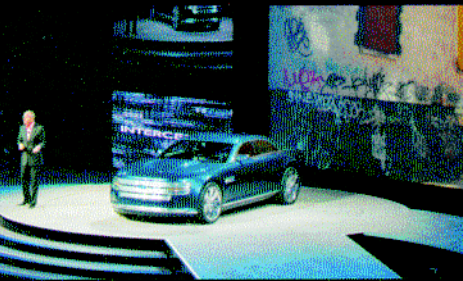


Detroit Auto Show 2007

AUTOMAKERS TEASE THE PUBLIC Text by Sam Haymart Photos by Llyra Haymart

Like last year, the weather in Detroit for the North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) was mild mannered with only a hint of snow. Automakers rolled out their best for the largest and most important auto show in the world. Detroit was the stage for Ford to walk the Bold Moves talk. All year long we have heard bold this and bold that, waiting for results in the form of new cars. The automaker showed it had some aces up its sleeve with a number of hot new concept cars and more importantly all new designs for the showroom.

FORD INTERCEPTOR CONCEPT



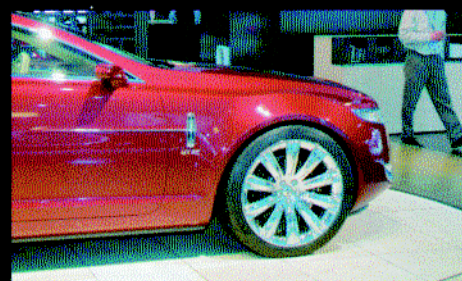
Starting with the hottest news of the show, the Ford Interceptor wowed the crowds. The 4-door sedan is built on a stretched version of Mustang's platform, sharing its mechanicals. Wheelbase was 120 inches, a full 12-inches longer than the Mustang. Under the hood is a 400 hp 5.0 DOHC Cammer crate engine from the Ford Racing catalogue and a six-speed manual transmission. Not easy to see in photos, however, that engine sports a Shaker hood scoop intake. With a loud racing exhaust system, the Interceptor rumbled Cobo Arena like a monster truck at an indoor event.

The styling of the sedan is a futuristic take on the 1965 Ford Galaxie from many angles while taking its face from last year's Super Chief truck concept. "This concept celebrates the best of American muscle, showing customers what 'modern muscle' is all about," said Peter Horbury, executive director - Design, The Americas. "The Interceptor concept is much like a Marine in dress uniform. He looks smart and elegant but you can see the raw power that lies beneath."

The Interceptor was a hit with crowds and signals where Ford may be headed with other vehicles to share the Mustang's chassis. How cool would it be to buy a new Ford sedan that you can bolt a Mustang supercharger and suspension kit to?

LINCOLN MK-R CONCEPT

A sister car to the Ford Interceptor, the Lincoln MK-R concept car shared



the same stretched Mustang chassis but had a completely different body design in addition to unique mechanical features. The sharp and crisp lines of the MKR were explained by Ford to show the future design direction for Lincoln production vehicles.

The new design created by a team led by Peter Horbury, executive design director at Ford, showcases the future design direction of Lincoln models. "We've reinterpreted the best of Lincoln designs over time, preserving the restraint and elegance synonymous with the brand," says Horbury. "The Lincoln MKR concept is sophisticated and modern, resembling an athlete—extremely strong and fit but looks elegant in a tuxedo."

Motivating the concept car is another message of future Lincolns, an environmentally friendly 3.5-liter gasoline twin-turbocharged direct-injection V-6. Producing 415 hp on renewable E-85 ethanol, Ford is billing it as a "no guilt" way to have V8 power. The "Twin Force" V6, Ford says is coming to production cars both from Ford and Lincoln in the near future. Underneath the MK-R is a fully independent suspension that was originally planned for the 2005 Mustang before bean counters spoiled the party. Whether or not this makes a production version is unknown.

2008 FORD FOCUS

While it's not as exciting as a Mustang, Ford showed off an all-new Focus compact car. The car is genuinely new, unlike many of Ford's face lifted models in the past couple years. It has all new sheet metal from bumper to bumper that offers a welcome new look. Inside, an all new contemporary interior design looks as



good as anything from Honda and has good fit and finish too. For the first time, a new two-door coupe will be offered in addition to the four-door sedan. Mechan-



icals are carried over from 2007 models. The new Focus will be an important part of Ford's turnaround effort as small cars are growing in popularity once again.

2008 FORD FIVE HUNDRED

The full-size Five Hundred sedan bowed in 2005 to a yawns and jeers of bland styling and lack of power from its 3.0 liter V6. While the sedans are some



of Ford's most technologically advanced and refined offerings to date, this car hasn't been a star on sales charts. Ford answered those calls with a freshened Five Hundred sedan for 2008.

The 2008 Five Hundred has a three-bar grille and headlamp treatment more akin to the very popular Ford Fusion, along with new chromed tail lights to match. The side fenders have also grown a set of chrome vent ornaments that add a sense of style. Inside, new trim treatments make the interior feel more expensive as well.

The big news for Five Hundred is an all-new more powerful 3.5 liter V6 with 260hp. That is up from 203hp previously. The engine will be mated to a

new smooth shifting 6-speed automatic transmission. Other refinements include a stiffer chassis with more quiet tuning to give a more refined driving experience. Overall, the makeover is a mild one, but improves what is already a great sedan.

FORD AIRSTREAM CONCEPT



This concept crossover is themed with the name and imagery of the great American travel trailer we all know as Airstream. To wit, this concept has an aluminum looking skin and what Ford calls "ceremonial rivets" to pay homage to its Airstream roots. "For 75 years, Airstream has been an icon synonymous with the optimism, discovery and wanderlust that's helped defined America," said J Mays, group vice president—Design, and chief creative officer.

The Hybrid "HySeries Drive" system is a plug-in electric vehicle that also uses a hydrogen fuel cell to help charge batteries while driving. The system is being tested currently in a number of Ford vehicles for possible future offering in production.

The interior features a floating instrument panel with flush-mounted, touch-sensitive controls and a multi-function single gauge display provides the driver all primary information. In the center is a 360-degree computer screen that can display a virtual fireplace, aquarium or lava lamp. Groovy man.

295 DAYTONA HEMI



Concept and production cars from Chevrolet and Dodge showed that they are gearing up for muscle car wars. Not to be outdone by a 500hp GT-500, Dodge showed off a more powerful version of the Viper, offering a whopping 600hp. NASCAR driver Kurt Busch drove on stage with the car saying, "It's time for

me to trade up". Dodge also showed off a redesigned version of its popular Magnum sport wagon.

CAMARO

Chevrolet commanded attention with the bright orange Camaro Concept Convertible. It is pretty bad when a



Chevy makes a dyed-in-the-wool Ford Mustang enthusiast drool. The car was stunningly beautiful with its rallye stripes and red striped tires. It sounds delicious as well. We can only hope that Ford has an equally charming replacement for the current Mustang in the wings.



Also at the Ford pavilion was the sharp new 2008 Super Duty F-Series trucks, Shelby GT, Ford Escape and Mercury Mariner were also on stage for closer inspection.

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GIUGIARO MUSTANG



The new Giugiaro Mustang concept was a design study by the famous Italian design house to pay tribute to the Mustang. In person the car is really a jaw dropper. The shapes and forms speak well to the 1967-1968 Mustang with its raised fender lines and creases.

Overall, the 2007 Detroit Auto Show was a show of force by American automakers who have been in a cloud of bad news in the past year. They successfully showed they have the talent and ingenuity to offer the cars that America wants. More importantly, they are beginning to finally deliver them. **MT**