



Holden's flourishing export program could be set to expand further with the...



Buick Invicta (top) with the Statesman-based Buick Park Avenue

DIGITAL IMAGE: Chris Harris

Statesman to USA

By JAMES STANFORD in NEW YORK

THE Statesman long-wheelbase sedan could be the next Holden vehicle exported from Australia to the United States.

General Motors is currently looking to replace its front-wheel drive Buick Lucerne large car and has told GoAuto that the Statesman is a strong contender.

The plan is not locked-in as the American auto giant is still unsure whether it should stay with a front-wheel drive platform for the Lucerne or change to rear-wheel drive in line with its other premium models.

Buick is examining taking a reworked Statesman produced in Australia or a more luxurious Chinese-made version of the car, which is sold in China as the Buick Park Avenue.

There is also the option of simply using the rear-drive architecture of the Statesman for a large sedan that would be produced in North America – either in the US or in GM's plant in Ontario, Canada, which is producing the new Holden-engineered Camaro sports car based on the same global rear-wheel drive architecture as the Commodore and Statesman.

Either way, Australia will be at the centre of the Lucerne development if GM does move to RWD. The general manager for Buick, Pontiac and GMC, Jim Bunnell, told GoAuto at the New York auto show last week that GM was looking at options for its large Buick sedan.



Park Avenue

"We have Buick Lucerne which is our premium large car – I wouldn't call it luxury, it is front-drive and as we look at that, we think, 'What is the evolution of that car? Does it go rear-drive or all-wheel-drive, or global platform with that?'" Mr Bunnell said.

"I know we have been looking for other options and we have looked at whether we can do something with the Park Avenue in China. Do we take that global rear-drive architecture and do a Buick off of that, maybe with Holden, maybe in Australia? As of this point there are no (concrete) plans," Mr Bunnell said.

While GM used the New York auto show to unveil Holden's latest exports to the US – the Commodore-based high-performance Pontiac GXP sedan, and the Pontiac G8 "sport truck" utility – the manufacturer also provided a glimpse of a luxurious Buick show car it plans to reveal in China at the Beijing motor show on April 19.

Resurrecting the Invicta nameplate (which is Latin for "invincible") after a 45-year hiatus,

the car was co-developed by GM design centres in Detroit and Shanghai "to meet customers' expectations equally in the world's two largest automotive markets" and is described as an evolution of the Riviera concept introduced last year in Shanghai.

Whether this emerges into a future large luxury family, which could have Australian DNA, is unclear. But the Riviera coupe appeared to have enormous potential as a Holden-engineered vehicle, and GM emphasised with the Invicta that it "reflects the way General Motors utilises design and engineering talent around the world to execute a premium vehicle with international appeal".

One factor that could thwart plans for the Statesman to be sold in the US is the looming Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards that have forced US car-makers to look at ways to reduce fuel consumption. That could tip the balance in favour of making the new Lucerne front-wheel drive.

The CAFE regulations are also delaying plans for the Chevrolet Corvette and could even stifle plans to produce a new-age Monaro, as previewed by the Coupe 60 concept car at the recent Melbourne International Motor Show.

Continued next page

BENZ AMG TAKES OVER BATHURST
– page 13



Glass's – The Auto Specification and Residual Value Specialists



GLASS'S

AUTOMOTIVE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

eurolaxGLASS's



Statesman to USA

Continued from previous page

As previously reported by GoAuto, GM has ruled out importing the Commodore-based Sportwagon for the time being. Instead, the company is concentrating on rolling out the just-launched Pontiac G8 sedan, the GXP version (due for release later this year) and the utility, which enters the fray in 2009.

At this stage, GM is not sure how well the ute will sell. An unnamed senior GM executive said a reasonable estimate would be 10,000 utes a year. On the other hand, Mr Bunnell said the company really did not know how the ute would be received.

"We are having a hard time guessing that one. We don't know," he said, adding that he expected the ute to be popular because there was nothing like it on the road.

"That vehicle is so unique. People in this country just want something different, they want something that screams: 'Look at me, I'm different!'"

While GM and Ford did sell car-based utes in the 1970s and 1980s, it is not clear how well they will be accepted now. In many ways, the Pontiac ute will be a test case for car-based utes and whether Americans are prepared to switch to them from full-sized pick-ups as fuel prices bite.

Success of the Pontiac ute could open the door



Buick Riviera

for a crew-cab Commodore Ute-based model. GM indicated it was interested in exploring that avenue when it revealed the Australian-designed GMC Denali XT ute concept at the Chicago motor show in February.

"You scratch your head and look at it and wonder, 'Is that where the pick-up is going?'" Mr Bunnell said. "More of a uni-body, lighter weight, more fuel efficient, but is a four-door, in this case it's a hybrid, you know, is that the direction of the pick-up in America if we have got fuel at \$4 a gallon? Possibly."

For now, Pontiac needs to determine what to call its G8-based ute. It has launched a competition for the public to name the car that was presented at the New York show by Rapper 50 Cent. It will take on the G8 tag, to indicate it is linked to the sedan, but the rest of the name is still to be determined.

For his part, 50 Cent – whose real name is Curtis Jackson – suggested they called it the Curtis, at least for the day of the presentation. The name Sport Truck was considered by Pontiac management, but was eventually rejected.

GM Holden chief Mark Reuss had suggested it should just be called the Ute, but Pontiac management told GoAuto this was unlikely.

Pontiac marketing manager Craig Bierley said there were two issues with the Ute name.

"When you say Ute it makes them think SUV, because that's short for sport utility vehicle," he said. "The other one is that we try to stay away from North American tribe

names. There is a North American tribe in the west called Ute – it is pronounced differently but it is spelt the same."

Several websites in the US have launched campaigns for its readers to vote for the name El Camino, the name of the long-discontinued Chevrolet ute that today enjoys a cult following. Pontiac will consider all the names suggested, but Mr Bunnell indicated the El Camino nameplate was unlikely.

"We would probably think about it and do a bit of market research," he said. "We're not crazy about it (El Camino) because people are going to say, 'Well, it's a Chevy' and they are going to walk into a Chevy store to go buy it and they (the dealers) are going to say, 'No, I don't have that, but I have this.'"

GM did consider selling the G8 ute as a GMC, but felt that it was better to sell it as a Pontiac G8 derivative because that made it easier to market. It did not consider branding the ute as a Chevrolet as there was deemed no room in that brand's product line-up for another model.

– WITH TERRY MARTIN

Volt for Australia – next page

John Mellor's



GoAuto news

PUBLISHER: John Mellor

EDITOR: Terry Martin

MANAGING EDITOR: Marton Pettendy

JOURNALISTS: David Hassall, Philip Lord, Byron Mathioudakis, James Stanford

PRODUCTION AND GRAPHICS:

Chris Harris, Luc Britten

SUB-EDITORS: Katrina Webb, Georgia O'Connell

NEW MODEL DIARY: Lou Paolino

PRODUCED BY GoAutoMedia:

Ph: (03) 9598 6477

newsroom@mellor.net

ADVERTISING MANAGER: Steve Butcher

Ph: 0419 562 110

ads@mellor.net

SUBSCRIBE FREE: www.mellor.net



No more excuses.

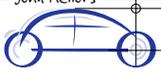
- Auto-IT has branches & staff around Australia.
- 400 dealer groups use Auto-IT software.

Think there's no alternative?
Think again.



Dealer Management Systems

sales@auto-it.com.au | www.auto-it.com.au | +61 3 9349 3062



Volt for Australia



GM confirms the Chevrolet Volt plug-in hybrid will be sold here early next decade

By JAMES STANFORD in NEW YORK

GENERAL Motors global product vice-president Bob Lutz has confirmed the Chevrolet Volt plug-in hybrid car will be sold in Australia.

The vehicle that Mr Lutz describes as a "Prius-buster" will be introduced in the US in 2010, with Australia set to commence sales one or two years following that.

"It is being engineered in right-hand drive, left-hand drive, and is being developed to meet all safety standards, pedestrian-protection requirements, exterior and interior protrusion – in other words, worldwide requirements are being taken into account, so it will, I'm sure, be sold in Australia," Mr Lutz said.

"Initially the production is going to be pretty low as we ramp up and make sure the battery suppliers can follow us with the volume etc, but at a very early stage we want to get to 60,000 a year, and then it's 'you name it'."

California will be the first US state that will receive the Volt because its government requires car-makers to build a certain number of electric vehicles each year. Mr Lutz said GM would then introduce the Volt in Washington "for political reasons" and subsequently in Florida "where no-one buys American cars any more."

He said the Volt would be a "re-conquest" weapon to win back buyers that GM has lost to imports.

However, before fine-tuning its sales and marketing campaign for the electric vehicle, GM still needs to iron out engineering issues.

"(We have) no problem with the (battery) cells themselves, but the engineering problems come in when you have to organise all of these several hundred individual cells into a big T-shaped battery pack," Mr Lutz said.

"Then the big T-shaped battery pack has to be interrupted in the middle because of the cross car beam that is necessary for the dynamic side impact. Getting all of that hooked up in series and in parallel and making sure that the cooling tubes all go to the right places, and making sure all the coolant goes to the right places and that the coolant flows through all the critical places around the cells, it doesn't require science or invention, it is just engineering."

