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This year's Paris auto show centred on production cars. There were fewer concept cars than usual. In this report, Driving Vision News present the new cars exhibited in Paris and their lighting equipment design, safety, and styling.

Some of the most innovative production-car lighting we found was on the Audi A3, BMW 7, Mercedes A-Class, Ford Mondeo, Seat Leon, Citroën DS3 Cabrio, Opel Adam, Renault Clio, and VW Golf.



Renault Clio



Volkswagen Golf



Ford Mondeo



Seat Leon

Despite the relatively small population of concept cars, we found innovative lighting on the Audi Crosslane coupé, the Lexus LF-CC, the BMW Active Tourer, Peugeot ONYX, Nissan Terra, and Ssangyong e-XIV.



Audi Q2



BMW Tourer



Peugeot 2008



Panamera wagon

The main takeaway points for this Paris 2012 Mondial are:

- Compared to the 2010 show, totally focused on eco-friendly cars, the 2012 show was more a display of automakers' strategies to cope with the European market downturn and to respond to market growth in other regions round the world.
- Technologically-focused innovation in highly visible aspects of vehicle design—none such as lighting!—with market-matched models and equipment, are crucial to every automaker's long-term success.
- Thanks to the unlimited styling and appearance-differentiation possibilities of LEDs and related technology and technique, cars presented at this year's Mondial prove there is room for new lighting technologies even in a down-trending market provided they help to reach the hearts of potential customers—a vital lever alongside reaching their minds via improved performance and safety to persuade them to buy.

- Several new important mass market production car models are launched with LED headlamps, namely Ford Mondeo and Seat Leon, now standing side by side with premium BMW 7 Series and Audi A3. We can see a developing picture of the wide variety of designs possible with LED technology.
- Stylish and advanced HID headlamps outnumber all other front light technologies displayed on premium and midrange cars. HID technology is getting a renewal boost thanks to the arrival of intelligent lighting features more practicably implemented with HID than with halogen, and lower-cost, reduced-wattage HID systems.
- Stylish LED rear lamps are increasingly prevalent on cars with LED or HID headlamps.
- Car makers like Ford, Chevrolet, and Volkswagen emphasise the importance of styling. The designers explain their work with videos using sketches, slides and simulations.
- Audi are still the primary car maker to push forward lighting as a technological differentiation factor, but Hyundai-Kia also understand lighting is a great lever of perceived value and they invest a lot in it.
- Several car makers like Renault, Volkswagen, and Opel had their entire exhibition area focused on the presentation of their newly-launched cars.

