

# The New York Times

# Automobiles

## A Dozen Don't-Miss Cars at the Show

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cluding the 2008 Yukon. This is G.M.'s first full-size S.U.V. hybrid, and it features a two-mode system developed in conjunction with DaimlerChrysler and BMW that results in a mild increase in mileage. The two-mode Yukon hybrid goes on sale late this year.

The most intriguing electric car at the show may be one in the display of LeMay collection classics in a far corner downstairs. Look for the 1912 Standard Electric, a fully functional battery-powered runabout that would put many of today's electric car concepts to shame.

**4. TAXI '07** Hybrid hunters may be more successful outside the convention hall. This curbside exhibit, organized by the Design Trust for Public Space, demonstrates what the future may hold for the city's bumblebee-colored taxi fleets.

Taxi 07 is not a static display; the vehicles actually work, and in some cases make runs through Midtown. The exhibit features electric cars, gasoline-electric hybrids and taxis with special features for riders with limited mobility. And be sure to savor this bit of fantasy: the exhibit and the taxis are waiting daily, fair weather or foul — unlike cabs on the real streets of New York.

**5. BENTLEY BROOKLANDS:** Neither you nor your chauffeur may ever drive a 2008 Brooklands coupé (say COO-pay), but you can drool over it here.

This latest derivative of the Arnage sedan is expensive, with a price around \$350,000, and it's exclusive, since only 550 will be built. It is also fast, since it comes with a 530-horsepower twin-turbo V-8 that churns out an incredible 775 pound-feet of torque.

The Brooklands made its world debut at Geneva last month, but it is new to New Yorkers, as is another dream machine from Geneva, the \$130,000 Maserati GranTurismo coupé.

**6. DODGE DEMON** The success of G.M.'s new small sports cars, the Saturn Sky and Pontiac Solstice, hasn't gone unnoticed by DaimlerChrysler. The Dodge Demon is the Chrysler Group's answer. This sleek little roadster initially gets only 172 horsepower, but it should still be very quick because it tips the scales at just 2,600 pounds. A high-horsepower version may also be in the works, however. This is definitely one of the show's top head-turners.

**7. SUBARU IMPREZA WRX** The outgoing WRX (and its sister vehicle the

Standard Taxi's prototype cab is part of the Taxi 07 exhibit.



Design Trust for Public Space

Tribeca, also being hastily redesigned) was as ugly as a toad, but with a relatively light weight, a turbocharged engine and all-wheel drive, it was Mr. Toad's Wild Ride. The new model looks as if it received, if not a full-blown open-mouth kiss, at least a peck from a princess. Now it has a measure of beauty to go with the brawn. What's not to love?

**8. SUZUKI SX4 SEDAN** This vehicle is Suzuki's take on a Subaru WRX STi, only without the hot engine, the six-speed transmission and the all-wheel drive. Yes, it only goes half as fast (0 to 60 in about 9 seconds, compared with about 4.6), but it also costs only half as much. It's also a sporty take on basic transportation that appears to be hitting the right chord with budget shoppers.

Last year, Suzuki finally achieved its long-sought goal of selling 100,000 cars in North America. With an improving lineup of enticing models like the SX4, Suzuki probably has some momentum toward its new goal of 200,000 sales by 2010.

**9. JEEP LIBERTY** The replacement for this compact S.U.V. has been long-awaited — for some, since the Liberty displaced the Cherokee in 2002. Despite general disappointment among the motoring press, the Liberty has been a minor hit for Jeep, notwithstanding its polarizing styling, anemic engines, off-road limitations and morbidly obese curb weight (especially with the discontinued diesel engine). The original Liberty caught on with women looking for a soft off-roader with a macho look. The '08 Liberty's more angular styling evokes the Cherokee. For a first-person demonstration of how the new Liberty performs, head for the big Camp Jeep sandbox outside the Javits center.

**10. MERCEDES-BENZ CL65 AMG** Only 40 of these celebrations of automotive excess will be available, starting

in the fall. How excessive are they? Start with a twin-turbo V-12 engine, 612 horsepower and 738 pound-feet of torque. Add a liquid metal exterior paint that had been available only on auto show concepts. The CL65 commemorates the 40th anniversary of Mercedes's AMG engineering subsidiary. The new CL65 is slightly larger, more aggressive looking, and has eight (yes, eight) more horsepower than the '06 model. All for \$200,000, give or take a euro.

**11. HYUNDAI GENESIS** The promise of the Genesis is luxury, power and performance on a blue-collar budget. The nearly production-ready concept is due to reach dealers next year and will have Hyundai's first V-8 engine. On top of upscale styling, the rear-drive sedan flaunts a lush interior, a five-link independent suspension and acceleration from 0 to 60 m.p.h. in less than six seconds. The car will have "well over 300 horsepower," Hyundai says, and a price "well under \$30,000."

**12. CHEVROLET TRAX, BEAT AND GROOVE** These three design studies being shown by G.M. may be harbingers of new G.M. small cars in Asia and Europe. Because they're powered by low-output one-liter engines, these putt-putt cars are unlikely to be built or sold in this country. But the company is making a point this year of showcasing the creativity of its worldwide design studios. All three designs shown here come from the former Daewoo studio G.M. acquired in South Korea.

**BONUS** It could be the coolest car on display, and you'll find it downstairs, far away from the big manufacturers' exhibits. It's the Seven-Eight-Nine coupe from a customizer called N2A (for No Two Alike). An amalgam of immortal Chevrolet styling cues from 1957-59, it is crafted on a Corvette chassis. One look and you'll probably ask the same question I did: why didn't someone at G.M. think of this?