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MAGAZINE

The story of McLaren

Now the McLaren 720S



Maserati Levante S

The return of a sporty Italian SUV

Toyota Land Cruiser

A timeless icon

Lexus LC500 super-coupe

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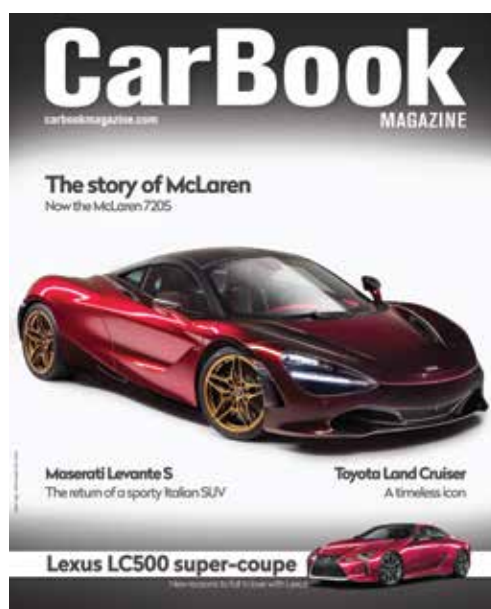
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McLaren history

The story of McLaren



Just mentioning McLaren to any automotive buff may very well cause his or her eyes to twinkle. The British F1-racecar builder turned production vehicle manufacturer has a unique and exciting story, full of fast-paced twists and turns, quite unlike that of any other brand operating in the market today. We explore a few of the highlights in this piece below, starting from the company's early days.

Humble beginnings

The story begins with a gentleman by the name of Bruce McLaren, born in 1937 in Auckland, New Zealand. Catching the motoring bug while working at a family-owned service station, he was already racing competitively at the tender age of 15. In 1958, Bruce moved to the UK under "Driver to Europe," a program designed to assist Australasian drivers seeking to per-

form at a high level on the opposite side of the globe. Partnered with mentor Aussie racing pro Jack Brabham and London-based team Cooper Cars, he began perfecting his technique piloting compact, lightweight rear-engine vehicles. Joining Formula 1 in 1959, Bruce won the US Grand Prix in the same year, becoming the youngest champion at that time. During a seven-year career with Cooper, Bruce went



on to win three more Grand Prix's and a slew of other races, driving for Jaguar and Aston Martin and Ford in the process.

Manufacturing

It didn't take long before Bruce gave a shot at manufacturing. Founding McLaren Motor Racing (MMR), the first product to roll off the shelf was the M1A sports car in 1964, which managed to hold its own in competitions held in both Europe and America. The success turned into customer orders and thus, 24 M1As were built.

The even faster M1B came next, helping lead MMR into the Can-Am (Canadian-American Challenge Cup) championship. Within four years, the team racked up 37 out of 41 victories.

Formula 1

When all this was going on, Bruce had plans to build his very own Formula 1 creation, to be used for the inaugural season of the then-new 3.0-litre iteration in 1965. Enter the M2B, the initial McLaren Formula 1 car. Although suffering engine issues after debuting at the Monaco Grand Prix and failing to secure a desirable finish, the technical achievements were nevertheless impressive.

In a tradition still practiced today, McLaren recruited the M2B's designer Robin Herd via the aerospace sector in Farnborough, London. He brought some cutting edge ideas to the table about increasing strength and simultaneously shedding weight. For example, utilizing



Mallite, balsa wood wedged in-between aluminum sheets arranged in a honeycomb fashion, in the construction of much of the inner and outer shell. A top podium position only took one more model and one more season, happening at the 1968 Belgian Grand Prix. A Cosworth-powered M7A was the key, helmed by Bruce and featuring the now-iconic McLaren orange livery. More good things would come at the racetrack until his untimely death while testing out the

M8D prototype at Goodwood Circuit in 1970.

McLaren F1

Following a merger between McLaren and English businessman Ron Dennis' Project 4 Racing Team a decade later, the McLaren Group was formed. Dennis knew early on motorsport alone would not be financially sustainable. The idea to make and sell an ultra high output road car materialized.

In 1989, under a new entity McLaren Cars, wheels





were put in motion to develop the fastest, best handling production vehicle with the highest power to weight ratio that was also practical. The result? A beautiful three-seater boasting butterfly doors and containing loads of hand-laid carbon fibre composite, running a BMW-engineered 6.1-litre, 48-valve V12 engine making 627 horsepower and 651

Nm of torque. Everything sat on suspension blending performance and comfort, comprised of double wish-bones front and rear, co-axial springs and light alloy dampers. **Le Mans** In 1995, the company finally entered the famed 24 Hours of Le Mans, and the weapon of choice was the

F1. Not originally intended to be adapted for racing, interest brewed amongst the industry as well as from owners to use street-derived automobiles. So, nine GTR versions were assembled. They were 90 kilograms lighter and had bigger brakes and wheels, a roll cage, quicker steering rack, stronger transmission and a rear wing fitted. Regulations stipulated power to

be dialled down to 600 horsepower. At Le Mans, six McLaren F1 GTRs entered, one taking first place by a single lap. **Modern era** Since the 1980s, the brand has undergone a lot of change, including a stint with Mercedes-Benz that saw the development of the SLR. In 2011, McLaren re-es-

tablished itself as a standalone production carmaker, launching the MP4-12C. Available as a mid-engine, rear-wheel drive coupe or roadster, a 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8 rested under the hood pumping out 592 horsepower, mated to a seven speed dual clutch transmission. Many contemporary classics have subsequently

been released, such as the evolution of the 12C, the 641-horsepower 650S; the limited plug-in hybrid P1 hypercar, a Ferrari LaFerrari and Porsche 918 challenger pushing a combined 904 horsepower; and the 666-horsepower 675LT “Longtail,” dubbed the “lightest, most drive-focused, most exclusive series-production McLaren supercar ever built.”

The new McLaren 720S

Latest model of McLaren 720S the second-generation Super Series, the supercar product family at the heart of the McLaren brand, driver-focused cabin, featuring the finest leathers and aluminium switches, New 720S delivers outstanding driver engagement, with best-ever Super Series aerodynamic efficiency and new generation of McLaren's active chassis system, Proactive Chassis Control II

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2018 Lexus LC500

& LC 500h hybrid coupé



Combining an exciting design and exhilarating performance, the all-new Lexus LC luxury coupe gives sports car fans new reasons to fall in love with the brand.

Lexus hints that this is just the tip of the iceberg as to the future of the Lexus brand, and that this all-new premium 2+2 coupe will set the bar high for its competitors.

What is it?

The LC series is the first Lexus based on an all-new rear-wheel-drive platform known as GA-L. This platform is part of a new global architecture for its

luxury vehicles.

Key to this platform is a low centre of gravity and centralized positioning of components resulting in an even more dynamic driving experience. Lexus focused on keeping the LC's occupants low, the wheels as far out at the corners as possible, and the engine behind the front axle's centreline.

