

Editorial

Interiors On Display At Geneva Motor Show



The Geneva Motor Show returned Monday last week for a lighter and shorter 100th edition. What was once a major automotive spring event will only occupy one hall of the Palexpo in Geneva, compared to six for the last show in 2019. It's an uphill climb to prove itself still worthy after four years of hiatus on account of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Very few major brands were represented there, with Renault-Dacia as the only European group, Lucid as the only American or newcomer, and Chinese BYD (also introducing their new Yangwang luxury brand) and SAIC, with their MG and IM brands.

This week's in-depth report brings you a look at what was on display, of course with an interior focus.

Today we also bring you step 3 of the survey we announced a couple of weeks ago; please vote by hitting [this link](#). results of the survey will be presented at the Köln Workshop on 23-24 April. By the way, it's time to [register](#), if you've not already done so.

Sincerely yours,

Philippe Aumont
DVN-Interior General Editor

In Depth Interior Technology

Geneva Auto Show: Renault, Lucid, and the Chinese



RENAULT 5 DESIGN SCULPTURE (DVN IMAGES IN THIS ARTICLE EXCEPT AS NOTED)

Renault



Renault revealed their 5 E-Tech electric, as the rebirth of this pop icon; reinvented to popularize EVs.



The original Renault 5 was built from the early 1970s until the mid-1990s, including the homologation special R5 Turbo, with a mid-mounted engine and huge body flares. The new Renault 5 takes elements from the original model, the “Super Cinq” facelift, and the Turbo. It is built on the AmpR Small platform (ex CMF-B), which helps cut costs by borrowing non-EV components such as the front suspension.

The platform offers a long wheelbase (254 cm) relative to the car's length of 392 cm, as well as a flat floor, a low center of gravity, and light weight—less than 1,350 kg for the 40-kWh version. Interior space is the same as the longer Clio; trunk space is 326 liters, with an additional 19 liters of cabin storage.

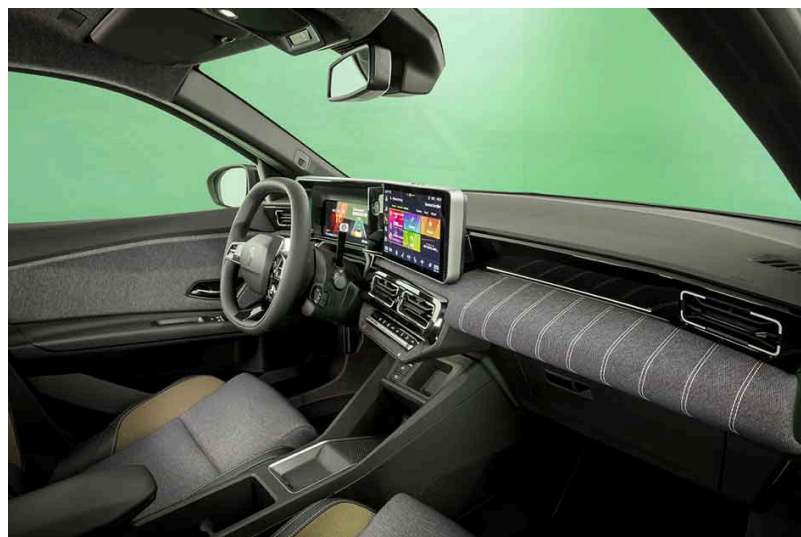


Gilles Vidal, head of design on the 5 project said, “Some will see the simplicity of the lines of a Super 5 and in all cases a sparkling look. The logic was the same inside with the vertical lineage on the right part of the dashboard or the seats evoking the H-shaped buckets of the (R5) Turbo with their very particular style, but with added comfort”.

Deeply bolstered front seats come from the Turbo. Inside, the padded two-level dashboard is drawn from the original. Bright color options is also coming from the original, and the new Renault 5 offers bright Pop Yellow and Pop Green paint as well as midnight blue, white, and black options. A black roof is available on some trim lines.

Design touches intended to build a connection between drivers and the car include a wicker basket to hold baguettes, an illuminated “5” on the hood to show battery charge, and a customizable gear lever.

RENAULT IMAGE



RENAULT IMAGE

The two 10-inch horizontal screens are integrated into a structure provided with a slight angle between the two panels to tilt the dashboard towards the driver. The instrumentation being lower, the outline of the structure becomes much thicker around it and evokes the rectangular and massive cap of the time. The two displays are controlled by the buttons on the steering wheel, by the tactile surface of the one dedicated to multimedia or by voice thanks to "Reno", the brand's digital assistant. It integrates the 200 most asked customer service questions plus ChatGPT artificial intelligence for more natural speech and expanded knowledge. Physical controls are retained for the air conditioning.