The Volt's lithium-ion battery pack sits on the floor of the car, with a line running along where the transmission would normally be and spreading out into a T underneath the driver and passenger seats.

While engineers continue to work on the

powertrain, the exterior design of the Volt has been locked in.

Mr Lutz said the production Volt would look very different to the concept car that was shown at Detroit in 2007.

"The back end looks a lot like the concept car, but the front end and cabin look quite a lot different unfortunately," he said.

"The show car, while it was very interesting design and very interesting looking, from an aerodynamic standpoint it was a complete train wreck. We had to fundamentally start over and we reshaped the vehicle for aerodynamic efficiency and made sure the Volt graphics, the grille and headlights are still there and the dropped belt-line on the side is still there," he said.

"I think it is still going to be a very attractive car – it is just going to be a slight shock for people who expect it to look exactly like the show car."

Mr Lutz said that the Volt would be the highlight of his long career. He admitted the GM leadership team was wrong to not follow Toyota and build its own Prius, and put his own hand up when it came to accepting responsibility.

Continued next page



Australia's No.1 Motor Industry Specialists...

- senior management
- sales department
- service department
- parts department
- general administration

- phone systems
- showroom control
- retail CRM
- fleet/corporate CRM
- loyalty programs

- sales & service training
- trainee mentoring
- management consulting
- performance analysis
- motivation & goal setting



**Hire the right staff,
give them the best tools,
motivate and train them.**

For more information please call 1300 666 562 or visit www.motorsolutions.com.au

Volt for Australia

Continued from previous page

"I took the blame for the whole company," he said.

While the GM product czar still believes hybrids do not make financial sense, he admits GM should have made its own Prius.

"If you run the numbers of what the additional cost is versus the fuel saving, they still don't make any sense," he said. "Having said that, it proved once again that the automobile business is not about hard facts and rational decisions, it is mainly about emotions."

Mr Lutz said his team felt a hybrid project would have lost between \$US250 million and \$US350 million a year and therefore decided against taking a proposal to the board. "We have been tasked with shareholder value, not destroying it," Mr Lutz said.

But he claims he would now act differently if he could turn the clock back.

"Now that we are smarter, if we could rewind the tape, we would go to the board and

say: 'This is not a profitable proposition, it is break-even at best, in fact it is probably going to lose us money, but it is something we have to do because our number-one competitor is going to do it. If they do it and we don't we are going to be seen as environmental laggards and technological laggards and therefore we urge you to say yes to this project even if it is going to lose money,'" Mr Lutz said.

"The board probably would have said, 'That makes sense, try not to lose too much money, but don't let those guys get away from us.'"

Known for his fierce opposition to regulated fuel economy standards and his perceived disregard for the green movement, Mr Lutz famously described the climate change argument as a "crock of shit". He argues that GM's push to replace fossil fuels with ethanol made from waste is a far better solution than simply reducing engine sizes and taking similar measures to reduce fuel consumption.

"All of these fuel economy mandates are focused on continuing to use oil, but try

to use a little bit less of it, (and) I don't think that makes a lot of sense," he said.

According to Mr Lutz, a lot of car owners who have large distances to cover and who cart things around with their families will not appreciate the changes.

"They are not going to like the result of everything being scaled down with itty-bitty four-cylinder engines. It is not what people want.

"Now, you could avoid all of that trauma for \$120 a car, which is what it takes to convert the fuel system to Flex Fuel (running on 85 per cent ethanol). You could avoid all of that and the world could continue to enjoy their Chevrolet Corvettes and Cadillac Escalades, the ute with their V8 engines, its Ford Falcons, we wouldn't have to change a thing and we could get the world off oil."

Turbo four for Camaro – next page
GoAuto Green – page 17



Bob Lutz

Customer Relations Marketing Coordinator

Head Office, Melbourne

Holden Special Vehicles currently have an exciting opportunity available at our Melbourne Head Office for a Customer Relations Marketing Coordinator.

Reporting to the Customer Relations Marketing Manager you will be responsible for:

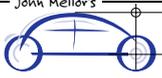
- Assisting in the analysing and development of direct-to-consumer campaigns that will drive consumer acquisitions.
- Develop and manage loyalty programs aimed at ensuring customer satisfaction.
- Participate in the development of new customer proposals.

To join our Strategy, Planning and Business Development team you will need to be an energetic, motivated self-starter who possesses a willingness to take on assignments.

The ideal candidate will have experience in the automotive industry, ideally specialised in CRM, and a passion for Australian automotive excellence.

To register your interest for this exciting career opportunity, please forward your application to hr@hsv.com.au, by Friday 11th April 2008. Only successful applicants will be contacted.





Turbo four for Camaro

By BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS

GENERAL Motors is considering turbocharged four-cylinder petrol power for its forthcoming Camaro sportscar, which is being engineered in Australia and is built on the Holden-developed global rear-wheel drive architecture.

Only V6 and V8 engines have been confirmed for the Camaro, which is due for release in North America next year.

However, GM vice-chairman of global product development Bob Lutz told US industry journal Automotive News at the New York auto show last week that a high-performance four-cylinder turbo petrol engine might be the right solution to rising fuel costs.

The unit thought to be under consideration is a variation of the 2.0-litre turbo engine found in the Pontiac Solstice GPX. It produces around 193kW of power and 353Nm of torque. Such an engine would also improve the Camaro's standing under the forthcoming Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) legislation.

In January, Mr Lutz told GoAuto that meeting CAFE would be one of the American auto giant's biggest challenges as it seeks to downsize its range in order to reach a fleet average of 35mpg (6.72L/100km) by 2020.

"In terms of fuel economy ... we have to



find ways to stimulate demand and desirability in cars that will get us closer to the 35mpg average," Mr Lutz said.

Although developed in Australia, the Camaro will be built in Canada. Production is expected to begin in February 2009 at a rate of 75,000 units a year, but GM hopes it will rise to 100,000.

Among the models expected are a 3.6-litre V6 entry-level car, a 300kW V8-engined Z28 and a range-topping 6.2-litre model with more than 380kW. A convertible is expected in 2010.

Read more: [Camaro tests Down Under](#)

Vorsprung durch Technik www.audi.com.au



Move ahead with Audi

Recognised as the producer of the very best quality German luxury vehicles, the Brand is attractive, sophisticated and technically advanced.

Audi has cemented its reputation as the fastest-growing German luxury brand in Australia, delivering 25% more vehicles to Australian luxury car buyers in 2007 versus 2006. This outstanding result follows exceptional growth of 30% in 2005 and a further 20% increase in 2006. In years to come, we will continue to see many more attractive new Audi models land on Australian shores, in conjunction with more than \$150 million investment in the Audi dealer network in order to consistently break our sales records – all with one goal in mind: to become the most desirable premium automotive marque.

To help achieve this goal, we are currently seeking to employ a Regional Aftersales Manager to support our Audi dealer network in the Northern Region (QLD, NT, WA). This position will be based in our Sydney head office or our Brisbane regional office.

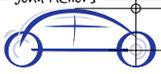
Reporting to the Aftersales Organisation Manager, some of your responsibilities include:

- ▶ Promoting vehicle sales by continually improving customer satisfaction
- ▶ Setting excellent standards of Aftersales business conduct
- ▶ Assisting dealers in developing adequate Aftersales facility layout
- ▶ Securing dealer Parts and Service targets and Aftersales capacity / focus
- ▶ Ensuring Audi dealer network complies with the Audi standards and ISO requirements
- ▶ Implementing Aftersales initiatives within network
- ▶ Managing Warranty and goodwill expenditure for the region
- ▶ Providing strong business management tools and support to Dealer network

If you are a motivated self-starter with effective time management skills and have an excellent understanding of the Parts and Service business, with experience within a premium brand – it will be highly regarded.

Regional Aftersales Manager

Please forward your application to Jo Ebejer our Human Resources Officer (Jo_Ebejer@audi.com.au) by Monday, 7 April 2008.



Genesis books in



In the beginning, Hyundai created a beautiful coupe concept.
Now it has given us the production version...

By DAVID HASSALL

AFTER appearing in concept form at the Los Angeles auto show last November, Hyundai went a step further in unveiling the final production version of the long-awaited Genesis Coupe in New York last week.

A more specialist high-performance halo car than the current front-wheel drive Tiburon – which is due to be replaced in the next 18 months by a two-door built on the i30 platform and based on the Veloster concept shown in Seoul last year – the rear-wheel drive Genesis Coupe will go into production in the United States in the first half of 2009.

However, potential Australian buyers will have to be patient because Hyundai Australia sales and marketing chief Kevin McCann

said last week that “if we were to launch it in Australia, it would be post-2010”. That is at least a year later than originally expected.

More bad news is that there was no mention in New York of the rumoured V8 engine, which will appear in the sleek Genesis sedan that debuted at the Detroit show in January but which has not yet been scheduled for an Australian release.

The so-called ‘Tau’ quad-cam 4.6-litre V8, which will produce an estimated 275kW (about the same as Holden’s 6.0-litre V8) and 439Nm of torque (against 530Nm) will not be available in the sedan until later in the year and may therefore be added to the Coupe at a later date.

