



• 2016 Alfa Romeo 4C Spider (preproduction)

DETROIT SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW | JANUARY 2015

The North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) is held at Cobo Center in downtown Detroit. No matter how much the world evolves, Detroit means cars at its core. NAIAS is the first show of the calendar year (though second in the seasonal cycle, after Los Angeles in November). Since Detroit happens after January 1, we get reveals of production vehicles for the following model year—2016 models with sale dates crossing January 1, 2016. They were even taking the wraps off some 2017 models. Here are some highlights (alphabetically, with exceptions for the big photos):

- Some 25 years after the original NSX, and after several years of developmental reveals, we have a production **2016 Acura NSX**. The car has a new longitudinally mid-mounted twin-turbo V6 and 9-speed dual clutch transmission, is 3 inches longer and an inch wider than its predecessor, moves its cabin forward a bit from the concept, and has Acura SH-AWD (all-wheel drive), an internal frame of aluminum, ultra-high strength steel and other advanced materials, anchored by a carbon fiber floor. They start taking orders this summer.
- The rejuvenated presence of Alfa Romeo in the US has just been multiplied by two, as the **2015 Alfa Romeo 4C Spider** (photo at top) was shown in preproduction form at Detroit, preparing to join the recently introduced 4C Coupe on dealer floors by the end of this calendar year. As with the Coupe, the new Alfa Romeo 4C Spider has a Formula 1 inspired carbon fiber monocoque chassis and all-aluminum 1750 cc dual-intercooled direct-injection turbo with variable valve timing.
- It has been awhile since a redesign of this successful three-row SUV. The new **2016 Audi Q7** is one of the final efforts under outgoing design chief Wolfgang Egger and contains evolutionary style elements, notably a huge brushed metal bezel around its grille. From there back, the vehicle's familiar egglike shape has become more generic. The big news is that it has shed over 700 pounds, which contributes to a 26 percent



• 2016 Acura NSX



• 2016 Audi Q7



• Bentley Mulsanne Speed



• Buick Avenir concept



• Chevrolet Bolt concept



• Hyundai Santa Cruz crossover truck concept

increase in fuel efficiency. The vehicle is smaller outside and larger inside. Infotainment and driver assistance technologies are upgraded.

- A new **Bentley Mulsanne Speed** has selectable sport suspension and steering, on demand. An updated 6.75-liter twin-turbo V8 carries the substantial sedan to 60 mph in just 4.8 seconds, with a top speed of 190 mph. With nine percent global sales growth last year, the US remains the super luxury brand's largest market, at 30 percent. Also revealed was a **Continental GT Speed Convertible**, and further buzz centered around a long-rumored **Bentley SUV**, yet to be unveiled.
- The **Buick Avenir concept** is a study in the brand's design direction, vehicle technologies and passenger comforts. A global team of designers applied the spirit of historic Buicks that had most influenced the world's automotive style direction in the past. This personal premium four-seat concept has full LED lighting, cylinder-deactivating V6 and twin-clutch all-wheel drive, all sitting on 21-inch wheels. Also revealed was the **2016 Buick Cascada** convertible, sure to be a hit.
- The **Chevrolet Bolt concept**, a new subcompact electric vehicle aimed for production—very soon—achieves 200-mile range at an approachable purchase price of about \$30,000. The car carries technologies from the Volt and the Spark EV. The Bolt has near-zero body overhangs, for a spacious interior on a small footprint. Construction is of lightweight aluminum, magnesium carbon fiber and woven mesh. Many features can be operated via smartphone—including ride-sharing. The Bolt was joined onstage by the **2016 Chevrolet Volt**, with significant restyling and enhanced range.
- A show-stopping new **2017 Ford GT** supercar (photo, next page) returns to market with a 600-plus-hp rear-midengine EcoBoost twin-turbo V6, construction of aluminum and carbon fiber, and an extremely aggressive and highly aerodynamic new body. Production begins in late 2016, as a

2017 model, in time for the 50th anniversary of the original Ford GT40 race car's famous 1-2-3 finish at the 1966 24 Hours of Le Mans. Also revealed were a new **F-150 Raptor** extreme sport pickup and a **Shelby GT350R Mustang**.

- The **Hyundai Santa Cruz concept**—a dramatically styled and broadly useful third millennium pickup, is equally suitable for urban duty, weekend adventure and general utility. With a mission similar to the Honda Ridgeline a decade ago—a new interpretation of what a pickup is—Hyundai nails it. Gutsy and gorgeous, it has the bearing of a utility hot rod. The concept has integrated rear-hinged rear doors. The roof, bed rails and even wheel arches offer tie-down cleats for securing cargo. The bed easily expands for longer cargo, using a drawer-like sliding function.
- The **2016 Jaguar XE** sport sedan slots below the Jaguar XF sedan—one of our favorites—at a starting price anticipated around \$42k (the XF starts at around \$50k). The line-topping XE S model will have a 340-hp 3.0-liter supercharged V6, though its price may approach that of an XF S, based on early UK pricing. The aluminum-intensive XE is available with rear- or four-wheel drive.
- The **Infiniti Q60 concept** two-door sports coupe is a peek at a new 2+2 launching during 2016 as a 2017 model. It's part of their renamed product realignment, between the new premium compact Q30 and a full-size car like the Q80 Inspiration concept shown in Paris last fall. A 3-liter twin-turbo V6 in the Q60 concept hints at a sporty character for the production model.
- Lexus generated plenty of buzz with a new **2016 GS F**, a 467-hp 5.0-liter V8 version of their rear-drive sedan, and its related **RC F** coupe. These machines echo the brand's return to racing, for which they had on hand the **Lexus RC F GT3** race car, first shown last year at the Geneva



