

**Whoa!  
Shanghai  
brings  
new vision  
to Buick**



## World premiere at Auto Shanghai 2007

*China-designed gullwing coupe is a preview of Buick's new international design language: "It's Not East, Not West ... It's Buick."*

The gullwing Riviera concept coupe was developed with global design input by the Pan Asia Technical Automotive Center (PATAC) in China, a design and engineering joint venture between General Motors and Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation (SAIC). The Riviera was engineered to accommodate a new hybrid system that will go into production at Shanghai GM, the General Motors flagship joint venture with SAIC, in 2008, prior to the Beijing Olympics.

The fuel-efficient car, which will feature several technological and manufacturing advances, represents the latest achievement of GM and its partners in the promotion and development of alternative propulsion technologies in China. The Riviera also marks the return of a venerable Buick nameplate after an eight-year gap; the Riviera, in various prior iterations, has sold more than 1.1 million units in the US between 1963 and 1999.

This new Riviera, with its tightly stretched carbon fiber body panels, a combination of positive and negative curves, strong front and rear identities and gullwing doors hopes to capture the essence of Buick classics, while presenting a thoroughly 21st century design.

According to James Shyr, PATAC Design Director, the Riviera's curves and "earth and water" interior tones are drawn from diverse inspirations—from classic Buicks, to ancient Chinese artifacts, to modern electronic icons. Inside and out, the car seeks to transcend cultural or national boundaries.

### Exterior design

The Riviera design is structured around the Buick tri-shield logo, sitting on a trihedral waterfall grille formed by three meeting planes. The Buick logo leads into a reflective strip through the hood, a nod to the distinctive mid-hood crease in classic Buicks. Elongated LED headlamps flow up the hood sides to three-section, top-mounted chrome portholes as a single piece of jewelry. Since Buick shows no signs of moving away from their longstanding portholes, this is an interesting style integration.

The logo, hood strip, headlamps, side mirrors and rocker covers all have "icy green" backlighting at night, matched by a backlit logo and exhausts at the rear.

Designers have incorporated several other



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design signatures from the original Riviera generation, including a "double sweep spear" line along the bodyside and a flared tail design. The "Shell Blue" exterior color is a metallic silver with light blue accents, highlighting the coupe's exterior curves.

Gullwing doors, selected for their exotic appeal, access a two-plus-two seating configuration. Over six feet wide at their widest point, they add to the coupe's sleek sideline. At night, fully opened doors shine the "Buick" name on the ground.

The use of carbon fiber in all body panels made the gullwing engineering demands easier to realize and sharp, tight radius curves possible across the body surface. The Riviera sits on 21-inch 10-spoke forged aluminum wheels, combining polished and satin finishes, with low-profile tires. Side mirrors take their cue from Formula One cars, sweeping yet unobtrusive.

#### Interior design

The interior is conceived as a sanctuary. The use of rich blue and subtle creams, representing earth and water themes, are conveyed through high-quality leather bucket seats, plush carpet and a luxurious

padded steering wheel. Completing the organic feel, the roof comprises two shaded glass windows for more headroom and what Buick uncharacteristically calls a celestial connection for occupants. That alone is enough to confirm that things are due for a change at Buick. The interior has no discernable start and finish point for the front and sides, creating a comfortable lounge feel, futuristic yet somehow familiar.

The three-dimensional speedometer, inspired by past classics but modern in execution, complements a touchpad central console loosely modeled on a computer mouse. An LCD display screen crowns the central console. Electronic shifter pads replace the traditional transmission shifter. Controls are kept to a minimum to avoid driver distraction.

Ambient light strips are applied from across the console and inserted on the door liner, stretching to the front seats. Deliberately imitating precious Chinese jade stone, the lights are tinted a subtle icy green, which also offers tribute to a favored color of Buicks in days gone by.

Interior trim treatments abound—miniature aluminum tri-shields in the front

seat headrests, a wooden floor mat in the rear and a rear central armrest which can move to left or right to accommodate passengers of different sizes.

Plush royal blue Alcantara was chosen for the door, console and roof, while sandy white leather covers the lower door, lower console and seats.