From launch, the top models of the front-engined Genesis Coupe range will be powered by an all-aluminium 3.8-litre DOHC V6 with variable valve timing, offering around 230kW of power and 340Nm of torque compared with the current Tiburon’s more modest 2.7-litre V6, which produces 123kW and 245Nm.

The V6-engined Genesis Coupe will accelerate to 96km/h in less than six seconds.

Entry-level models will also receive a boost in power, with the Genesis Coupe getting a new turbocharged and intercooled 2.0-litre

four-cylinder engine with constantly variable intake and exhaust valves.

The all-alloy turbo engine will produce an estimated 158kW (166kW on premium petrol) and 295Nm, which compares favourably with the Tiburon V6 and easily exceeds the 102kW/181Nm of the previous non-turbo four-cylinder that was discontinued in Australia four years ago.

With both engines, the standard transmission will be a six-speed manual gearbox. But while the turbo-four will make do with a five-speed automatic option, the V6 will come with a beefier ZF six-speed to handle the extra torque. Both will have sequential manual shifting and all cars come with a limited-slip differential.

The Genesis Coupe was unveiled in New York by the head of Hyundai’s California Design Centre Joel Piaskowski, who also presented the concept car at the Melbourne motor show. Mr Piaskowski said that the transformation from concept to production reveals that its signature design features have emerged intact.

“The mission for Genesis Coupe was to create a pure performance car with a design that would capture the imagination of hardcore automotive enthusiasts,” said Mr Piaskowski. “With its aggressive look from just about any angle, I think we have been able to do that.”

Continued next page



Veloster

The right formula for your business

Success

Deloitte.

Motor Industry Services

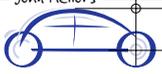
When it comes to great service, we don't just offer it, we deliver it.

As a result of our commitment to service delivery, we have built a client base of over 1200 dealerships through Australia, New Zealand and Asia. Whatever the needs of your business are Deloitte Motor Industry Services has the right formula to ensure your dealership performs at its optimum level.

So, how can we help your business today?

For more info go to www.eprofitfocus.com
or contact **Wayne Pearson** wpearson@deloitte.com.au

 ProfitFocus



Genesis books in

Continued from previous page

He said that the Genesis Coupe was unmistakably linked to several Hyundai concept cars, including the HCD9 Talus (side glass and 'Z' bodyside lines) and the HCD8 sport coupe concepts (overall design direction).

"The arching roofline and tapering greenhouse highlight the exterior profile and emphasise the car's broad shoulders and wide stance. The rocker panels are drawn close to the ground, making the bodysides extra thick and the daylight opening thin, allowing the wheels to be slammed up into bulging fenders.

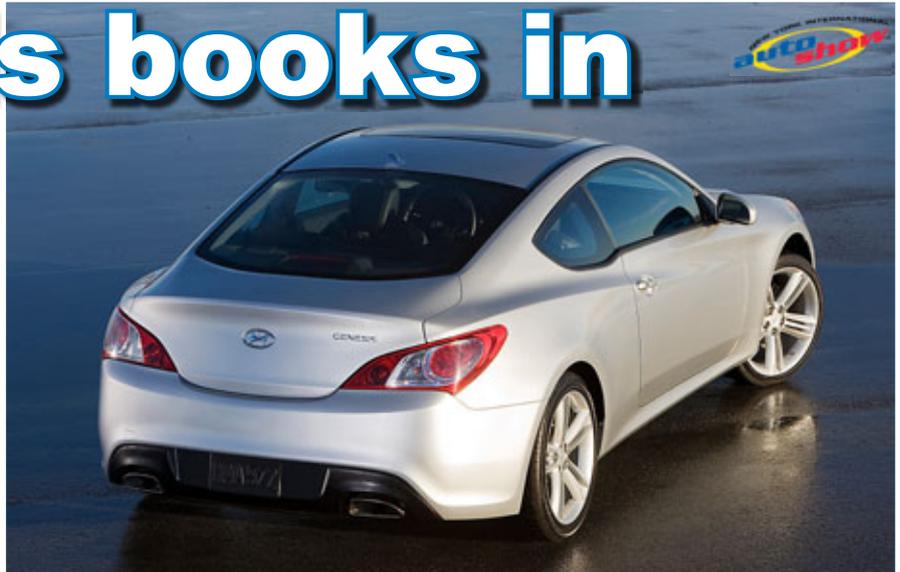
"To complete the aggressive sportscar look, the depth between the fenders and the greenhouse has been maximised.

"Large openings in the front fascia allow for better engine breathing and the dual exhaust tips integrated into the rear fascia with surrounding blackout repeat the design theme of the front fascia graphic."

Standard wheels are 18-inch alloys while optional 19-inch alloys will also be available.

Having designed a car to push Hyundai's performance credentials, the cockpit is suitably driver-oriented, with a large analogue speedo and tacho in the centre of the instrument cluster, a push-button starter and sports seats designed to provide strong lateral support.

The seats come in a range of fabric and leather combinations while the interior also comes with the expected central information console.



Hyundai makes big claims for the rear-wheel drive platform's construction, which it says employs a large percentage of ultra-high-tensile steel. It claims the Genesis Coupe is lighter than the rival Infiniti G37 and is 24 per cent stiffer in bending rigidity than the (previous-generation) E46 BMW M3.

The front-engined chassis has a front-biased 55:45 weight distribution and employs a MacPherson strut dual-link front suspension with a 23mm-diameter stabiliser bar and a five-link rear suspension with an 18mm stabiliser bar.

The high-performance Genesis Coupe SE model's 'track-tuned' suspension features a stiffer front spring rate, stiffer rear springs and unique shock valving, providing better roll control over the GS model.

Braking power is also increased on the SE, with fixed monobloc four-piston Brembo brake callipers clamping 340mm rotors at the front and 330mm rotors at the rear, while the GS and GT models make do with 320mm and 315mm rotors clamped by floating single-piston callipers.

Steering is by a quick-ratio hydraulic rack-and-pinion system with engine-speed-sensing power assistance.

Electronic stability control is standard in the US, along with high-intensity discharge headlights, front, side and curtain airbags, active head restraints, ABS with EBD and brake assist, a tyre pressure monitor and a fully integrated auxiliary input jack for using and charging your iPod.



Custom Fleet
Part of GE Commercial Finance

Looking for a new opportunity?

GE Commercial Finance is one of the world's leading non-bank lenders and a major growth engine for GE globally. As one of the world's leading brands and most admired companies, GE provides unmatched learning and career development opportunities within the diverse GE businesses.

Custom Fleet is part of GE Commercial Finance, one of the world's leading automotive financial services and fleet management companies, supporting a fleet in excess of 1.5 million vehicles in 22 countries.

Custom Fleet is experiencing rapid growth and as a direct result we are seeking talented people interested in new opportunities in the Fleet Leasing and Management industry. Below are just some of the exciting employment opportunities at Custom Fleet based in Sydney and Melbourne.

- Service Controller, NSW (Job # 810989)
- Relationship Manager, VIC (Job # 809118)
- Business Development Manager, VIC (Job # 810305)

If you have the relevant skills and experience for any of these roles within Custom Fleet, or if you are interested in a career with GE please go to www.gecareers.com



Several other cars caught our attention in New York, including more new metal from Korea and Japan – and some mean, slightly green American machines



KIA KOUP

PRESENTED as a concept car at the New York show last week, the Kia Koup is in fact a thinly disguised near-production car that is likely to be on the road by the end of 2009. The two-door coupe body designed by Kia's Californian studio has a four-seat interior that, if you take away some of the styling excesses, is close to what the production car will look like. Kia's first coupe is also expected to form the basis of parent company Hyundai's next-generation Tiburon, which contrary to previous reports will not be replaced by the Genesis Coupe – also shown at the New York show last week. The Kia Koup is about more than just style, thanks to a potent aluminium 2.0-litre 'Theta II' four-cylinder petrol engine with direct injection and a twin-scroll turbocharger. It pumps out 216kW of power and an incredible diesel-like 392Nm of torque from just 2000rpm all the way up to 4000rpm. Drive goes to the front wheels through a standard six-speed automatic transmission with steering column-mounted paddles for sequential manual shifting. The concept car rides on 19-inch alloy wheels that will be tamed down for the production version and has electronic stability control, six airbags, a tyre pressure monitoring system and adaptive headlights. Kia Australia is trying to position the brand as adventurous and young at heart to make it stand apart from Hyundai, and spokesman Jonathan Fletcher said the Koup is the sort of sporty vehicle Kia needs in this country. "If we can make the price work, it would be a great hero car for us and make a strong statement about the brand," he said. DH



KIA MAGENTIS

KIA has given its mid-size Magentis a major facelift with a redesigned exterior and interior that were shown for the first time at the New York motor show. Still called the Optima in the US and some other markets, the Magentis has been made longer overall – extended by almost 50mm at the front and 25mm at the rear – with refined styling features at both ends, including the grille, lower fascia, headlights and tail-lights. Inside, the interior has been revised with new seat trims, a new audio system and optional satellite navigation for the first time. Mechanically, the big news is the adoption of double variable valve timing on the 2.4-litre four-cylinder base engine, which boosts power from 119kW (at 4000rpm) to 130kW while torque also rises, from 221Nm (at 4250rpm) to 229Nm. Fuel consumption is also said to be improved. The alternative 2.7-litre V6 carries over from the current model, but also gets a slight increase in performance – up from 138kW/247Nm to 142kW/250Nm. Kia has also introduced a sportier model called the SX, which gets a firmer suspension tune, black-bezel grille and headlights, LED repeaters in the wing mirrors, foglights and bigger 17-inch alloy wheels. The new Magentis will not go into production until August, so expect it to arrive in Australia around October, but no decision has yet been made about the SX coming here. DH



