated at a low 1,300 rpm and the fact that 49 per cent of the shell is constructed out of lightweight aluminum. While not fast per se, acceleration from the boosted four cylinder is buttery smooth and even produces a faint but pleasant exhaust note.

Handling is, as usual, on point, the wagon sitting on a sporty steel suspension setup. All members of the C-Class family are equipped with an electromechanical Direct-Steer system — it combines speed-sensitive servo assistance and a steering ratio that changes with the given steering angle so feedback is tight and responsive. Furthermore, power steering assistance provided by the rack-and-pinion steering gear is controlled as needed,

thereby upping efficiency. And, as mentioned above, the C-Class may have an optional AIRMATIC air suspension bundled in for the first time.

The 2018 Mercedes-Benz C300 Wagon is proof that practicality does not have to come at the cost of performance and style. For prospective customers who can wait a little longer, a refreshed 2019 model was just recently announced during the middle of this year's international automotive show circuit. Updates include never-before-offered MULTIBEAM LED headlamps, made up of 84 individually controllable quick-reaction LED bulbs in each housing, and a fully digital 12.3-inch high-resolution instrument cluster capable of showing turn-by-turn navigation.



Volkswagen Atlas

The weight of a brand's success resting square on its shoulders



It comes as no surprise that Volkswagen brand head, Herbert Diess, has been working hard these days to earn his keep. Since the German automaker's diesel emissions scandal, the Volkswagen brand has suffered a lot worldwide.

However, over a year and a half since VW agreed to settle by paying record amounts of fines, the most recent batch of new VW models have been very promising.

What's in a name?

Enter the 2018 Volkswagen Atlas, representing a new chapter in the VW story, especially in the USA. Built in Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA, the seven-passenger Atlas promises to draw much more positive attention to the brand in the crowded family SUV segment.

Technically, the "Atlas" is the third VW named after a Greek titan, and for those of you who don't know, Atlas held up the sky. An appropriate name then for the first VW seven-passenger SUV, but also appropriate for the fact that the company has a lot resting on the shoulders of this model.

Volkswagen actually managed to keep the final name very close to its chest, as rumours suggested that "Teramont" was one of the final choices. But Volkswagen's American dealers felt that name wouldn't jive with its audience. After all, "Tiguan" and "Touareg" took a while to catch on.

Since the North American market is one of the major hotspots for any auto manufacturer, it would make sense that playing into this territory with an easier-

to-pronounce American-style name would be a smart idea.

Exterior

The Atlas is just what you'd expect in the minimalist VW way. It's stylish, and almost brutish, with its chunky North American-like lines. Unlike the soft curves penned by many of its competitors, the Atlas is much more in-your-face distinctive.

Based on Volkswagen's modular MQB (Modular Transverse Matrix) architecture, the Atlas takes on many of its design cues from the CrossBlue concept, first revealed in 2013. Unlike Volkswagen's oddball-sized first-generation Tiguan and Touareg, the Atlas' dimensions make it easy to define for buyers. It is within millimetres of its main rivals such as the Toyota



Highlander and the Mazda CX-9.

The Atlas sits at 198.3 inches long, 78.3 inches wide, and 70.0 inches high. In other words, it's one of the largest Volkswagen models on sale today. Despite its muscular and modern design, it still offers a low coefficient of drag of 0.34.

All Atlas models feature full LED front lighting, including high and low beams, Daytime Running Lights, turn signals, and side marker lights. Higher end models also include standard LED taillights.

Family hauling fun

So far the gamble has seemed to have paid off with the Atlas' demand outstripping supply, at least temporarily, and the manufacturing plant in Tennessee churning units out to meet this demand.

But it's easy to see why. Two adults fit very comfortably

in the Atlas' third row with room for luggage behind them. Fold down the third row, and the cargo area is absolutely cavernous. Total passenger volume is a humongous 153.7 cubic feet, and the standard second-row bench has a 14-degree backrest recline function and a 7.7-inch sliding range for maximum comfort. Since this is a family vehicle, VW engineers have also created an innovative folding mechanism that enables the second row bench to tilt and slide forward, even with child seats in place.

To keep all passengers happy, even base model Atlas models have two-zone climate control (first row and second/third row) along with a second-row control panel for rear passengers. Higher end trims are fitted with the three-zone Climatronic automatic climate control system.

Technology and Safety

There is no shortage of entertainment system options with the Atlas. However, the signature unit was developed through collaboration between Fender, the legendary amplification experts, and Panasonic. This top-of-the-range unit was specifically designed for the Atlas' passengers to feel as if they are in a live performance, regardless of which row of seats they're sitting in within the vehicle.

A 480 watt, 12-channel amp delivers sound throughout via 12 speakers, including a centre channel speaker, woofers in each door, first and second-row tweeters, two wide-frequency speakers, and a subwoofer in the third row.

The Atlas is also fitted with Volkswagen's latest MIB II infotainment system, with a maximum touchscreen-



size of 8.0 inches. Inputs for this headunit are family vehicle friendly with four USB ports, Bluetooth audio, and live traffic-enabled GPS navigation.

Like the rest of the VW line-up, the Atlas has a wide array of active and passive safety systems including six airbags, and a network of electronic safety systems such as radar-guided cruise control, blindspot detection, and Electronic Stability Control. The Atlas is also the only vehicle in its class to offer Automatic Post-Collision Braking, which builds on the premise that a collision is rarely a single action but rather a series of events that follows the initial impact.