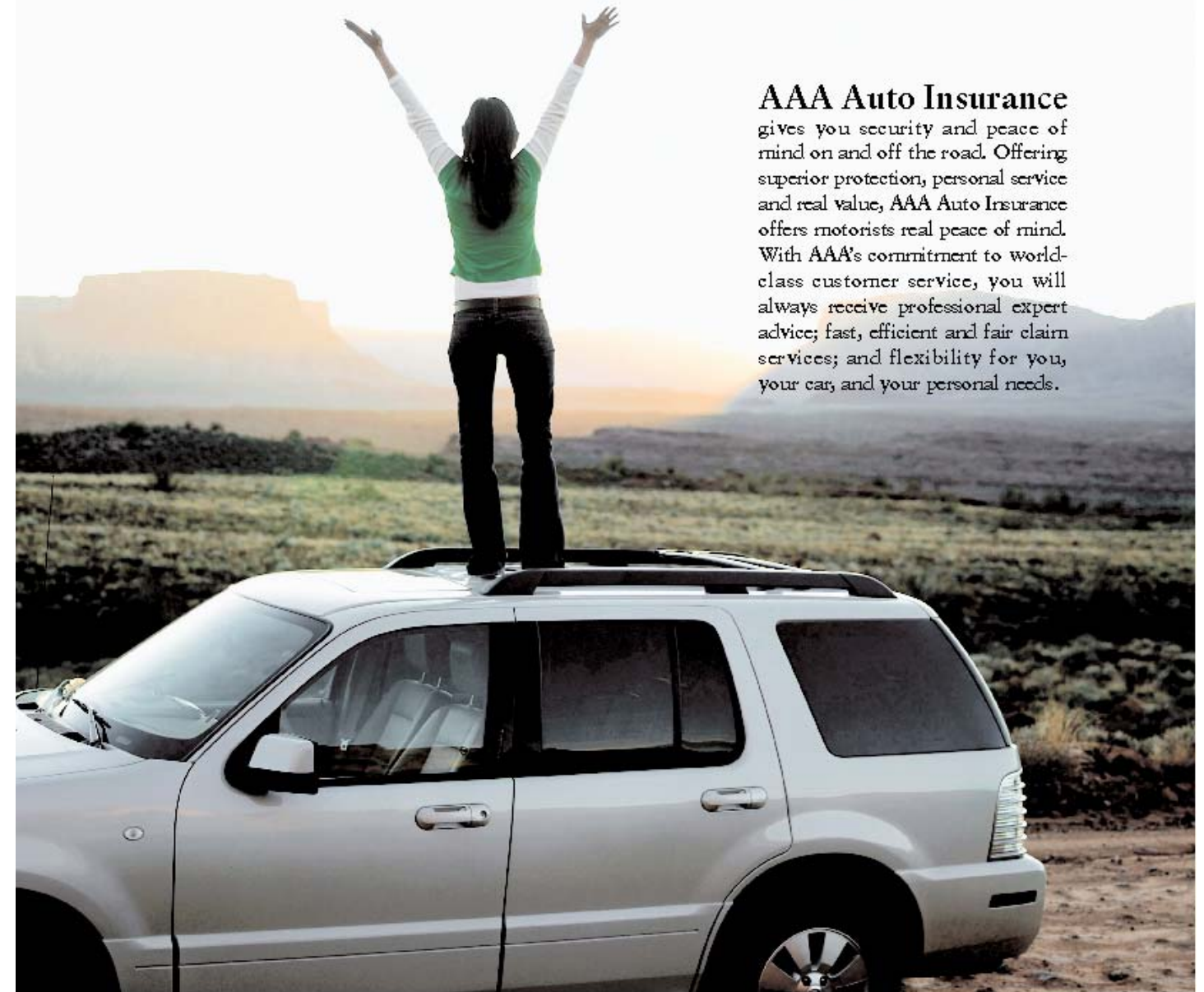
#### Ancient influences

The design team set out to create a modern global design—not something which could be superficially described as a Chinese car. At the same time, they sought to draw from various heritage outside the automotive industry for classic shapes, concepts and artifacts, to present a subtle Chinese essence and influence.

One strong influence was the yuanbao, a small curvaceous gold or silver ingot used in ancient China as currency and popular today as a symbol of ancient Chinese prosperity.

Buicks have long been popular in China, so this Shanghai concept has the potential to tap emotions and utility compatible with both East and West. It's definitely interesting to watch Buick push the envelope. ■

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