NISSAN MAXIMA

NISSAN took the covers off a Maxima tested and honed on Germany's Nurburgring at the New York auto show this week. Due on sale in the US in June, this seventh-generation Maxima has an all-new body and interior, while the front wheels are again turned by a revised version of the acclaimed VQ35 3.5-litre petrol V6 mated to a CVT transmission that now features a sport mode. Nissan dubs the design "liquid motion", which is meant to convey a "commanding four-door sportscar" feel. Evidence of this is in the Maxima's so-called aggressive stance and "powerful fender design" that is "not unlike many exotic sportscars on the market today". Nissan revealed that switching from front-to-rear-wheel drive was considered during this Maxima's gestation period, and while due consideration was given to the inherent dynamic advantages, the company ultimately chose to stick with the status quo of the previous four generations since the mid-1980s to keep running costs, manufacturing complexities, kerb weight and interior space intrusion down. Nevertheless, compared to the outgoing US model, this MY09 Maxima is also shorter in length and wheelbase, and wider in track – the upshot of a new platform for the model that is also shared with Nissan's US-only Altima Camry rival. BM



FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

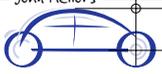
***Fast and accurate service quoting
solution for service departments***

 1800 810 103

 ssm@infomedia.com.au

 ssm.ifmsystems.com

Superservice Menus 



NISSAN DENKI CUBE

NISSAN gave Toyota's youth-brand Scion something to think about with the American debut of the Cube in concept car form at the New York motor show. Displayed as an electric version and dubbed the Denki (which means "electricity" in Japanese), the concept is based the current second-generation Cube sold successfully in Japan and features laminated lithium-



ion batteries packed underneath the floor and seats to provide motivation to the electric motors. The battery technology, which Nissan claims is significantly more efficient and safer than more conventional nickel-metal hydride, was co-developed with NEC and is scheduled for commercial use early next decade. Built on Renault's B-segment alliance platform that also underpins models as varied as the Nissan Tiida and Renault Clio, the Cube is a hot favourite as the company's riposte to the Toyota Yaris, Honda Fit (Jazz), Smart ForTwo and upcoming next-generation Ford Fiesta/Verve as a new wave of city cars sweep the US. Nissan is reportedly preparing the next (third-generation) Cube for export from Japan to North America. Described as a "more rounded box", it is due next year as an MY2010 model. BM



PONTIAC SOLSTICE COUPE

GENERAL Motors subsidiary and home of the Australian VE-based sedan and ute, Pontiac has put a lid on its Solstice two-seater convertible. Removable and made from magnesium for lightness, the panel adds all-weather protection to the front-engined, rear-wheel drive roadster that Pontiac revealed in concept car form during 2002 as a rival to the evergreen Mazda MX-5, and then launched three years later. Not due in US dealerships until early 2009, the Solstice Coupe will sell alongside its rag-top sibling. It is unclear whether a coupe version of the almost identical Saturn Sky will also appear. Two 2.4-litre four-cylinder petrol engines will be available, in 129kW naturally aspirated and high-performance 194kW turbocharged GXP guises. Although the Solstice gains a new silhouette and greater weather and security protection as a result of the roof, GM claims only minimal changes occurred to the body structure in its transition from an open to a closed car. Pontiac launched the Solstice in 2005, with almost 20,000 finding homes in the US the following year. However, sales fell by around 15 per cent in 2007. BM



SALEEN S5S RAPTOR

SALEEN is a highly respected name in the US performance car scene and in New York the company unveiled a mid-engined supercar that it claims will compete with the Italian exotics. Powering the S5S – which stands for Saleen 5.0-litre supercharged – is therefore a hand-built ethanol-burning V8 with a Saleen-developed twin-screw supercharger that delivers 485kW of power and 854Nm of torque to the rear wheels. Top speed is quoted at more than 200mph (320km/h) and 0-100km/h acceleration is completed in just 3.2 seconds. The Saleen S5S Raptor follows the race-bred 7.0-litre S7 that was designed by British constructor Ray Mallock Engineering, which was introduced in 2000 and grew twin turbochargers in 2005. While



that car was ultimately priced at US\$585,000, the company says the S5S Raptor will be priced at around US\$185,000 if it goes into production – which is planned within two years. Transmissions are a six-speed manual or sequential auto, the chassis is made from aluminium, ABS and ESC are fitted, and the 20-inch forged aluminium wheels with Pirelli Ross tyres wrap around 15-inch brake rotors with six-piston callipers at the front and 13-inch rotors grabbed by twin-piston callipers at the rear. Saleen, which built its reputation on producing modified Ford Mustangs, also announced in New York a partnership with racing legend Dan Gurney to build 300 blue Mustangs with white stripes in homage to Gurney's 1969 Shelby-built Trans Am racer. DH

SCION HAKO COUPE

TOYOTA'S US youth brand Scion tested new design waters with a vintage re-interpretation of its trademark boxy styling. Touted as a "more emotionally appealing" take on the Yaris-based xB series, the Hako Coupe is designed to be "a sporty version of the box", according to Scion. Retro American-car influences are what its Japanese designers had in mind for the concept, with flared mudguards featuring moulded running boards, an upright windscreen, and chop-top coupe roof styling. Slimline exterior mirrors, smooth surfacing and 18-inch deep-dish five-spoke alloy wheels all conspire to evoke a 1930s feel. Step inside the Hako Coupe, however, and a very modern Japanese sensibility prevails, thanks to gaming motifs peppering the concept's interior, from a joystick-like gear lever to the video monitor instrument panel that includes a host of multi-media functions. BM



FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

Bridge Consulting | Automotive Recruitment

Who is driving your business?

- Administration & Office Support
- Sales & Marketing
- Accounting & Finance
- Human Resources
- Management
- Purchasing

Ensure the right people are driving your business

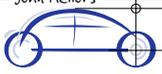
Contact Bridge Consulting:

Melbourne: 03 9864 6040

Sydney: 02 9957 5740

www.bridgeconsulting.com.au

BRIDGE
CONSULTING



SUZUKI KIZASHI 3

SUZUKI has confirmed it will build a sporty new mid-size sedan derived from the Kizashi concept design, which appeared last week at the New York show in near-production form (despite the 21-inch wheels). The Concept Kizashi 3 appeared alongside its two earlier design studies – the first of which appeared six months ago at the Frankfurt show and the second of which followed just one month later in Tokyo. Suzuki makes no secret of its ambitions for the new five-seater, which will be the company's flagship model and is designed to build the company's image, primarily in the US but also in markets such as Australia. Known as a maker of motorcycles and small vehicles, Suzuki wants to compete in the larger sedan market against the likes of the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord, but its statement that the Kizashi-based model will "provide an accessible alternative



to the near-luxury segment" suggests it will also be pitched against European cars like the Ford Mondeo and Citroen C5. Suzuki will build the sedan at a new plant under construction in Japan and has promised to have the car on sale by 2010. Like the Tokyo concept, the New York show car was fitted with a 224kW 3.6-litre V6 petrol engine driving all four wheels through a six-speed automatic transmission. It rides on a 2800mm wheelbase and is 4650mm long, 1900mm wide and 1450mm high. DH



Join a Queensland icon!

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Part of Australia's largest motor retailer, Automotive Holdings Group Limited (AHG), Zupps have been a Queensland icon for 60 years. With thirteen vehicle dealerships and three truck centres as well as a large Warehousing and Parts Distribution operation, we employ approximately 800 staff throughout Queensland.

Due to continuous company growth, we have exciting sales opportunities available:

SALES MANAGER & SALES SUPERVISOR: Aspley

These positions will be responsible for sales management and leading and motivating employees to effectively achieve targets. You will have exceptional interpersonal and customer service skills, considerable sales experience in the automotive industry along with previous leadership experience.

SALES CONSULTANTS: Aspley – Browns Plains – Mt Gravatt

The successful candidates will ideally bring with them experience from a similar environment, possess exceptional sales skills and be highly organised with great interpersonal skills and good computer literacy. If you are a strong team player, have excellent attention to detail and the ambition to succeed then this role is for you. Candidates with little or no experience may also be considered for trainee positions.

Zupps offers:

- Excellent remuneration package including fully maintained company vehicle.
- 5 day working week.
- Above industry salary and commission structures.
- Career path, training and development opportunities.
- Flexible and friendly work environment.

If you have a positive outlook and enjoy working in a dynamic environment then send your details to:

Human Resources, 1310 Logan Road, Mt Gravatt 4122.

Telephone: (07) 3877 0000. Email: hr@zupps.com.au

This is an excellent opportunity for you to further your career with Australia's largest automotive retailer.



ZUPPS – DRIVE YOUR CAREER

Barina 'inferior'

Blue Oval boss claims GMH's Korean light car lacks product appeal

By MARTON PETTENDY

NEW Ford Australia president Bill Osborne claims GM Holden's Korean sourcing policy has failed because it underestimates the importance of product appeal in the small-car market.