New architecture allows rear roominess and easy on-board access; The space for the front passenger's legs is extended under the dashboard, thanks to a recessed glove box allowing the seat to be moved forward and preserving sufficient knee room in the rear for right occupant of the bench seat.

Each trim level will have its atmosphere. The "Evolution" will compensate for the absence of fabric on the dashboard with light tones, white injected plastic trim and stitching in the colors of the French flag. The intermediate "Techno" level will use denim on the seats, door panels and dashboard.

Finally, the top trim will be renewed every year. For the first vintage, this "Collection" version will be called "Iconic Cinq" and will favor the choice of yellow color, matched with a two-tone yellow and gray mottled fabric on board, with "5" logos drawn on the seats.

22 per cent of materials are 'circular', and particularly for fabrics, with 100-per-cent recycled upholstery on the two upper equipment levels. The R5 is said to be 85 per cent recyclable. We come back in later edition on that.

The Renault 5 will be followed by the Renault 4 small SUV, after the original rugged small station/hatchback that first appeared in the 1960s.

Dacia



DACIA IMAGE

Dacia launched their lightweight BEV range with the new Spring model, claimed to be at less than one ton for a 4-door, 4-seat layout. It will be, so far, the lightest BEV on the European market.

The vehicle features a new exterior and interior design. In-cabin technology offers a customizable digital dashboard featuring a 7-in. screen and a 10-in. infotainment center screen. It has been developed on the Renault CMF-B platform.

The basic equipment will notably receive the 10-inch central screen (the instrumentation will go down to 7 inches and the interface will not benefit from integrated Google like the other two trim levels) with Android Auto and wireless Apple CarPlay compatibility.

Dacia also presented their revamped Duster SUV, and World Rally-Raid Championship contender, the Sandrider, which will be driven by Sebastien Loeb starting with Dakar rally-raid 2025. The Sandrider's design

has been inspired by feedback from racing crews. its commitment to affordable decarbonization is supported by synthetic fuel made by Saudi Aramco.

The revamped Duster Interior upgrades include a standard seven-inch digital instrument panel, and a 10.1-inch central touch screen standard on higher trim levels. Base models get just a 3.5-inch display.



YOU CLIP - DVN IMAGES

The Duster will also have numerous opportunities to showcase Dacia's new YouClip system for interior accessories. It comes standard with seven YouClip pre-installed positions, including one on the right side of the steering wheel for smartphones, and one on the central tunnel on the front passenger side to hold handbags and other small objects. Two YouClips are standard in the luggage compartment, while two optional on most trim levels are positioned behind the front seat headrest for tablet computers to entertain rear passengers.

Car of the Year



The Renault Scenic E-Tech Electric won the Car of the Year 2024, and the award ceremony took place in Geneva on Monday 26 February. The voting results of the seven finalists, in order from first: Renault Scenic—BMW 5 Series—Peugeot 3008—Kia EV9—Volvo EX30—BYD Seal—Toyota C-HR.

The Car of the Year trophy has been awarded since 1964. It is supported by nine major publications across Europe: 'Auto' in Italy, 'Autocar' in the UK, 'Automobil Revue/Revue Automobile' in Switzerland, 'Autopista' in Spain, 'AutoTrends' in Belgium, 'Autovisie' in the Netherlands, 'Auto Mobil-Vox' in Germany, 'L'Automobile Magazine' in France and 'Vi Bilägare' in Sweden. The jury 2024 is composed of 58 motoring journalists from 22 countries, who individually test and rate the seven models available to vote for in the final. These seven have previously been whittled down from a total of 29 new vehicles as part of an initial voting round.

BYD



BYD SEAL U DM-i

China's largest EV brand is making a major push in Europe. BYD's Atto 3 is Europe's top-selling full-electric compact SUV. In Geneva, BYD unveiled its first plug-in hybrid model for Europe, the Seal U DM-i, which it said will go on sale in the region in the second quarter.

With a clear and intuitive infotainment system, including OTA capabilities, with a rotating, 15.6-inch tabletlike display, the cabin has plenty of room for five adults. There are also sculpted seats clad in vegan leather, mood lighting, and an Infinity audio suite. Up front, the driver gets a crystal gear selector and wireless charging.

BYD also showed their huge Yangwang U8 plug-in hybrid SUV; Yangwang is BYD's new premium brand.





YANGWYANGWANG U8

Yangwang calls the interior theme “Halo Cockpit” All seats are draped in brown Nappa leather, and there’s a sky roof with a floating starry sky headliner that can be customized in different patterns. U8 has a 7-seat layout (2+2+3), the second row is equipped with two independent business-class type seats, and the third seat can be folded

Cockpit includes a vertical 12.8-inch Galaxy curved screen with an inclination angle of 37°. It uses a curved OLED panel with excellent contrast and bright colors. There’s also the 23.6-inch instrument screen and passenger entertainment screen pass through the back of the Galaxy curved screen.