The LC's bodywork combines exotic materials such as aluminium, carbon fibre, and high-tensile steel to reduce weight and lower the centre of gravity. In fact, the LC has the highest torsional stiffness amongst all Lexus vehicles.

For the LC500, strategic use of high-strength steel results in a car that resists twisting forces even better than that of the exotic, carbon fibre-intensive LFA supercar.

The LC will be offered as two models, the LC500, and the LC500h hybrid, both heavily inspired by the LF-LC concept car. Despite being heavily enhanced by a multitude of materials, the LC's designers have managed to achieve both a look that combines avant-garde styling and the proportions of a dynamic looking coupe.

The end result is a shape that is athletic, but also





seductive and glamorous.

Pick your pleasure

What Lexus designers promise in style is also delivered in performance. Lexus says that the vehicle represents a new relationship between the design and engineering teams and the end result was not just a new car, but also a new way to design and build their luxury models.

Powering the LC500 is the latest iteration of the high revving Lexus 5.0L V8 that graces both the RC F and the GS F. With 471 hp and a 10-speed direct shift auto transmission, the LC500 promises an exhilarating

driving experience to match that which is hinted by its sharply angled sheet metal and massively meshed grille. The 10-speed adaptive automatic transmission, the first in a luxury car, selects the optimum gear according to the computer's estimation of the driver's behaviour based on vehicle speed, throttle pedal application, and even past driving history. Lexus says that this new transmission is smaller and lighter than some current 8-speed transmissions and has shift times that rival those of a dual-clutch transmission. The LC500's 0 to 96 km/hr (60 mph) time is expected to be less than 4.5 seconds.

Also available with hybrid power

The LC500h hybrid introduces an all-new Lexus multi-stage hybrid powertrain system that has specifically been designed for high-performance vehicles. Delivering 354 hp, the system is built around the latest lithium-ion hybrid battery technology coupled with a 3.5L V6 engine and a continuously variable transmission. This CVT is further mated to a four-speed automatic gearbox to closely align engine RPMs with throttle inputs. This novel setup eliminates the elastic band feeling that most CVTs are associated with, delivering a

surprisingly sharp connection between the throttle pedal and vehicle response.

Since sound contributes such a big part to the driving experience, Lexus engineers have gone to great lengths to carefully tune everything from the air intake to the final exhaust, creating a “concert hall” effect inside the cabin. That is essentially marketing speak for describing how at higher speeds, the engine note will continue to proportionally contribute to the LC's driving experience.

Interior

Inside, the LC mimics what was so well received in the LF-LC concept vehicle that was first revealed to the public at the 2012 North American International Auto Show.

Both the LC500 and LC500h feature a sumptuous interior with precisely-stitched leather spread across complex surfaces, once again showcasing Lexus' renowned attention to detail. Designers were careful to ensure that the interior layout matched the dynamic but luxurious theme of the exterior. The drive position

is low and coddling, calibrated to invite spirited driving.

As previously mentioned, the beauty of the new GA-L platform is its low centre of gravity. Designers took full advantage of this by placing the LC500 driver's hip point to be as close as possible to the vehicle's centre of gravity. This sweet spot is where the so-called “seat of the pants” feeling is best communicated.

It's all in the fine details

Lexus also focused on the smallest details to create an engaging yet seductive atmosphere for the LC's driver. Nothing was left on the table, from the feel and positioning of the magnesium alloy paddle shifters to the LC500's exquisite door panels, centre console, and dash pad featuring elements of Lexus' world-renowned, detailed obsessed Takumi craftsmanship.

They even considered where the driver's eyes would focus and designed the surface shape in that area accordingly to help support a driver's mindset. Lexus says that this was one of the first times that designers worked as closely as they did in the engineering

development process so that both teams could understand how driving goals and design could realistically mimic each other in the production car.

Final thoughts

Four years after the debut of the Lexus LF-LC Concept, Lexus has delivered a provocative, athletic flagship coupe that makes the brand's strongest statement yet about its future product direction.

It is a particularly important vehicle as Lexus vehicles were once only known for their reliability, craftsmanship, quietness, but not for their driving dynamics or exciting styling. Over the last few years, the company's new models have not only looked more distinct and passionate, but have also been far more interesting to drive.

The LC coupe, and new LS flagship, continue to showcase how the Lexus brand is committed to this direction for the long haul, invigorating both its showrooms and its customer base. I can't wait to see what the future holds for the brand!



The Toyota Land Cruiser

A timeless icon



With over 60 years of global adventure under its belt, the Toyota Land Cruiser enjoys loyalty unmatched by any other 4x4 aside from perhaps the original Jeep or Land Rover.

A little history lesson

Did you know that it was over 66 years ago, back in 1951, that production of the first generation Land Cruiser commenced? This Jeep-like vehicle had a miniscule run of only 90 units, but since then, the Land Cruiser has been produced as a convertible, a hard top, a wagon, and even a cab chassis version (as an ambulance or troop carrier).

The Land Cruiser's longevity and reliability has led to its huge popularity worldwide. Tune into the international news on television, and you'll likely see a Land Cruiser used by some sort of humanitarian organization in a third world country. Toyota also extensively tests the Land Cruiser in rugged places such as the Australian outback, one of the

toughest operating environments on the planet due to its unique combination of terrain and temperature. This is perhaps why it is one of the best-selling body-on-frame four-wheel-drive vehicles in the land down under.

What's in a name?

The "Land Cruiser" name was created by Toyota's then technical director, Hanji Umehara, in 1954. Not wanting to sound less dignified than the "Land Rover" brand, the "Land Cruiser" nomenclature was selected. Today, the Land Cruiser is known from Aruba to Zimbabwe for its continued formula of combining a sturdy body-on-frame design and full-time four wheel-drive. Despite its serious off-roading ability, not much has changed to the original recipe. The old-school solid front axle and inline 6-cylinder engine were ditched back in 1998, and most of the updates have been on the creature comfort front as far as ride quality, safety, and interior accoutrements.

Step up to the Lexus side of the Toyota pond, and you'll find that the Lexus LX570 is a gussied up but still capable Land Cruiser in disguise.