This system essentially applies the brakes when a primary collision is detected by the airbag sensors, helping to reduce residual kinetic energy and therefore reducing the chance of further damage.

How does it drive?

With the MQB chassis architecture boasting a large percentage of high-strength hot-formed steel as well as modern construction techniques, the Atlas' chassis manages to remain lightweight. This is quite evident as despite its physical size, the Atlas drives much smaller than it actually is.

The turning circle is a tight 38.06 feet, and the steering wheel turns from lock-to-lock in 2.76 rotations. The electronically-assisted power steering system is too light to call it sporty, but it feels precise and quick enough, albeit a bit lifeless. Then again, the Atlas is for hauling kids and cargo, and not for track-use.

The four wheel strut-based independent suspension, with a multilink arrangement out back, absorbs most bumps with stride. The ride is also relatively quiet,

smooth, and compliant, even on rough surfaces.

Power comes from the choice of two engines. A 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder with 235 hp and 258 lb-ft of torque (from 1,600 rpms), or a 3.6-litre VR6 direct-injection six-cylinder engine. Our test car was equipped with the latter, which produces 276 hp and 266 lb-ft of torque (from 2,760 rpms). The VR6 would be our recommended engine of choice, especially if one is towing up to the Atlas' max towing capacity of 5,000 lbs.

With either engine, power is sent through an eight-speed automatic transmission, then through all four wheels via VW's 4Motion all-wheel-drive system.

This latest generation 4Motion system features Active Control, allowing the driver to select specific vehicle profiles based on driving conditions.



There are four settings: Onroad, Snow, Offroad, and Custom Offroad. These alter operating parameters for drive systems like the engine, transmission, steering and Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC), as well as traction-assistance systems like Hill Descent Assist and Hill Start Assist. The singular user interface is highly intuitive, comprising both a rotary knob and a push-button. Turning the knob engages the various drive modes, while pushing the button triggers a pop-up menu on the screen of the infotainment system, allowing the driver to fine tune each mode.

Final Thoughts

Volkswagen may have taken its sweet time in bringing a seven-passenger SUV to market, but it has clearly identified the targets it needs to make a dent in the segment.



Maserati Levante S

The return of a sporty Italian SUV



The list of SUVs I've driven that ended up putting a silly grin on my face afterwards is a pretty exclusive one. The most recent entry? Maserati's Levante S, the brand's first entry into the segment, first introduced last year.

Some may ask why the luxury automaker is venturing into crossover territory, and Porsche may be the best answer to that question. Its best selling models are not the 911s and Caymans, but rather the Macans and Cayenne utility vehicles, respectively. And so, Maserati

is placing bets on this creation to produce similar results.

Family roots

Stylistically, the Levante -named after "a warm Mediterranean wind that can change from mild to gale force in an instant" - is really just a bigger, off-road-ier version of the Ghibli executive sedan upon which the small SUV is based. It looks like nothing else in its class with its sliver headlights, big grille anchored by the trident emblem and a grinning mesh air intake

spanning the width of the front bumper.

Each front fender is embellished with a succession of three small silver ducts, and more trident badges are affixed to each of the rear quarter panels. Bright red brake calipers latched onto cross-drilled brake rotors peeking out behind big five-spoke wheels. The back end may be the tamest part of the vehicle featuring an understated roof spoiler and quad exhaust pipes.

In contrast to its ready-to-pounce appearance, our tester was sprayed a subdued Grigio Maratea (dark





grey) metallic colour. Open the doors, though, and your eyes are treated to a sea of “sumptuous” red leather covering almost all the interior panels and seating surfaces. Anything that isn’t is finished in either black leather, aluminum or carbon fibre instead.

It’s all in the sound

I’m truly a sucker for noise, and the Levante scratches my itch in all the right places. The engine, a 3.0-litre twin-turbocharged V6, fires up giving only a hint of its true aural potential. Manufactured by Ferrari, the mill produces 430 horsepower and 580 Nm of torque at a low 1,750 rpm.

Running parallel along the eight-speed automatic shifter is a series of buttons: M for manual shifting, I.C.E. (Increased Control and Efficiency), Sport and

Off-road, all fairly self-explanatory. Tapping Sport makes throttle response more aggressive, as well as opening up a set of pneumatic exhaust bypass valves that make the vehicle sound like a full-on racecar. Every shift results all sorts of pops and burbles coming out of the muffler, which is as addictive as it is gleefully obnoxious.

Not only can the Levante rocket from 0 to 100 km/h in 5.2 seconds, it can also go where other luxury pseudo-SUVs dare not. I had the chance to enter a small purpose-built off-road course consisting of muddy hills, big divots, small logs and other fun stuff and the standard intelligent Q4 all-wheel drive made getting through barely a challenge. An air suspension system and set of electronically controlled shock

absorbers, automatically adjusted appropriately while in off-road mode, are both standard.

Fresh features

New for the 2018 model year is the addition of a Nerissimo Edition that basically dips the entire exterior in a black colour. The dark paint is set off by contrasting Black Chrome trim found on the upper part of the grille frame and Trident, side air vents, badging and alloy wheels. As a final touch, even the fog light rings have been blacked out.

It may come as a surprise that Maserati is actually a subsidiary of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA), and the Levante is assembled at FCA’s Mirafiori factory in Turin, Italy. The standard trim starts at AED 345,450, and the more powerful S at AED 387,450.



Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV

Introducing the first 100 per cent electric 4WD PHEV



After watching other markets have their (efficient) fun, Canada officially welcomes the 2018 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV.

The Japanese automaker says this model — which originally debuted in 2013 — is currently the world's best selling plug-in hybrid electric SUV, and as we experienced at a recent product launch, the vehicle certainly offers a few things not seen in this segment before.

Future inspiration

“The Outlander PHEV is the most significant launch in the history of our company in Canada. It represents

a halo for our brand, and the direction [we're] is going in SUVs,” says Don Ulmer, product planning senior manager.

“It's the only PHEV to offer S-AWC (Super All-Wheel Control, the name of Mitsubishi's full-time four-wheel drive system), it has DC Quick Charging, something common on pure EVs but not so much plug-in hybrids, and a 10 year or 160,000 kilometre battery warranty. But, of all the things we talk about, if there's one thing you should take away, is that it's the only PHEV out there with 100 per cent electric four-wheel drive,” says Ulmer.

Indeed, the crossover boasts quite a unique setup. Two 80-horsepower electric motors, mounted at the front and rear axles and powered by a 12 kilowatt-hour battery, work in tandem providing instant-on, lossless 4WD due to the absence of a connecting shaft. A 2.0-litre four-cylinder internal combustion engine (ICE) under the hood, producing 117 horsepower sent to the front wheels, gives an additional kick as required.

Hybrid system

The green Outlander cycles between three driving modes that change depending on the road and load conditions. EV mode is the default, where the electric





motors do all the work and is capable of yielding a maximum 35 kilometre emissions-free range. They are also the primary propulsion source in Series Hybrid mode, activating while climbing an incline for example, with the gasoline mill playing the role of generator. The third mode is Parallel Hybrid, where the compact SUV is driven primarily via the ICE such as on the highway when speeds reach in excess of 120 km/h.

In addition, there are a trio of neat operator-selectable modes to customize electricity consumption. EV Priority forces electric-only use until only one bar of life remains or the speedometer ticks past 120 km/h; Battery Charge utilizes the ICE to juice up the on-

board battery to 80 per cent in about 40 minutes; and Battery Save maintains the existing power reserves until needed, like pattering about in the city. Charging is a cinch: plugging into a standard Level 1 household outlet takes eight hours to get to full, 3.5 hours for Level 2 and 25 to 30 minutes when connected to a DC station.

Hushed performance

I've driven both the standard Outlander and the environmentally friendlier variant, and the two behave surprisingly similar, the latter of course performing in a much quieter manner. Akin to other EVs, the PHEV has a brake regeneration system to feed unused kinetic energy back into the network. Occupants will

notice paddle shifters affixed to the steering column and wonder what purpose they serve, and instead of shifting gears, they control brake regeneration strength to any of six settings.

As advertised, my driving partner and I achieved some impressive fuel economy numbers, hovering between 6 and 7 L/100 km.

Three trim levels are available, starting with the base SE, moving to SE Touring that adds a sunroof, leather, heated steering wheel and LED lighting and topping out at GT which bundles a power liftgate and safety tech including forward collision mitigation, adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning, automatic high beams and a multi-view camera system.



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The Ferrari 488 Pista

the synthesis of extreme, track-level power and driving exhilaration for the road



The Ferrari 488 Pista is powered by the most powerful V8 engine in the Maranello marque's history and is the company's special series sports car with the highest level yet of technological transfer from racing. In fact the name, meaning 'track' in Italian, was chosen specifically to testify to Ferrari's unparalleled heritage in motor sports.

Technically, the Ferrari 488 Pista encompasses all of the experience built up on the world's circuits by the 488 Challenge and the 488 GTE. For over

25 years, Maranello has been organising the most prestigious of all one-make championships, the Ferrari Challenge, in which over 100 drivers split into three continental series do battle at the wheel. Last year saw the introduction of the 488 Challenge, the first model in the series to be equipped with a turbo engine. The Ferrari 488 GTE is instead the car fielded in the FIA World Endurance Championship, the pinnacle of GT racing, where it has won two consecutive GT Manufacturers' titles and no less than five titles in total

since the championship's inception in 2012. Thanks to wins in both the Pro and Am categories, the 488 GTE has taken no fewer than 35 out of the 50 races run to date.

The new car's engine adopts numerous solutions from that of the 488 Challenge and its power output has been increased to 720 cv. It is also lighter, thanks to new titanium con-rods and carbon-fibre intake plenums. The inverted radiator cooling system is also derived from the Challenge with the radiators

raked rearwards (rather forwards as in the 488 GTB), improving cooling and maintaining optimal performance levels even in high thermal stress situations.

The car's aerodynamics are derived from both the 488 GTE and from Formula 1, specifically the S-Duct at its front, the rear spoiler and diffuser profiles which boost efficiency by 20% compared to the 488 GTB. Other solutions have been carried over from the track to shave off further weight, including the lithium battery (from the 488 Challenge) and also the new carbon-fibre wheel rims - a first for Ferrari. The overall result is that the 488 Pista is an impressive 90 kg lighter than the 488 GTB.

As with the three previous special series, the Challenge Stradale, 430 Scuderia and 458 Speciale, this new berlinetta is the perfect marriage of extreme performance and track car-style handling.