There are physical buttons and control levers under the central control screen, and the center console is equipped with a wireless charging panel. Since the entire center console is almost occupied by the screen, the air conditioner outlets are placed on top of the center console.

Rear-row passengers are kept entertained with two 12.8-inch floating screens. This is complemented by the Evidence Series Hi-End audio system with 22 speakers, giving occupants a 3D immersive sound experience.

The vehicle is claimed to be amphibious, [see video](#).

BYD also presented the Denza D7 and D9.





Multi-Functional Rear Console - Below

Closed (L) Open (R))



Rear Armrest with small display →



DENZA D9

The Denza D9 is the first high-end MPV in Denza portfolio. It is said to be based on core values of design, ride, intelligence, driving, and safety. It can be had as an EV or a plug-in hybrid. It targets business, diplomatic, and political targets. The MPV is the second model in the brand's line-up and the first to be released since Mercedes-Benz exited their joint venture with BYD.

The cabin has a 2+2+3 configuration with adjustable and folding seats, not to mention ventilation and massaging functions. Aside from the usual pair of screens in the front, there are extra displays mounted on the armrests of the second-row seats to control various functions. There's a rear-seat entertainment system with dual screens, along with a small fridge that can hold as many as six bottles. The captain's chairs in the middle slide fore and aft, offering amounts of legroom, while the grab handle on the B-pillars makes it easier to get in and out. Even rearmost seats get USB ports and a central armrest, along with LED ambient lighting, and speakers from the Dynaudio sound system.

MG

MG is one of the two SAIC brands presented at Geneva. They showed their new MG3 small hatchback, with a full hybrid powertrain rather than a mild-hybrid engine. MG says the car retains the 'fun-to-drive ethos' of past sporty MGs while increasing comfort levels.



MG3 – MG IMAGES



The MG3 emphasizes driving assistants and comfort elements from the entry level on up. There is standard automatic air conditioning, four USB ports and a reversing camera with rear parking sensors. Higher finishes add artificial leather upholstery, hands-free access, heated front seats and steering wheel and a 360° camera.

From an HMI standpoint, it has updated technology including twin digital screens, with the larger central touchscreen measuring 10.25 inches. It has sat nav as standard, along with MG's iSmart connectivity package that includes a smartphone app.

The car has a generator, activated when the electric motor needs energy, which allows to drive electric as often as possible. A heat engine that supplies the electric motor with energy when the car is in Series mode. SAIC also presented their new premium EV brand, IM (for Intelligent Mobility). Their L6 electric sedan was on display; it has a range of up to 800 km.



Lucid

The U.S. EV maker Lucid, founded by former Tesla CTO Peter Rawlinson, targets high-end customers with their Air sedan. Lucid made their European show debut in Geneva, displaying the Gravity SUV and two variants of the Air sedan including the Sapphire.



DVN IMAGES

The Gravity has seating for seven people, with a highly modular interior that sees all seats slide, fold and stow away for storage. Infotainment is taken care of by a big 34-inch 'floating' screen, complete with 6K display, while a similarly large 'frunk' is roomy enough to turn into a picnic bench.



The Lucid Air Sapphire, with three motors, has 1,251 hp and zings to 100 km/h in around 2 seconds. It has a top speed of 330 km/h. The expected WLTP range is over 700 kilometers. The starting price is €250,000! We don't know if skis are included.

The Air Pure is a rear-wheel-drive variant of the Air; it will start at about €85,000 in Europe, Rawlinson said at the show on Monday. Lucid plans to open four new sales points in Germany this year, in addition to the six already open in Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland.

PININFARINA

Foxconn, known for producing Apple iPhones, unveiled the Foxtron Model B five-door hatchback. Foxtron is a collaboration between Foxconn and Taiwanese carmaker Yulon Motor Company, established in 2020, for development and production of EVs in Taiwan. This collaboration focuses on a modular electric vehicle platform.



DVN IMAGES

The Model B is part of Foxtron's lineup of concepts developed on the in-house developed MIH (Mobility in Harmony) modular architecture.



The interior has been simplified as much as possible, and the cabin has been designed to be as spacious as possible. There are few frills. Leather is combined with aluminum and lacquered black for a modern presentation. A few touches of white bring even more brightness to the steering wheel and door panels. Cameras replace traditional mirrors, with visual rendering on screens at the top of the dashboard. Ambient LEDs run along the length of the passenger compartment.

Pininfarina also showed their Enigma GT concept, a 2+2 model described later in this newsletter.

