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Ferrari's Paris Special: F1 technology for new hybrid

Lead

Anyone who thinks Ferrari has gone a bit soft by planning to launch a hybrid version of the model that will succeed the Enzo might like to know what the Prancing Horse has in mind for the chassis. All the materials, design methodologies, construction processes, staff and instruments are all pure F1.

According to Ferrari, the marque "chose not to use the industrial carbonfibre manufacturing techniques... normally adopted in the automotive sector, as they did not meet the quality and functional standards Ferrari set itself". Well, that puts the rest of the industry back in its box, doesn't it? Instead, Ferrari will be producing a limited-edition, special series of a hybrid car that draws on the marque's "vast experience in working with composites for single-seaters".

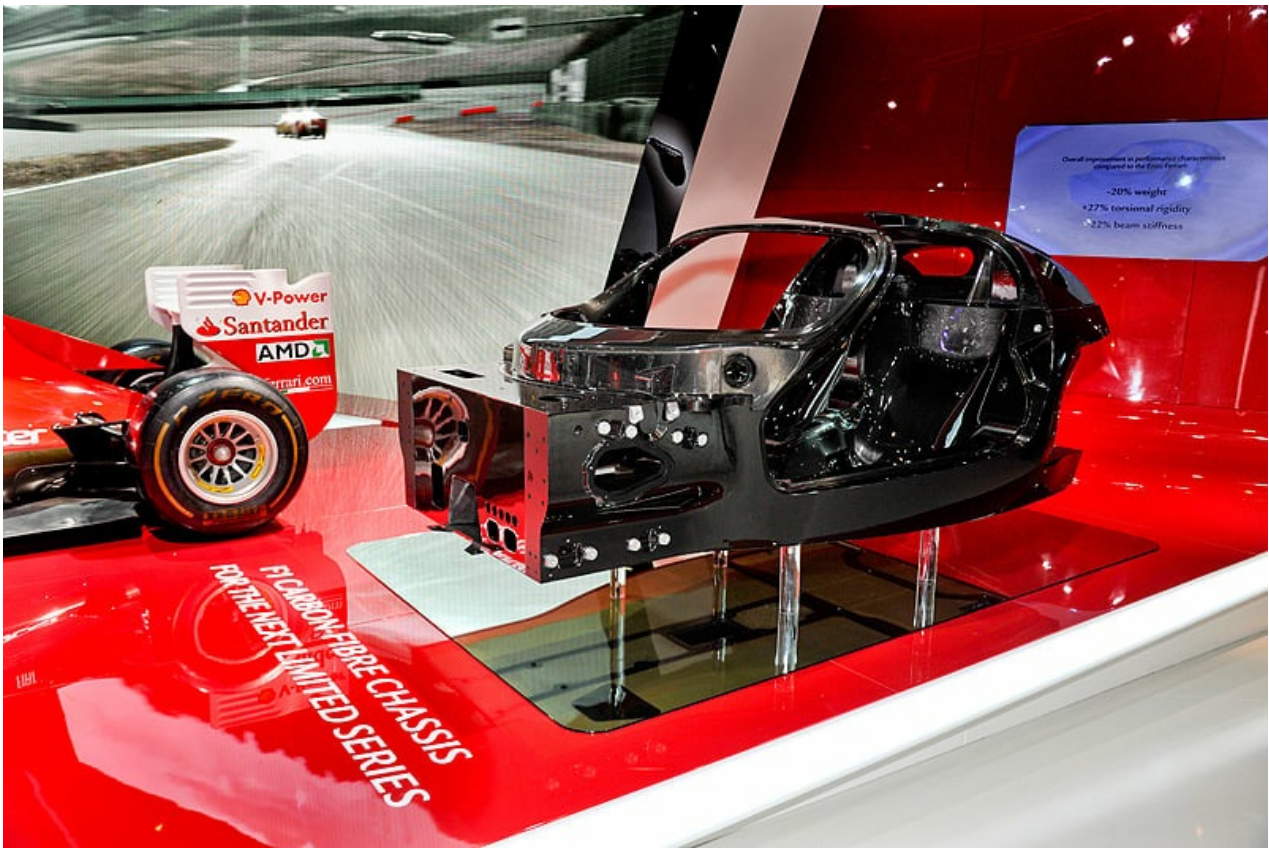
For example, the chassis uses four different types of carbonfibre (four?! - hands up anyone who thought carbonfibre was just... well... carbonfibre) that is hand-laminated, then cured in autoclaves. For those with an in-depth interest in the tough, black stuff, you might like to know that the main structure is T800 carbonfibre with local, strategic applications of T800UD. Then there's M46J (of course!) for the structural underbody and the cross-member and - in certain *critical* areas, there is T1000 carbonfibre, no less. That's the type used in the nose-cone of F1 cars. All clear now?

While the details are a little shrouded in jargon, there's no mistaking the result: a chassis that's 20 per cent lighter than the current Enzo Ferrari's, despite the extra weight required by housing hybrid components. Just as impressively, torsional rigidity is up by 27 per cent.

In short, even when it comes to the modern preoccupation with hybrid cars, it's clear that Ferrari intends to remain true to its own, unique philosophies.

And if hybrid cars (and carbonfibre technology) just aren't your cup of tea, never fear. Ferrari will also be showcasing the five cars in its current line-up - F12berlinetta and FF, coupé and Spider versions of the 458, plus the California 30 - the '30' in the name referring to the reduction in weight and increase in horsepower announced earlier this year.





Photos: Ferrari

Gallery

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