

DETROIT AUTO SHOW

JANUARY 2019



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The North American International Auto Show has been held in Detroit in January each year for years, though this was the last time for that; starting in 2020, it will be held in June, for a variety of reasons, weather probably being one, but it's more complex than that and a topic for another time. This year, the show (also known as NAIAS or more colloquially just the Detroit auto show) ran the same week as Arizona's collector car auctions, which kept us close to home. But it's not as though we missed the Detroit events. We traveled there the week before for a couple of reveals; others were repeated at Barrett-Jackson (where some VIN number one vehicles from Detroit also crossed the block); and a couple of other Detroit reveals were soon followed by launch drives—all of the above covered elsewhere in this issue. With not that many reveals in Detroit, our multi-state approach turned out to be at least as good as being there, and in some cases even better.

We flew to Detroit the week before NAIAS for an early reveal of the 2020 **FORD** Explorer at Ford Field (see elsewhere in this issue). It was revealed again for the multitudes at the show, and they had saved some additional news for then—an Explorer ST with a 400-hp performance-tuned 3.0L EcoBoost V6 and a 318-hp Explorer Hybrid with over 500 miles of range. Ford also used the show to announce a new deal with Volkswagen that will involve trucks and vans globally at first, with EV, autonomous and mobility projects to follow.

Unthinkable to many 10 or 15 years ago, Chinese-built vehicles have been on sale in the US for a few years now from familiar European and American brands. Now get ready for Chinese domestic badges. **GAC** Motor (China's fifth-largest) sets the stage with the Entranze EV, a seven-passenger electric vehicle concept, the first from their new California-based GAC Design Studio. Presented as the ultimate road-trip car, it's a multi-purpose utility equally ready for long trips to the beach or mountains, and for the daily commute. Patio-inspired sliding glass doors are said to reflect indoor/outdoor beach house life.

The all-wheel-drive **INFINITI** QX Inspiration mid-sized SUV concept—which they say has been 30 years in the making—serves as a precursor to Infiniti's



• 2020 Ford Explorer ST



• GAC Entranze EV concept



• Infiniti QX Inspiration electric concept

first fully-electric vehicle. The concept is said to combine the influences of modern architecture and technology, with a form language that hints at the potency and character of electrified powertrains, drawing on the Japanese spatial concept of "Ma." Japanese DNA continues with the handcrafted interior's traditional techniques and materials. The Infiniti QX Inspiration was named Best Future Concept in the *Detroit News* Readers' Choice Awards.

Previously shown at NY Fashion Week and the SEMA Show, the all-new three-row 2020 **KIA** Telluride SUV had its formal auto show reveal at Detroit. "Big, bold and boxy," the 291-hp all-wheel-drive eight-seater was designed specifically for the US at Kia Design Center in Irvine. Powered by a 3.8L Atkinson Cycle GDI V6, Kia Telluride has an 8-speed automatic, four-wheel independent suspension, a highly rigid monocoque body shell of 59.4 percent advanced high-strength steel, self-leveling air suspension, Smart-Eco-Sport-Comfort drive modes, a Snow mode, and tow capacity up to 5000 pounds.

We've been highly impressed with our time in the **LEXUS** RC F and even its lighter-spec F Sport sibling. For 2020, Lexus widens that gap, with advanced performance tech upgrades to the RC F—new intake manifold, rear half-shafts, more aluminum suspension parts and stiffer bushings, even a lighter AC compressor—adding five horses (now 472 hp). In addition, an RC F Track Edition was revealed at Detroit, with the same engine, but significant weight reduction and additional downforce based on the RC F GT3 race car, as well as its own red leather and Alcantara interior. Both arrive in second quarter 2019.

RAM TRUCKS has lapped up one trophy after another for its new Ram 1500 lineup since its introduction (here in Arizona) last spring. NAIAS in Detroit was the occasion for the static reveal of equally totally redesigned and reengineered Ram 2500 and 3500 Heavy Duty pickups, which they then brought to southern Nevada, just across the river from Arizona, for a launch drive event, which would be our first time with the trucks (see elsewhere in this issue).

We have this alphabetized under S, where you're likely to look for it, but the 2020 Ford Mustang **SHELBY** GT500 is a Ford product (while some others have been Shelby products, and yes, it's sometimes hard to tell the players without the program). Though revealed at NAIAS, we had a special session with it the week before, outside Detroit (which was embargoed until the show reveal). The car then came to Barrett-Jackson for its Arizona reveal, where VIN 001 was auctioned for charity. (See all of the above elsewhere in this issue.)

TOYOTA Supra, a beloved nameplate missing from the marketplace for years, returned at NAIAS, to much anticipation, offering two-seat coupe performance at a price point just under \$50,000. Though we weren't in Detroit for this reveal, the car was also revealed just 80 minutes later in Scottsdale at Barrett-Jackson, where its first example was also sold (see elsewhere in this issue).

NAIAS also included presentation of the 2019 North American Car, Utility and Truck of the Year (**NACTOY**) awards, fruits of a months-long process involving a panel of 54 of our automotive media peers. This year's winners were the Genesis G70 (Car of the Year), Hyundai Kona and Kona EV (Utility of the Year) and Ram 1500 (Truck of the Year), all covered in our pages prior (Ram 1500 at launch in Arizona, Kona at launch in Hawaii, G70 on a San Diego roundtrip).

Next up was the Chicago Auto Show in February, to be followed by the Geneva Motor Show in March and the New York International Auto Show in April. ■



• 2020 Kia Telluride



• 2020 Lexus RC F Track Edition



• 2019 Ram 2500-3500 Heavy Duty



• 2020 Ford Mustang Shelby GT500



• 2020 Toyota Supra