Shenzer

Shenzer is a 70-year-old custom commercial automobile brand from Taipei, Taiwan.



This is a high premium business shuttle type of vehicle. Note the second-row instrument panel with displays, air vents, and glove box architecture—like in the front of the vehicle.

Microlino



Switzerland-based Microshowed their miniature electric car that requires no driver's license (L6e category, AM driver's license); this small EV that's been on sale in Europe for a couple of years has been adapted to meet regulations allowing drivers as young as 14 to get behind the wheel with a top speed of the model is limited to 45 km/h. It has a self-supporting steel unibody that improves safety compared to the tubular frame of other vehicles in its class.

This type of car—limited performance, very low weight, very low footprint in the city—is presented as a carbon usage solution. Is it a solution for city mobility? The future will tell us!

Interior News

Antolin's New Nexus Door Panel Concept

INTERIOR NEWS



Antolin's new Nexus door panel concept aims to cover consumers' demands while meeting the requirements of any client around the world.

Together with key partners like Walter Pack (smart surfaces) and PersiSkin (vegetal skin for interior trim), Antolin had in mind a solution combining sustainable materials—natural, recycled or recyclable—and valuable technologies to enhance user experience.

The four visions offered by Nexus are suitable for any kind of mobility and driving modes:

- E-sential Line, for affordable quality
- Premium Line, for upgrading the mobility experience.
- Car Sharing, creating an own space.
- Self-Driving, comfort on board.

Different designs and architectures of products are needed to integrate circularity and sustainability into innovative technologies and materials. Nexus is based on one core carrier in which, via a plug and play scheme, several functionalities and finishes can be executed to ease the customization as well as the recyclability process during all the phases of the product life cycle.

Antolin focused on materials and eco-design, that is, how the parts that make up the vehicle are designed, and there it is where the circular economy and the use of recycled and natural materials come into play. The carrier is made up with a high recycled content polymer, while the door also includes monomaterial parts and natural or bio-sourcing coverings.

Depending on the vision chosen, the different features available can be added to create a personal space inside the car adapted to user's needs: a 3D hologram driving assistance system provides key information when needed while the backlit solutions allow to generate new light ambiances or to communicate with the passengers. The Nexus range also features a new visual and tactile interface and an active mirroring thanks to a smart decorative surface.

Thermal comfort is achieved thanks to a learning and predictive system which implies energy efficiency.

The door pocket has been reinvented as a versatile plug and play element and an additional storage area has been implemented that can act as a sanitization compartment for personal goods.

Hisense Concept Vehicle with Holographic AR HUD

INTERIOR NEWS



HISENSE IMAGES

Hisense Group is a Chinese maker of appliances, TVs, and electronics; they're headquartered in Qingdao. The concept car they presented at CES 2024 simulates a vehicle environment using advanced laser projection technology. The holographic AR HUD was honored with the CES 2024 Innovation Award; it transforms the windshield into an information hub, displaying vehicle data and road information, while the headlight projection system adds entertainment value by projecting images on walls for entertainment viewing and road safety information on demand. The entry light's high-resolution projection can be used for brand logos or as a greeting for consumers. Additionally, the projection on the side and rear windows allows the vehicle glass to display high-definition images – becoming a medium for consumers to obtain information and view entertainment in the car.

Starting from the driver's cockpit, the heads-up display (HUD) offers an immersive experience by providing turn-by-turn directions, speed, and other essential vehicle information. While the exact resolution and size dimensions are yet to be finalized, the preliminary concept promises a screen size ranging from 13 to 15 inches, ensuring optimal visibility for drivers. Rear passengers get with two additional laser projectors, one on each side, and another centrally located in the rear where the traditional glass would typically be. The idea is that when cars are capable of autonomous driving, the rear passenger seats will swivel around. These laser displays, measuring approximately 30 to 40 inches, create a captivating visual experience for passengers, whether they're embarking on a road trip or enjoying a romantic date night.



According to Hisense, this technology boasts a luminous display surpassing the brightness of conventional LEDs, providing an enhanced viewing experience for all passengers, regardless of external conditions.

A mini-laser projector is located directly under the rearview mirror, providing a luminous projection of the name of the car you are driving. Even if Automotive Laser Display is currently in the concept stage, Hisense said that leading automakers are actively considering adopting this groundbreaking technology. It is based on a triple-laser projection system, delivering a color performance 48 per cent superior to traditional LEDs while maintaining a compact form—80 per cent smaller than conventional optical solutions. Its luminous efficiency makes it the premier choice for automotive displays.

New Mini Interiors: Personalization, Sustainable Materials

INTERIOR NEWS



"Charismatic simplicity", is the slogan identifying the design language of the new MINI family, which translates into reducing the vehicle design to the essentials, though maintaining an elegant and unique appearance. [DVN already reported](#) about this interior, but there's more here.