The vehicle dynamics were designed for unique driving feedback and to make the car's full potential available to all drivers, professional or otherwise. Specific vehicle controls were developed with this in mind, first and foremost being a new oversteer management system usable in the manettino's CT-OFF position and designed to make the car's performance on the limit easier to reach and control.

A new gear-shift strategy in the RACE position delivers a far more sporty experience, very similar to that of a

track car. In other words, the Ferrari 488 Pista offers drivers of all abilities an exceptional and exhilarating experience that normally only a competition car could deliver, setting a whole new benchmark in terms of driving pleasure for the Ferrari range.

The Ferrari 488 Pista's extreme design is underlined by the optional livery that highlights the aerodynamic innovation of the S-Duct. The car's lines were developed to underscore its sporty soul and cleverly combine the purity of the 488 GTB with some of the hugely successful racing and functional elements of the 488 GTE and 488 Challenge while staying true to Ferrari's traditional styling.



Porsche at the 2018 Geneva Motor Show

World premiere of the Mission E Cross Turismo



Porsche will be unveiling the concept study of an electrically driven cross utility vehicle (CUV) at the Geneva Motor Show. The strengths of the four-door Cross Turismo include an emotional design with striking off-road elements as well as an innovative display and operating concept with touchscreen and eye-tracking control. Measuring 4.95 metres in length, the concept vehicle has all-wheel drive and an 800-volt architecture, prepared for connection to the fast charging network. It can also be charged by induction, at a charging station or using the Porsche home energy storage system. Additionally, the debut of the Porsche

911 GT3 RS heralds the arrival of one of the most radical high-performance sports cars today. It produces 520 hp (383 kW) from a four-litre capacity.

Mission E Cross Turismo – the electric athlete from Porsche

Two permanent magnet synchronous motors (PSM) with a system output of more than 600 hp (440 kW) enable the Mission E Cross Turismo to accelerate to 100 km/h in less than 3.5 seconds and to reach a speed of 200 km/h in under 12 seconds. Furthermore, the level of continuous power is unmatched by any other electric vehicle: multiple accelerations are possible in

direct succession without loss of performance.

‘The Mission E Cross Turismo is an expression of how we envision the all-electric future. It combines sportiness and everyday practicality in unique style. Our vehicle will be fast to drive, but also quick to recharge and able to replicate its performance time after time,’ says Oliver Blume, CEO of Porsche AG. The Mission E Cross Turismo, which is already fit for the road, builds on the concept of the Mission E study presented by Porsche at the 2015 International Motor Show (IAA). The series-produced car based on this model will celebrate its premiere next year.



Close to motor racing: the new 911 GT3 RS with a 520 hp naturally aspirated engine

With the 911 GT3 RS, Porsche will also be presenting the most powerful road-going track sports car with a naturally aspirated engine. The power of 383 kW (520 hp) is generated by a six-cylinder boxer engine with a four-litre capacity and a revving range of up to 9,000 rpm. Just like the heart of the new GT model, the chassis comes directly from the world of motor sport upgraded with rear-axle steering, all geared towards uncompromising precision. The 911 GT3 RS can accelerate from zero to 100 km/h in 3.2 seconds, reaching a top speed of 312 km/h (194 mph).



RANGE ROVER SV COUPÉ

DEBUTS AT GENEVA MOTOR SHOW



Nearly 50 years ago, Land Rover created the luxury SUV sector with the introduction of the Range Rover. Now it's defining a new genre with the world's first full-size luxury SUV coupé: the limited-edition two-door Range Rover SV Coupé.

Created by Land Rover Design and Special Vehicle Operations, SV Coupé is an exemplar of Range Rover design, craftsmanship and capability. It features a seductive body allied to the next-generation of cabin luxury – with the peerless all-terrain ability expected from Range Rover. No more than 999 will be hand-crafted by SVO for clients worldwide.

Gerry McGovern, Chief Design Officer, Land Rover, said: "The Range Rover SV Coupé is a celebration of the Range Rover bloodline. With a dramatic two-door

silhouette, this breath-taking four seat coupé alludes to its unique heritage whilst being thoroughly modern and contemporary. Beautifully realised, superbly engineered, the Range Rover SV Coupé delivers the most distinguished, luxurious and exclusive Range Rover ever built."

Beautiful proportions with a powerful stance give SV Coupé unrivalled on-road presence. The signature floating roof, continuous waist and tapering tail are instantly recognizable Range Rover DNA, yet are expressed in a unique way for this exclusive addition to the Range Rover family.

SV Coupé's purity of line is perfectly complemented by elegant power-close doors with frameless glass. In combination with the panoramic roof, light floods into

the cabin, accentuating the relaxed, sophisticated and contemporary ambience.

Carefully curated body colour combinations, including a new Contour Graphic available in four duo-tone colourways, are offset by unique side vent and grille designs. This is also the first Range Rover with a 23-inch wheel option.

Enhanced luxury and exquisite craftsmanship extends inside too, with semi-aniline leather front seats bringing Range Rover's already premium interior to a new level of luxury: accommodation comparable to private jets and yachts. Their graduated diamond quilt design is unique to SV Coupé.

Each SV Coupé will be hand-assembled to the client's personal specification by the fastidious experts at the

SVO Technical Centre in the UK – a first for Range Rover.

John Edwards, Land Rover Special Operations Managing Director said: "The introduction of the new SV Coupé brings a new level of individual expression to the Range Rover portfolio and builds on the success of Special Vehicle Operations' existing bespoke Range Rover programme. Feedback from SV clients who have already seen the vehicle in confidential commissioning sessions has been overwhelmingly positive."

