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The Italian job

Built to mark the 50th anniversary of hi-po Nissans, the Italdesign GT-R50 is a true Godzilla

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There goes Tokyo

Japan and Italy team up to create monstrous 530kW Nissan GT-R50



By TUNG NGUYEN

NISSAN has teamed with Italian coachbuilder Italdesign to create the ultimate GT-R, dubbed GT-R50 by Italdesign, as a 50-year celebration of the former's flagship nameplate and the latter's birthday.

Using the existing GT-R Nismo as a starting point, Italdesign developed, engineered and built the car that is longer, wider, lower and more powerful than its donor vehicle, with the GT-R50 featuring a number of golden touches to spruce up the Gundam-inspired bodywork of the Nissan supercar.

Finished in Liquid Kinetic Gray, the contrasting Energetic Sigma Gold touches adorn the front fascia surround, bonnet vents and side mirrors, as well as nearly the entire back-section of the car.

The roof is lowered by 54mm with slightly raised outer edges for a “muscular look”,

according to Nissan, while the bonnet wears a more prominent power bulge and the rear window is more steeply raked.

Nissan's signature twin round tail-lights have also been tweaked with Italdesign going for a floating look, which is nestled below a massive adjustable rear wing, and custom 21-



inch wheels shod in 255/35 tyres up front and 285/30 rubber in the rear fill the arches.

Inside, the GT-R50 is also treated to lashings of style thanks to a carbon-fibre-finished centre console and instrument panel, while gold highlights are used across the doors and switchgear.

Seats and the flat-bottomed steering wheel sport black Alcantara and Italian leather trim.

Under the bonnet, the GT-R50 still packs a twin-turbocharged 3.8-litre V6 petrol engine, but

outputs have been raised from the Nismo's 441kW/652Nm to "an estimated" 530kW/780Nm.

The lift in performance is a result of GT3 competition-spec turbochargers, larger intercoolers, high-flow piston oil jets, revised camshaft profiles, higher-flow fuel injectors, optimised ignition, and revised intake and exhaust systems.

Teamed with a strengthened dual-clutch six-speed automatic transmission, the GT-R50 also features revised continuously adjustable suspension, and six- and four-pot Brembo brakes front and rear.

Nissan senior vice-president for global design Alfonso Albaisa shot down hopes that the GT-

R50 would form the basis of the new-generation model, but instead said it is a unique way to celebrate two milestones.

"Although this is not the next-generation GT-R, it is an exciting celebration of two anniversaries in a proactive and creative way – wrapping one of Nissan's best engineering platforms and Japanese design with Italian coachbuilding," he said.

"How often do you get to ask, 'What if we created a GT-R without limits,' and then actually get to build it?"



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“This is a rare window in time when two big moments intersect: 50 years of Italdesign shaping the automotive world and 50 years of Nissan generating excitement through our iconic GT-R.

“So to celebrate this convergence, Nissan and Italdesign created this custom GT-R to mark 50 years of engineering leadership.”

The GT-R nameplate first appeared in 1969 as the flagship variant in its Skyline line-up, before being replaced by a new-generation model in 1973 that was in production for just a single year.

GT-R would not return to Nissan until 1989 with the introduction of the R32 Skyline powered by the famed twin-turbo 2.6-litre RB26 straight-six engine that dominated Australian touring cars in the early 1990s.

The fourth-generation R33 Skyline GT-R went on sale from 1995 to 1998, before the fifth-gen R34 Skyline GT-R was made available

from 1999-2002, the latter of which featured as Paul Walker’s car of choice in the Fast and the Furious movie franchise.

Outside of film, Skyline GT-R models were also popularised with the Gran Turismo, Need for Speed and Forza video game series, as well as through the Initial D and Wangan Midnight street-racing mangas.

The Skyline moniker was dropped in 2007 with the debut of the Nissan GT-R, a two-door four-seater powered by a twin-turbocharged 3.8-litre V6 engine.

Meanwhile, Italdesign has worked with many car-makers throughout its lifespan, but is most notable for designing the first-generation Volkswagen Golf and Scirocco of 1974, the Alfa Romeo Brera and 159 of 2005, the 2004 Maserati MC12 supercar and the 2001 SsangYong Rexton. **MM**

Drag me to hell

Hellcat Redeye gets Demon treatment to produce face-melting 594kW/959Nm



By TUNG NGUYEN

DODGE has uncovered its updated Challenger muscle car range with a new flagship SRT Hellcat Redeye variant that packs a 594kW/959Nm punch thanks to upgrades borrowed from the drag strip-orientated, limited-run Demon.