The latest model to wear the name badge

The Land Cruiser hasn't really been updated since 2013, where Toyota performed a mild refresh and significantly updated the interior trim, infotainment system, as well as the traction and stability control systems. For 2016, Toyota took this a step further with a refreshed front fascia, fenders, and new headlamps. But everything else visually from the A-pillars back is still essentially the same. The 2017 model is largely unchanged from the 2016 model. Fitted with Toyota's tried and true naturally aspirated 5.7-litre V8, the Land Cruiser's powerplant generates 381 hp and 401 lb-ft of torque. At almost 6,000 lbs of curb weight, the modern day Land Cruiser is a hefty



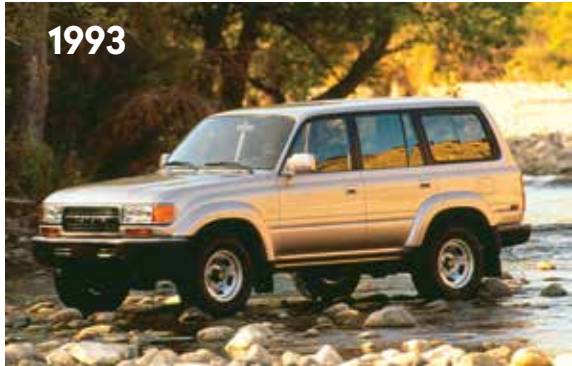


girl. To make the best of the power, Toyota did swap out the 6-speed automatic for their latest corporate 8-speed gearbox. The four-wheel-drive system relies on the time-proven full-time setup with high and low ratio selections via a console-mounted dial. Toyota's Active Traction control system, A-TRAC, utilizes both brake and throttle intervention to help to control wheel spin. There is a limited-slip Torsen centre-differential with a default 40/60 fore/aft torque split ratio. The system can also shift power to the wheels that slip to those that grip if need be.

As part of the 2016 update, the Land Cruiser also gained Toyota's "Multi-Terrain Select" system, with a collection of settings such as Mogul, Crawl, Sand & Snow, to pre-setup the chassis and drivetrain for different types of the rough stuff.

What is it like to drive?

With its 5,926 pound curb weight, the Land Cruiser



won't win any stop light drag races. However, the torquy V8 sounds grunty and feels quick enough paired with the well-calibrated automatic transmission. The 0-100 km/hr dash comes in under the 7 second mark, quite respectable. Just stay away from drag racing with any Cadillac Escalades for pink slips. Towing capacity is 8,100 lbs, depending on the setup. The Land Cruiser makes extensive use of high-strength steel all throughout, including the A, B, C, and D-pillars. There is a solid-on-road driving feel, but with the comfort of a luxury sedan. The steering feel is heavy and the ratio is certainly set

up to be on the leisurely side. Toyota engineers have clearly erred on the side-of-caution and don't want to encourage drivers to execute any quick steering manoeuvres on this high centre of gravity vehicle. The other reason for the slower steering is added precision when off-roading. The key to the Land Cruiser's off-pavement prowess is suspension articulation facilitated by long wheel travel. The Kinetic Dynamic Suspension System hydraulically adjusts the lean resistance provided by the stabilizer bars, increasing or reducing it to help minimize any tendency for wheel lift. This system also has the added

benefit of reducing on-road body lean by as much as 50 per cent in day-to-day driving on the street. Approach and departure angles are 32 degrees and 24 degrees respectively, with a 27.5 inch fording depth. **On the inside** There is ample shoulder and elbowroom in the first two rows, but the third row is a bit of a tight squeeze for three adults abreast, despite what Toyota may say. Two would be much more comfortable back there unless they are kids. When not in use, the third row seats fold to each side versus down into the floor. A novel arrangement and a nod to the Land Cruiser's



predecessors. However, this does mean that cargo room is not as capacious as it could be.

Toyota's latest Safety Sense P (TSS-P) is also standard equipment on the Land Cruiser, adding collision mitigation braking, pre-collision warning, lane departure warning, blindspot warning with rear cross traffic alert, radar-based adaptive cruise control, and automatic high beams.

Final Thoughts

Broad shouldered and confident, the vaunted Land Cruiser arguably authored the rulebook for Sport Utility Vehicles.

For those looking for a reliable, understated four-wheel-drive vehicle with seating for eight, there are few other choices. Over 60 years later, the Land Cruiser brings together ultimate capability and luxury with proven off-road aptitude. It's no wonder that it is still adored by its loyal and discerning customers the world over.



BMW 5 Series

Five Alive



One of BMW’s best-selling vehicles is the 5 Series midsize sedan. In production since 1972, the 5 Series has been well regarded by many as the quintessential executive sports sedan. To the business world, it’s as ubiquitous as a leather valise or a dark colour suit. Timeless, universal, but never out of style. All-new for 2017, BMW says that the 5 Series is “all-new and all-innovative”. We’re here to answer what exactly this means.

What is old is new again

Glance quickly at the new 5’er and you might not notice that the subtle changes. BMW says that this was done on purpose as owners didn’t want anything too

flashy at the risk of sending wrong signals. Like any good design, it’s all in the details. Now in its seventh generation, the G30 5 Series wears the latest corporate face, including the wide kidney grilles, LED headlamps, and the latest iteration of the signature angel eye daytime running lights. Look closely and you’ll see that those wide kidney grilles now have movable slats that close or open to optimize aerodynamics. The LED headlamps are adaptive units. The passenger cell is more set back in relation to the body, and the roofline flows a little more aggressively to the rear end. The classic Hofmeister kink by the rear door is still present but now more aggressively stated.

There are too many subtle changes to list out in this review, but BMW says that the sum of all of these changes are greater than the whole. They help to imbue the 5 Series with a “forward-surging character” with “undeniable muscularity”.

An effective weight loss diet

One of the tactics to increasing performance and handling performance without the expense of fuel economy is to reduce weight. Accordingly, the 5 Series has undergone a diet to combat its increased length, width, and height. There is extensive use of aluminium including the bootlid, doors, and suspension parts, yielding a claimed weight loss of 123 pounds for the 530i xDrive as an





example. This is an impressive figure considering that BMW has fully loaded the car with its latest technology, the most impressive of which is a remote control automatic parking system. More on that later. BMW engineers have also reduced the drag coefficient of the new vehicle by 10 per cent compared to its predecessor, setting a new sedan benchmark of CD = 0.22. To give you a sense of comparison, this is lower than the latest Toyota Prius!

Behind the wheel

The new 5 feels more predictable and is easier to manoeuvre, thanks in part to its new aluminium suspension. Opt for the M Sport package with its upsized 19-inch wheels, lowered ride height, M sport brakes, and there is much more liveliness to the new 5’s already excellent dynamics. You can even get rear steering as part of a new options package. There are several engine choices available. BMW’s

new 248 hp turbocharged 2.0L four-cylinder engine powering the 530i, a 3.0L turbocharged 335 hp inline-six cylinder engine powering the 540i, and finally a 4.4L twin-turbo 462 hp V8 powering the M550i. All models are equipped with BMW’s excellent eight-speed transmission and xDrive all-wheel-drive is optionally available the 530i, 540i, and M550i. Also arriving in the Spring of 2017 will be a plug-in hybrid version of the 5 Series sedan in the form of the BMW 530e iPerformance. The 530e’s eDrive system and a four cylinder petrol engine work in perfect unison to achieve a combined output of 252hp. The all electric mode is available up to 140 km/hr, and with a range of up to 50 km before the gas engine kicks in to assist.

