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Jack's back

Brabham Automotive revives an Aussie legend with its debut mid-engined supercar

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Red alert

Polarising Mercedes-Maybach sedan-SUV concept uncovered at Beijing show



By JUSTIN HILLIARD

MERCEDES-MAYBACH has rolled out its latest high-end concept at the Beijing motor show last month, with the Vision Mercedes-Maybach Ultimate Luxury combining conventional sedan and SUV body styles to create an unconventional shape.

Presenting as a blockier, high-riding four-

door sedan that measures in at 5260mm long, 2110mm wide and 1764mm tall, the Ultimate Luxury is a departure from the norm, but Mercedes-Maybach's focus on delivering unrivalled levels of opulence remains.

The front end is dominated by a large grille with vertical chrome bars that mimic a pinstripe suit, with this look first seen on the

Vision Mercedes-Maybach 6 Coupe at the 2016 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

Slim LED headlights feature three individual lamp units, while large air inlets flank a horizontal air inlet with chrome blades and honeycomb-pattern mesh to round out the purposeful, SUV-like front-end look.

However, the side profile is where the sedan

element of the Vision Luxury is most apparent, with its three-box design clearly on show, despite featuring larger surfaces typically found on SUVs.

A set of turbine-style 24-inch alloy wheels are a suitable match for the Vision Luxury's presence, while black wheelarch extensions and flush doorhandles link with chrome trim



for the window surrounds and character lines to signal its intentions.

Three-section LED tail-lights bisect the rear end, which echoes that of a sedan thanks to its traditional boot lid and proportions.

However, the rear window is uniquely split in two, following the signature elevated

chrome strip that also splits the bonnet and runs through the panoramic glass roof.

Just like the front end, the rear is characterised by its flanking air inlets, while a diffuser element incorporates the honeycomb-pattern mesh seen on the adjacent bumper.

The interior of the Vision Luxury is suitably

luxurious, with front and rear passengers afforded sumptuous comfort, although the latter receive a larger dose thanks to reclining seats with calf support.

Rear passengers also have access to the wide centre console that extends through the first row and features a heated Magic Wood tray

with fine-china teapots and cups that can be stowed away at the press of a button.

Given the Ultimate Luxury is intended to be a chauffeur-driven vehicle, driver controls are kept to a minimum, with a pair of free-standing widescreen 12.3-inch displays projecting the instrument cluster and infotainment system.

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Lashings of Crystal White Nappa leather upholstery with rose-gold diamond stitching are prominent, while polished aluminium, Dark Ebony wood, gloss black, metallic red and rose gold trims are generously used throughout the cabin.

The Ultimate Luxury is motivated by a pure-electric powertrain, which consists of four compact permanent-magnet synchronous motors that provide 550kW of power and fully variable all-wheel drive.

A flat underfloor battery pack has a usable capacity of 80kWh, which equates to a driving range of more than 500 kilometres when using NEDC standards. Top speed is electronically limited to 250km/h.

Significantly, the Ultimate Luxury allows a charging capacity of up to 350kW due to its support for fast DC charging under the CCS standard. As such, about 100km of range can be

added after a brief five-minute charge.

In addition to wired charging, induction charging is also possible when the Ultimate Luxury is parked on top of an electromagnetic field that wirelessly transmits its current.

According to Daimler AG chief design officer Gorden Wagener, Mercedes-Maybach has used the Ultimate Luxury to reinforce its position as the leading high-end automotive brand.

“The Vision Mercedes-Maybach Ultimate Luxury is a totally new archetype of a kind never seen before,” he said. “Our concept combines the DNA of an SUV with that of a saloon to produce an ultra-modern SUV of three-box design.

“With sensuality and pure sophistication, we have created a timeless vehicle that underscores the position of Mercedes-Maybach as the ultimate luxury brand.” **MM**

Return to Oz

Just 70 examples of Aussie-built Brabham BT62 track star to be produced



By ROBBIE WALLIS

BRABHAM Automotive has lifted the lid on its debut model, the track-only mid-engined BT62 that is set to become the only supercar built in Australia.

Honed at Victoria's Phillip Island race track and set to be manufactured in South Australia by company founded by racing legend Sir Jack

Brabham's son David, the car packs a 5.4-litre normally aspirated V8 mounted amidships and driving the rear wheels.