SV Coupé clients can choose from four front-to-rear contrast interior colourways, or a range of single-tone interior colours. Both are complemented by a choice of three elegant wood veneers. A first for Range Rover is Nautica, which carefully balances heritage craftsmanship with new technology, fusing walnut and sycamore together.

Optional paint finishes include Liquesence, which brings a sensational liquid metal finish to Range Rover for the first time.

Additionally, Special Vehicle Operations' bespoke personalisation team offers SV Coupé clients the opportunity to indulge their desire to create a truly unique vehicle to their exacting taste, granting access to 100 more paint colours, plus unique 'match to sample' hues, with a range of finishes; duo-tone front and rear leather colours with a bespoke quilt pattern; contrast stitching; headrest embroidery; doorhandle and treadplate engraving and semi-precious metal badging.



SV Coupé is also the fastest-ever full-size Range Rover, with a 165mph top speed. Powered by an exhilarating 565PS 5.0-litre Supercharged V8 petrol powertrain, the most powerful engine ever placed in a full-size Range Rover, means SV Coupé hits 0-60mph in just 5.0 seconds.

Mark Stanton, Special Vehicle Operations Director, said: "As you'd expect from Range Rover, the engineering integrity in SV Coupé is more than

skin deep. This is a meticulously honed vehicle that's designed for SV clients who love driving."

The suspension is tuned to provide a more driver-focused edge than the standard Range Rover, with a ride height lowered by 8mm, but will remain composed and comfortable at all times. Plus, the SV Coupé loses none of Range Rover's legendary all-terrain ability, with 900mm maximum wading depth – and a maximum towing capacity of 3.5 tonnes.



LAGONDA VISION CONCEPT

A NEW KIND OF LUXURY MOBILITY



Aston Martin is proud to present Lagonda Vision Concept, marking the beginning of a new range of state of the art, emission-free luxury vehicles. Production is planned to start in 2021. Lagonda aims to be the world's first zero emission luxury brand. It will confound traditional thinking and take full advantage of the latest advances in electrification and autonomous driving technologies, which amount to the biggest revolution in land-bound transportation since the invention of the car. Lagonda will show how true luxury and modern design, far from being diametrically opposed interests, can exist in total harmony and enhance each other's most desirable characteristics. 'We believe people associate luxury in their cars with

a certain traditional and even old-fashioned approach because, to date, that is all that's been available to them,' commented Aston Martin President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Andy Palmer. 'Lagonda exists to challenge that thinking and prove that being modern and luxurious are not mutually exclusive concepts.' **Lagonda 'Vision Concept'** The Lagonda 'Vision Concept' is a near future study that previews the design language that could potentially be seen in production Lagonda models as soon as 2021. Alongside the new concept, two 40 per cent scale models will be displayed, one coupe concept and one SUV concept, to illustrate how the Lagonda design language could be adapted for the future. 'The Lagonda Vision Concept is an incredibly bold

design statement,' said Aston Martin EVP and Chief Creative Officer, Marek Reichman. 'The electrification revolution means there is no longer any need for horse and carriage design, and our new concept shows the scope of design opportunities that open up once you no longer need to provide space for a large power source directly in front of the passenger compartment. In the Lagonda Vision Concept, the batteries occupy the floor of the car. Everything above that line belongs to us.' The Vision Concept showcases Lagonda design ingenuity. Both far shorter and lower than traditional limousines, the exceptional space efficiency that has been achieved by its radical design means there is room inside for four adults, each of two metres height or

more, to stretch out in luxurious comfort. 'Lagonda has no need to occupy a huge amount of road space or make an ostentatious wealth statement,' continues Reichman. 'It is like comparing Concorde to the first class cabin of a conventional airliner. By ditching traditional architecture like Parthenon grilles and massive frontal areas, and by using electrical power, Lagonda design can still be distinctive and luxurious without being grandiose. It offers its customers a thoroughly modern, emission-free form of super-luxurious mobility.' Far more than any orthodox design, the Lagonda Vision Concept was designed from the inside out because that is what the architecture allows. With no need to package a vast internal combustion engine, gearbox and transmission, Lagonda's designers could optimise the interior down to the smallest detail and then build up the exterior of the car around it. The Lagonda Vision Concept doesn't have a bonnet because one is not required. But it still needs to travel through the air and to do so as efficiently as possible to preserve battery life, which is why its shape is so sleek and dynamic. 'The shape of the Lagonda Vision Concept is the result of satisfying a number of different requirements,' says Reichman. 'The need to make a bold design statement, to establish Lagonda as a company of the future and to show how technological advancement can help liberate design too. So while Aston Martin design language can be seen as organic and natural, that of Lagonda is more sculptural, shocking and challenging. It is a shape formed by the collision of invisible forces, like those made by magnetic particles in an electrical current. The secret is to understand how to connect that shock and change to beautiful surfacing.' For the interior Reichman and his team took further delight in defying convention, turning to the most traditional of households for the most visionary thinking. 'How do you create a cabin that is at once unlike any other, capable of achieving a new level of luxury both in look and feel while staying true to Lagonda's forward thinking vision? For me there was only one man for the job.' The work of English furniture designer David Linley, has fascinated Reichman for years. His ability to marry materials, some very modern, others very established in ways that are never predictable held the key to the interior of the