Speaking at his first monthly sales briefing with the media, a tradition started by former Ford Australia boss Geoff Polites and continued by his successor Tom Gorman, Mr Osborne said Holden's low-cost light-car strategy had resulted in a Barina that was "inferior" to its predecessors.

"Fiesta continues to be a real strong bright spot for us in the small (light) car segment," he said. "It's clearly a growth segment we believe we have strong product in and can capitalise on."

"The biggest performer was the new Mazda2, but the biggest loser is Barina. We attribute this really to GM's sourcing strategy out of Korea," said Mr Osborne, referring to February sales results, which saw Fiesta's share of the light-car segment rise from 6.0 per cent after the first two months of 2007 to 6.3 per cent to date this year.

Meantime, although it still comfortably outsells the eighth-placed Fiesta, the fifth-placed Barina's share of Australia's smallest-vehicle segment has fallen from 13.8 per cent to 9.6 per cent YTD.



Fiesta



Barina

For the record, Toyota's Yaris still leads the light-car brigade, despite falling almost five percentage points in 2008 to 20.5 per cent, followed by Mazda2 (up from 6.0% to 11.8%), Hyundai's Getz (down from 12.8% to 11.2%), Honda's Jazz (up from 10.2% to 10.7%), Barina, Suzuki's Swift (down from 10.8% to 9.3%), Kia's Rio (up from 5.8% to 7.4%), Fiesta, Mitsubishi's Colt (up from 2.5% to 2.8%) and Hyundai's Accent, which has dropped from 4.1 to 0.8 per cent.

Asked to explain why he believed the South Korean origins of Holden's latest baby – the TK Barina-badged version of Daewoo's Kalos that replaced the European-sourced, Opel Corsa-based XC Barina in December 2005, and which is expected to receive a mild facelift this year – had affected its popularity, Mr Osborne said it had been perceived as a retrograde step in the marketplace.

"My assessment is that Barina is just an inferior product to their traditional offering and that's why it's suffering," he said. "Korean sourcing itself is not the issue. I think it's a question of product appeal and in sourcing that particular product out of Korea they probably underestimated, in my opinion, the value of product

appeal in the market in this segment.

"My understanding, from a cursory review of the vehicle, is that it's just not an appealing product, so they may have had a low-cost strategy and underestimated the role that product appeal plays in this segment," he said, echoing comments made by his forebear, Mr Gorman.

Mr Osborne said light- and small-car buyers now demanded more than just a low entry price.

"The old-school thinking about the small-car segment is that it's purely a price-competitive segment and that's changing as younger buyers expect

more and people that perhaps are moving out of larger vehicles are used to all the amenities, if you will, of a larger vehicle. They don't want to give those up as they move into small cars," he said.

"So I think the lesson for us – and the one that we are diligently applying to the small-car segment – is that these buyers are not just interested in something that's cheap and cheerful.

"They want all the features, they want modern and progressive styling, in addition to a good value proposition for fuel economy and price of acquisition," he said.

FG can beat VE: Ford – next page



Bill Osborne

SELL MORE by Improving Your Prospect Management Process



Online



Walk-in



Phone-in



AUTOGATE PRO.

Call 1300 308 690 | email sales@datamotive.com.au | visit datamotive.com.au

Manage **ALL** of your sales opportunities in one, easy-to-use system.

Bulk email function: more sales opportunities are just a click away.

Create and save your own email templates or build on our collection.

Simple reports that:

- Identify key lead sources
- Identify the vehicles that generate most enquiry

DATAMOTIVE

Proudly part of the Carsales Network

FG can beat VE: Ford

Bill Osborne is adamant Falcon can return to large-car sales dominance

By MARTON PETTENDY

HOLDEN'S new Commodore may currently be almost twice as popular as Ford's aged Falcon, but new Ford Australia chief Bill Osborne says the new Falcon can reverse one of the largest sales advantages ever seen in the declining Australian large-car market.

Asked if he believed the redesigned FG Falcon range can return Ford to large-car sales leadership after a decade of Commodore dominance, Mr Osborne said: "I do, and my belief in that is based on one generic belief about the market and that is that ultimately the best product wins.

"I fundamentally believe we have the best product in the market and it's up to us and our dealers to convince buyers of that," he said.

"I have no fear of comparing this product head to head with the Holden or the Toyota offerings, because I do believe it's a world-class product that's head and shoulders over both of our principal competitors in the market – and I say that without apology."

However, the newly appointed Ford Australia president was reluctant to predict a timeframe in which the new Falcon, which will be launched in sedan and utility forms in May, would defeat Holden's VE Commodore range, which will be complete by around the same time, when the new Sportwagon joins its sedan and ute stablemates on sale.

"It's not the type of thing that's accomplished overnight," said Mr Osborne. "Over time the best product wins and I've seen that time and time again in my career. When you come to market with a very strong product and you offer it at an attractive and compelling price, you just have to tell enough people about and eventually they come.

"I wouldn't give you market share projections at this point, but I do believe it is a product that will ultimately obtain segment



FG Falcon (front, left)

leadership," he said.

Holden has dominated Australia's large-car market since the launch of the all-new VT Commodore in 1997, when the Lion brand attracted more than 77,000 sedan and wagon customers for a 38.6 per cent share of a segment that accounted for almost 200,000 sales annually – and represented 37 per cent of the total new-vehicle market.

In the same year, Ford's EL Falcon range was a close second in terms of popularity, with almost 72,000 sales and a 36.1 per cent segment share.

Last year, large cars found about 133,000 new homes, representing just 12.7 per cent of all new-vehicle sales in Australia, and to the end of February this year Falcon sales were down a massive 25.5 per cent, with Commodore sales 16.6 per cent lower.

At its peak nine years ago, Holden sold almost 95,000 Commodores (including utes), but sales of large cars in Australia are now at a 14-year low as new-car buyers embrace imported vehicles in record numbers.

So far in 2008, Falcon holds a 23 per cent share of the large-car segment with 3772 sales, while Commodore has a huge 45.9 per cent slice with 7523 – a lead of 3751 sales after just two months.

Holden hopes to widen that gap even further this year, and used last month's Melbourne motor show opening (where it also successfully stole the limelight from the public reveal of Ford's new Falcon with its futuristic Coupe 60

concept) to announce increased standard safety specifications for the Commodore sedan – two weeks after Ford revealed model-by-model details of its FG Falcon range.

Aside from finally making air-conditioning standard on Commodore (previously it was a \$2000 option), Holden announced all Commodore sedans and wagons will come with side curtain airbags as standard across the range.

The move goes one better than Falcon, which will come to market with front and rear passenger-protecting side curtain airbags as standard in only two of the eight FG variants. However, all new Falcons will come standard with head-protecting side airbags in the front seats.

Mr Osborne said the run-out of the current BFII Falcon sedan and wagon was progressing well and that he expected little or no stock of the current Falcon.

"It's important for us to have a very strong run-out. We will be in a very strong position at launch. There are no large stocks of BF now. We are exactly where we want to be in terms of our stock position," he said, adding that Ford had already commenced FG Falcon production at its Broadmeadows assembly plant.

"We are already in switchover mode – we're building FG Falcons as we speak. Some of them will be press cars. We really begin our launch curve, our acceleration curve, in April. We're driving towards FG production en masse over the next couple of weeks," he said on March 13.



ATO targets automotive industry

Would you worry if the ATO audited your BAS returns?

PwC is running a series of training sessions for automotive staff involved in completing BAS returns.

We can provide you with expert advice and assistance in completing your BAS return and dealing with the complexities of GST compliance.

Industry specific courses are \$500 per employee and run during May in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane. A small investment to ensure that you can sleep at night if the ATO knocks on your door.

Register online at www.pwc.com/au/auto or call 02 8266 7073 for more information.



Ferocious new C63 AMG launches with a bang at huge Bathurst torque-fest

By MARTON PETTENDY

MERCEDES-BENZ says it cannot justify the expense of attending two major motor shows a year, but the hallowed German luxury car-maker spared no expense when it came to the Australian launch of its wicked new C63 AMG sedan last week.

The brand's newest AMG model is already a sell-out success, but that did not stop Mercedes holding a four-day promotional extravaganza at Mount Panorama that not only comprised the Australian media launch of the most powerful C-class ever, but saw about 300 owners and prospective owners and 400 dealer representatives drive the whole gamut of AMG models.

Mercedes is not the first brand to hold a car launch at the spiritual home of Australian touring car racing (that honour goes to Volvo, which presented its 760 Turbo there in 1984), but the Benz event nonetheless represented a significant coup as the company succeeded in closing the iconic public road circuit for the best part of a week.

The links between Bathurst, which has held touring car races for more than 40 years, AMG, which celebrated its 40th anniversary last year, and the hottest iteration of the all-new W204 C-class sedan, which forms the basis of Mercedes' German touring car championship contender, are obvious. Benz says the C-class

is the most successful DTM racer ever, with 61 wins from 116 starts.

To reinforce the parallels, Benz shipped out a number of touring car VIPs, led by its own five-times DTM champion Bernd Schneider, as well as Ford V8 Supercar drivers Jamie Whincup and Will Davison, plus no fewer than 35 professional drivers with 35 Australian titles between them to act as driving instructors on the day.

