

CLASSIC DRIVER

Best of the LA Auto Show 2012

Lead

Like a phoenix from the ashes – America is booming, at least in terms of car sales. As a result, Classic Driver surveys the commitment of the manufacturers and brings you the highlights of this year's show.

Porsche Cayman

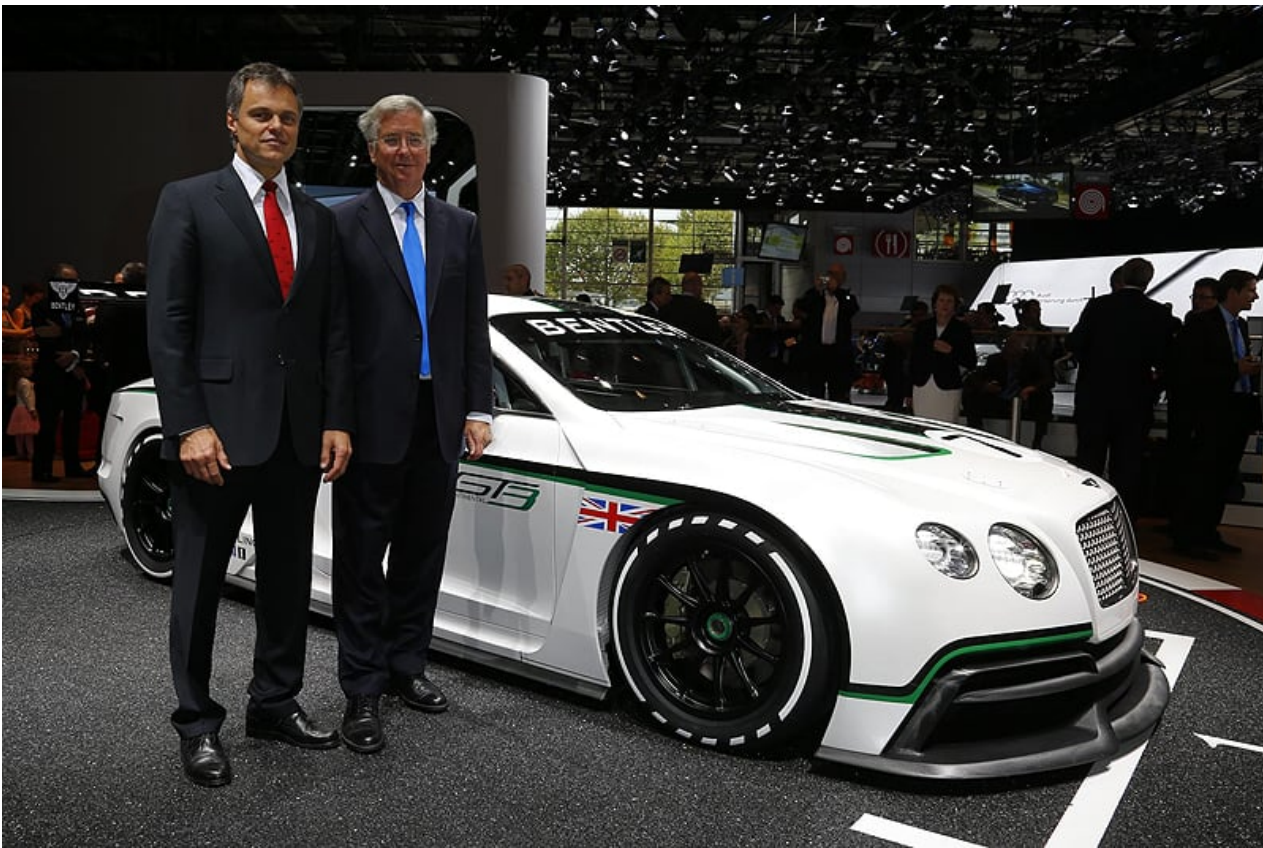




Porsche's latest addition to its recently overhauled sports car range is the second-generation Cayman, which sits alongside the all-new Boxster as Porsche's entry-level sports car. It's had a nip-tuck here and an augmentation there, but its beauty is beyond skin deep. Underneath the tauter bodywork is a completely new chassis, while other improvements collectively increase performance and economy.

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We first saw the GT3 version of Bentley's Continental GT Speed at the Paris Show only a few months ago. It will hit the circuits in late 2013. Bentley is clearly using the LA show as an opportunity to test the reactions of potential American customers. Good luck with getting any answers, gentlemen; the visitors are likely to be rendered speechless by the size of that carbonfibre rear wing.

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BMW i3 Concept Coupé





The i3 has been doing the rounds at motor shows for a while now, ahead of its expected showroom launch next year. But this is the debut of the three-door derivative – which, along with the shedding of two doors, has a more steeply raked windscreen in the pursuit of ‘sportiness’. We wonder if the M-division will ever get in on the eco-act?

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Mercedes-Benz





With a stand opposite its Bavarian rivals, Mercedes needed to turn up to the party with something special. Step forward not only the SLS AMG Black Series, but also the Ener-G-Force concept. Despite being polar opposites – the Black Series a supercar on steroids, the G-Force a distant vision of future Merc SUV styling – the two seemed to complement each other quite well on the stand.

The same can't be said of the Smart 'ForJeremy' (yes, really): a collaborative design exercise based on a Smart Fortwo, with apparently no further purpose than pampering the ego of fashion designer Jeremy Scott. Equipped with some of Mr Scott's signature 'wings', the car also has bespoke wheels and white Nappa leather seats with diamond stitching.

[Go to our in-depth article on the SLS Black Series >>](#)

[Go to our in-depth article on the Ener-G-Force >>](#)

Jaguar Land Rover





The XFR-S made its debut in LA – but we'll have to wait a month or two before finding out if its bark is as loud as its bodykit. Other recent additions to the JLR family were also on display: the new Range Rover (which we've already driven) and F-type both made their North American debuts. Well, we are nearing the 50th anniversary of the 'British Invasion', after all...

[Go to our in-depth article on the new Jaguar XFR-S >>](#)

[Read our road test of the all-new Range Rover >>](#)

Old-School U.S. Muscle





Even in these eco-aware times, it seems nothing can hold back the American muscle car. Whether it's an all-new Viper armed with an 8.4-litre V10, or a tuned Dodge Charger with upwards of 650bhp, the traditional-recipe cars ensnare onlookers in a manner the average motor show econobox could only dream of. But, given the opportunity, we'd always choose to slip behind the rear suicide doors of the chrome-shouldered 1961 Lincoln Continental, to be chauffeured around the night-time streets of LA with the signature 'float' of a softly sprung 1960s American saloon.

Photos: NewsPress / Manufacturers / Sven Jürisch

Gallery

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