Lagonda Vision Concept. 'When we first started working with David we showed him all these ideas we'd had for marquetry and leather on the inside and he said, "Let's use different materials, materials people won't expect even in isolation, let alone together." Which is why the interior of the Lagonda Vision Concept uses not only ultra modern materials like carbon fibre and ceramics but also some of the oldest and finest that of late have rarely been used in the automotive sphere, like cashmeres and silks.' The result is a cabin that surprises, shocks and fascinates, where silk carpets and hand woven wool upholstery live in perfect harmony with carbon fibre trim and functional ceramic tiles that open and close to alter the ventilation and adjust the volume of the music. As well as working with David Linley, Marek enlisted the support of Savile Row tailors, Henry Poole for their expert knowledge in tailoring luxury materials. When the decision was made to use hand woven wool the master tailors of Henry Poole were able to assist

in creating the patterns, cutting the material and the detailed finishing to ensure that a perfectly trimmed seat was achieved on the Lagonda 'Vision Concept'. Its design also means a new level of convenience and ease of use can be delivered. Because the majority of the car's structural strength comes through its floor, it has been possible to use apertures in the body far larger than would be wise in conventional cars. As a result, the rear hinged back doors don't just open outwards, the roof sections also open upwards to provide unprecedented ease of access. Occupants can therefore literally stand up inside and walk out of the car, or step straight into it. Similarly, the front seats are not mounted on conventional runners which always interfere with where those in the back would like to place their feet, but instead sit on cantilevered arms extending from the floor outside the seat frame providing a completely uncluttered floor area. And the seats are more like armchairs, with heavily bolstered arms because, given the choice people always use arms to lower and raise themselves from chairs.

RICHARD MILLE & MCLAREN AUTOMOTIVE

LAUNCH THEIR FIRST TIMEPIECE AT GENEVA MOTOR SHOW



Richard Mille and McLaren Automotive have revealed their first jointly-commissioned timepiece, the RM 11-03 McLaren Automatic Flyback Chronograph, at the Geneva International Motor Show during a reception hosted by McLaren Automotive CEO, Mr Mike Flewitt and Richard Mille CEO, Mr Richard Mille. Limited to just 500 pieces globally and priced at 180,000CHF plus tax, the watch will be made available initially mainly to McLaren Ultimate Series clients.

The RM 11-03 McLaren, created in close collaboration between McLaren Design Director Rob Melville and Richard Mille Engineer Fabrice Namura, has been in development since McLaren Automotive and Richard Mille partnered last year uniting a mutual

interest in unique design, the use of new materials and modern craftsmanship. "The idea was to take on a real technical challenge, and come up with something other than a mere dial with an inscription, for example. I find the 720S designed by Rob Melville mesmerising beautiful, and we wanted to give the RM 11-03 McLaren curves that were similarly both aesthetic and functional," says Namura. These influences, as well as design cues borrowed from McLaren's range of luxury sports and super cars, are reflected in this special timepiece.

The case of the RM 11-03 McLaren is made of Carbon TPT® interlaced with Orange Quartz TPT®, resulting in an extremely resistant and light-weight case while paying tribute to a colour that is synonymous with

McLaren. The Carbon TPT® enhances the mechanical performance of the RM 11-03 and offers resistance to harsh environments.

The titanium pushers fitted to the Carbon TPT® case echo the design of the distinctive headlights of the McLaren 720S. Titanium inserts, similar in shape to the iconic McLaren F1's air-intake snorkel and bearing the McLaren logo, adorn the bezel. The complex grade 5 titanium crown is shaped like a McLaren lightweight wheel. While the McLaren Speedmark logo is incorporated on the rubber strap specifically developed for this edition.

Under the bonnet of the RM 11-03 beats the automatic RMAC3 calibre, first launched in 2016, with a flyback chronograph ready to literally race on the track. The instant return of the counter to zero makes it possible to quickly restart the stopwatch function. Powered by two barrels mounted in parallel and a balance wheel with variable inertia, the movement has a 55-hour power reserve. Barrel winding is ensured by a variable geometry rotor that enables personalised winding adjusted to the wearer's activity level, further evidence of Richard Mille's characteristic attentiveness. The fact that a race car's chassis must always exhibit tremendous torque resistance while remaining light in weight inspired the brand, which adopted these requirements as its own in producing the baseplate and bridges for this calibre of PVD-treated grade 5 titanium to ensure the requisite stiffness and perfect functioning of the going train. The satin-finish grade 5 titanium upper bridge further accentuates the depth of the calibre, creating a visual trajectory around the annual calendar and oversized date as well as the 12-hour chronograph and countdown counters. With such technical specifications, it comes as no surprise to find the new RM 11-03 McLaren previewed on their booth at the 2018 Geneva Motor Show. The RM 11-03 will be offered to McLaren Ultimate Series customers exclusively through Richard Mille Boutiques. McLaren customers will have the opportunity to match their edition number of 1 to 500 of their McLaren Ultimate Series to the caseback number of their RM 11-03 McLaren.

mavi



TAG Heuer presents the first Aston Martin Special Edition chronographs



At the International Geneva Motor Show, Jean-Claude Biver, CEO of TAG Heuer and President of the LVMH Group Watches Division, and Andy Palmer, President and CEO of Aston Martin, were particularly proud to announce that TAG Heuer has been chosen as Official Partner, Official Watch Partner and Official Connected Watch Partner of Aston Martin and Aston Martin Racing.