Two are the driving themes of the new Mini Interiors: personalization, with each trim option offering unique interiors, and attention to sustainability.

The vehicle has been designed to provide a spacious interior, with optional as an opening panoramic glass sunroof and a wireless charging shelf. The rear seats fold down in a 60:40 ratio to expand the luggage compartment, providing up to 725 liters of cargo space. The circular OLED display offers seven Mini Experience Modes, enabling drivers to personalize the cabin ambiance and display settings to match their preferences.

The Mini Intelligent Personal Assistant (IPA) enables drivers to control various vehicle functions using voice commands, and the Mini Digital Key Plus function enables smartphone integration for keyless entry and personalized vehicle settings.

Personalization is emphasized also with the option of two brand-new exterior colours – sunny side yellow and ocean wave green.

But the real highlight are the trims options, offering unique interiors with two-colour design textiles and special knitting process, and 100-per-cent vegan materials. In addition to textiles made from PET bottles, for example, materials quantities are also kept as low as possible, by means of production process optimization avoiding cut-offs waste. In addition, the use of mixed-content materials improves recyclability.

Examples of the new sustainable interior components are the slim dashboard with a textile surface crafted from recycled polyester and the new compact multifunction steering wheel, made with vegan leather.

Vegan leather is implemented also as alternative to seat real leather trim.

But can the vegan only interior compete against leather and, what's wrong with leather? There's a big environmental impact due to the production of leather for large automotive volumes: it's not the most natural and environmentally safe process farming, as converting animal skin to leather demands vast energy and involves hazardous chemicals. And of course, this is not in line with MINI's brand image of being environmentally conscious and animal friendly. Therefore, the choice of Vescin – synthetic leather made of recycled materials, which is itself 100-per-cent recyclable. The Vescin materials are softer to the touch than leatherette and feels more premium.



MINI SEAT WITH VEGAN LEATHER - BMW
IMAGE

Leather alternatives are particularly suitable for areas that are subject to a high level of wear and tear, for example the steering wheel and the seats. And using alternatives for the steering wheel surfaces alone could produce 85% lower carbon emissions along the value creation chain than using real leather.

Nissan Juke Gets Upgraded Interior, Infotainment

INTERIOR NEWS



NISSAN IMAGES



The Nissan Juke, entering production in March at the Sunderland, UK plant, has had an interior overhaul. There's a revamped center console and instrument panel and upgraded materials, aimed at elevating the in-car experience.

The central infotainment screen is now larger and ergonomically inclined toward the driver for enhanced usability. New materials, such as smoother leather-like material and recycled Alcantara inserts, contribute to a luxurious feel. The Central Display has been upgraded to a 12.3in digital TFT screen, offering customizable layouts and displaying essential driving information.

Nissan suggests that the upgraded infotainment system uses a more intuitive interface, improved voice recognition and expanded connectivity options, including wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. Additional features such as speed camera information and video playback from USB devices also aim to improve the user experience.

According to Lesley Busby, color manager, and Mat Weaver, vice president of design, the aim was to bring the exterior of the vehicle to the interior, with customer feedback a strong influence on the revamped interior.

A new N-Sport grade has been introduced, which features distinctive yellow highlights that extend across the top of the instrument panel, framing the central infotainment screen and air vents, along with yellow recycled Alcantara inserts on the seats and quilted patterns and embossed Juke branding.



All the models feature new seats designed for improved comfort. The N-Connecta seats use a fabric called Kira Melange with PVC accents, while Tekna models feature black PVC with quilted inserts and a piano black finisher around the seat aperture. There is an enlarged glovebox and a redesigned armrest that reportedly offers improved support and functionality. The introduction of an electric handbrake and repositioned controls in the hybrid version aim to maximum space and convenience between the front seats.

The updated Juke now includes Intelligent Driver Alertness (DMS?) as standard. Lane Keep Assist monitors the vehicle's position within the lane and triggers a steering wheel vibration if it veers too close to the lane's edge, correcting the direction if necessary to maintain trajectory.

Lincoln Pushes Digital Scent Collection for Personalized UX

INTERIOR NEWS



LINCOLN IMAGE

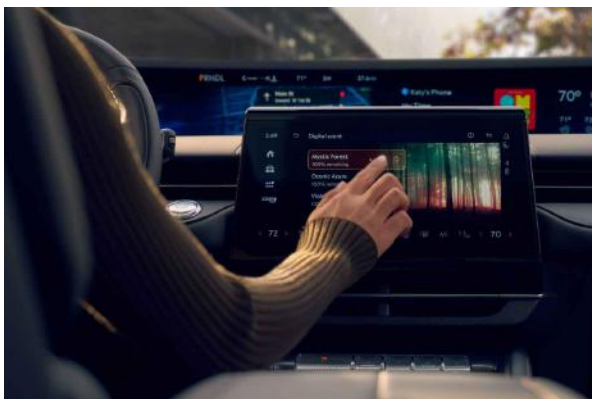
Ford's luxury automotive brand Lincoln has expanded their 'digital scent' collection, offering seven fragrances for a personalized interior experience. The scents were curated by perfumiers in collaboration with Lincoln designers and are available first in the 2024 Lincoln Nautilus SUV.

