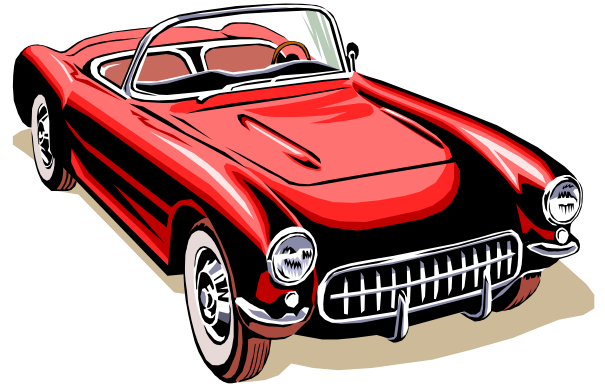


Weekly Car Dealers Newsletter

September 16, 2008



This information that follows is taken from sources including *The Carconnection*, *Autoweek*, and other industry sources. For more information please call our Edmonton office.

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[FOR NOW, HONDA WILL SKIP ELECTRIC VEHICLES](#)

One name is conspicuously absent from the electric vehicle hoopla: Honda. And R&D chief Masaaki Kato says that is for good reason. Honda Motor Co. has no plans to produce electric vehicles. The battery technology is not ready, he says. "Nowadays, the most advanced batteries are lithium ion batteries. But even though the size is getting smaller, the density of the energy is still too poor for cars," Kato said. For the foreseeable future, electric cars will be limited to short-distance city runabouts. By 2015, they will account for less than 1 percent of the market in developed countries, Kato said. - Source: *Automotive News*

[2011 CHEVY VOLT: LOST IN TRANSLATION?](#)

The 2011 [Chevrolet](#) Volt doesn't look as much like the concept version, and that has potential customers complaining.

Earlier this week we showed you the first photos of the 2011 Volt, and unleashed a whirlwind of coverage that--to our surprise--has led to a lot of speculation on the Volt's

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appearance. It's turned into a mini-consumer clinic on the new gas-electric [hybrid](#), which GM says it will launch for sale with a 40-mile electric driving range that can be extended when its small gasoline engine is running.

The [Detroit News' Manny Lopez](#) connects with the issue: "It shouldn't come as a surprise that the production Volt isn't charged with the stylish sex appeal that many had hoped. But it shouldn't be devoid of it either. Unfortunately, it is. The Volt looks like a GM Prius, which followed the rollout last week of the [Honda](#) Prius, all paying design homage to the real deal, the [Toyota Prius](#)."

Whether the photo release was intentional or not, here's your chance to take a look at the concept version and decide for yourself if the Volt has met, exceeded, or fallen short of your expectations.

FORD'S ECOBOOST GETTING MORE BOOST FROM ETHANOL?



[Ford](#) will pair its new EcoBoost engines with an ethanol-injection system that will increase fuel economy by another 5 to 10 percent, PickupTruck.com reports.

In the Bobcat scenario, the EcoBoost engines will get a blast of ethanol to their already efficient direct-injection, turbocharged setup. Instead of injecting gas right into the cylinders, the new "Bobcat" engines will use tradition fuel injectors and will use the direct-injection ports to spray ethanol into the cylinder, which will cool the

mixture for better efficiency and to prevent the pre-detonation (pinging) inherent in an efficient high-compression gasoline engine.

Ford's EcoBoost engines will make their debut soon in a range of [Ford](#) vehicles like the [2009 Lincoln MKS](#) and [trucks](#) like the [Ford F-150](#). The EcoBoost series is a direct response to the need for greater power from smaller, more efficient engines.

The Bobcat's additional efficiency could put the engines within striking range of the ultra-efficient diesel. Additionally, so little ethanol is used, it's claimed, that the separate ethanol tank would only require refilling every few months depending upon usage.