• 2016 Jaguar XE



• Infiniti Q60 concept



• Lexus RC F GT3 race car



• 2015 Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 Coupé 4MATIC



• 2016 Nissan Titan XD





• 2017 Ford GT

show. At 2,755.8 pounds, it carries a modified V8 with 540-plus hp. Lexus will supply GT3-compliant vehicles to racing teams starting this year. GT3 cars qualify for events such as the 24 Hours of Nürburgring in Germany and the Super Taikyu Endurance and Super GT series in Japan.

- Combining everything they've learned from pioneering four-door coupes, 4MATIC SUVs and AMG performance builds, the **Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 Coupé 4MATIC** follows last year's introduction of the GLE with a 585-hp biturbo V8 powerhouse AMG version. The high-performance SUV coupé has sport suspension with active roll stabilization, active curve system and sports direct-steer.

- Big pickup wars gain a rejuvenated contestant with the **2015 Nissan Titan XD**. The truck's 5.0-liter Cummins turbo-diesel, with 310 hp and 555 lb-ft of torque, is intended to position the new Titan between lightweight (150/1500) and heavy-duty (250/2500 and up) competitors. "We weren't just going for best-in-class," says Renault-Nissan chairman and CEO Carlos Ghosn, but rather, "best new class." The all-American new Nissan Titan was designed and engineered in Arizona, California, Michigan and Tennessee and will be built in Mississippi, with engines from Tennessee and Indiana. Nissan Titan goes on sale later this year.

- The **2016 Porsche 911 Targa 4 GTS** is a 50th anniversary model, combining its open top with a 430-hp GTS engine, PASM chassis, 20-inch wheels, standard Sport Chrono package and sport exhaust. Even with all that—and a wider Carrera 4 body, as on all Targas—the power-to-weight ratio of the new model is improved, to under 8 pounds per horsepower. Expect a top track speed over 186 mph and zero-to-60 acceleration in just 4.1 seconds with PDK transmission.

- The new **2015 Ram 1500 Rebel** combines air suspension and 33-inch tires for increased ride height and immense capability, backed up by skid plates and tow hooks, with a classic 4x4 stance.

With 3.6L Pentastar V6, the pickup has a 3.92 rear axle—the first time for this combo. HEMI V8 models are also available. A new grille departs from the brand's longstanding crosshairs for the first time (see also the later Chicago show in this issue), giving the truck a rugged tubular pushbar look, without that weight and bulk. The Rebel is the tenth model in the extensive Ram pickup lineup. Rear-wheel-drive models are also available.

- The midsize **2016 Toyota Tacoma** updates powertrains and retunes suspension, for the next iteration of a truck that has sold over seven million since 1964. Primarily developed in Michigan, the new Tacoma receives more high-strength and ultra-high-strength steel in both frame and body. The truck has a choice of 2.7L four-cylinder or all-new 3.5L Atkinson cycle V6 with both direct and port fuel injection. Toyota says to expect better off-road capabilities and a quieter cabin. Five trim levels come in both two- and four-wheel drive.

- The show opened with the **Volkswagen Golf** and **Golf GTI** receiving Car of the Year trophies. Then, on stage inside, the company revealed the **Volkswagen Cross Coupe GTE concept**, a handsome new five-seat plug-in hybrid SUV. The powertrain includes a 276-hp 3.6 VR6 FSI engine, two electric motors (54 and 114 hp) and all-wheel drive. Its sheetmetal gives indications of VW's next-gen SUVs in the US, while its instruments demonstrate a future incorporating gesture controls for instruments and information.

- The **2016 Volvo S60 Inscription** is an upsized S60 sedan, with larger interior dimensions for US customers—a full 3.4 inches of additional rear seat legroom, thus rating best-in-class. Materials are intended to reflect the car's Scandinavian origins, including walnut trim and "silk metal." But the biggest news may be that the S60 Inscription will be now-Chinese-owned Volvo's first Chinese-built Volvo sold in the US, and thus the first Chinese-built car of any sort for sale in the US. ■



• 2016 Porsche 911 Targa



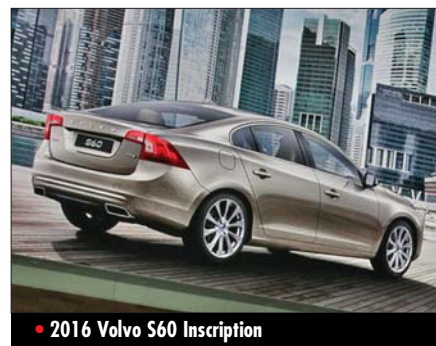
• 2015 Ram 1500 Rebel



• 2016 Toyota Tacoma



• 2017 Volkswagen Cross Coupe GTE



• 2016 Volvo S60 Inscription