To mark the new partnership, TAG Heuer presented two magnificent special editions honouring the British luxury brand. The Swiss watchmaker drew on its extensive expertise and through a strong collaboration with the Aston Martin design team to develop the designs, drawing direct inspiration from the colours, shapes, patterns and materials characteristic of Aston Martin's sports cars. Every detail imparts a creative touch and recalls the overarching automotive spirit of the partnership.

The first model is the prestigious TAG Heuer

Carrera Calibre Heuer 01 chronograph, which draws inspiration from Aston Martin's luxury universe. The famous manufacture movement is visible through the dial, which is skeletonised in a hexagonal pattern that recalls the details on the new Vantage, for an exclusive Aston Martin dial. Meanwhile, the sturdy 45 mm solid steel case also presents a design that was specifically developed for this edition, which features lines on the side to evoke speed, the race track and piston. In another of the piece's exclusive features, the shape of the lugs has been revisited, taking inspiration from the lines of Aston Martin's emblematic bodywork. With a black ceramic tachymeter bezel, this piece is the perfect reflection of the expertise and technical mastery arising from the partnership between the two brands. The second model is a TAG Heuer Formula 1 chronograph inspired by Aston Martin Racing. The TAG Heuer Formula 1 is TAG Heuer's ultimate motor racing model, synonymous with performance



and speed. Entirely in steel and measuring 43 mm in diameter, this quartz chronograph features a notched steel bezel and an aluminium ring with a tachymeter scale. The indexes, seconds hand and Aston Martin's famous winged logo all don Aston Martin Racing's specific shade of lime essence and stand out against the watch's black dial to beautiful effect. The movement is accurate to a tenth of a second – an indispensable feature in a motor racing watch – and is displayed on the small counter at 6 o'clock, with the minute counter at 9 o'clock and the current seconds counter at 3 o'clock. The model comes with a magnificent and unique Bridge of Weir pure black nappa leather strap as used on Aston Martin's Car. Once again this is exclusively for Aston Martin as this is the first time TAG Heuer uses a leather strap in the TAG Heuer Formula 1 collection. With lime essence topstitching, it adds character and sporty style to the watch.

TAG Heuer & Gulf Oil International

A full-colour partnership!



TAG Heuer is very proud to announce that a global partnership has been signed with Gulf Oil International, which will see the development of new activities and new editions, including the Monaco Gulf which was presented on the occasion of the signing. With the immediately recognisable famous blue and orange stripes, Gulf has been a well-known player in the automotive industry for over 115 years. Quality, endurance and passion are the company's watchwords; proven by their history of innovation, invention and continuing development. It was the first company to drill for oil below the sea, and in 1913, became the first in the world to open a petrol station.

It shares values with the Swiss watchmaking brand that

has automotive sport in its DNA. TAG Heuer and Gulf have crossed paths several times, but the most notable was in 1971, in the film "Le Mans", when Steve McQueen wore a Heuer Monaco on his wrist while driving a Porsche 917 that featured the Gulf logo. Jean-Claude Biver, CEO of TAG Heuer and Chairman of the Watch Division of LVMH Group, stated: "It's a real privilege to forge links with Gulf and its history in automotive sport that includes the Porsche 917K, Steve McQueen, the Le Mans 24 Hour Race and the Monaco watch. It's a prestigious and emotional partnership. I know of few other brands that could share as many memories of pit stops and which have a relationship as strong and authentic.



We share the same passion and this promises good things for the future!" Frank Rutten, Vice President International of Gulf, added: "TAG Heuer is an iconic name for automotive sport and our two brands have many shared highlights, stretching back over almost half a century. We're delighted with this partnership and look forward to developing it, representing, as it does, a new direction for the relationship between Gulf Oil International and TAG Heuer. Timing is of critical importance to many aspects of our business – Gulf has, for instance, a peerless "on time in full delivery record" in its marine operation - we share values of innovation and quality but, in particular, our shared history ensures that this is one of the most genuine unions in the automotive world."

Mitsubishi Al Habtoor Motors launches

the all-new Eclipse Cross across its showrooms in the UAE



The all-new 2018 Eclipse Cross is a fusion of sharp coupe looks and dynamic SUV mobility with signature Mitsubishi styling, technology and driving confidence.

It joins the formidable line-up of the other popular Mitsubishi SUVs like the legendary Pajero, Montero Sport, Outlander and the ASX.

The Eclipse Cross contains many all-new features including a 1.5-liter direct-injection turbo- engine, Keyless Operation, Power-sliding Panoramic roof, Electric Parking brake, Head-Up Display (HUD), Forward Collision Mitigation System (FCM), Blind Spot warning and Lane Departure warning.

A test drive was recently held at Dubai Autodrome for members of the motoring media, exclusive guests and automobile enthusiasts who put the all-new 2018 Eclipse Cross through its paces.

“The 2018 Eclipse Cross is an all-new product offering in one of the popular motoring segments in the UAE and with the addition of the Eclipse Cross, Mitsubishi is well positioned to race ahead in the SUV segment.” said Mr. C.V. Ravin, General Manager Sales – Mitsubishi, Al Habtoor Motors. “Its distinctive

styling, advanced technology and exciting performance, made the Eclipse Cross very appealing to all those who test drove the Eclipse Cross at Dubai Autodrome.”, he added. Available in three variants, the Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross aims to appeal to style-conscious drivers with its sharp coupé looks and muscular SUV stance, which delivers an enjoyable, reassuring feel that elevates the driving experience.