With carbon-fibre body panels, the two-door, two-seat coupe has a pricetag to justify its supercar moniker – £1 million (\$A1.81m).

Revealed at Australia House in London, only 70 examples of the BT62 will be built in

reference to seven decades of Brabham. It will be built in left-hand drive as standard, with right-hook available on request.

The quad-cam V8 punches out an eye-watering 522kW of power and 667Nm of torque, sent exclusively to the rear wheels via a six-speed sequential gearbox.

Combined with the prodigious power output

is a weight of just 972kg, which has been achieved thanks to a stripped-out interior and carbon-fibre body panels.

Its light weight means the BT62 packs a power-to-weight ratio of 537kW per tonne, more than the McLaren Senna (458kW/tonne dry), Pagani Huayra (445kW/tonne), Ferrari 812 Superfast (361kW/tonne) and Ford GT (348kW/tonne).

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Measuring 4460mm long, 1950mm wide and with a wheelbase of 2695mm, the BT62 has a number of aerodynamic enhancements to maximise downforce, including a massive front splitter, beefy rear diffuser, underbody alterations and a huge adjustable rear wing that combine to add 1200kg of downforce.

Stopping power comes from six-pot carbon Brembo brakes, while 18-inch wheels are standard. A massive 125-litre fuel tank with quick-fill connectors enhances its track-focused reputation.

Inside, the BT62 resembles a hardcore racer, with a six-point harnesses, removable carbon-fibre racing-style steering wheel, roll-cage, Alcantara and exposed carbon-fibre trim, and fixed bucket seats.

The first 35 examples of the BT62 will be decked out to reflect each of the Brabham

racing team's 35 grand prix wins, with the first model liveried in green and gold in reference to the BT19, which produced Sir Jack Brabham's first win at the 1966 French grand prix.

That year also marked the first year that Sir Jack went on to win both the driver's championship and constructor's championship - a feat never matched.

The Brabham Formula One racing team folded in 1992 after changing hands a number of times. In 2010, a legal battle ensued when a German businessman attempted to buy the Brabham name and re-enter Formula One.

The Brabham family was eventually granted the rights to the name, and in 2014, Sir Jack's son David Brabham, who spearheaded the BT62 project, launched Project Brabham to enter a race team to Le Mans.

Sir Jack died in May 2014. **MM**

Blue meanie

Camaro muscle car updated for the new year, but Australian arrival still unclear



By TUNG NGUYEN

CHEVROLET'S facelifted Camaro has been revealed for its home US market, but whether Australians will get the new version of the Ford Mustang-baiting muscle car is still up in the air.

Last year, Holden Special Vehicles (HSV) confirmed it will import and convert the 2018 model year Camaro into right-hook form to

go on sale in Holden showrooms this July, but HSV marketing general manager Damon Paull remained mum on the prospect of the just-revealed 2019 version landing Down Under.

“As flagged last December, we’ll be bringing the MY18 Camaro 2SS in mid-year with our re-engineering/production to commence at HSV (around) July,” he said.

“We don’t have any comment to make with

the facelifted Camaro revealed overnight.”

Although Mr Paull would not be drawn on further details, he said “we expect to reveal full specifications and pricing within the next month”, which is rumoured to come in around \$90,000 before on-roads – about \$30,000 more expensive than the updated V8-powered Ford Mustang.

Confirmed to arrive locally in only one flavour

– the 6.2-litre V8-powered 2SS that punches out 340kW/615Nm in US guise – the 2018 Camaro will send power to the rear wheels via a six-speed manual or eight-speed automatic transmission.

However, the 2019 update will see the eight-speed unit upgraded to a new 10-speed transmission with custom launch control and line lock burnout functions.

Slight styling tweaks differentiate the two

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SS-grade Camaros, including a reworked front end with a new ‘flowtie’ open grille emblem, as well as aerodynamically enhanced air curtains, bespoke headlights and a reworked bonnet.

At the rear, the SS gains a new diffuser when optioned with the Dual Mode Exhaust, while LED tail-lights and new 20-inch wheels also feature.

Other changes in the Camaro line-up include an updated infotainment system that mirrors the functionality of smartphones with a 7.0-inch colour touchscreen unit as standard and an 8.0-inch display available as an option.

2SS grades will get a rear camera mirror as standard that offers a “less obstructed field of view using a camera display that eliminates potential obstructions such as rear body pillars

or seat headrests”, as well as an improved, high-definition reversing camera, forward collision alert and an enhanced data recorder system.

