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Supra hero

GR Supra Racing concept previews all-new flagship sportscar for Toyota

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Goldeneye

Aston Martin relaunches Lagonda as a standalone brand to battle Rolls-Royce



By JUSTIN HILLIARD

CLAIMED to be the first luxury brand exclusively driven by zero-emission powertrains, Lagonda has been rebooted by parent company Aston Martin with designs to launch two new models by 2023.

Announced at the Geneva motor show

overnight, Lagonda's standalone return was marked with the reveal of the electrified and self-driving Vision Concept.

According to Aston Martin president and chief executive officer Andy Palmer, Lagonda will aim to disrupt the status quo by combining two differing design approaches for its models.

"We believe people associate luxury in their cars with a certain traditional and even old-fashioned approach because, to date, that is all that's been available to them," he said.

"Lagonda exists to challenge that thinking and prove that being modern and luxurious are not mutually exclusive concepts.

"We see no limits for Lagonda. It will be a brand for the restless, for those who are anything but happy with the status quo.

"It will produce cars that exploit technology, without being obsessed with it for its own sake. And it will enable Lagonda to redefine the concept of luxury within the



automotive and other spheres.”

The Vision Concept is said to preview the design language of the aforementioned two new models, with the first set to enter production in 2021 while the second will likely follow two years later.

The body styles of these models are yet

to be confirmed, but Lagonda did display scaled-down coupe and SUV concepts at its Geneva stand alongside the Vision Concept fastback sedan.

Any two of the three could make production in the next five years, but an official call will be made in due course.

Aston Martin executive vice-president and chief creative officer Marek Reichman stressed the importance of the Vision Concept to Lagonda’s revival, particularly from a design perspective.

“The Lagonda Vision Concept is an incredibly bold design statement,” he said.

“The electrification revolution means there is no longer any need for horse and carriage design.

“Our new concept shows the scope of design opportunities that open up once you no longer need to provide space for a large power source directly in front of the passenger compartment.



“In the Lagonda Vision Concept, the batteries occupy the floor of the car. Everything above that line belongs to us.”

While Lagonda has not detailed the specifics of the Vision Concept’s pure-electric powertrain, it has revealed that a solid-state battery pack can be installed for a real-world driving range of up to 644 kilometres, while wireless charging is also supported.

Outputs are sent to an intelligent all-

wheel-drive system that distributes up to 100 per cent of available torque to any corner depending on demand.

Shorter and lower than a traditional limousine, the Vision Concept offers seating for four and caters towards occupants that are more than two metres tall thanks to its efficient interior packaging.

The seats themselves are akin to armchairs, offering heavily bolstered armrests for

increased comfort, while the front pews can rotate 180 degrees to facilitate conversation with rear passengers.

Ingress and egress is aided by suicide rear doors as well as roof sections that open upwards, meaning occupants can stand up inside and walk out of the vehicle, or vice-versa.

Materials used throughout the cabin include carbon-fibre and ceramics as well

as cashmeres, silks and woven wool, with renowned British craftsman David Snowdon collaborating on the project.

Commenting on the future of autonomous driving and how it relates to Lagonda, Mr Palmer reiterated that such an innovation has been available for a long period of time.

“For owners of true luxury cars, autonomy has existed for over a century in a carbon-based form called a chauffeur,” he said.

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“We imagine most Lagonda customers will choose to be driven, but whether by a person or a computer will be up to them. And if they want to drive themselves, the car will ensure that is a delightful and memorable experience too. Lagonda will provide that choice.”

Specifically, the Vision Concept is a Level 4 autonomous vehicle, meaning it is able to drive itself in normal conditions on all recognisable roads.

As such, its steering wheel can move from left- to right-hand drive as needed, or can retract entirely if a human driver is not required.

“There are some excellent products in the luxury car market today, but they are tied by their brands to traditional design execution,”

Mr Palmer added.

“Similarly, if you look at the most modern, technologically advanced cars on the market, they are defined by their technologies.

“By contrast Lagonda will be entirely strategic in its approach of technology, using it as a means to attain its goal of creating the world’s first ultra-modern luxury cars, and never as an end in itself.”

Aston Martin also rolled out the Vulcan AMR Pro, a track-only version of its hypercar, at the Geneva motor show, with the 1000kg model providing an equal amount of downforce thanks to its slick aerodynamics. If that is not enough, combined power output will be more than 820kW. **MM**

Check M8

BMW targets Panamera with striking M8 Gran Coupe concept



By TUNG NGUYEN

NOT content to let rival Mercedes-AMG steal the high-performance sedan limelight with its GT 4 Door, BMW has ripped the covers off its sleek M8 Gran Coupe at this year's Geneva motor show.