Using a supercharged 6.2-litre Hemi V8 for

motivation paired to an eight-speed TorqueFlite automatic transmission with a choice of two final drive ratios – the standard 2.62:1 or optional 3.09:1 for improved acceleration capabilities – the Redeye will shoot from zero to 60mph (97km/h) in as little as 3.4 seconds.

Upgrades in the Redeye include a larger 2.7-litre supercharger up from the standard

Hellcat's 2.4 litres, increased boost pressure, a 300rpm higher rev limit at 6500rpm, two dual-stage fuel pumps and a larger air intake system.

Meanwhile, the standard Challenger SRT Hellcat, also powered by a force-fed 6.2-litre bent eight, receives a lift in output from 527kW/881Nm to 535kW/889Nm.

Fitted as standard with a six-speed manual

gearbox, the Challenger SRT Hellcat can also be optioned with the eight-speed TorqueFlite automatic, while all supercharged V8 versions of Dodge's two-door muscle car will sport a new-look front end that features functional dual-bonnet vents, a throwback to the brand's muscle cars of yesteryear.

Redeye grades gain extra badging, while a

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bootlip rear spoiler is also available as an option on the SRT Hellcat, and standard features extend to adaptive suspension, six-piston front brakes, launch control, a line lock burnout function, 8.4-inch Uconnect infotainment touchscreen and SRT Drive Modes.

A Widebody Package is also available on the SRT Hellcats, as well as the 362kW/644Nm 6.4-litre naturally aspirated V8 R/T Scat Pack grade, which adds 3.5 inches to overall width.

Widened versions of the Redeye will blitz the standing quarter mile in 10.8 seconds, while the standard-width car will stop the clock at 11.1s. SRT Hellcat vehicles are 0.1s slower respectively.

R/T Scat Pack versions gain a bulging aluminium hood taken from the outgoing SRT Hellcat, while buyers also now have the option of larger six-pot Brembo brakes, wider wheels

and tyres, and suspension upgrades.

Lower grades in the Challenger range, the R/T and new GT RWD, are also fitted as standard with the Super Track Pack that includes performance suspension, enhanced steering, 20-inch wheels, steering wheel-mounted shift paddles and front splitter.

A Performance Handling Group upgrade kit is also available on the two aforementioned variants that, as the name suggests, improves vehicle control with suspension and braking tweaks.

Given that no versions of current third-generation Dodge Challenger – which was introduced in 2008 – have made their way Down Under, GoAuto expects the updated range to also be locked out for Australian buyers, but Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) Australia gave no comment. **MM**

Up the Lev-ante

Maserati unleashes its most potent Levante yet with 404kW/730Nm twin-turbo V8 GTS



By ROBBIE WALLIS

MASERATI has officially confirmed a high-performance GTS version of its Levante large SUV, which is being considered for an Australian debut as the company assesses whether right-hand-drive

production is a viable option.

The Levante GTS packs the same 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8 engine as the Quattroporte GTS, however outputs have been dialled up from 390kW/650Nm to 404kW at 6250rpm and 730Nm from 2500-5000rpm.

Its outputs are comparable to other top-spec luxury SUV offerings, such as the Range Rover Sport SVR (423kW/700Nm), Porsche Cayenne Turbo (404kW/770Nm), Mercedes-AMG GLE63 S (430kW/760Nm) and the BMW X5 M (423kW/750Nm).

The zero-to-100km/h sprint can be completed in just 4.2 seconds, and top speed is pegged at 292km/h, while fuel consumption stands at 13.5 litres per 100km and CO2 emissions at 313 grams per kilometre.

An eight-speed ZF automatic transmission



sends power to all four wheels using Maserati's Q4 rear-biased all-wheel-drive system, which includes a mechanical limited-slip differential on the rear axle that can lock up by 25 per cent under power and 35 per cent under release.

In order to extract the extra power, Maserati included two new twin-scroll turbochargers,

redesigned cylinder heads, camshafts and valves, a new crankcase, oil pump, auxiliary belt and wiring layout, and a specific wheel design.

The GTS sits as the second most-powerful Levante in the range behind the 440kW Trofeo, which was revealed at this year's New

York motor show and is also, at this stage, not available to Australian buyers.

