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# Typecast

Wild-looking Civic Type R hot hatch revealed at Geneva motor show

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# Four real

Mercedes-AMG previews four-door hybrid powerhouse with GT4 Concept



By ROBBIE WALLIS

**M**ERCEDES-AMG has lifted the covers from its Porsche Panamera-baiting four-door GT Concept at the Geneva motor show, revealing a 600kW bi-turbo V8-hybrid powertrain that will give a preview of the alternative drivetrain

technologies being developed by the company.

The GT Concept teams a 4.0-litre bi-turbo V8 from the GT coupe family with an electric motor that employs Mercedes' 4Matic all-wheel-drive system that can reportedly launch the GT Concept from standstill to 100km/h in less than three seconds.

Unlike the rear-drive two-door GT's, the GT Concept uses the V8 to power all four wheels, with the electric motor giving supplementary power to just the rear axle for an instantaneous boost.

The battery system in the GT Concept is scalable and can be adjusted in performance and

capacity for different models and markets, and potentially different hybrid set-ups in the future.

The system is able to charge itself while driving through regenerative braking as well as using the engine if charge has dropped beneath a certain threshold.

Three driving modes are available – full



electric, full combustion or hybrid – however Mercedes-AMG has not shared details of any mode.

Peak torque is also unconfirmed at this stage but its 600kW power output makes it 100kW more powerful than the recently-announced range-topping Porsche Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid, which also uses a 4.0-litre twin-

turbo V8 hybrid powertrain for a combined output of 500kW/850Nm.

If the current hybrid set-up makes it into a production vehicle, it would be the most powerful drivetrain in the Mercedes-AMG arsenal, comfortably out-gunning the monumental 463kW/1000Nm 6.0-litre twin-turbo V12 in the S65, which is facing

extinction in a world of rising fuel and emissions regulations.

Visually, the GT Concept retains the overall look of the GT coupe with some distinctive tweaks, including redesigned headlights and aggressive body styling.

The headlights feature a narrower, slimmer LED cluster with two tubular rod lights that

illuminate the road directly in front of the car, along with daytime running lights, a pulsing turn signal that sits at the top of the light cluster as well as a large LED main light, which uses three-dimensional autonomous lighting technology.

The tail-lights follow the GT design more closely with a slim cluster that wraps around

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the body of the car, and features the same 3D technology in the headlights.

A large front spoiler dominates the fascia of the GT Concept, with prominent side gills and a carbon-fibre splitter lending a more purposeful look than the GT or GT S coupe.

The Panamericana grille features vertical ribs like on the forthcoming GT R that have been painted red, as well as radiator shutters that can open and close to prioritise aerodynamic or thermal efficiency.

Carbon-fibre side sills and B-pillars, and side mirror cameras give the GT Concept a futuristic look, while the copper and silver alloy wheels with carbon-ceramic brakes and bronze brake callipers add extra flair.

The rear end is dominated by the chunky carbon-fibre rear diffuser and single-exit central exhaust, while the roofline manages to retain the shape of

the coupe despite the addition of two doors.

Mercedes-AMG has not provided any images or information on the interior, which could suggest a production version may not differ greatly from the two-door version in terms of dashboard layout.

Mercedes claimed the GT Concept “heralds the further extension of the AMG GT family”, and it has previously been speculated that a production four-door GT will be made under the moniker of GT4.

The two-door range is currently offered in three states of tune, ranging from 340kW/600Nm in the GT to 430kW/700Nm in the GT R. It is unknown what version of the V8 is in the hybrid concept.

The GT4 could also potentially be offered in the future with a combustion-only powertrain featuring any of those three previous V8 set-ups. **MM**

# Quiet achiever

All-electric Zoe e-sport bolts to 100km/h  
in 3.2 seconds from standstill



By ROBBIE WALLIS

**R**ENault has drawn upon its experience in the Formula E all-electric racing series to create the Zoe e-sport concept for the Geneva motor show, packing a battery-powered twin electric motor set-up that pumps out 340kW of power and 640Nm of torque.

