

# Powerful sportscars revived at Geneva Motor Show

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Forget the people carrier and electric runabout: with the economic crisis over, the low, sleek and powerful supercar regained its place at the Geneva Motor Show, which opens to the public on Thursday.

Journalists, photographers, and industry executives clustered in scrums around glitzy launches by Italian sports car makers Ferrari and Lamborghini.

"Compared to previous years, the [Geneva Motor Show](#) will be marked by growing optimism among car makers," said Carlos da Silva, of consultancy Global Insight.

"The motor industry is back on track."

Clean engines, electric or hybrid petrol-electric, abounded among some 170 new model launches, alongside mini runabouts and five- to seven-seat family wagons. Even Rolls Royce unleashed a prototype electric-powered version of its limousine.

But little can replace the dreamy-eyed appeal of the top-line sports car in the industry, even if its six-digit price, 600 or even more than 1,000 horsepower and 300-plus kilometre-per-hour plus top speed are out of reach for the average buyer.

Although it was still the company's trademark boiling bright red, Ferrari nonetheless squeezed four seats into its low slung new "FF", as well as four-wheel drive for the first time in its history.

"The FF is a fantastic and very important step, a new page in our history," chairman Luca Cordero di Montezemolo enthused beneath the firm's prancing horse emblem.

Nowadays Volkswagen-owned Lamborghini's new Aventador was slightly less subtle.

"Raw power and feather-light weight," the company claimed of its [carbon fibre](#), high-tech 12-cylinder car, paring a couple of hundred kilos off Ferrari's 1,700 kilogrammes.

Yet that allowed Lamborghini to lay claim to a 20-percent cut in [fuel consumption](#) and [carbon emissions](#) over the car's predecessor.

In keeping with a tradition dictated by the company's logo, the Aventador was named after a bull that became a legend among Spanish bullfighters.

Green credentials of some shade or other are essential even for this exclusive and small -- though highly profitable -- corner of the car market.

German rival Porsche offered a hybrid engine in its four-door coupe, the Panamera.

But while such renowned [car makers](#) fit in alongside known luxury brands on London's Bond Street, New York's Fifth Avenue or Geneva's Rue du Rhone, smaller newcomers are seeking to carve their niche in the same market.

Spain's GTA Motor, a racing car specialist, unveiled its first high-tech supercar for the open road, the Spano. It pares down weight thanks to the use of carbon fibre and metals favoured by the aerospace industry such as titanium.

And it's not the kind of car you pick from a catalogue.

"We'll just sell 99 cars, each client will have their own exclusive colour," a company executive told AFP, shrugging off talks of economic uncertainty.

"The car is built in Valencia (Spain) but it's in emerging economies, in Russia, China, the United Arab Emirates, that we'll sell," he added, eyeing the same markets as the major mainstream auto makers.

Meanwhile, traditional British car maker Morgan dug even deeper into its roots at the Geneva show.

It revived a favourite among the 1930s sporting gentleman, an open three-wheeler powered by a modern motorcycle engine, which can leap to 60 miles-per-hour (100 kmh) in a shade over four seconds.

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