The total value of the track-going and support vehicles used over the four days was \$8.9 million and each of the AMG cars employed for circuit use was fitted each night with four new tyres, new brake pads, new brake discs and new brake fluid by a dedicated team of 12 engineers.

In all, more than 800 people were shipped in and out on more than 30 chartered and commercial flights to the event, with more than 160 staff employed over the four-day event. Benz says pre-event work began in July 2007, with planning starting even earlier.

"To pre-empt any speculation ... it's a triple (customer, media and dealer) act for us, which justifies the investment," said Mercedes-Benz Car Group managing director Horst von Sanden, adding that demand for the new C63 AMG would far outstrip supply, despite the confirmation last week of an increased production allocation for Australia.

Mercedes-Benz Australia currently holds

more than 150 orders for the most formidable C-class ever and predicts it could easily sell more than 600 examples. But, despite the initial allocation of 350 cars expanding to 500 for 2008 (10 times the number of W203-based C55 AMGs sold here), the nine-month waiting list remains unchanged.

The C63 is the first of a flurry of new Mercedes-Benzes to arrive this year, including the C200 Estate (late April), facelifted SL convertible (July), SL63 AMG (August), C220 and C63 Estate (August, with a price of \$141,300 announced for the latter this week), facelifted SLK (August), facelifted B-class (September) and facelifted M-class (September).

The popularity of the C63 is not surprising given it comes with the same better-value price position its donor model was released here with in July. While the W204 C-class sedan carries a \$1500-lower starting price than its forebear, a price of \$139,500 was announced for the C63 AMG sedan in January.

That makes the new C-class AMG sedan \$21,000 cheaper than the 270kW supercharged 5.4-litre C55 it replaces, as well as \$17,500 less than its most direct rival in the BMW M3 coupe (\$157,000) and a whole \$25,000 less than Audi's RS4 super-sedan (\$164,500).

Continued next page

NO lead fees...

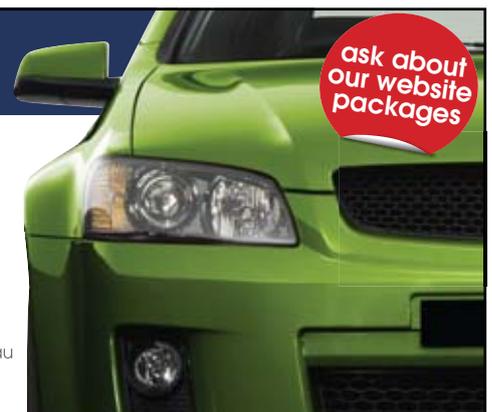
Save \$\$\$ with one low monthly fee for unlimited cars online.

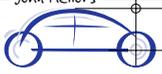
[click here for a special offer for GoAuto subscribers](#)

call 1300 247 444
or visit www.247carads.com.au/ga

classifieds - directories - banner media

247carads.com.au
all things car...





RISING INTEREST RATES

Now is the time to review your dealership valuation and restructure plans, and any associated borrowings.

Don't delay!

For independent expert advice on dealership value and restructure planning, please call Ken personally.



Ken Rich – Director

Office: (07) 3229 0080
Ken Rich: 0418 152 254
ken.rich@richandco.com.au
www.richandco.com.au

'When Experience Counts'

Rich & Co Pty

Accountants and Business Advisors

The wild one



Continued from previous page

Pricing for the V8-powered Lexus IS-F, which arrives in late 2008 as Japan's first serious compact sports sedan offering, is expected to be about \$150,000.

"I think it has ruffled a few feathers in our competitors' camps," said Mr von Sanden.

Furthermore, the C63 comes standard with an automatic transmission (Benz says the seven-speed 7GTronic-based AMG Speedshift Plus auto is 20 per cent quicker-shifting and "completely eliminates" the need for a manual transmission, yet admits it would be nice to have one), offers class-leading 336kW/600Nm outputs from its 6.2-litre V8 and sprints to 100km/h in a claimed 4.5 seconds – one-tenth faster than even the M3 with its recently announced M-DCT twin-clutch automated manual transmission.

As GoAuto previously reported after our first drive in Europe, the C63 features specific front quarter guards, a unique bonnet with power dome, more aggressive front and rear bumpers, side skirts, a bootlid spoiler, dual twin exhausts and LED tail-lights.

C63-specific technology includes three-stage ESP traction/stability control, speed-sensitive AMG sports steering, reinforced driveshafts and joints, a 35mm-wider front wheel track, 18-inch AMG alloys (8.5-inch wide up front, 9.0-inch at rear), beefier brakes and a new three-link front suspension with firmer springs, dampers and anti-roll bars, plus increased negative wheel camber.

Interior upgrades include multi-adjustable AMG sports seats with integrated head restraints for the first time, AMG instruments and an AMG multi-function flat-bottomed sports steering wheel with paddle shifters.

Standard fare in Australia includes an electric tilt/slide sunroof, bi-Xenon headlights, full Nappa leather trim available in three colours (beige, black and grey), an alarm with interior motion sensor and a Harman Kardon sound system.

Only three factory options will be available: a carbon-fibre trim package (to replace the standard 'black ash' highlights), Keyless Go auto un/locking and starting, and an electric rear window blind. Radar-operated Distronic cruise control will not be available.

The C63 is the fifth generation of a long line of AMG-tweaked C-class models, not including the 190E 3.2 in 1987 – the first AMG-tuned compact Benz.

The 1993 C36 was the first fully-fledged AMG model, followed by the 1997 4.3-litre V8-powered C43, the supercharged V6 C32 Kompressor of 2001 and the previous-generation C55 Kompressor (2004). But this is the first time the AMG version of any model has been available from launch.

More than 22,000 C-class AMGs have been sold globally. Australia continues to be one of the top five AMG-buying nations and one of the highest per capita, with 1000 AMG vehicle sales expected this year.

DRIVE IMPRESSIONS: [CLICK HERE](#)

DO YOU WANT TO DRIVE YOUR CLOSING RATES AND GROSS PROFITS UP?



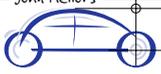
Call **Simon Schmidt** for your specialised in-house sales training on 0412 125 926

- Hands on practical training solutions
- Strongly retail oriented training by Simon himself
- Measured success with ongoing support
- Comprehensive on the phone training
- The best negotiation and closing skills training available

Email contact: simbin@bigpond.net.au

"OBLIGATION FREE ON SITE PRESENTATION TO SHOW CASE THE SKILLS YOUR PEOPLE WILL GAIN"

Driven
Automotive sales training



Carriage return



Volvo's V70 station wagon is back with a big injection of power and panache

By DAVID HASSALL

VOLVO is taking its V70 premium sports wagon further upmarket in Australia with the launch this week of the third-generation model, raising the price by some \$15,000.

However, the all-new V70 bears little resemblance to the superseded model, not only in looks but in terms of technical specification and features.

Based on the bigger S80 platform rather than the previous S60-based model, the new V70 has a turbocharged six-cylinder engine replacing the previous five-cylinder 'atmo' unit and has the drive going to all four wheels rather than just the front.

With the apparently unstoppable growth



of SUVs cutting into traditional wagon sales, Volvo Car Australia (VCA) thought long and hard about bringing the new V70 to Australia and has now clearly positioned it as a sporty alternative for buyers who want the space and practicality but have not yet given up on driving enjoyment.

The new V70 is priced at \$67,950 and, apart from the massive power boost and all-wheel drive, gets a substantial list of standard features that push it well beyond the previous model (which was priced at \$52,950) and even put it above its high-riding XC70 sibling (which is priced between \$56,950 and \$64,450).

VCA has elected to retain its single-model V70 policy, even though more humble engines are available overseas, so any Volvo buyers suffering sticker shock with the latest model will have to look at the smaller V50 range.

At the heart of the new V70 is the transversely mounted turbo inline 3.0-litre T6 engine, which features a two-stage turbo for strong performance throughout the rev range and produces some 210kW of power and 400Nm at just 1500rpm (compared with 175kW and 320Nm for the 3.2-litre version in the V70-based XC70).

Driving through a standard six-speed

automatic transmission with a 'Geartronic' sequential manual mode (only five-speed previously), the V70 accelerates from 0-100km/h in a very unwagonlike 7.2 seconds – some 1.8 seconds faster than the outgoing 125kW/230Nm model.

Of course, the flipside is that the turbo uses considerably more fuel, with the official combined figure rising by 14.1 per cent from 9.9L/100km to 11.3L/100km.

Squeezing the straight-six engine sideways under the V70's bonnet was achieved by removing hardware such as the air-conditioning and power steering pumps from the front of the engine and locating them above the transmission, driven by gears from the back of the crankshaft.

Being based on a larger platform with a 56mm-longer wheelbase, the new V70 benefits from a bigger interior that provides some 48mm more legroom for back seat passengers and 30mm more shoulder room in the front.

A revised self-opening tailgate design makes the boot aperture larger than before, cargo volume increases by 70 litres to 555 litres and adjustable anchorage points on aluminium rails as well as a 40/20/40 split-fold rear seat provide plenty of load-carrying options.