The collection includes three signature scents for Nautilus owners. These are:

- Mystic Forest: earthy cedarwood with patchouli, amber and yuzu citrus.
- Ozonic Azure: a crisp blend of patchouli, freesia and spice.
- Violet Cashmere: rich violet, grapefruit and golden citrus.

Four new scents have been added to the collection: Cloud Balsam, Serene Seashore, Twilight Embers, and Sunlight Retreat

Lincoln's focus on personal wellness informed the development of these scents, recognizing the impact of aromatherapy on mood and relaxation. The fragrances were carefully chosen with IFRA-certified ingredients and each scent cartridge features a microchip controlled through the vehicle's touchscreen.



LINCOLN IMAGE

Each scent cartridge features a microchip and is controlled through the vehicle's center stack touchscreen. The scenting experience also works in collaboration with the new Lincoln Digital Experience, which is easily customizable to let clients extend their digital lives into the vehicle through their favorite apps and services.

Digital Scent is unique as the cartridges diffuse from the center console, separately from the vehicles' heating and cooling systems, so the driver can turn the scent on and off independently. Scent cartridges were rigorously tested in temperatures -40°F to 185°F (-40°C to 85°C) for compatibility with multiple climates.

The Design Lounge

Crash, Part II

THE DESIGN LOUNGE



MAZDA SUPERCAR AT NAIAS 2008 (WIKIMEDIA IMAGE)

When it comes to cinema adventure, twisted metal and shattered glass take the lead. The relative filmography, after several-minutes-long car-chases in the streets of Paris, or bumper to fender legendary circuit battles up to the instant the car spins out of control, from black and white classic to the latest Blu-Ray editions, they left blasted debris of cars that met their destiny. Red and green blinking lights, sometimes rain on tarmac or paved road, paint lines, Astroturf and grass, tire walls, warning signs and fluo-tape, add to the kinetic passage. However, their impact extended beyond car bodies and cinema screens, influencing fashion and industry trends, leaving an indelible trace on popular culture, captivating audience for many decades after their release. Thus, car crashes acquired a cultural awareness, in times even a certain glamour. While cars have been crashing, there is something materially ephemeral and imaginatively durable happening. Like graffiti, a temporary art with a long-lasting message. The foundation on strong visual values is what makes the specific message highly compelling, just as every successful car design project. The process is identical.

In the rich portfolio of legendary car incidents, a particular event remained engraved in the collective memory of the world design community, business people and colleagues. The legend of the peculiar accident is strictly related to its design features and proportions, speed lines and sweeps, ...well, its beauty! But let's rewind...

Franz had this special twist in just about every single sketch he would put on the wall in the class of '91. We followed and chased him along projects, competitions, semesters and even career achievements later. He was fast. Fast forward to 2008 North American International Auto Show in Detroit. The very expected

majestic prototype rolled on stage with the driver stepping on a sound symphony over the heavily modified 20B 3-rotor Wankel engine running on E100 ethanol, before flipping the door open to start his press conference. We couldn't expect anything less, Franz¹ came out on stage. No surprise at all, and that special twist was there: the show car was stunning! The press conference will remain as a milestone in car design chronicles; however, a greater event took rapidly over any recollection. A few months later, during the photo-shooting, a routine practice for showcars, in August 19th 2008, at Bentwaters, as Top Gear's Charlie Turner², following the prototype on track, later reported "... *there was some smoke seen from behind yet the wounded race car was still faster than our people carrier. (With the wind blowing from directly behind, the fire is being fanned inexorably towards the nose of the car). From spotting the first flame to staring at the soggy, scorched carcass of one of history's most beautiful concept cars has taken less than eight minutes*".

Furai³ stands for 'the sound of the wind' and ironically was the name of the magnificent prototype manufactured by Mazda as the embodiment of the brand's design freedom and motorsport heritage. And Turner continues: *"The Furai is dead. Dead with shocking speed, savagery, and finality."* Furai now stands also as a reminder of how quickly and how badly things can go wrong.