The twin motors are situated on both the front and rear axles sending power to all four wheels, and can be adjusted to send the majority of torque to either end of the car.

Power output in the Zoe e-sport is actually greater than that of its Formula E counterpart, as power in the single-seat racing series is capped at 201kW, but features similar

technology such as the air and water cooling system with front-mounted radiator, and high-capacity permanent magnet technology which maximises energy efficiency.

Powertrain settings can be adjusted to control energy consumption, and four different driving modes are available.

The battery pack has a 40kWh capacity and

weighs 450kg, bringing the total weight of the micro car to 1400kg.

This enables the Zoe e-sport to rocket from a standstill to 100km/h in just 3.2 seconds and on to an electronically capped top speed of 210km/h which Renault says takes less than ten seconds to achieve.

Renault has offset the heavy battery pack

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with the use of carbon-fibre bodywork to help minimise overall weight.

Exterior highlights include aerodynamic aids such as a front air dam, flat undercarriage, Formula E-inspired diffuser and carbon-fibre tailgate, while aesthetic touches include 20-inch alloy wheels, tinted windows, Satin Blue finish with yellow highlights on the mirrors and grille, and carbon-fibre bumpers, tailgate spoiler and air intake surrounds.

Handling is enhanced by a lowered ride height, wider track, racing-developed double-wishbone suspension front and rear, four-way adjustable dampers and 245/35 R20 tyres.

Inside the cabin is a rectangular steering wheel, Alcantara trim, two Recaro bucket seats with competition harnesses and a tubular steel rollcage with protective Kevlar panels which

certifies the car for race track use.

The regular Zoe is not offered in Australia but has been the top-selling pure EV in Europe for the last two years, and according to the French brand, last year, more than a quarter of all European EVs sold were Renaults.

It is not the first time that Renault has used its motorsport nous to come up with wild and outlandish concepts, with the most notable probably being in 1995 when it put a 588kW 3.5-litre V10 from the 1993 Williams-Renault Formula One car into an Espace mid-size people mover.

It used a carbon-fibre F1 chassis, mid-mounted engine and six-speed automatic transmission, and was able to race from 0-100km/h in 2.8 seconds and on to a top speed of 312km/h. **MM**

# Bento box

Japanese turbo hatchback to pack 235kW/400Nm performance punch



By ROBBIE WALLIS

**H**ONDA has ripped the covers off its tenth-generation Civic Type R hot hatch, featuring an 11kW power bump over the previous iteration, revised suspension and stiffness and increased aerodynamics to take the fight to the likes of Ford's Focus RS and the Subaru WRX STi.

The UK-built Type R uses a revised version of the ninth-gen's 2.0-litre VTEC turbo-petrol four-cylinder engine that now pumps out 235kW of power, while torque remains the same at 400Nm.

Mated exclusively to a six-speed manual gearbox with a rev-match control system, the Type R sends power to the front wheels and

has benefited from a number of mechanical changes that improve handling and performance, says the Japanese car-maker.

Torsional rigidity has been improved by 38 per cent over the old Type R according to Honda, thanks to a more rigid chassis and the use of extra adhesive in key bonded areas.

The front MacPherson strut suspension is

carried over from the Civic range but has been revised to minimise torque steer and improve handling, while the independent multi-link rear suspension has been fitted with high-rigidity suspension arms.

Three driving modes will be available, comprising of comfort, sport and +R modes, which adjusts the adaptive dampers, steering

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force, gear shift feeling and throttle response.

Aerodynamics have been improved over the outgoing model, thanks to a smoother underbody, front air curtain, lightweight rear wing and vortex generators situated at the rear of the roof line.

Styling remains almost identical to the prototype model revealed at the Paris motor show in September, showing aggressive styling including low front skirts, large mesh lower air intakes, 20-inch wheels, triple-exit exhaust, a large rear spoiler, muscular wheel arch flares and the red H Honda badge which is synonymous with Type R variants.

