



Frankfurt Motor Show 2015: Editor's Picks

SUMMARY

REALISTIC APPROACHES Concept cars were more commercial than previous years. Designs reflected cars that are likely to go into production in the next few years, providing a valuable testing ground to gauge public opinion before manufacture.

GROWING GREENER Premium manufacturers are now leading the way towards fully electric vehicles – and demonstrating the potential of this power outside of the expected sectors. All-electric concepts included a sports car from Porsche and an SUV from Audi.

LUXURY MODELS The high-end market continues to thrive, with several launches aimed at high-net-worth consumers. The first production run of Bentley's SUV debut has already sold out, demonstrating the strength of this sector.

FOCUSED INNOVATIONS Despite a more commercial mindset running through the show, elements of future-thinking innovation made an appearance, such as 3D-printed interior components and a shape-shifting design to improve aerodynamics.

Concept Cars

- The Koeru from [Mazda](#) is a coupé-style crossover featuring a low roof and swept-back, sporty styling – the model affirms the Japanese manufacturer's reputation for bold concept cars. A production model based on the Koeru could fit into the company's model range as a CX-4 or CX-6.
- The [Nissan](#) Gripz previews a potential new sports crossover that would expand the Japanese company's sporty Z sub-brand. The scissor doors are unlikely to make production, but the compact form and raked roof make for a desirable model.
- The [Citroen](#) Cactus M is a beach-buggy-like vehicle that hints at the addition of a possible convertible variant to the family crossover. Aimed at a younger, active consumer, it could broaden the French brand's appeal – see our coverage of [Auto Shanghai 2015](#) for more on models that appeal to first-time buyers.



Mazda Koeru



Nissan Gripz



Citroen Cactus M



Citroen Cactus M

- The Project 2&4 road racer is the result of a collaboration between Japanese manufacturer [Honda](#)'s car and motorcycle designers. The model intends to replicate the feeling of riding a motorbike, while delivering the maneuverability of a car. It features a single seat suspended above the ground, while a transparent digital display replaces a conventional dashboard.
- German manufacturer [Mercedes-Benz](#)'s Concept Intelligent Aerodynamic Automobile (IAA) automatically adjusts its form to improve aerodynamics when travelling above 80km/h. Innovations include a segmented rear that increases the length of the body to reduce drag, and hubcaps that inflate to improve airflow over the wheels.



Honda Project 2&4



Honda Project 2&4



Mercedes-Benz IAA



Mercedes-Benz IAA

- [Peugeot](#)'s Fractal urban coupé uses sound to enhance the driving experience. The French manufacturer commissioned sound designer [Amon Tobin](#) to create signature sounds for the vehicle that are triggered by opening or closing doors, acceleration and deceleration. Alongside a series of speakers throughout the interior, a seat panel also translates vibrations directly through the body.

Noise is also emitted outside of the vehicle – in line with European legislation that states all electric vehicles must make low-level sound by 2018 to notify pedestrians or cyclists of their presence.

Pointing towards future manufacturing processes, 80% of the interior's parts are 3D printed. Additive manufacturing also made an appearance at the [North American International Auto Show](#) earlier this year, demonstrating the possibilities of practical applications within the industry.



Peugeot Fractal



Peugeot Fractal



Peugeot Fractal



Peugeot Fractal

Coming Soon

- [Kia's](#) new Optima could be another breakthrough model for the South Korean carmaker. The saloon's modern styling is likely to attract consumers who prioritise design away from the conservative-looking class leaders, such as the Ford Mondeo and Volkswagen Passat.
- The new Tiguan from German brand [Volkswagen](#) is more sports utility vehicle (SUV) and less of a crossover than the original car. The proportions have been revised, making it more compact and sporty, while the clean surfaces and angular lines provide a more rugged and purposeful stance.
- The [Alfa Romeo](#) Giulia features sculpted, clean lines and typically Italian curves, continuing the Italian brand's reputation for aesthetic-focused designs. This executive saloon will spearhead a return to the US market and is also the first of eight models that will launch over the next three years.



Kia Optima



Kia Optima



Volkswagen Tiguan



Volkswagen Tiguan



Alfa Romeo Giulia



Alfa Romeo Giulia

- The Mégane is one of French automaker [Renault](#)'s bestselling cars, so the new model is vital to the brand's resurgence. Its bold, modern design and high-quality interior suggests a more grown-up feel, to help it stand out in this crowded market segment.
- The [Mini](#) Clubman small premium estate is larger and more spacious than previous models from the British manufacturer, and features four doors for improved practicality. The model provides a competitive model in a market gradually filling up with small estates – look to our coverage of [Paris Motor Show 2014](#) for further insight.