The particular incident signified a lot as it was the perfect depiction of a design project and its ephemeral yet extremely high and valuable impact, ephemeral nonetheless. It contributed to the comprehension of what great concept cars are all about, often far from reality but even when they are real, they remain a dream, a legend. For the design community, the final stage was not about the filmmaking nor the photo shooting of the accident but a level deeper. It was about the bend, the distortion, the implosion, the abrasion, the dent, on some of the best surfaces ever conceived and not just individually but as a system of entities (planes), an aesthetic polymorph of proportions at every angle or orthographic view, all tailored to perfection. The newly invented Zoom-Zoom design language, was tested on several Mazda concepts like the Nagare, Ryuga, Hakaze, and the Taiki. In the case of Furai, it was implemented to package an impeccably balanced technical layout.

We constantly lived through this delusion of the imaginary that could vanish just before touching reality or convert into something else, like another project, and unbeknownst to all of us that's what design was, is and always will be: a never-ending game between imagination and reality. Unlike any proven methodology, trial and error is the rule of thumb that reassured automotive development all along. Factual achievements regarding technologic applications or financial triumphs and market successes are part of it, yet, before all that, right at the beginning, there is only a white sheet of paper, and strong convictions. No assistance, no AI here, just a gut feeling. In a certain way a similar feeling to the one just before a crash.

¹– .Franz von Holzhausen ACCD'91, led the design of the Mazda Furai unveiled at the 2008 North American International Auto Show.

²– .Charlie Turner is now Top Gear's editorial director.

³– .The Mazda Furai now exists only in video games such as Asphalt and Forza Motorsport 4.

Pininfarina Enigma GT Concept

THE DESIGN LOUNGE



PININFARINA IMAGES

The Enigma GT concept, powered with hydrogen, introduces a unique canopy that lifts together with dashboard and windshield. Floating in the canopy, an almost invisible transparent OLED screen acts as a digital centerpiece, in an aeronautically inspired dashboard, with augmented reality on the windscreen

The interior design follows suit, blending emotional soul with technical elements, creating a friendly, sporty, and light environment. Life onboard becomes a grand touring experience, akin to flying, enjoying vigorous thrust but wrapping you in a welcoming cocoon. An aeronautically inspired dashboard integrates laminar airflow for ventilation. Lightness in the design is celebrated by making the parts of the powerful hydrogen powertrain visible.

The approach focused on ingenious, advanced and sustainable materials finds expression in the light-sculpted seating in the front, suggesting comfort. An uninterrupted band of high-touch material creates an intimate and sporty atmosphere within and integrates the rear seats.



Pininfarina's design humanizes technology, evident in the holistic UX/UI design. Even the AR windscreen becomes part of an immersive and intuitive UI. AR Driving Assistance enhances the driving experience with an innovative augmented reality layer powered by the vehicle's AI designed to assist drivers in real-time (HUD like). This feature goes beyond conventional navigation, offering a comprehensive set of functional tools. It provides seamless navigation, shouts out points of interest, identifies and alerts drivers about blind spots, and integrates ADAS functionalities for enhanced safety.

An interior loop with a clear glass display provides essential information to the driver while also catering to the entertainment needs of passengers. The transparent glass display offers a minimalist and distraction-free design, allowing the driver to focus on crucial driving details, while passengers can enjoy interactive and engaging content. This seamless integration of information and entertainment creates a harmonious in-car experience for everyone on board.

A uniquely shaped, multi-functional steering wheel with touch displays is the key tangible element through which the driver feels the connection to the car. These touch displays facilitate personalized control, allowing the driver to customize commands based on individual preferences. Whether adjusting vehicle settings, controlling entertainment options, or managing communication features, the touch displays on the steering wheel provide intuitive and easily accessible controls. This level of personalization ensures that the driver can interact with the vehicle in a way that best suits their preferences, enhancing overall comfort and convenience.

An autonomous driving mode for long distances transforms travel time into an opportunity for family bonding and relaxation. During extended drives, the system takes over the driving responsibilities, allowing the driver to shift attention to the interior and enjoy quality time with the passengers.

The Pininfarina Enigma GT represents not just a design study, but the inception of a journey that will unfold over time. On one hand, it nods to a reimagined kind of a car we want to rediscover - the GT. On the other hand, it deliberately withholds the complete revelation of its design, keeping it shrouded in mystery and reserving the full unveiling for the future. This marks the beginning of an evolving narrative, a design expedition destined to reveal its intricacies gradually, inviting anticipation for the chapters yet to be written.

Massimo Frascella is New Audi Design Chief Creative Officer

THE DESIGN LOUNGE



AUDI IMAGE

Massimo Frascella, a graduate of the Istituto d'Arte Applicata & Design in Turin, Italy, brings extensive experience from previous roles at Stile Bertone, Ford Motor Company, Kia, and most recently, Jaguar Land Rover.