Why not stick with gasoline direct injection as in its own EcoBoost engines, in VW/Audi 2.0T and 3.2 V-6 engines, in the new GM high-feature V-6 ([CTS](#), [Enclave](#), [Outlook](#), [Acadia](#), [Traverse](#)), and now also in Porsche's [911](#)? This allows just one injector to do two jobs, both cylinder cooling and the injection of the fuel for combustion. Might extra complexity equal extra repair costs down the road? But if [Ford](#) really can achieve unheard-of diesel efficiency with a gasoline engine, they'd make headlines and potentially give the diesel engine mortal injuries.

Regardless, we strongly suggest FoMoCo consider a different name for their new high-tech gas miser; you don't want this new tech to share its name with the [Mercury](#) clone of the [Ford](#) Pinto. -

Source: [PickupTrucks.com](#)

SNAKE SALE: VIPER CONTINUES TO ATTRACT POTENTIAL SUITORS

It's not every day an iconic supercar business is put on the block, and Chrysler says it has received considerable interest from potential buyers for the Dodge Viper unit.

The company has heard from a number of global suitors, including some from North America, Chrysler co-president Jim Press said Wednesday.

"We've been approached by outside individuals who want to buy the product and sustain it going forward," he told reporters at an Automotive Press Association luncheon in Detroit.



Retaining an interest in the Viper business isn't a requirement of the potential deal for Chrysler, Press said. He also gave more details as to why the company is willing to part with the unit, saying investment dollars are better spent on higher-volume products. Press didn't identify the potential buyers, but the Viper unit could attract a range of investors, including foreign automakers looking to bolster their performance credentials in North America. Tata recently bought Jaguar and Land Rover from Ford, which earlier sold Aston Martin to a Kuwaiti consortium. General Motors' Hummer unit also is up for sale.

The Viper, however, is a bit of a unique case--a single performance car with one factory in Detroit, where the cars are hand-built. Press said he expects a future owner will be able to sink more cash into the Viper and give it a long-term future. "I think that will preserve the brand going forward," he said. — Source: [Autoweek.com](#)

LITHIA OPENS L2'S BUDGET CAR OUTLET IN LOVELAND COLORADO

Instead of sending older, high-mileage vehicles to a wholesaler, Lithia dealerships in Colorado now send them to a corporate liquidation lot in Loveland

The lot now bearing the name L2's Budget Car Outlet was previously run by L2 Auto. L2 Auto was a Web-based operation that appears to have operated as an online consignment lot. L2 Auto closed its doors in June after one year in business.

Robert Sacks, Lithia's director of community relations is quoted in an article appearing in the *A Member of the MacKay Network*

Loveland Reporter-Herald as saying, "We had a lot of customers looking for vehicles that we realized we had going to auction."

Other local auto merchants are happy to see the location active again. Others have tried similar used car, medium-sized box operations, but the idea has not caught on big time. Lithia may have chosen the right timing- we'll see. — *Source: The Dealersedge*

10 VEHICLES THAT WILL REDEFINE THE AUTO INDUSTRY IN THE NEXT YEAR

From hybrids to big pickups, from luxury cars to thrifty compacts, a handful of new vehicles that debut over the next 12 months may shape the future of automakers around the world. They come in all shapes and sizes. Some break new ground for their manufacturers. Others aim to reassert companies' dominance in market segments they created. From icons like the Ford F-150 and Toyota Prius to newcomers like the Lincoln MKT and Chevrolet Traverse, they are the most interesting and important new cars to watch as the 2009 model year kicks into high gear and model year 2010 begins.

2009 Audi A4

Bigger, better and radically restyled, Audi's new sport sedan offers more room than the competition and an elegant new design. The A4's beautifully balanced chassis could threaten the BMW 3-series' handling supremacy, while a base price of \$32,700 for the sedan and \$34,500 for the station wagon should make competitors from Acura to Lexus nervous.

The A4 sedan is trickling into dealerships now. Look for a high-m.p.g. diesel and convertible to join the A4 lineup.

2009 Chevrolet Traverse

Chevy's new family hauler just hit the market with seating for up to eight, a \$28,225 base price and a graceful design. If the Tennessee-built Traverse gets the same rave reviews as GM's other recent midsize crossovers -- the Buick Enclave, GMC Acadia and Saturn Outlook -- it could outsell the other three put together. The Traverse gets a direct-injection 3.6-liter V6 engine that produces 281 horsepower. The EPA rates the Traverse's fuel economy at 17 m.p.g. in the city and 24 m.p.g. on the highway for front-wheel drive models.