Renault Megane



Renault Megane



Mini Clubman



Mini Clubman

Greener Models

- [Porsche's](#) Mission E concept demonstrates the potential for all-electric models that can compete with US brand Tesla's Model S. The German sports car manufacturer is pitching the vehicle as the "Porsche of tomorrow", so expect to see further developments over the next few years. See our blog post on the [Lamborghini Hybrid](#) for more on shifts within the supercar market.
- Also bringing green credentials to alternative categories, German automaker [Audi](#) showcased an electric SUV, the e-tron Quattro concept. The model is timely, as Tesla is also due to launch a Model X SUV in 2016. An Audi representative told Stylus the model will remain largely unchanged when a Q6 e-tron Quattro goes into production in 2018, bringing a greener twist to the widely popular SUV market.
- The hybrid [Toyota](#) Prius has sold 5.2 million units globally since its introduction in 1997, so the fourth generation of the model will continue to be an important car for buyers looking for something green. It is styled much like the Japanese company's hydrogen fuel cell Mirai model, and features a futuristic, aerodynamic shape.



Porsche Mission E



Porsche Mission E



Audi e-tron Quattro



Audi e-tron Quattro



Toyota Prius



Toyota Prius

SUVs

- The Bentayga is the first SUV from luxury British automaker [Bentley](#). Its Brutalist design, with large flat surfaces and an imposing presence, became a controversial talking point – however, all of the first year's production has been pre-sold, so clearly, it has not put off buyers.
- British carmaker [Jaguar](#) also revealed its first SUV, the F-Pace. The combination of the company's heritage and the car's sleek, sporty styling should prove appealing to buyers in major markets such as US and China.



Bentley Bentayga



Jaguar F-Pace



Bentley Bentayga



Jaguar F-Pace

- Spanish brand [Seat](#) has plans to enter the SUV market in 2016. It showcased the Leon SC Cross Sport concept – a high-riding version of the Leon small family hatchback. It is being used to gauge public reaction prior to production.
- American giant [Ford](#) is also expanding the SUV offer in Europe, adding the Edge to its existing model line-up. Already on the market in the US, it has been refined and improved – especially the quality of the interior – to meet the standards of European consumers.



Seat Leon SC Cross Sport



Seat Leon SC Cross Sport



Ford Edge



Ford Edge

Luxury Convertibles

- British luxury marque [Rolls-Royce](#)'s brand new model, Dawn, evokes the design of classic motor launches. The luxurious vehicle features a wooden rear deck and traditional interior elements, such as high-quality leather, polished metal highlights and traditional-looking dials. Look to the [Colour, Material & Trim](#) report for more details.
- German manufacturer Mercedes-Benz has added a cabriolet variant to its highly successful large executive saloon/limousine S-Class range, creating a luxury boulevard cruiser that should have huge appeal.



Rolls-Royce Dawn



Rolls-Royce Dawn



Mercedes-Benz S-Class Cabriolet



Mercedes-Benz S-Class Cabriolet

- The 488 Spider is the latest luxury convertible from Italian sports car brand [Ferrari](#). Alongside a typically sculpted design, it features a folding hardtop that is said to be lighter than a cloth roof. This innovation lowers the overall weight (with all the resultant efficiency advantages) and helps with the car's structural rigidity.
- The Huracan LP610-4 Spyder from [Lamborghini](#) provides competition to Ferrari's launch. The convertible supercar has a cloth roof and features the signature sharp lines associated with the Italian manufacturer.



Ferrari 488 Spider



Ferrari 488 Spider



Lamborghini Huracan Spyder



Lamborghini Huracan Spyder

FUTURE INSIGHTS

TRY IT OUT Auto shows provide an important opportunity to gauge public reaction to new designs – follow the lead of several brands at Frankfurt by showcasing concept cars that may lead to commercial models within the next few years.

THINK MATERIALS This year, the most exciting innovations were derived from high-tech material developments. Take inspiration from Peugeot's concept that features 3D-printed interior components, pointing towards a future of manufacturing on demand.

APPLY ACROSS CATEGORIES An eco-aware mindset is no longer restrained to certain market sectors. Be influenced by the growing enthusiasm for clean energy across a variety of models – such as Porsche's electric supercar and Audi's SUV.

ENGAGE THE SENSES Automotive manufacturers are recognising the importance of senses beyond sight and touch to enhance the driving experience. Consider scent or sound as a tool of personalisation to create a more emotive connection – see our S/S 17 Design Direction [Contour](#) for further insight.

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