

CLASSIC DRIVER

Frankfurt Favourites: Our magnificent seven from IAA 2013

Lead

With tired legs and pounding heads from trundling around the sprawling expanse that is the Frankfurt Motor Show, we bring you our personal favourites from the numerous premieres...

This year's show was as much about the technology of presentation as it was to do with the vehicles themselves. Jaguar ushered in its new C-X17 SUV concept by seemingly making a solid wall disappear. The VW Group night was a Tron-esque spectacular which blurred the boundaries between actual and virtual reality. BMW transported guests to a utopian cityscape using clever lighting and sound effects. As always, there were 'grey suits' aplenty, company men reeling off well-rehearsed speeches to sober up proceedings – but, of course, the cars were always the stars...

Audi Sport Quattro Concept



To the surprise of journalists and visitors alike, the Audi Sport Quattro concept had a little of its limelight stolen by the quirky [Nanuk](#). However, the off-road supercar could do nothing to dim our enthusiasm for the Ur-Quattro's spiritual successor, significantly updated – mainly by way of a 250bhp power increase – since its first appearance in 2011. The honed styling and tweaked proportions, highlighted by the striking yellow paint, look to have only furthered its chances of small-series production. You've got our endorsement now, Audi, so just go on and build it, will you?

Porsche 918 Spyder



When Porsche announced a few years ago that the Carrera GT's successor was to feature a hybrid drivetrain, many were sceptical. Why would the follow-up to one of the last 'purist' supercars need to be burdened with batteries and an electric motor, merely to save a few litres of fuel? As has always been the case, Porsche has proved its critics wrong with cold, hard results: with Walter Röhrl at the wheel, it recently [snatched the Nürburgring Nordschleife production car lap record with a time of 6:57](#). We can't wait to thumb the starter button ourselves.

BMW i8



Porsche isn't the only German manufacturer investing big money in top-of-the-range electric or hybrid cars. While i3s are used at the massive Frankfurt show to shuttle visitors around, BMW's stand showcases the production version of its i8 hybrid supercar. As expected, some details have changed since its reveal in conceptual form a couple of years ago – namely the lack of glass doors, and the switch from all-electric to plug-in hybrid drive. Priced at 126,000 euros, it'll be interesting to see if the target group bites, and frugality becomes the new automotive status symbol.

Ferrari 458 Speciale



Compared with the high-tech offerings from the German giants, the latest Ferrari seems almost classical in its approach – yet we'd still free up a space in the garage for one, even if we only have the abilities of its predecessors (360 Challenge Stradale and 430 Scuderia) to judge it by. What's more, the N.A.R.T.-inspired livery on the show car excites us just as much as the active aerodynamics, or the tweaks to the already impressive 4.5-litre V8.

Mercedes-Benz Concept S-Class Coupé



As BMW has spent the last few months trying to explain exactly what a 4 Series is, its long-time adversary has wisely consolidated the replacement for the CL into the S-Class family to avoid similar confusion. Mercedes' design department seems to be undergoing somewhat of a renaissance after several years of hit-and-miss creations, and focusing on classic proportions with harmonious contour lines and muscular arches is a welcome new trait. The concept's 4.7-litre twin-turbo V8 will be carried over to

production, but you can also expect Mercedes to produce its first hybrid in the luxury GT segment, too.

Jaguar C-X17



It seems nothing can go wrong for Jaguar Land Rover at the moment: F-types are being sold faster than they can be made, while the new Range Rover family is a triumph in engineering expertise. Although some would argue the two company’s products should remain as differentiated as possible, the market clearly wants a Jaguar 4x4 – hence this C-X17 concept, which previews both a brand new platform as well as a production-likely, ‘lifestyle SUV’. And there’s no better man to have penned the latter than Ian Callum; any better understanding of Jaguar DNA and he’d surely be a veterinary scientist.

Volvo Concept Coupé



For decades, there has been a universal respect for Volvo – but rarely have its cars displayed anything even resembling passion or emotion. It seems times are changing, as this Concept Coupé demonstrates a possible future design direction with a sprinkling of inspiration from the famous P1800. However, Volvo’s Chinese owners want not only to prove their design skills and awareness of the company’s history, but also to showcase a new architecture on which many future models will be based. There’s no doubt a Volvo coupé such as this would be a great addition to European automotive culture – just ensure all this new-found flair extends to the meetings where you decide on model names please, Volvo.

Photos: Jan Baedeker

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