2010 Chevrolet Camaro

The 422-horsepower V8 may dominate headlines, but the V6 model of Chevrolet's reincarnated sport coupe will probably determine the car's success. The 300-horsepower V6 has enough grunt to make the modern and beautiful Camaro a true sports car. Chevrolet predicts an EPA rating of 26 m.p.g. on the highway, as good or better than less-powerful V6 sport coupes like the Ford Mustang, Dodge Challenger, Honda Accord and Nissan Altima. The 2010 Camaro is to go on sale early next year.

2009 Dodge Ram

Radically reengineered, the new Ram offers improved fuel economy and several unique features when it hits the road this fall. A switch to car-type coil springs promises to make the Ram the smoothest-riding pickup on the market. The addition of a roomy crew cab and secured, lockable storage bins in the rear fenders should win the Ram new customers. The Ram goes on sale late this month with a \$21,270 base price.

2009 Ford F-150

The F-150 is expected to lose weight and gain visual appeal when it goes on sale late this year. High-strength steel reduces weight and improves cargo and towing capability, while the crew cab model will offer six inches more space for rear leg room and storage space. Styling changes include a new tailgate with three horizontal scalloped lines stamped into it to mirror the three-bar grille up front. Look for the F-150 to push pickup fuel economy to a new high when a direct-injection turbocharged V6 model joins the lineup in 2010.

2010 Honda Insight

The five-passenger gasoline-electric Insight is Honda's attempt to remind buyers that it's a leader in hybrid cars. Honda was the first automaker to sell a hybrid in the United States when the previous two-seat Insight went on sale in 1999, but the flashy Toyota Prius quickly eclipsed Honda's mundane Civic and Accord hybrids. Honda aims to change that with the 2010 Insight, which has the same hatchback profile as the Prius. Honda promises a base price "significantly below" other hybrids when it goes on sale in the spring of next year.

2010 Lincoln MKT

Lincoln promises its eight-seat crossover will resemble the dramatic MKT concept car that debuted at the 2007 North American International Auto Show in Detroit. The production MKT, which is to go on sale in mid-2009, will have a more traditional squared-off roofline than the concept to provide room for three rows of seats, but it will also be the first car to fully embody Lincoln's new design theme. It's expected to come in front- or all-wheel drive and offer a turbocharged, direct-injection V6 to combine performance and fuel economy.

2009 Toyota Venza

This has been an unusual and unpleasant year for Toyota, which idled assembly lines and saw falling sales in response to high gas prices and the slow economy. The nifty-looking Venza five-passenger crossover is an opportunity to reverse that momentum. Designed and engineered largely in the United States, the Venza is Toyota's attempt to combine the appeal of sporty crossovers like the Nissan Murano with the practicality of a midsize station wagon. The Venza is to offer front- or all-wheel drive and either a 3.5-liter V6 or 2.7-liter four-cylinder engine when it goes on sale this fall.

2010 Toyota Prius

Arguably the most eagerly anticipated car that will debut at the 2009 North American International Auto Show in Detroit next January, the Prius is an all-new replacement for the car that's become the icon for all gasoline-electric hybrids. Fuel economy should top the current model's EPA rating of 48 m.p.g. in the city and 45 m.p.g. on the highway when it goes on sale sometime next year. Toyota is so enthusiastic about the car's prospects that it plans to build the Prius in the United States for the first time.

2009 Mazda 6

This elegant midsize sedan aims to build on Mazda's reputation for making sporty alternatives to other automakers' mainstream models. Roomier than the car it replaces, the Flat Rock-built Mazda 6 also offers high-end features like blind-spot alert. Mazda has dropped the slow-selling station wagon and hatchback models. The new 6 is on sale now. Power comes from a 2.5-liter four-cylinder or 3.7-liter V6 engine. Prices start at \$18,550. — *Source: Detroit Free Press*