



REFLECTIONS ON THE GENEVA MOTOR SHOW 2014

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In general, the Geneva Motor Show is regarded by most media regulars as the best one to attend, as it is in the words of one journalist, 'small but perfectly formed'.

The night before the first press day, Monday 3 March, is usually reserved for a number of different manufacturer events, where journalists can view new models prior to the media unveiling the next day. This offers journalists the opportunity to meet and talk with designers as well as marketing and press folk about the background to the specific model as the next two days at the show are crammed with journalists and camera crews from all over the world and the opportunity to talk in detail about certain models is much reduced. This year I had the opportunity of doing just this with Vauxhall/Opel, as they revealed their new



Adam models to the press on the Monday night.



Opel Adam Rocks

In previous years, on the first morning of the Geneva Motor Show, I have scrambled and scrummed with the best of them to get front row access at most manufacturer press conferences, just to get those first shots as the cover is pulled off some new model. Then, just before that press conference finishes, one tries to extract oneself gracefully from the front of the scrum to race off to the next press conference, ahead of the media throng. Trouble is, that most other photographers and video crews have the same idea, so your intended graceful departure from one press conference more closely resembles an undignified pushing and shoving exercise with extended elbows, and with little regard for the multitude of feet being trampled in the process.



This year, however, I resolved not to go down that road, and to rather follow the masses getting the shots of each new reveal immediately after the press scrum had departed, allowing me more or less free access to most models. This policy certainly paid dividends and worked a treat on most stands.



Audi TT 420 quattro sport

But about the Geneva Motor Show itself, there were some great new models on display, many 'e' cars and an increased number of custom outfits. New manufacturer Qoros had their long-awaited new 3 Hatch on display. Hyundai had their new Genesis, Opel their new Adam models and the aggressive-looking Astra OPC Extreme (Vauxhall Astra VXR Extreme) while Subaru revealed their Viviz 2 concept. The Rinspeed driverless concept was of particular interest in that it showed what life might be like in the future when cars would drive themselves.



Opel Astra OPC Extreme

Audi had their new TT on the stand as well as the awesome TT 420, a much more powerful 2-litre version of this popular model. Making its appearance also were Audi's R18 e-tron quattro and DTM racer for the 2014 season. Bentley showed their new Continental Speed GT Convertible, and Porsche had their Carrera Targa on the stand for the first time in Europe having being revealed previously in Detroit. Also on the Porsche stand were their two 2014 WEC race cars, these being the 919 Hybrid to race in the LMP1 class, and the updated 911 RSR. The 919 Hybrid reveal was the car's first public appearance and will usher in a new era of Porsche's participation at the highest level in sports car racing.



Bentley Continental GT Speed Convertible

Of course there were numerous other launches and concept cars such as the new Corvette and Camaro, Skoda VisionC and VW T-Roc concepts, the Rolls-Royce Phantom Convertible and Ghost Series II. Maserati had their new Alfieri concept, sporting the snazziest wheels at the Geneva Motor Show, but this was no doubt for initial public appeal. Ferrari showed their new California Turbo, a V8 powered droptop that represents a real departure for the Italian manufacturer with its turbo engine.



Rolls-Royce Ghost Series II

Fiat had the new Panda on their stand, a fun-looking practical and small all-wheel-drive vehicle. The Toyota Auris Hybrid promised just 84 g/km CO₂ from its engine, while nearby the Honda Civic Type-R looked impressive.



Honda Civic Type R (Concept)

On the BMW stand their much-vaunted i3, recently voted as UK Car of the Year 2014, was extremely popular with the media and Chinese industrial photographers alike, as the latter snapped every possible component with the view no doubt to replicating it back home. BMW also showed their awesome looking i8 plug-in hybrid sports car featuring highly efficient eDrive technology and the use of recyclable interior materials.



Jaguar XFR-S Sportbrake

Jaguar Land Rover presented the new XFR-S Sportbrake, a 5.0-litre supercharged V8 delivering 550PS and no doubt a rival for Audi's RS6. Alongside was the Range Rover Evoque Autobiography Dynamic, with its 285PS/400Nm 2.0-litre petrol engine and ZF 9-speed automatic transmission with active driveline.



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Range Rover Evoque Autobiography

In line with many other manufacturers, Nissan has developed a comprehensive range of personalisation options that will allow owners to make their new Juke unique. Factory special personalisation packs to enhance the interior and the exterior were shown on the new Juke Design. Also on display were Nissan's GT-R Nismo and Blade glider concepts, as well as the ZEOD RC prototype to run at this year's Le Mans 24-Hour race.



Nissan's new Juke

On the supercar front, McLaren launched their 650S Spider with much smoke from the smoke machine, while Ron Dennis actually looked quite surprised to be on the stand. Celebrating their 20th anniversary, the Swedish manufacturer Koenigsegg introduced the Agera One:1, the world's first 'megacar' with a simulated top speed in excess of 440 km/h. Don't bother asking because the entire production of six vehicles has been fully pre-sold, prior to introduction.



McLaren 650S Spider

It is of course not possible to list and show all the models from the Geneva Motor Show in this blog, but to see a wider selection of cars on display, visit: <http://bit.ly/1oBkFWn>

By Glen Smale

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