Packed with technology

Inside, the 5 Series’ posh interior borrows much from its big brother flagship 7 Series. From the 16 way power front seats, available Gesture Control, open-pore

wood, 3D surround view, and a massive 10.3 inch infotainment system powered by iDrive 6.0, it’s a nice place to be. Gesture control for key iDrive functions, such as volume control, accepting/declining phone calls, have also been adopted from the 7 Series. There is even an ambient air package, which pipes in your choice of several fragrances into the cabin and ionises the air to ensure that it’s the highest quality possible. Those electrically adjustable seats are, of course, standard equipment, and decorative stitching and quilting makes an appearance for the first time in the 5 Series. Optionally available are multifunction seats with a massage function with eight different massage programmes, each with a choice of three intensity modes. The optional Driving Assist Plus safety package now comes with a host of functions including “Lane Change Assistant”, which operates at speeds between 70 and 180 km/hr. BMW says that this function “aids

the lane change manoeuvre” using sensors to check that there is an opening in the next lane and if it’s clear to pull out. As expected, there is also a radar-based Dynamic Cruise Control system, which can even keep into account motorway exits and roundabouts, where the acceleration is automatically adjusted to suit these special traffic situations. The system is sophisticated enough to monitor not only the vehicle immediately in front, but the one in front of that as well. **Perfect parking via remote control** For those of us who played with remote controlled cars as a kid finally comes the grown-up version of

this technology. The 5 Series’ Remote Control Parking system, also found in the flagship 7 Series, enables drivers to use parking spaces that are narrow enough to make getting out of the car awkward. Using the Display Key, all the driver has to do is to position the car in front of the desired parking space, climb out, then manoeuvre the car into the space using the key. All acceleration and braking actions are monitored and controlled by the parking sensors, the Parking Assistant, and the Surround View sensors. The engine can also be started and switched off by the Display Key remote. Incidentally, the Display key can be wirelessly charged

in the car, or plugged into a USB outlet. Perhaps a slight inconvenience, but you’ll definitely win cool points with your friends. **Final thoughts** The new 5 Series heavily borrows many of its innovations from its flagship 7 Series big brother but at a much lower price tag. The revised sedan boasts a preview of future self-driving technology, a luxurious and quiet interior, and loads of other cutting edge tech features. While this model may still be the metaphorical dark business suit of the car world, there’s a reason why those suits still haven’t gone out of style.



Fiat 124 Spider

More than a dressed up Miata



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 2017 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. **Style** 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. 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 (an additional \$4,200) adding extras such as uprated adaptive auto-levelling LED headlamps. **Staying true to roots** 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, 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. While the outside may have been changed enough to fool most people, the interior 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.

Turbo power

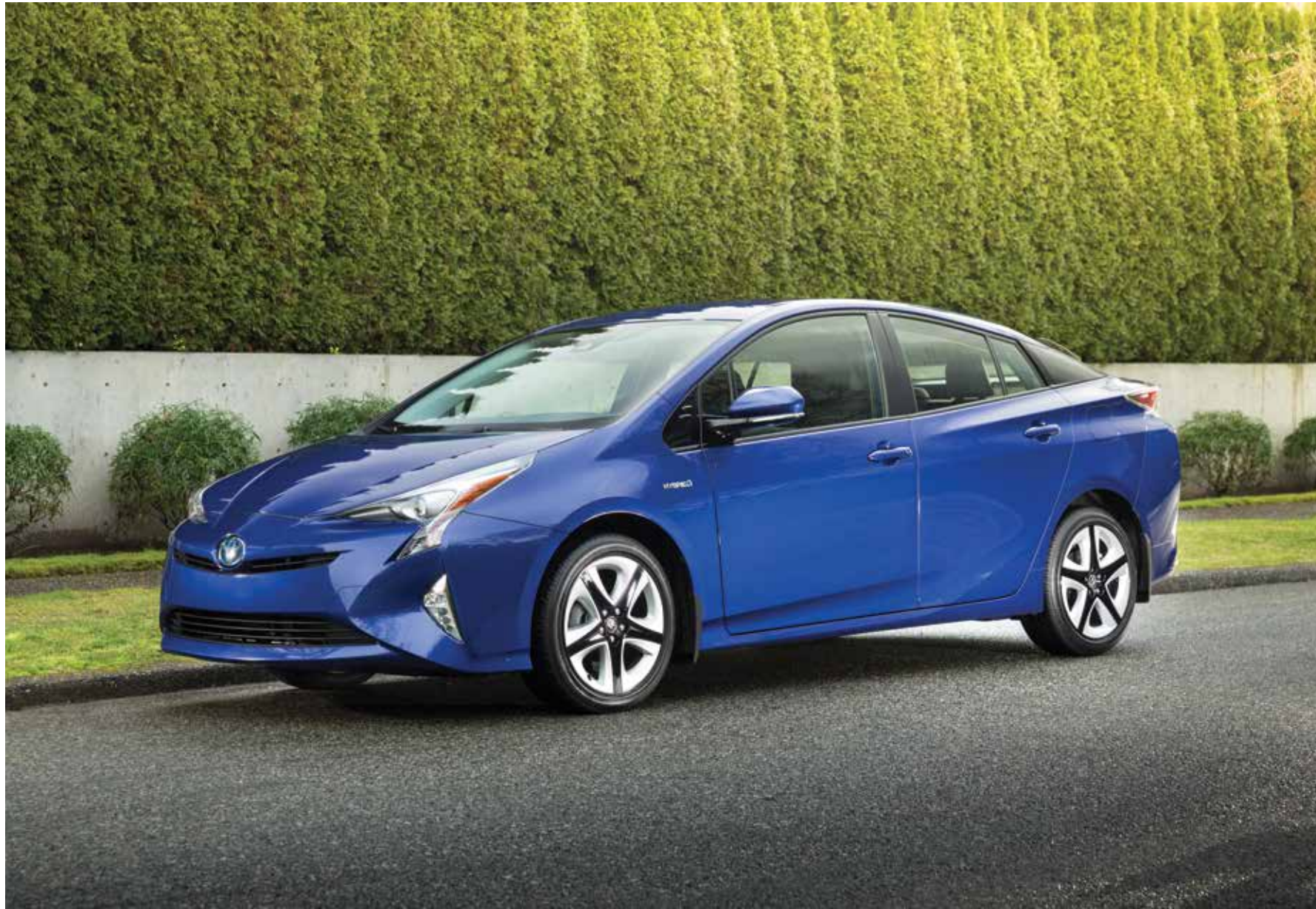
The similarities don't really carry over to the driving dynamics. For starters, the powerplant is completely different, the Spider opting for a small displacement, force-fed approach. The 1.4-litre MultiAir turbocharged four cylinder, borrowed from the 500 Abarth, generates 160 horsepower. And with a 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 148 lb-ft at 4,600 rpm.

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. The 2017 Fiat 124 Spider is available now.



Prius launch

Toyota hybrid enters fourth generation



It would not be a stretch to say that finding someone who has never heard of the Toyota Prius would be difficult. Many people have likely sat in one at one time or another, considering many taxi companies around the world favours the fuel-efficient vehicles for their fleets. Now in its fourth iteration, 2017 marks the 20th anniversary of the world's first mass-produced hybrid.