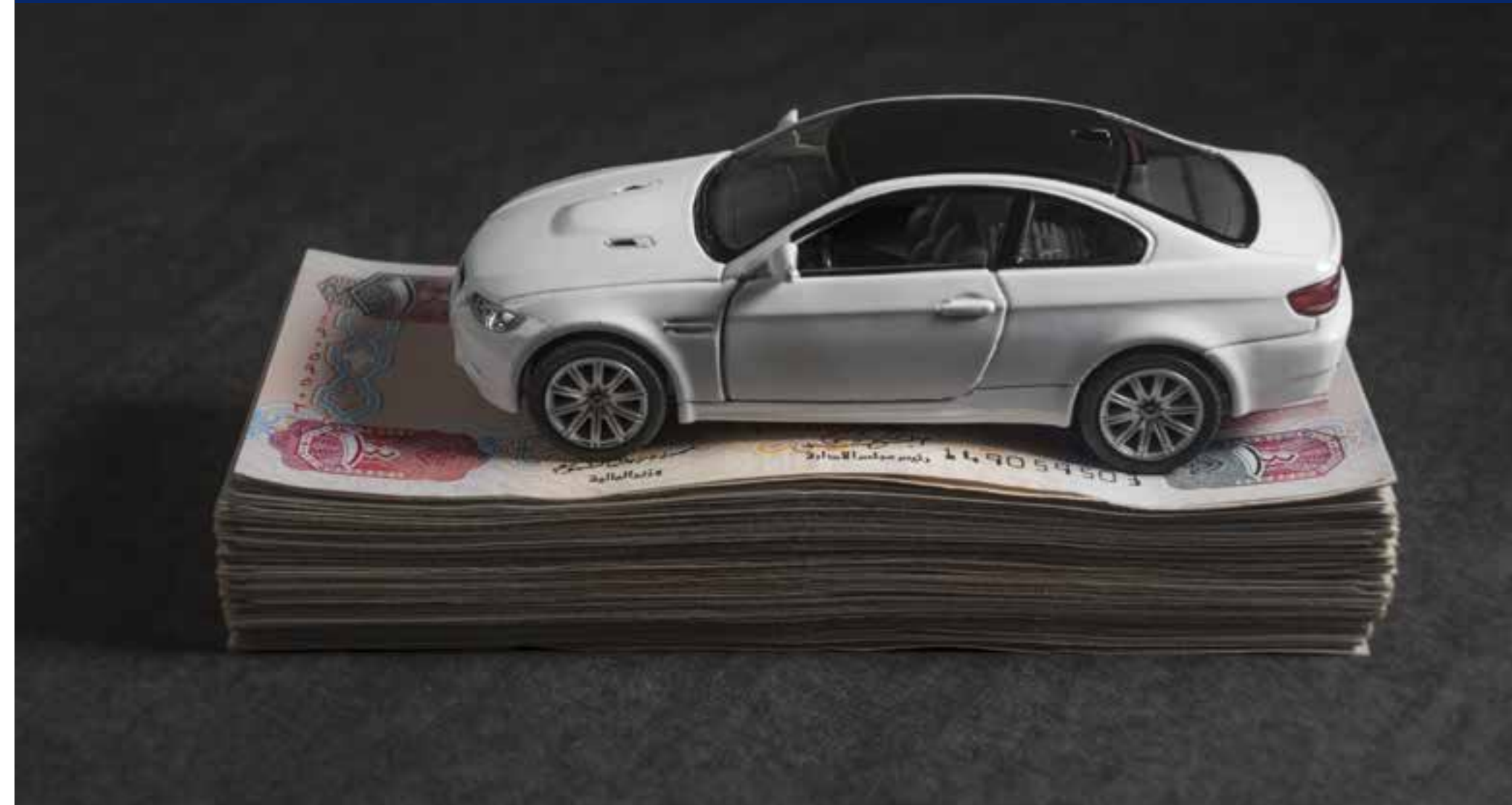
DYNAMIC DESIGN WITH CHARACTER

The sharp and dynamic form of the all-new Eclipse Cross is distinguished by its wedge profile with its bold beltline and strong character line; a forward raked rear window; the sharply truncated rear gate and short overhang; and muscular wings that contribute to an athletic appearance.

The front design features Mitsubishi’s trademark Dynamic Shield concept, which refers to the protective shield shape visually formed by the black central area and highlighted by bold bright work on either side of the grill. Distinctive auxiliary lamps are recessed deep in the front fascia adding drama and sophistication to

the SUV’s front-on appearance.

At the rear, the high-mounted, stretched rear lamps divide the rear window into eye-catching upper and lower segments and when illuminated the tubular LED and central LED brake lights form a single bar of light running across the tail, giving the Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross a broad and unmistakable appearance from the rear. The Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross also heralds the arrival of a new red body colour. The standard coating is layered with semi-transparent red and clear coating, and this creates high levels of colour saturation with a highly-refined finish. Inside, the new SUV’s dashboard is shaped using horizontal lines, with silver metal frames and a black and silver monotone colour scheme helping create a sense of refinement that is both dynamic and sporty. With its Rockford Fosgate Sound System that delivers the music reproduction of a quality home system and new Head Up Display, the futuristic cockpit inspires a sense of excitement for the driver. For maximum comfort and flexibility, the rear seat features a 60:40 split with long slide-and-recline adjustment.



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