Continued next page

AUTOMOTIVE RESEARCHER – Melbourne

JATO Dynamics is the leading supplier of automotive market intelligence delivering the world's most complete, accurate and up-to-date databases of vehicle prices and specifications, industry news including incentives information, sales and registrations data.

We are currently recruiting a researcher in Melbourne to provide comprehensive research of sales volumes data of the local automotive market. This role requires strong self-motivation with an analytical approach to data. The position requires a candidate who has some previous data collection experience within a client focused, specialist setting, preferably in an automotive environment.

A post secondary education and industry experience would be well regarded and the ideal candidate must have excellent computer skills as much of the

work will entail working with spreadsheets and data manipulation. A good knowledge of the local car market and a working knowledge of the terms used to describe vehicles would be an asset.

Experience of working remotely or independently would be an advantage. JATO offers a flexible home-based working environment. Therefore candidates must have a suitable home working area available.

Send applications to:
recruitment.aus@jato.com
by 9 April 2008.



OUR KNOWLEDGE IS YOUR POWER

Subaru's Aussie rules

Australian team played a large role in developing Forester III

By BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS

SUBARU has revealed that Australia played an important role in the development of the latest Forester compact SUV.

Codenamed PF3, the third-generation Forester Australian had input as much as three years ago.

Speaking at the launch of the vehicle earlier this month, Subaru Australia managing director Nick Senior said that local executives interacted extensively with the Japanese engineers during the PF3's gestation.

"We've been involved on Forester from very, very early on," he said. "Where we've done a little bit of work was nine or 10 months ago, working on finetuning some of the driving dynamics, and we have a package that you see today that is testament that they got it right from day one.

"We drive it on the test track – a Japanese Domestic Model (vehicle) – and we pass judgement when we drive it here ... to decide which direction to go."

Dealing with the previous-generation Forester's tight rear legroom was deemed a big priority for the Australian market.

"This is a car that resonated with us in terms of its direction (addressing) the biggest customer negative comment, which was rear legroom," Mr Senior said. "Where there is more upside for us is in its family appeal. Now we've got more interior



space, and specifically more rear legroom."

Mr Senior's team was also vocal in terms of getting the new Forester's appearance right. "One of the feedback (issues) of the (outgoing) Forester was that it was a little bit angular, and so here is a direction with a more contemporary styling to it," he explained.

The other main consideration was adding a more SUV look. "The SUV flavour needs to come through more, and that's what we are seeing more of today," Mr Senior said. "It's still going to hit the mark with those who still buy a Forester to drive to work Monday to Friday, but its recreational aspect has been enhanced."

Subaru Australia still insists that the old Forester's basic recipe has not been messed with, and that the model has performed well ever since it debuted in Australia in the latter half of 1997.

"(Certainly) it's addressed styling issues,

(but) it was the car from day one that hit the mark and has not needed to change dramatically since then," Mr Senior said. "There was not a lot you need to do on a car like the Forester. It's been on the market for 11 years, and 10 of those have been consecutive years of growth. It was only last year, as we got to the end of the model life, that we didn't break another record."

Despite the new Forester's growth, Mr Senior is confident that it will not encroach too much into the larger Liberty's turf, although there may be some cannibalisation of Outback sales.

"Not for Liberty. Maybe a little bit for Outback," he said. "But, by and large, internally we say the Forester is the car for weekends, and Outback is the car for long weekends. Forester is more about recreation, Outback is more about lifestyle. They are two differentiated segments, and I think that will still continue."

Volvo's new V70 is \$15,000 dearer, but has more performance and pizzazz to boot

Continued from previous page

Cabin innovations include a "world first" two-position height-adjustable integrated rear child booster seat that comes as standard with the Australian model.

Other safety features include extended (by 60mm) side curtain airbags to better protect children, twin-chamber airbags to cover the hips as well as the chest (a system first seen on the S80), and a stronger side structure designed to improve impact intrusion.

Greater use of high-strength steel

throughout the chassis is said to have improved torsional rigidity by 15 per cent.

Other new technical features include the introduction of a semi-active self-adjusting electronic damping system with three manual settings (developed in conjunction with Swedish racing outfit Ohlins), an automatic park brake and optional speed-sensitive power steering (with three settings).

Electronic stability control is standard, along with active bi-Xenon headlights, parking sensors front and rear, 18-inch

alloy wheels, auto-dimming interior mirror, automatic wipers, woodgrain interior trim, six-CD audio system and heated front seats.

Stopping power is aided by ABS with emergency brake assist while a collision warning system uses radar and a camera to alert the driver to a possible collision and will automatically brake the car if a collision is deemed unavoidable to reduce the force of the impact.

For drive impressions, go to www.goauto.com.au in the coming days.

Fleet/Corporate Sales Specialist

Keema Nissan, Australia's fastest growing Nissan Dealer, is gearing up for further growth in 2008.

Nissan has the most diverse model range of any manufacturer and we are looking for the right person to join our team.

We are looking for a fleet/corporate sales specialist to drive sales potential. Previous experience in a similar or related role would be highly regarded. Keema has stormed the market and our name is highly regarded.

If you are an honest, passionate individual who would like to join a fantastic team in a great working environment, then we would love to talk to you. A fantastic package will be offered to the right applicant. We look forward to hearing from you.

Email: careers@keema.com.au.

Or telephone Jasen Hannagan from Wednesday, 26th March on 0412 746 986.

Team **KEEMA**



Custom Fleet
Part of GE Commercial FinanceGoAuto Green is brought
to you by Custom Fleet

Let's get serious: Toyota

Toyota executive urges Australian law-makers to clarify positions on hybrid

By JAMES STANFORD

TOYOTA Australia Technical Centre vice-president Max Gillard has called on the Federal and state governments to clarify their positions on supporting hybrid technology as the company considers building a petrol-electric Camry at its Altona plant in Melbourne.

The Australian Federal government and Victorian state government have been lobbying Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) executives in Japan to award its Australian operation a hybrid production project, and are believed to have offered significant financial support in order to achieve that outcome.

However, Mr Gillard has told GoAuto that both tiers of government need to do more when it comes to incentives for purchasing hybrid vehicles, especially those made in Australia.

"I suppose the issue at the moment is that the governments, both state and Federal, really haven't made their position clear in regards to hybrid," Mr Gillard said.

He said there were currently no formal incentives to purchase a hybrid vehicle on offer from any government in Australia, except for a promised stamp duty refund in Queensland that was yet to materialise.

Mr Gillard also said he thought governments should be prepared to support an Australian-made hybrid by purchasing them for fleets.

"If the government is serious, the government purchases should be pretty high too," he said.

Toyota Australia's plan to build a hybrid vehicle at Altona is still embryonic and the company has previously said very little about it publicly for fears that the project may fall over. However, Mr Gillard made it clear that



Camry Hybrid

Toyota Australia wants to build a hybrid version of the Camry.

"At the moment we have the Prius, which is very focused on fuel efficiency; you have SUVs like the (Lexus) RX and then the (Lexus) GS which are going more for performance," he said. "We are plumbing for something in the middle, which is not as quirky as the Prius, so a Camry hybrid would be ideal and we are working towards it."

Mr Gillard said the vehicle, if produced, would have to be a full petrol-electric hybrid model rather than a milder version that would simply stop the engine at idle and run ancillary systems, such as the air-conditioning system, off a battery.

Toyota Australia is keen to produce the hybrid Camry for both domestic and export markets, although the high Australian dollar is posing a problem. Even so, Mr Gillard believes building a hybrid locally would bring several benefits.

"All the benefits of local production would flow through – you don't have the shipping issues, you don't have the import duty," he said. "At the moment, with the Australian dollar being so strong, you could argue that it would probably be better to import it. But in the long-term we believe we should be making the car where the car is being sold."

Asked whether Australians would be prepared to pay extra for a hybrid Camry

over a regular model, Mr Gillard said: "That depends on what you mean by extra."

"Probably now you could buy a Corolla for two-thirds of the price of a Prius, but if you get a Camry-sized vehicle and you could sell it for \$40,000 to \$45,000, that's cheaper than the highest-grade Camry," he said. "So you are sort of in the right ballpark, you have the fuel efficiencies and if there are no negatives as far as the user is concerned, then it is the way to go."

Mr Gillard spoke to GoAuto earlier this month at SAE Australasia's Green Vehicle Technology conference, where he presented Toyota's view on future clean vehicle direction. He said Toyota would continue to develop petrol and diesel engines and would investigate other new technologies, but was convinced that for now hybrid was the best answer.

Mr Gillard said full-electric plug-in hybrids, which will be introduced by Toyota overseas in 2010, could also have a large role to play in Australia. "Because the cost of our electricity is so cheap – aside from South Africa we are the cheapest – plug-in hybrid has big potential in Australia," he said. "With so much commuting in Melbourne and Sydney, it is probably going to be quite effective, albeit to get the 60km range is really our target. We are still a long way off that with battery technology, but we are moving towards it."

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

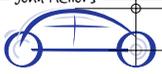
Custom Fleet
Part of GE Commercial Finance

"We listen to your needs.
Then we create tailor-made solutions."



To find out more, call Custom Fleet, the fleet management experts on **1800 812 681**.