"One of my first tasks when I joined Toyota about 18 years ago was to introduce the media and others to the very first generation Prius, says Toyota's Stephen Beatty during a launch event last year for the redesigned model, adding it originally represented the company's

vision of what mobility in the future might look like. "It's a car that's not only stylish and fun, but it's fitted with a lot of advanced technologies including some that only a hybrid makes possible."

Brand new platform

The most obvious difference of this car from the generations previous is the look, now significantly more aggressive. The current model, which is sold globally, is the first to be built on the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA), a platform underpinning several Toyotas and Lexus' to come.

The signature "Triangle Silhouette" wedge-like profile is still present, but the entire vehicle is longer and sits

20 millimetres lower. The peak of the roof has been moved forward by 170 mm for a leaner appearance and improved aerodynamics, and working together with air stabilizing fins installed on the underside, front quarter window and taillights, help to achieve a slippery drag coefficient of 0.24.

The bi-LED headlamps split off from the integrated turn signals, matching triangular LED running foglights underneath. At the back, the tails are an even more distinctive shape, resembling a pair of hooks that dip deep down into the rear bumper cover.

Inside, the familiar geometric-patterned shift lever has been moved up onto the dashboard, surrounded





by lots of futuristic-looking trim pieces finished in white. A 6.1-inch Display Audio screen hooked up to a backup camera is standard, bumped up to a 7-inch monitor and navigation package on the Touring grade and above. All grades except Base also receive the SofTex material seen in former Prii covering the seats and steering wheel.

Powertrain

As is the case in the outgoing example, a 1.8-litre four-cylinder gasoline engine is mated to two electric motors and managed by a CVT transmission, together producing 121 net horsepower and a manufacture-estimated fuel consumption rating of 4.5 L/100 km. If you engage the new Power mode like I did, causing the computer to adjust the shift points for sportier acceleration then you trade economy for a little bit more fun. I still managed to net around 7.2 L/100 km

with the throttle mashed on more than one occasion. The components making up The Prius' Hybrid Synergy Drive are smaller and lighter, including a shrunken battery moving from under the luggage area to beneath the rear seat, opening up more cargo space. As part of TNGA, the Prius rides on a newly developed double wishbone rear suspension and re-valved shock dampening. Combined with a lower centre of gravity and the reduced weight of the powertrain components, the handling feels much more planted than before. To demonstrate this, Toyota set up a simple slalom course in a parking lot and guests were encouraged to weave in-between cones as quickly as they'd like. My test runs became increasingly spirited each time, and the car darted in and out with little body roll and only the slightest squeals of protest from the tires.

Safe and convenient

Last year, the 2016 Prius was one of the first in the current fleet to offer the optional Toyota Safety Sense (TSS) suite combining four safety systems, built around a camera and millimetre-wave radar: pre-collision braking with pedestrian detection, lane departure warning, automatic high beams and adaptive cruise control. A couple of other innovations, utilizing ultrasonic sensors mounted around the body, are Intelligent Clearance Sonar that gauges possible collisions with obstacles or oncoming objects when turning right or left, and Simple Intelligent Park Assist that guides the driver into a parking space while backing-in. "Toyota engineers and designers have given the fourth-generation Prius everything it needs to continue to be a pioneering automobile and the world's best selling hybrid," says Beatty.



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Maserati Levante S review

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 all new 2017 Levante S, the brand’s first entry into the segment. 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.

Elegant looks

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.

Performance

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 race car. 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 also goes 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.

It may come as a surprise that Maserati is actually owned by Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA), and the Levante is assembled at FCA's Mirafiori factory in Turin, Italy.



mavi

Honda CR-V



It's hard to believe that it has been over 20 years since the very first Honda CR-V first made its debut in Japan in 1995 as a concept car. Due to the CR-V exceeding Japanese Government dimension regulations, the original CR-V was regarded as a luxury vehicle and only sold in Japan at Honda Verno dealerships, which sold established Honda products with a higher content of standard equipment and or a more sporting nature.

5th generation Comfortable Runabout Vehicle

Completely reengineered and redesigned for 2017, the all-new Honda CR-V re-iterates tenets on which

has resulted in its continued popularity. These include competency, reliability and versatility, all of which have been improved with this 5th generation model. The 2017 CR-V is built on the same Honda compact global platform introduced on the 10th generation Civic. For increased safety, the body utilizes 56.5% high strength steel folded into a bold and sophisticated new look.

It all starts with a fresh new aggressive front end with wing-shaped LED daytime running lights and muscular fenders. Step up to the highest Touring trim level, and you'll also get the added benefit of Honda's signature LED headlights with available automatic

high beams. The long hood, longer wheelbase, combined with the short rear overhang and dual exhausts give the new CR-V a more athletic presence than before. While I'd stop short of calling it sporty, it is at least sophisticated and handsome.

What's under the bonnet?

For the first time ever, the CR-V is available with a turbocharged engine. Most CR-Vs will be equipped with Honda's 1.5-litre turbocharged 4-cylinder engine producing 190 hp and 179 ft-lbs of torque. But there is also a 2.4-litre non-turbocharged direct injection 4-banger VTEC engine on lower trim models.





For maximum efficiency, all CR-Vs are equipped with Honda’s Continuously Variable Transmission and Honda’s first ever implementation of an Active Shutter front grille, which can close at higher speed to lower aerodynamic drag. Combined with the CR-V’s more aerodynamic new body, Honda expects that the vehicle will achieve best-in-class fuel economy.

The CR-V is also available with the latest Real Time AWD with Intelligent Control, basically Honda’s latest traction and stability control system

On the inside

To make your every day drive more pleasant, there is a premium new interior with features that you’d expect on far more expensive luxury vehicles. Look around and you’ll immediately notice the upgraded materials throughout, including a soft-touch dashboard

and nicely stitched seats. Families will immediately appreciate the top-in-class interior space, and the best rear seat legroom in its class.

There are also niceties including a colour TFT instrument gauge cluster, an available panoramic moonroof, and Honda’s 7” latest touchscreen infotainment system (thankfully now equipped with a proper volume knob).

The GPS system is powered by the simple-to-use TomTom navigation interface and now also supports Apple CarPlay and Android Auto platforms.

Higher levels of safety equipment

The CR-V also expands the application of “Honda Sensing” suite of advanced active and passive safety and driver-assistive technologies. Honda is clearly is dead set on maintaining the model’s status as the outright

benchmark in the highly popular compact SUV segment!

Dubbed Honda Sensing Technologies, not only is there Forward Collision Warning and Collision Mitigation Braking, but also Lane Departure Warning, Lane Keeping Assist, and Adaptive Cruise Control with low-speed follow (in stop-and-go traffic).

On the passive safety front, the CR-V is built on Honda’s next-generation Advanced Compatibility Engineering body structure, targeting the highest available collision safety ratings globally.

How does it drive?

If you’re a fan of the new Civic, you’ll feel right at home behind the wheel of this latest CR-V.

The added benefit of a more aerodynamic exterior is a lower level of interior noise. While past Hondas haven’t

exactly excelled in the sound dampening department, the CR-V does well in this category.