The M8 Gran Coupe is based on the the Bavarian car-maker's upcoming new-generation flagship 8 Series that was previewed

with a concept in May last year and is on track for an international release in 2019 with an Australian on-sale date expected thereafter.

Sporting a sleek silhouette and flowing roofline, the M8 Gran Coupe is punctuated by sculpted panel work, muscular rear haunches and an aggressive front fascia.

BMW's signature kidney grille sits proudly up front, flanked by two slender headlights that

incorporate the brand's unique halo lighting signature, while the front bumper features large intakes and a chiselled design not unlike the smaller M2.

A bulging bonnet, arch-filling wheels, front fender vents and a steeply raked windshield complete the M8 Gran Coupe's menacing road presence.

BMW's latest showcar also sports a

narrowing window profile and prominent door contours that draw the eye rearward where the upswept shoulder line resolves at an integrated rear spoiler.

The pumped-up rear wheelarches "offer a visual expression of the power working through the rear axle", according to BMW, while the rear features bumper-integrated vents, slim tail-lights and quad exhaust tips.

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On its way to production form though, the M8 Gran Coupe will likely lose its carbon-fibre reinforced plastic roof and slim side-view mirrors, but also gain a set of handles for all four doors.

Gold highlights are used throughout, including on the wheels, front grille surround, window outlines, exhaust outlets and brake callipers – the latter replacing the M brand’s signature blue – to contrast the green paintwork, called Saleve Vert, in the swoopy show car.

BMW Group Design senior vice-president Adrian van Hooydonk said the new 8 Series will serve as the top-of-the-range model in BMW’s stable.

“The BMW 8 Series will take over as the new flagship model of the BMW line-up and,

as such, combines unsurpassed sportiness and elegance,” he said.

“The BMW Concept M8 Gran Coupe offers a look ahead to the most exotic and alluring variant of the new BMW 8 Series.”

Set to compete directly against the likes of the Mercedes-Benz CLS and Audi A7, BMW will position the 8 Series as a blend of luxury and performance, according to M and i Design vice-president Domagoj Dukec.

“The BMW Concept M8 Gran Coupe is designed to stir things up, to polarise – it should move you emotionally,” he said.

“With this car we want to reach people who are looking for something special and who to stand out from the crowd. Here, BMW M is unmistakably taking luxury out of its comfort zone.” **MM**

Fast and Furious

BMW co-development uncovered as hardcore Toyota racing concept



By TERRY MARTIN

TOYOTA has previewed its reborn Supra sportscar with a GR Supra Racing concept unveiled at the Geneva motor show overnight.

In presenting the concept, Toyota Motor Europe president and CEO Johan Van Zyl said the long-anticipated, brand-boosting performance car

– which is being developed alongside BMW’s new Z4 – would be launched “soon” but GoAuto understands that its international rollout will not take place until next year.

Toyota Australia is yet to confirm local launch timing or other specific details.

“Yes, the Supra is returning,” Dr Van Zyl said.

“This concept is a clear signal of our intention

to bring back one of our most legendary sportscars to the market. This baby, developed by Toyota Gazoo Racing, is a thoroughbred designed for the racetrack – the best way of taking our ‘Supra hero’ into a new era.

“It has been made light, compact and, of course, fast. I think you will agree it looks amazing.”

Few concrete details on the production

model have accompanied the concept, but the basic layout will be front-engine/rear-wheel-drive wrapped in a lightweight two-door coupe body for starters.

A roadster and other variants are anticipated down the track, and powertrain options remain the subject of speculation with various reports overseas suggesting anything from turbo-four



to natural-breathing or even twin-turbo six-cylinder power motivating the new sportscar.

Chief engineer Tetsuya Tada told journalists in Geneva that the Supra would not simply be a clone of the new Z4, despite commonalities in platform and components, and was being developed to provide a high level of dynamic performance across a range of environments, from closed circuit racing to winding back roads and high-speed motorways.

The company also made a point of emphasising the use of “Toyota components”

on the front and rear suspension of the concept.

The ‘90’ racing number on the door is the codename for the fifth-generation Supra, following the A40, A60, A70 and A80 series produced between 1978 and 2002, while the GR in the concept’s name refers to Gazoo Racing.

Lightweight composite materials are used across the striking bodywork, including the bonnet (complete with louvred air inlets), front and rear bumpers, front splitter and rear diffuser, side skirts, door mirror caps and the

massive rear wing.

The windscreen and side windows are made from plastic and the doors are lined with carbon-fibre panels.