While the facelift also ushers in a new 2.0-litre Turbo 1LE variant for the Camaro that kicks out 205kW/400Nm, at this stage HSV will only import the 6.2-litre V8 version.

Chevrolet marketing director for cars and crossovers Steve Majoros said: “Lauded since its introduction for its balance of driving fun, refinement and value, the restyled 2019 Camaro reaches even higher with more of the design, technology and choices that customers want.

“It’s a performer with few competitors and a pillar of Chevrolet’s energised car line-up,” he said. **MM**

Bahn burner

M5 Competition super saloon gets freaky as power leaps, acceleration times drop



By JUSTIN HILLIARD

BMW has unleashed the latest iteration of its bahn-storming M5 Competition super-sedan, which will hit Australian showrooms in the second half of this year priced from \$229,000 before on-road costs.

Commanding a \$30,000 premium over the

regular M5, the M5 Competition will go toe to toe with the Mercedes-AMG E63 S, which checks in at \$239,611.

The M5 Competition takes its sibling's 4.4-litre twin-turbocharged V8 petrol engine and ups peak power by 19kW to 460kW at 6000rpm, while maximum torque holds steady

at 750Nm from 1800 to 5800rpm – 200rpm wider than the regular M5.

As a result, the M5 Competition dashes from standstill to 100km/h in 3.3 seconds while on the way to 200km/h in 10.8s. For reference, the regular M5 completes these marks in 3.4s and 11.1s respectively.

Despite its performance credentials, the M5 Competition is only marginally less efficient and more pollutant than its sibling with claimed fuel consumption of 10.8 litres per 100 kilometres on the combined cycle test, up 0.3L/100km, and carbon dioxide emissions of 246 grams per km, up 5g/km, partly thanks to



the inclusion of a petrol particulate filter.

Comparatively, the E63 S produces 450kW and 850Nm, runs 3.4s triple-digit and 11.5s double-tonne sprints, drinks 9.3L/100km and emits 212g/km.

The M5 Competition's standard variable M Sport exhaust system provides even more aural drama thanks to its "cross-bank exhaust manifold, which enables exceptional turbocharger response to throttle inputs", according to the German car-maker.

New engine mounts feature an 86.2 per cent higher spring rate, which BMW says "enables greater response to driver inputs and less slack in power and handling delivery".

Ride height has been reduced by 7mm, while suspension spring rates have increased by 10 per cent for both axles, including shorter auxiliary springs for better wheel control.

Increased negative camber on the front axle, racing-style ball joints for the rear toe links, a new mounting design for the front anti-roll bar and an increased spring rate for the rear anti-roll bar are also among the suspension upgrades.

Bi-colour, Y-spoke 20-inch alloy wheels reveal the M5 Competition's intentions, wrapped in 275/35 tyres up front and 285/35 rubber at the rear.

High-gloss black trim adorns the side mirrors, signature M side gills, window surrounds, B-pillars, front double-kidney grille,

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rear diffuser, rear lip spoiler and quad exhaust tips, while body-colour doorhandles and rear M5 Competition badging round out the exterior changes.

Inside, black seatbelts with striped M stitching, M5-branded piped floor mats and an M Competition start-up instrument-cluster graphic subtly hint at the M5 Competition's performance potential.

As with the regular M5, the M5 Competition exclusively puts its outputs down to the ground via BMW's rear-biased M xDrive all-wheel-drive system and eight-speed M Steptronic automatic transmission.

According to BMW Group Australia chief executive officer Marc Werner, the M5 Competition will bring more thrills than its regular counterpart.

"Within weeks of revealing the BMW M5, we sold out of our initial allocation of 50 units," he said. "To now have the M5 Competition available to us is fantastic news.

"With more power and a further refined drive system, the M5 Competition will take the M5 experience to an even higher level."

Sales of the 5 Series have taken a significant hit this year, with 257 examples sold to the end of April, representing a 52.3 per cent decrease over the 286 deliveries made during the same period in 2017.

This effort places the BMW second in the \$70,000-plus large-car segment this year, trailing the Mercedes-Benz E-Class (471 units) but ahead of the Audi A6 (108), Maserati Ghibli (92), Audi A7 (44) and Volvo S90 (42), among others. **MM**