The electric power steering can feel a bit numb on-centre, but overall it’s light and precise enough for this class of vehicle. There are tubular front and solid rear stabilizer bars that promote quick turn-in and flatter cornering, but it’s not exactly sporty. Overall, the front MacPherson strut and rear multi-link suspension have been set up for a steady, confident, and secure ride, befitting the CR-V’s primary mission as a people hauler.

Final thoughts

If you’re looking for a reliable, safe, and stylish looking compact SUV, the 2017 Honda CR-V is a solid bet. Not only does it have an outstanding track record, but this latest model features high levels of standard equipment, the latest in passive and active safety technologies, a spacious high quality interior, and all at a great value.



Lexus UX Concept

Lexus kicks crossover gear up a notch with new concept



Think the Lexus NX looks futuristic? Then prepare to have your socks blown off with the Lexus UX Concept compact crossover.

Lexus premiered the vehicle, representing Lexus' vision for a small SUV of the future, at the Mondial de l'Automobile motor show in Paris.

Conception

The UX was dreamt up by ED², the automaker's design centre in the South of France.

"The biggest challenge for any designer is always to create something new and original, yet with relevance to both the customer and the brand," said ED² president Simon Humphries in a news announcement. "Overall, this is a product which gives another hint of the potential for Lexus' design approach to satisfy those

criteria. The expression of a progressive, strong yet artistic & premium product which further enhances Lexus' unique and challenging brand position."

DNA

With seating for four, the UX takes the muscular appearance of an off-road vehicle and adds some aerodynamic elements of a sports car to the mix. There are huge angular fender arches hanging above each wheel, and the chassis sits low to the ground.

A new styling concept called "inside-out" is also being introduced on the crossover, where visual elements from the exterior blend into the interior, and vice versa. For instance, the front fenders flow into the cabin and house display screens showing images captured by rear facing cameras mounted on the doors.

Not everything has been changed — the signature spindle grille, albeit evolved, remains the main focal point of the front fascia.

Like a trendy meal at a modern restaurant, the inside of the vehicle has been deconstructed. A structural roof bar is visible to passengers, the A pillar is see-through, made from a clear polycarbonate material, and the seats are, well, barely there.

Innovative seat technology

The UX receives the first application of the Lexus Kinetic Seat Concept, looking a little like a Halloween prop with its black and orange colour scheme and spider web appearance. Rather than conventional upholstery, fibre netting is used, radiating out from the centre of the two sections. Flexible in nature, the



net conforms to the occupants shape and effectively distributes the load to allow for comfortable prolonged sitting.

In addition to better load dispersal, the seat is built to simulate the stabilizing effect of a human spine. Both the backrest and cushion accommodate and move in accordance with a person's individual body shape and vehicle momentum. This helps to mitigate the head "bobbing" effect during driving, particularly for passengers, thus keeping the field of vision steady and providing an overall better ride.

Lexus forwent using petroleum-derived materials and instead chose to go with an environmentally friendly synthetic spider silk — called QMONOS, made by Japanese advanced biomaterials company Spiber — to make the threading for the backrest. The material is comprised primarily of protein made from a microbial fermentation process, which is then spun into the durable and strong final form boasting excellent shock absorbance properties.



Holograms and Artificial Intelligence

in tomorrow’s vehicles



The Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas brings about the latest technology, the greatest innovators, and a taste of our future lives. This annual tradeshow, held in January every year and not open to the public, used to be about the latest gadget, the best television, and drones. However as modern cars are increasingly packed to the brim with technology, car manufacturers have

been choosing CES to showcase their current and future innovations. Whether it is electric power, in-car entertainment, or self-driving/autonomous capabilities, all of the above made their appearances at last and this year's show. In fact, there was an entire convention hall filled with just carmakers alone! In many ways, automakers are trying to ensure that future cars are as connected to your life as

your smartphone. A large part of the smartphone's power is its ability to connect to the cloud to enable collaborative new services and experiences through a multitude of devices. The autonomous driving car of the future will be just such a device. **Toyota Concept-i**
A vision into motoring in year 2020
Friendly, Personalized, Fun. Those are not necessarily



adjectives that we currently use to describe our present day driving experiences. Toyota feels that the vehicle of the future can indeed be all of those things and much more focused on you, the driver. And that's the vision behind their Concept-i car, designed by Toyota's CALTY Design Research in Newport Beach, California. Toyota's view is that vehicles of the future should start with the people who use them and that it's all about the driver and vehicle relationship. Key to making the Concept-i's vehicle technology welcoming and approachable is a next-generation user interface that serves as a platform for the vehicle's AI Agent, nicknamed "Yui". The philosophy behind the user experience technology, developed by the Toyota Innovation Hub in San Francisco, is called "kinetic warmth. This belief centres around mobility

technology being warm, welcoming, and above all, fun. The Concept-i leverages the power of Yui to anticipate people's needs and improve their lives. Yui learns with the driver to build a relationship that is meaningful and human beyond just driving patterns and schedules. Toyota says that the idea is to be able to measure emotion, mapped against where and when the driver travels around the world. The Concept-i then leverages advanced automated vehicle technologies to help enhance driving safety. The interface begins with a visual representation of Yui home centered on the dashboard. Concept-i avoids screens on the centre console and only reveals information where and when it's needed. Coloured lights emanate throughout the vehicle in sweeping lines, with interior shapes designed to enhance Yui's ability to use light, sound, and touch to communicate

critical information, such as whether or not the car is in automated or manual drive mode. Even the Concept-i's exterior is designed to enable the car to engage with the world around it. Yui can appear on the car's exterior panels to greet occupants as they approach the car. The rear of the vehicle has the ability to communicate messages to drivers in the vicinity. Ian Cartabiano, studio chief designer at Toyota's CALTY design facility, insists that their vision for the future is that driving is still fun. From what I saw, it's clear that Toyota still wants to ensure that future generations experience the joy of driving. **BMW i Inside Future**
While Toyota presented an actual car, BMW presented what they called a "sculpture" with a glimpse into the possible interior of the future. The BMW i Inside Future showcased a selection



of trailblazing technology and focuses on the opportunities and challenges presented by fully automated driving. What kind of experience will such a car journey offer and what will such an interior look like? BMW's vision is that there will be seamless integration between personalization of the vehicular space and one's home.

The sculpture's piece-de-resistance was the astonishing and fully functional BMW HoloActive Touch system. This innovative interface takes current infotainment systems into the Star Trek-like era, with a free-floating display operated using finger gestures.

Touch the virtual button floating in mid-air and you can actually feel the tactile feedback as confirmation of your action. The experience is totally foreign, but



completely jaw-dropping. BMW's tactile feedback technology essentially works by vibrating the air around one's finger by using a sophisticated pulse, sort of like a tightly focused subwoofer. An overhead camera detects the driver's hand movement within a set space and once the position of one's fingertips is in the right spot, the pulse is emitted.

