

Japan automakers to unveil concept cars in Detroit

The Associated Press



DETROIT, Jan. 13

(Kyodo) — Honda Motor Co. and Toyota Motor Corp. are among the major players in an increasingly confident automotive industry unveiling new concept models to stir excitement in the improving U.S. market at the North American International Auto Show that opened Monday in Detroit.

U.S. research company Edmunds.com estimates 15.66 million new cars were sold in 2013, an 8 percent rise from the year before, and automakers from Asia, Europe and the United States will give debuts to more than 50 vehicles in Detroit to capitalize on the uptick in car sales.

Emphasizing concept cars to showcase their vision of the future, Japanese companies are expected to unveil prototypes of luxury vehicles to grab the attention of U.S. consumers in the improving market.

Honda Motor will unveil the compact 2015 Fit on Monday with a fuel-efficient powertrain using the company's Earth Dreams Technology. It will be produced for the first time in North America at Honda's plant in Celaya, Mexico.

Acura, Honda's luxury brand, will reveal the 2015 TLX prototype mid-size sedan on Tuesday with two powertrains. To streamline its lineup, Acura will discontinue the TSX model in 2014 and the newly named TLX will replace the outgoing TL model.

"The sporty characteristics that customers found appealing in the TSX are even

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

more pronounced in this aggressive new TLX," American Honda Motor Co. senior vice president Mike Accavitti said in a press release ahead of the show.

Toyota Motor's luxury brand, Lexus, will unveil on Tuesday the RC F coupe, which is based on the RC coupe shown at the Toyota Motor show last November. With a larger and more powerful V8 engine, the RC F will have a speed-sensitive active rear spoiler and aerodynamic stabilizing fins.

Nissan Motor Co. will debut a sports sedan concept on Monday that will give customers an "advanced look" into how the company plans to design a future sports sedan. It will also show, for the first time in North America, two compact concepts, the IDx Freeflow and the IDx NISMO.

Nissan's luxury brand Infiniti will unveil the Q50 Eau Rouge concept on Tuesday. Based on the Q50 sports sedan, which will be sold in February as the Skyline in Japan, the concept has an aerodynamic design influenced by Infiniti's participation in Formula One.

"From our shared passion for performance with Infiniti Red Bull racing grew a collective desire to produce a vision of what a high-performance Infiniti Q50 could look like," Executive Design Director Alfonso Albaisa said in a press release ahead of the show.

Meanwhile, the "Big 3" American automakers, General Motors Co. Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler Group LLC are expected to make the most of their hometown show as they seek to capture shares in what Kelly Blue Book estimates will be a market with sales of 16.3 million new vehicles in 2014.

GM will unveil the 2015 Chevrolet Corvette Z06 on Monday, completing the company's performance car lineup with the already-in-production SS Sedan, Stingray Convertible and Camaro Z/28. Production of the iconic car is expected to start later this year.

"Chevrolet is America's favorite performance car brand, and for 2014 we are going to offer enthusiasts more choices than ever before," Global Chevrolet senior vice president Alan Batey said in a press release ahead of the show.

GM will also unveil the 2015 Cadillac ATS coupe on Tuesday, according to Edmunds.com. The coupe will be the companion to the ATS sedan and is expected to have the same four- and six-cylinder engines.

Chrysler is widely expected to unveil the 2015 200 mid-size sedan. It will also highlight its Dodge brand with a new line of exterior packages for the 2014 Dart.

Ford is expected to give a debut to its highly anticipated F-150 pickup truck. Last year, it unveiled the Atlas, considered to be a preview of the truck that was 340 kilograms lighter than its predecessors.

Among European companies, German automaker Volkswagen AG will unveil the Golf

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R, a high-performance hatchback with a turbocharged 4-cylinder, 290-horsepower engine. It will also unveil the 2014 Beetle Dune concept, an off-road, sporty version of the iconic Beetle.

"The manufacturers continue to show their confidence in the NAIAS and will once again bring their absolute best to Detroit's world stage," NAIAS 2014 chairman Bob Shurman said in a press release ahead of the show, which is marking the 25th year as an international event.

The exhibition is open to the media Monday and Tuesday. It will open to the general public Jan. 18-26.

Source URL (retrieved on 10/21/2014 - 8:39pm):

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