Other points of interest include the fitment of BBS racing wheels (with Michelin racing tyres), a high-performance braking package with Brembo Racing rotors and callipers, and a racing exhaust.

The “competition-focused” cabin has a racing dashboard and OMP-supplied driver’s seat (with safety harness) and quick-release steering

wheel mounted on a racing column. The tiller also incorporates a paddle-shift system.

The competition spec also brings with it a full rollcage, fire extinguishers and specifically designed fuel and brake lines, pedal box, battery and wiring loom.

As GoAuto reported exclusively way back in August 2016, Toyota quietly laid the groundwork to resurrect the Supra name by applying for trademark protection for the moniker in June that year – the same month it lodged a similar application with the European

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Toyota Australia vice-president sales and marketing Sean Hanley this week described Supra as “one of the most beloved Toyota cars of all time” and claimed that its nameplate “continues to command enormous respect”.

“There has been huge public interest in a modern revival of the Supra legend, and this concept points to a sportscar deserving of the famous name,” he said.

“Revealing a racing concept ahead of a production model highlights that motorsport is Toyota’s proving ground of choice for high-performance vehicles.

“The GR Supra Racing concept makes it clear Toyota is developing the Supra to be a true driver’s car.”

The Supra was introduced to Australia in

1983 – in third-generation guise – and Toyota says it sold 2895 Supras over the next decade.

In 1993, Supra was offered here in coupe and targa-top variants, both powered by a 174kW 3.0-litre inline six-cylinder engine and priced just above \$70,000.

The fourth-generation version was released overseas that same year but not sold in Australia, which was amid “the recession we had to have”. Production ended in Japan in 2002.

The GR Supra Racing concept will be added to the Gran Turismo Sport video game next month, while some reports suggest the production version of the Supra will turn up at the Los Angeles auto show in November.

BMW presented a more production-oriented concept of its new Z4 at the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance in August last year. **MM**

Mission possible

Porsche charges up electric future with Mission E Cross Turismo concept



By RON HAMMERTON

PORSCHE has given the world an insight into its second all-electric car to follow in the wheel-tracks of its initial Mission E electric sports sedan that is due to be revealed in its production form next year.

Called Mission E Cross Turismo and thought to be coming in 2021, the blistering 440kW twin-motor “cross utility vehicle” was revealed at the Geneva motor show where Porsche CEO Oliver Blume described it as an expression of how the company

envisions the all-electric future.

The vehicle – based on the Mission E’s battery friendly architecture and seemingly using the same electric all-wheel-drive powertrain – came as a surprise at Geneva, as Porsche had given no hints of its existence.

As expected, Porsche showed off the hardcore 911 GT3 RS at the show, describing the 383kW coupe as one of the most radical high-performance sportscars of today.

But the GT3 RS could not be any more radical than the Mission E Cross Turismo

which has the looks of an off-roader but is claimed to be able to sprint from zero to 100km/h in under 3.5 seconds – just 0.3s slower than the GT3 RS – and reach 200km/h in under 12s.

“Furthermore, the level of continuous power is unmatched by any other electric vehicle: multiple accelerations are possible in direct succession without loss of performance,” Porsche said.

At 4950mm long, the Mission E Cross Turismo is big – a few millimetres longer than the latest Cayenne large SUV that is just months away from Australian launch.

Now that we have seen the new electric vehicle, we can understand why Porsche was adamant that it would not launch an all-electric-powered Cayenne. It had something else in the wings.

Porsche describes the Mission E Cross Turismo as “already fit for the road”.

According to the guff released by Porsche at the show, the new vehicle will come with an 800-volt system prepared for fast charging. It also is equipped for induction charging – just drive over an induction-



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charge pad on the floor of the garage.

Mr Blume said the car would not only be fast to drive but also fast to charge.

The vehicle is expected to have an 80 per cent charge time of just 15 minutes on a high-power fast charger. The range is expected to be a minimum of 500km on a full charge.

Inside, the concept boasts what Porsche describes as “an innovative display and operating concept with touchscreen and eye-tracking control”. To our eye, the all-electronic cockpit looks like an attempt to clean up Porsche’s current over-complicated

cockpits festooned with buttons and knobs, taking the design well into the 21st century.

The five-door concept has seating for four, but a production version could offer a family friendly five-seat layout.

Porsche has been working on its electrification program for years, having shown the original Mission E concept at the 2015 Frankfurt motor show.

Even before that, it revealed its groundbreaking 918 plug-in hybrid in 2010, going on to smash the production-car lap record for the Nurburgring, setting the first sub-seven-minute lap time of 6:57. **MM**