Up Close on Personnel

motor staff

Brought to you by Motor Staff - The Motor Industry's No1 Recruitment Specialist sales • service • parts • admin

CRICHTON LOOKS TO HAVE CASHED IN AFTER SURPRISE BENTLEY ACTION

MILLIONAIRE Kiwi automotive baron Neville Crichton is believed to have made a massive profit after selling his recently acquired shareholding in British luxury-car retailer HR Owen to Volkswagen-owned car marque Bentley Motors.

The news agency *Reuters* reported last week that Bentley Motors has agreed to buy a 27.9 per cent stake in HR Owen, which sells Bentley cars under the Jack Barclay franchise in London. While the identity of the seller or the price paid was not disclosed, Mr Crichton increased his shareholding in HR Owen to 27.08 per cent on February 21 through his holding company Balverona. Overseas reports are valuing Bentley's stake at about £9 million (\$A19.8 million) and have quoted HR Owen chief executive and Bentley sources as saying the transaction removed speculation over the future ownership of the group. Bentley regards Jack Barclay as its most important dealership in the world. HR Owen has reportedly undergone substantial restructuring over the past two years, selling off more than 30 sites and concentrating on its main London outlets and key branches in places such as Manchester. It sells a range of prestige marques, including Volkswagen-owned Lamborghini and Bugatti, BMW-owned Rolls-Royce and Fiat-owned Ferrari. Through Balverona, Mr Crichton owns Ateco Automotive and European Automotive Imports, which between them import and distribute Alfa Romeo, Citroen, Fiat, Ferrari and Maserati vehicles in Australia and New Zealand. **Read more: [Crichton circles UK](#)**


Neville Crichton

TODT QUILTS FERRARI

FERRARI chief executive officer Jean Todt suddenly quit his position with the Italian company last week.

The Frenchman, who led Ferrari's remarkable Formula One revival over the past decade, had only been in the job for 17 months, having relinquished the F1 job in favour of a corporate life. He has retained his position on the board of Ferrari, maintains his positions as President of Ferrari Asia Pacific and Ferrari West Europe, and will continue to represent Ferrari's motor sport interests at the FIA World Council.


Jean Todt

Mr Todt has been replaced as CEO by 62-year-old Amedeo Felisa, who has been Ferrari general manager since 2006. Mr Felisa joined Ferrari in 1990 as director of product development. The changes were announced after a shareholders' meeting that renewed the appointments of Luca di Montezemolo as company president and Piero Ferrari as vice-president. Mr Todt led Ferrari through its most successful period ever on the track and helped Michael Schumacher to a record five successive world F1 championships, but stood down from the team last year and handed the reins to Stefano Domenicali.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

TOP FORD, MAZDA MOVES

THE Ford Motor Co has made a series of high-level appointments within the senior leadership team of its Asia Pacific and Africa business unit "to support the continued expansion of the company's fast-growing China operations and to deepen its partner relationships and synergies with Mazda".

The most prominent of these affects Mazda Motor Corporation (MMC) executive vice-president Bob Graziano, who will relocate to China on April 1 to become president and CEO of Ford Motor China. He will remain a representative director of the MMC board.

Ford Motor China's chief operating officer Phil Spender will move to Japan to fill Mr Graziano's position, while the current chairman and CEO of the Blue Oval's Chinese operations Mei-Wei Cheng will become executive chairman "responsible for Ford Motor China's business strategy, as well as strengthening strategic partnerships and government relations".

Following the Graziano/Spender announcement at MMC, more than 20 other senior executive changes were heralded at the Japanese car-maker.

Among them, former Mazda Australia managing director and now managing executive officer in charge of overseas sales and customer service, Malcolm Gough, will move to the same level of management in charge of sales expansion.


David Upton (left) and Richard Collins

HONOUR FOR UPTON

HIGH-PROFILE Adelaide dealer identity David Upton was recently recognised for 20 years of service at the Jarvis group in South Australia.

One of the faces of the company's quirky advertising campaigns, Mr Upton was aged 24 when he joined Jarvis Ford in 1988 as F&I (finance and insurance) manager, moving up over the years to become general manager of Jarvis Ford operations at Norwood and Hillcrest.

"During this period of time he has made a very significant contribution towards the growth of the whole Jarvis team," said group dealer principal Richard Collins. "He was instrumental in the early establishment of Jarvis Toyota and contributed towards the development of Jarvis Subaru ... David's growth and development didn't just happen - he planned it, he put the effort in and he has achieved the results."

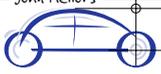
Australia's best choice of careers and staff...

The Motor Industry's No1 Recruitment Specialist
motor staff

Sales • Service • Parts • Admin

- Professional Career Advice
- 12 Years Industry Experience
- Largest Selection of Vacancies
- Unsurpassed Industry Contacts
- Largest Applicant Database
- Friendly & Ethical Service
- Expert Resume Preparation
- Personality & Skills Matching

Sydney • Melbourne • Brisbane • Adelaide • Perth
P: 1300 666 562 W: www.motorstaff.com.au E: careers@motorstaff.com.au

GoAuto's latest car review

www.goauto.com.au

Nissan Dualis Ti five-door wagon

DUALIS is the name of one of the smallest compact SUVs you can buy. It's also probably the tallest and most SUV-like of all small cars available. Either way you look at it, the Nissan is an interesting alternative in the \$30,000 segment, straddling these categories plus a smattering of medium and larger sized family cars. And with such stiff competition, the true replacement for the lamented Pulsar has a good deal to recommend it. Our only real issue with it is whether the deal is good enough for what Nissan is charging.

CAR REVIEW: [CLICK HERE](#)

GOAUTO SPOT ON

MOUNTING pressure on Holden to announce that it will discontinue the Rodeo one-tonne range later this year, following GoAuto's exclusive report earlier this month, has resulted in a statement confirming the plan. As we reported, GM Holden will replace the Rodeo with a vehicle known as the Colorado. As with Rodeo, the utility will be offered with petrol or diesel power, 4x2 or 4x4 drive and in a range of bodystyles including single cab, space cab and crew cab.

"The light commercial segment is a significant market for Holden and with this exciting new addition we will remain a major player with a highly competitive new entry," said GM Holden LCV marketing manager Teresa Basile in a statement. "And Rodeo owners can rest assured that Holden remains committed to providing superior customer service and parts availability to the current range."

Read more: [Holden to retire Rodeo](#)

THAT'S SHOW BUSINESS

ATTENDANCES at the recent Melbourne International Motor Show were up six per cent on 2007, despite the absence of a number of car manufacturers including Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, Jaguar and Citroen. The Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC) said last week that 243,089 people attended the event, passing 240,000 for the fifth time since the event began in 1925. Mercedes management explained prior to the event that it pulled out because it was too expensive to attend two large motor shows (Melbourne and Sydney) in a year. Last week, marketing expenditure was again a topic of conversation for the German brand when it staged a multi-million-dollar four-day AMG launch at Bathurst.

Launch Pad carsales.com.au
brought to you by Australia's No. 1 Auto Website

MARCH:

Hyundai i-Max/i-Load vans

Kia K2900 utility

Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG sedan

Porsche 911 GT2 coupe

Porsche Cayenne GTS SUV

SsangYong Rexton II XDi SUV

SsangYong Kyron XDi SUV

SsangYong Sports XDi utility

SsangYong Stavic XDi people-mover

Subaru Forester SUV

Volvo V70 wagon



C63 AMG



Forester

New model diary: [CLICK HERE](#)

GRAND CHEROKEE BOOST

JEEP has launched an updated version of its Grand Cherokee overseas, ahead of an Australian debut in June.

Billed as the most luxurious Jeep ever, the MY08 Grand Cherokee has an overhauled interior – now with soft-touch dashboard materials, revised colours and textiles – and a number of additional cabin features such as tilt and telescopic steering wheel adjustment, a more ergonomic steering wheel, more comfortable armrests, redesigned instrument cluster and a floor console with improved cupholders.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

NAZI TYPES IN C5 AD

CITROEN has come under fire from British politicians who have accused the French manufacturer of Nazi stereotyping with an advertisement for the new C5.

Backed by a range of Senior Westminster politicians, Scottish National Party leader Angus Robertson tabled a motion in parliament last week which urged Citroen to withdraw its new "Unmistakeably German" advertisement that has "imagery, symbolism and style reminiscent of the 1930s".

A report on Mr Robertson's website describes the airborne shots set to Wagner in the opening scenes of the advertisement as being reminiscent of the Nazi propaganda film *Triumph of the Will*. It also identified a number of other controversial elements: an eagle statue similar to the Nazi emblem; a road sign in Gothic script not seen in Germany since 1945; a fencing duel that is popular with extreme-right German fraternities; and a closing sequence in front of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Stadium.

A spokesman for Citroen Australia told GoAuto this week that it did not plan to use the advertisement, which positions the new C5 as "more German than the Germans".

C5 ADVERT: [CLICK HERE](#)

GREEN WHEELS TURNING

A NEW website has been launched to help customers choose environmentally friendly vehicles. A joint initiative of Future Climate Australia, RACV and EPA Victoria, Green Wheels (www.greenwheels.com.au) ranks vehicles by their greenhouse gas emissions and presents readers with information regarding the environmental impact of the different engine technologies.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

carsales.com.au

It just works.

Get us working for you. Become a Carsales dealer 1300 308 690