Frascella says, "Joining Audi is a very special moment for me. I am deeply honored to assume the role of chief creative officer and to guide such a talented team in shaping the future of the brand to new heights of innovation and distinction."

Under Frascella's leadership, Audi Design is looking to define future generations of Audi models. The automotive industry is undergoing significant technological advancements, leading to changes in the shapes and functionalities of vehicles across all segments. Recognizing this, Audi has restructured its design department to report directly to the chairman of the board of management.

Frascella said of his design philosophy, "Simplicity is the essence of my approach to design. I am passionate about creating designs that are free from superfluous ornaments and do not merely follow trends. Instead, we will rely on a timeless and sophisticated design language."

Lichte led Audi Design since 2014 and was involved in introducing new generations of Audi's popular models. During his tenure, Audi also launched its first standalone electric model series, the e-tron, e-tron GT and Q4 model family.

Audi CEO Gernot Döllner said, "Together with his team, Marc Lichte shaped the evolution of the brand's design into the age of electric mobility. We thank Marc for having been a creative mind and visionary for the face of the brand for a decade."

"Design has always been part of the brand's core, of the DNA of the Audi brand. That is why, especially during this phase of technological transformation, 'Vorsprung durch Technik' must be visible and tangible in the interior and exterior of all coming series models. Massimo Frascella will ensure Audi vehicles are going to embody the brand's identity through an unmistakable and emotional design language."

News Mobility

Volvo Safety Technology Alerts of Accidents Ahead

NEWS MOBILITY



VOLVO IMAGE

With the new Accident Ahead Alert, Volvo cars can alert drivers of accidents ahead directly using real-time data from a traffic management center. It will be phased in on compatible Volvo models in Europe, starting in Denmark. The location data is provided by national road authorities and compatible cars, starting with other Volvo cars.

Volvo industry-first connected safety technology, which was introduced in 2016, uses Volvo Cars' cloud, based on real-time data. It allows Volvo cars to communicate with each other and alert drivers of nearby slippery road conditions and hazards. In the same way, drivers can now be alerted to accidents ahead regardless of the time of the day.

Volvo has plans to integrate more traffic data shared by other partners in the European Data for Road Safety ecosystem, including national traffic management centers in other countries and cars from other brands.

To make roads safer for all, Volvo call for more road authorities to share anonymous traffic accident data and encourage other car makers to join us in offering similar technologies. Volvo Cars has been committed to sharing connected safety data for others to integrate into safety features and will continue doing so.

For Volvo car owners, it's easy to contribute to road safety by opting for data sharing: simply activate it using the "connected safety" option in your car's center display. The car will then be able to alert the driver of an accident ahead by using the hazard light alert in the dashboard, and if available, the head-up display. Rest assured that only the essential information will be shared with other cars and the data will be anonymized to ensure privacy.

General News

Immervision, Via Optronics in Car Camera Confab

GENERAL NEWS



IMMERVISION IMAGE

Interactive display systems provider Via Optronics has signed a contract with Montreal-based vision systems specialist Immervision, for the design and development of automotive cameras that can be customized and brought to market quickly.

Immervision's Deep Seeing technology and wide-angle vision systems, optical design and image processing enable smart devices with superhuman eyes to capture high quality visual and contextual data. The company invents, customizes, and licenses wide-angle camera solutions and imaging software technology for AI, machine vision and user applications, from capture to display, in the mobile, automotive, robotics, security, and other industrial and consumer product industries.

This partnership is to develop a specialized lens technology to customize and produce automotive cameras that address customer need for a greater range of view fields. The cameras are expected to be used most frequently in e-mirror and surround view applications.

Via CEO Roland Chochoiek says, "Our camera design and development team will leverage Immervision's expertise to accelerate innovation of our products and broaden product offerings to our customers."

And Immervision CEO Michel van Maercke says, "We view our immense expertise across wide-angle and other optical engineering fields to be immediately applicable to VIA's products".

Materi'act, PCR in Sustainable Materials JV

GENERAL NEWS



MATERI'ACT IMAGE

France's Materi'act is setting up a joint venture in Dallas, Texas with PCR Recycling to accelerate the development and delivery of recycled compounds for sustainable automotive parts with up to 85-per-cent CO₂ reduction by 2030. Materi'act is part of the Forvia group, with headquarters and an R&D center in Villeurbanne, France.

Products in mind for the sustainability initiative include door panels, center consoles, instrument panels and all other automotive products where plastic is predominantly used.

The joint venture will focus on the procurement and processing of post-consumer plastic waste by PCR and the processing of recycled raw materials by Materi'act into sustainable composite formulations. The partnership ensures a local, long-term supply of raw materials in the USA. In future, the company also intends to provide sustainable materials and circular solutions for customers from other-than-automotive industries.