Suspension has been tuned for the GTS with 20-inch alloys as standard, wrapped in 265/40 front and 295/40 rear rubber. 21- or 22-inch alloys will also be available as an option.

Maserati's Integrated Vehicle Control

system has been tuned to minimise understeer and maintain optimal control of the vehicle. The front brakes have been fitted with six-piston aluminium callipers and 380mm drilled discs, while the rear gets 330mm drilled discs.

Styling-wise, the GTS is differentiated by a new front bumper, lower splitter and GTS

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badging, while full-matrix LED headlights are available as an option.

Inside, the GTS gains full-leather sports seats in four different colours, a redesigned leather-wrapped gear shifter, updated instrument cluster graphics, aluminium paddle shifters, velour floor mats, illuminated trunk sills and a 900W, 14-speaker harman/kardon sound system.

If it were to come to Australia, the GTS would likely be priced north of \$200,000, with the range currently topping out at \$179,000 before on-roads for the S GranSport/GranLusso.

Alongside the announcement of the GTS, Maserati has also detailed model-year updates for the existing Levante, Quattroporte and

Ghibli ranges, which are due to arrive locally mid-next year.

The Quattroporte range gains graphic tweaks to the 8.4-inch infotainment display, a redesigned gear lever and button cluster, a revised 'Nerissimo' black package, greater choice of upholstery, and new paint colour and wheel options.

Ghibli models add adaptive full LED matrix headlights as standard, as well as the choice of two premium sound systems and the same infotainment changes and exterior and upholstery options as the Quattroporte.

The V6-powered Levante range has been similarly updated with headlight, upholstery, infotainment, sound system and paint changes. **MM**

Sting in the tail

McLaren's fourth 'Long Tail' is the fastest and most powerful Sports Series model yet



By ROBBIE WALLIS

MCLAREN has lifted the lid on its latest model, dubbed the 600LT, which is the fourth 'Long Tail' version in the supercar-maker's history that draws inspiration from the 675LT revealed

at the 2015 Geneva motor show.

Based on the 570S, the 600LT is the fastest and most powerful model in the history of the entry-level Sports Series range, with a limited number coming to Australia. Exact timing, pricing and allocation is yet to be determined.

McLaren has boosted power for the 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8 by 22kW/20Nm to 441kW/620Nm, thanks to an updated cooling system and reduced back pressure in the exhaust system, which is shorter than that in the Senna.

As the name would suggest, the 600LT's body length has been increased by 74mm, and features an extended front splitter, lengthened rear diffuser and a fixed rear wing.

If owners check every weight-saving box, the 600LT checks in at 1247kg dry, 96kg



lighter than the 570S Coupe, with 23 per cent of parts changed for the 600LT.

Weight saving is achieved with new carbon-fibre bodywork and the special exhaust system, which exits on top of the 600LT's rear, in front of the fixed wing spoiler. Options from McLaren Special Operations (MSO), such as vented carbon-fibre front fenders and a carbon-fibre roof and cantrails, help to further reduce weight.

To enhance on-road performance, the 600LT gains the aluminium double-wishbone suspension and lightweight brakes borrowed from the 720S, sharper throttle, brake and steering response, firmer engine and exhaust mounts and Pirelli P-Zero Trofeo R rubber.

The weight-saving measures continue inside with a minimalist cabin featuring carbon-fibre racing seats borrowed from the P1 hybrid supercar and extensive Alcantara trim throughout. Those looking to further reduce weight can option super-light carbon-fibre pews taken from the Senna.

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McLaren has described the production of the 600LT as “strictly limited”, so Australian allocation will be slim. Local pricing is yet to be determined, but a pricetag somewhere between the 570S Coupe (\$395,000 before on-road costs) and the 720S (\$515,080) is likely.

Production of the 600LT will begin in October and last for 12 months, meaning the new model will likely land in Australia in 2019.

The LT badge began in 1997 with the McLaren F1 GTR Longtail, a GT racecar

based on the F1 GTR that shed over 100kg compared to the original, and finished the 1997 Le Mans 24 Hours GT1 class in first and second place.

The nameplate was revived at the 2015 Geneva motor show with the 675LT, based on the 650S Super Series model, which was followed by a drop-stop Spider version due to the demand of the coupe.

As such, the creation of a 600LT Spider is not out of the question. **MM**