While regular Australian Civics will be built at a factory in Thailand, each global Type R will be built at Honda of the UK Manufacturing in

Swindon, England.

Production is chalked to start in mid-2017 for a fourth-quarter Australian arrival, and notably it will be sold in North America for the first time to date.

It will be a rebirth for Australian Civic Type Rs, after Honda Australia elected not to bring the ninth-generation version Down Under due to supply constraints.

Pricing is unconfirmed at this stage, but the Type R is likely to sell well above the current range-topping VTi-LX hatch, which costs \$33,590 before on-roads.

For comparison, the Ford Focus RS is priced at \$50,990, the Subaru WRX STi costs \$49,490 and the Volkswagen Golf R manual starts at \$52,990. **MM**

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# British bruiser

McLaren shoehorns new 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 into 720S supercar



By DANIEL GARDNER

**M**CLAREN has used the Geneva motor show to finally reveal one of its worst-kept secrets, the 720S high-performance coupe that will lead the introduction of its second-generation Super Series.

After a protracted hype campaign of teaser images, leaked photos and the 720S moniker unofficially circulating for weeks, the British sportscar-maker has finally wheeled out the production model.

Australian McLaren fans will be offered the new model with 720S pricing kicking off from

\$489,900 before on-road costs – \$25,900 more expensive than the current 650S that the new Super Series model will replace.

Customers in McLaren's native UK will start taking delivery of the 720S next month, but Australians are being asked to wait a little longer with the new McLaren arriving Down

Under in the third quarter of this year.

Attendees to the Swiss show have been treated to a first full look at the model's new look which introduces radical new styling such as segmented headlights, high-exit exhausts seen on the 675LT and an illuminated engine bay.

Unlike previous McLarens, the 720S has



no gaping vents aft of the door to feed air to the mid-mounted engine and its radiators, instead using a double-skinned door to channel air backstage.

In addition to the new engine cooling approach, the styling also hides a significant evolution in aerodynamics and a new larger V8 engine which combine to allow the new model to achieve some dizzying statistics.

As its name suggests, the new Super Series car has 720 horsepower (530kW) and 770Nm of torque at its disposal courtesy of a 4.0-litre turbocharged V8, which takes the British brand away from its consistent recipe of 3.8 litres for the first time since it was introduced in the 2011 12C.

With all-new carbon-fibre Monocage II construction, the 720S manages a dry weight of just 1283kg (kerb weight is 1419kg), allowing the new engine to blast the car from zero to 100km/h in 2.9 seconds,

while 200km/h comes up in 7.8s. The McLaren will blast to a top speed of 341km/h.

Braking performance is just as eye-opening, with 200km/h scrubbed to zero in just 4.6 seconds, and in only 117 metres. Brake rotors are crafted from light-but-highly heat resistant carbon-ceramic composite and measure 390mm at the front and 380mm on the rear axle.

A seven-speed SSG dual-clutch transmission sends power to the rear wheels which measure 19 inches in all corners.

While the 720S offers electrifying performance through the basic principles of lightweight construction and abundant power, more complex technology adds to the mix, says McLaren.

The new car introduces the next generation of the company's Proactive Chassis Control system that alters suspension and damper rates during enthusiastic driving to keep all four corners in contact with the road and "an

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On the inside, McLaren keeps ground-breaking features coming with new Folding Driver Display, which is unique to the automotive world.

For day-to-day driving, the display uses a large digital screen to present vehicle information such as engine and road speed via orthodox instrumentation, oil and water temperatures and trip information.

But when the driver needs full concentration on the road, the entire cluster tilts and slides away into the dashboard revealing a minimalist

bar display on its top edge.

Despite its potent performance, the 720S’s maker says it represents “an incredible degree of usability” with a number of features that make the new Super Series car possible to use for the daily commute.

Fine leather upholstery and machined aluminium switch gear enhance the cabin in addition to the newest version of McLaren’s slick information and entertainment interface.

A front storage compartment can swallow 150 litres of luggage, while the boot offers another 210 litres of space. **MM**