With HoloActive Touch, for the first time ever, the infotainment system's functions can be controlled without any physical contact with materials. But yet the technology still enables visual and tangible driver-vehicle interaction familiar from conventional touchscreens. BMW's HoloActive Touch allows drivers and passengers to access the wide variety of services provided by BMW Connected.



BMW shows us their vision

of automated driving at CES2017



Every January, the world’s media swarms Las Vegas Nevada for the annual Consumer Electronics Show. Now in its 50th year, CES is a global consumer electronics and technology tradeshow that showcases the hottest tech gadgets of tomorrow. With technology being increasingly prevalent in cars today, BMW invited us for an exclusive sneak peek of its advances in the areas of automated driving, intelligent connectivity and control and display systems.

Intelligent Connectivity

BMW has a good track record of bringing to market systems that are presented at CES. For example the Remote 3D View system presented by BMW at last

year’s CES was brought to market in record-quick time. By combining the Surround View driver assistance system with BMW Connected connectivity features, this system allows a three-dimensional view of the vehicle and its surroundings to be transmitted via a mobile data connection to the driver’s smartphone. This service, which allows drivers to keep their eye on their parked vehicle at any time, regardless of their location, has made its production model debut in February 2017 on board the new BMW 5 Series.

A preview of future autonomous vehicles

Nonetheless, BMW’s engineers were still wary of calling our demonstrator 5 Series an “autonomous

vehicle”, but rather a preview of the Level 3 autonomous car that should reach production status by 2021.

Key to our preview was the all-new BMW 5 Series sedan equipped with “Personal CoPilot”. Already packed with loads of driver aid technology in its current production form, the prototype 5 Series was remarkably unchanged despite its self-driving capabilities. However, the prototype relied on a special laptop in the trunk which could cross-check the vehicle’s position against a highly detailed roadmap, resulting in very accurate lane-keeping. Rather than just showcase an autonomous vehicle like other auto manufacturers at CES, what was uniquely

eye-opening was the BMW’s overall vision of how a Personal CoPilot car could be integrated into our future lives. Working through the car’s link-up with their Open Mobility Cloud and the BMW Connected personal mobility companion app, the systems work in tandem to consider the driver’s appointments of the day and contacts to automatically calculate an optimal drive route with segments that can be safely conducted in autonomous mode.

No longer needing to operate the controls when behind the wheel, drivers can use this freed-up time to relax or plan the rest of their day. To showcase this, BMW equipped our prototype 5 Series with a special tablet. Once the car was in Passenger mode, we were allowed to stream movies via Amazon Prime Video and even order needed items online through Prime Now. The car was even automatically dimmed the interior





lights and closed the rear sunshades when a movie was selected! Additionally, the car's iDrive system was able to pull up local points of interest onto and read out TripAdvisor-style information related to these places.

Partnerships with other technology companies

The connected driving experience was also enhanced by intelligent voice control. BMW Connected demos featured a visionary concept of an in-car voice-controlled personal digital assistant that customers are familiar with in other areas of their daily life. The system presented at CES 2017 was the in-car application of Microsoft's Cortana. This means that in future applications, the voice-controlled capabilities already offered by Microsoft Cortana on a home PC or smartphone in future could also be available on board a BMW. For example, BMW Connected can provide a reminder en-route of an upcoming appointment for which no location has yet been fixed, and Cortana can be used to make a



suitable restaurant recommendation and reserve a table. BMW's CES2017 preview provided us with a glimpse of how we could travel around in the near future, what

we can expect of a car's interior, and how we might want to experience a journey. From what we saw in Las Vegas, the future is very friendly indeed!



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Porsche: then till now

helped begin a long legacy of amazing performance machines to come out of Europe that continues to this day. Below is a brief timeline of noteworthy Porsche moments.

Early Years

1948 - The 356 is introduced, named after its design project number. Production starts in Austria and later moves to Germany.

1950 - First North American Porsche order is placed.

1951 - Ferdinand Porsche dies. Engine output of 356 increases to 60.

1954 - A stripped-down version of the 356, the

Early Years

1948 - The 356 is introduced, named after its design project number. Production starts in Austria and later moves to Germany.

1950 - First North American Porsche order is placed.

1951 - Ferdinand Porsche dies. Engine output of 356 increases to 60.

1954 - A stripped-down version of the 356, the

Speedster, is released.

1956 - The 10,000th 356 is built.

911 Era

1963 - Porsche unveils the 911, which succeeds the 356 and features a new 2.0-litre, 130-hp six-cylinder engine.

1964 - The 911 begins production and retails for \$5,500 US.

1965 - After 17 years, the 356 is discontinued. Its engine lives on in a 911 body dubbed the 912, the new entry-level model priced at \$4,000 US.

1966 - A Targa variant of the 911, with a removable

roof panel, is added to the lineup.

1970 - In a joint project between Porsche and Volkswagen, the 914 is born: a mid-engine, two-seater roadster with pop-up headlights. Engine choices are a four cylinder from VW or a six cylinder from Porsche.

Turbocharged and topless

1975 - North America meets the 911 Turbo for the first time. Offered as a 1976 model, the Turbo combines supercar performance with everyday practicality.

1976 - The 924, a front-engine sports coupe, replaces the 914. This time it's offered with an Audi engine.

1978 - Another departure from the 911 takes shape: the front-engine, 240 hp V8 928.

1983 - A 911 Cabriolet is released and overtakes the Targa as the open-air driver's Porsche of choice.

1984 - Porsche AG goes public. The 911 is now referred to as the Carrera.

All-Wheel

1990 - There are plenty of firsts for the 911 Carrera such as an all-wheel drive system, 85 per cent new parts and a Tiptronic automatic transmission.





1995 - Front-engine models (968 and 928) are discontinued.

1996 - The one millionth Porsche is built.

Modern Day

1997 - The mid-engine Porsche Boxster convertible is introduced.

1998 - Ferry Porsche dies. The company redesigns the 911 from the ground up using a liquid-cooled engine.

2000 - The Carrera GT supercar concept with a 5.5 L V10 is unveiled at the Paris Auto Show.

2003 - Porsche begins sales of its first sport utility vehicle, the Cayenne Turbo and Cayenne S.

2006 - The mid-engine Porsche Cayman is introduced.

2009 - At the Shanghai Auto Show, Porsche unveils its first sports sedan: the Panamera.

Electric Age

2010 - Porsche Cars North America rolls out a production gasoline/electric hybrid for the first time with the Cayenne S Hybrid.

2013 - As part of a facelift for the Panamera, a plug-in hybrid version of the Panamera is released called the S E-Hybrid.



2014 - Two more plug-ins are made available: the Cayenne S E-Hybrid, and the 918 Spyder 608 hp

supercar with 887 net horsepower. Porsche also enters the compact crossover market with the Macan.



Bentley introduces the Bentayga Mulliner

The Ultimate Luxury SUV



Bentley Motors has announced the introduction of the Bentayga Mulliner: the ultimate luxury SUV. Bentley’s in-house personal commissioning division, Mulliner, has applied its exquisite craftsmanship to the multi-award-winning Bentayga, creating a new flagship model and setting new standards in automotive luxury, ideal for the discerning Middle East customer. New features – including optional Duo Tone paintwork, unique 22” wheels, Mulliner Bottle Cooler and a new veneer concept – complement the Bentayga’s sculptural, modern design. Robin Peel, Head of Marketing – International for Bentley Motors, said: “The Bentayga by Mulliner is the personification of Bentley: it further raises the benchmark of modern luxury. The first edition of the Bentayga was one of the most eagerly awaited models in the region and we are very pleased to unveil this extraordinary creation by our craftsmen at Crewe.”

Featuring Bentley’s class-leading 6.0-litre, W12 engine, the Bentayga Mulliner combines efficiency and refinement with ultra-luxurious levels of power and torque. With 608 PS (600 bhp) and 900 Nm (663 lb. ft.) delivering a 0-60 mph time of 4.0 seconds (0-100 km/h in 4.1 seconds) and a top speed of 187 mph (301 km/h), the Bentayga is the world’s fastest SUV. Produced in very limited numbers due to the highly complex, handcrafted nature of the Bentayga Mulliner’s luxurious interior features, this new flagship model will be available to order in Spring 2017 across the region.

An Extraordinary Mulliner Exterior

The Bentayga Mulliner is the most exquisitely appointed luxury SUV ever created, and will appeal to Middle East owners searching for the pinnacle of go-anywhere motoring, with the characteristic Bentley performance and comfort.

This new model introduces striking optional Duo Tone paintwork for the first time on Bentayga. The elegant finish is achieved by choosing the perfect proportional balance point for the split, the resulting effect making the cabin and bonnet appear as though floating. The split also serves to enhance the Bentayga’s trademark super-formed muscularity and accentuates its powerful presence.

The new Mulliner 22” Paragon seven-spoke wheels with floating wheel centres, unique exterior badge, and the addition as standard of body-coloured lower bodywork and bright chromed lower bumper grilles, complete the exterior enhancements.

The Ultimate Handcrafted Interior

Inside, Mulliner has combined traditional and modern coachbuilding design. A new Mulliner designed interior colour split – with the front and rear seats finished in different hide colours and offered in seven

suggested colour ways – complements the optional Duo Tone exterior paintwork. The hand-stitched hides are finished with unique Mulliner embroidery and contrast stitching.

Bespoke features by Mulliner include a new Mulliner Bottle Cooler in the rear of the cabin, featuring an illuminated chilling cabinet and bespoke Cumbria Crystal flutes, all seamlessly integrated into the generously proportioned, rear centre console. Ombré Burr Walnut Veneer is exclusively introduced to the Bentayga Mulliner model. This showcases a unique wood transition from Black through to Burr Walnut as the veneer wraps around the interior and a special veneered panel replaces the standard central console fascia.

Mood lighting, comprising six different ‘moods’, together with illuminated Mulliner tread plates and Bentley LED Welcome Lamps, create a luxurious night-time ambience. Bentayga Mulliner also offers owners the chance to create their own bespoke ambience, with ‘My Mood’, which allows occupants to choose from 15 different colours, while also adjusting the brightness in doors, armrests and footwells.

Luxury in Audio, Comfort and Convenience

The Naim for Bentley Audio system in the Bentayga Mulliner is the most powerful, highest quality audio system in the class, featuring twenty speakers driven by a 1,950-watt, 21-channel amplifier.



A convenient, remote-controlled parking climate control function allows the vehicle interior to be cooled or heated when the engine is switched off, while electric rear window blinds and a double sun-visor are also available with the Sunshine Specification. The Bentayga Mulliner also benefits from Bentley Dynamic Ride – the world’s first electric active roll control technology that utilises an unrivalled 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. The flagship Bentayga is also available with the exquisite optional Linley Hamper by Mulliner, complete with refrigerator, bespoke fine Linley china cutlery, crockery and crystal glass, and storage area for dry goods. For comfort in the great outdoors, sections can be removed and used as seats. Another striking option is the bespoke mechanical Mulliner Tourbillon by Breitling clock. The most complex of watch mechanisms, the Mulliner Tourbillon features 196 individual pieces and is automatically wound periodically by a dedicated high-precision winding mechanism within the car. This masterpiece is machined in solid gold (customers can select from yellow, white or rose gold), with a choice of either a mother-of-pearl or black ebony face and decorated with eight diamond indexes.

Mulliner – The Beauty of Bespoke

As Bentley’s personal commissioning division, Mulliner exists to respond to individual customer requests for further bespoke features on the Bentayga Mulliner. The experienced team, supported by the in-house engineers and designers at Crewe, prides itself on a long history of fulfilling the desires and demands of Bentley’s most discerning Middle East customers.



Porsche Connect

Porsche goes online

Porsche revealed the redesigned 2017 Panamera early last summer, and shortly followed up with the announcement of its next-generation infotainment system that will find its way into the sports sedan. Dubbed Porsche Connect, it will work with the Porsche Communication Management infrastructure and include features such as enhanced navigation, customizable widgets and a companion app granting access of select vehicle operations via a mobile device.

Making things easier

In a press release, Porsche says, “Drivers are now able to use their time in the car more efficiently and also keep an eye on their Porsche at all times. In a similar way to smartphones and tablets, Porsche Connect is helping to simplify everyday life through mobile technology.”

The so-called centerpiece of Porsche Connect is a 12.3-inch high-resolution touch and gesture sensitive display in the new Panamera — exact configuration differs depending on the model. Users have the option of creating shortcuts to launch favourite commands, and change what is shown by waving a hand in front of the monitor. The display also controls the improved GPS, which takes advantage of both Google Earth and Google Street View to provide much more detailed directions. Frequent fliers can bring up flight information to check arrival and departure times, delays, gate and terminal numbers, and even see available spots at nearby parking lots.



Smartphone integration

Apple CarPlay has been receiving a lot of press lately in the tech world, and is now fully integrated into the system. Once a compatible iPhone has been plugged in, running at least iOS 7.1 or higher, several familiar programs can be opened onscreen at the touch of a button like phone and messages, audio (Podcasts, Audiobooks, Spotify, Stitcher radio) and even iBooks. Or, for those who prefer to do things by talking, Siri speech recognition is along for the ride. For example, a text can be composed and sent using one's voice, or queuing up a playlist. Speaking of apps, The Porsche Car Connect app is free to download in the App Store or on Google Play, and allows locking and unlocking

the doors, setting the temperature and checking the mileage, all remotely. To save time, drivers can search up a destination on their phone and then send it directly to the onboard navigation. The app can sync calendar appointments and stream music once connected to the vehicle as well.

A couple of final pieces of Porsche Connect are an Internet cloud portal offering owners various handy online management and maintenance services, and a handy smartphone storage compartment in the cabin that acts as an antenna booster, optimizing reception and battery consumption.

To learn more, visit the Porsche Connect website at www.porsche.com/countries/connect.



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