

# Hypercars mingle with station wagons at Geneva auto show

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This undated photo released by car manufacturer Daimler AG shows a Mercedes-AMG E 63 S 4Matic + T-Modell car. The car will be shown at the Geneva Auto Show in Geneva, Switzerland that starts Tuesday March 7, 2017 with media days. Europe's automakers face huge questions: the impact of Britain's decision to leave the European Union, Donald Trump's proposed border tax on imports, the uncertain prospects for electric vehicles. Meanwhile they have to keep selling cars - in a ferociously competitive market. (Daimler AG via AP)

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decision to leave the European Union, President Donald Trump's proposed border tax on imports, the uncertain prospects for electric vehicles.

Meanwhile, they have to keep selling cars in a ferociously competitive European market.

That mix of anxiety about the future and the need to market hot products today will mark the 87th Geneva International Motor Show. The show convenes Tuesday and Wednesday at the Palexpo center next to Geneva's airport for two days of vehicle unveilings to journalists and CEO interviews. It then opens to the public Thursday and runs through March 19.

Here are major themes likely to mark the show.

## RIDING HIGH IN SUVs

A key trend at Geneva show will be the shift from minivans to small sport-utility vehicles, which combine car-like features such as plush interiors and sleeker rooflines with off-road features like high clearance.

PSA Group's Citroen C-Aircross concept is expected to replace the current C3 Picasso. General Motors Co.'s Opel will show off its Crossland X, a model that turned out to be a sign of things to come: it was developed with the PSA Group, which has agreed to purchase Opel. The deal is expected to be announced Monday.



This undated photo provided by car manufacturer Citroen, shows a Citroen C-Aircross Concept, car. The car will be shown at the Geneva Auto Show in Geneva, Switzerland that starts Tuesday March 7, 2017 with media days. Europe's automakers face huge questions: the impact of Britain's decision to leave the European Union, Donald Trump's proposed border tax on imports, the uncertain prospects for electric vehicles. Meanwhile they have to keep selling cars - in a ferociously competitive market. (Citroen via AP)

In SUVs, consumers like the rugged, utilitarian look and the higher riding position, which gives drivers a feeling of safety, says Tim Urquhart, principal analyst at IHS Automotive. And for the companies, "you can sell the same technology for a higher margin," Urquhart said. Small SUVs can re-use many of the mechanical foundations of small cars, spreading manufacturing costs.

In the higher price range, Range Rover's Velar boasts a six-cylinder gasoline engine that reaches 100 kph (62 mph) in only 5.3 seconds.

Other model launches include the convertible version of the E-Class from Daimler AG's Mercedes-Benz luxury brand; Daimler's Mercedes-AMG performance division will offer a station wagon with a big 4.0 liter engine and acceleration like that of a sports car—0-100 kph (0-62 mph) in 3.5 seconds. Not to be outdone in the family transport department, rival BMW is coming ahead with a station wagon version of its 5-Series.

## HYPERCARS

Geneva is usually a good show for stunning, unbelievably fast sports cars costing hundreds of thousands, or more.



This undated file picture provided by car manufacturer Porsche AG shows the Porsche Panamera Turbo Sport Turismo. The car will be shown at the Geneva Auto Show in Geneva, Switzerland that starts Tuesday March 7, 2017 with media days. Europe's automakers face huge questions: the impact of Britain's decision to leave the European Union, Donald Trump's proposed border tax on imports, the uncertain prospects for electric vehicles. Meanwhile they have to keep selling cars - in a ferociously competitive market. (Porsche AG via AP)

Ferrari has the 812 Superfast, equipped with a 12-cylinder engine generating 789 horsepower. Singapore-based Vanda Electrics Pte Ltd. offers the racecar-like, low-slung Dendrobium.

The Huayra Roadster from Italy's Pagani stands out with a bold curve running from roofline through roof pillar to the hood. It's powered by a gigantic 6.0 liter, 12-cylinder engine turning out 764 horsepower.

## TRUMP, BREXIT

Companies with assembly or parts production in Britain—such as Ford, General Motor's Opel division, BMW, and Nissan—face decisions about what to do with investment and production there as Britain prepares to leave the EU.

Prime Minister Theresa May is due to trigger Brexit this month, starting two years of negotiations on a new trading relationship between Britain and the EU. The main concern is whether Britain leaves without retaining some access to the EU's tariff-free single market. The auto industry is vulnerable as it depends on the supply of parts that cross many borders before a car is complete.



This undated photo provided by Daimler AG shows Mercedes X-Class cars. The cars will be shown at the Geneva Auto Show in Geneva, Switzerland that starts Tuesday March 7, 2017 with media days. Europe's automakers face huge questions: the impact of Britain's decision to leave the European Union, Donald Trump's proposed border tax on imports, the uncertain prospects for electric vehicles. Meanwhile they have to keep selling cars - in a ferociously competitive market. (Daimler AG via AP)

Similar uncertainty is coming from Trump's talk of a tax on imports from factories in Mexico. It's a potentially big development—though it hasn't happened yet.

## ELECTRICS

The auto industry has sunk billions into developing new electric cars, but they won't stand out at the Geneva show as they did at the Paris show last year, when Volkswagen and Daimler both made a big deal about battery-powered concept cars.

Global battery car production will amount to only 0.7 percent of the 93.5 million vehicle global car market this year, say analysts at the IHS Global Insight forecasting firm.

Consumers are held back by obvious drawbacks: limited range, the need to find a place to charge up, higher price and doubts about battery lifetimes. Lower oil prices have also held back adoption.

Carmakers are betting that the day of the electric car is coming, in part because of government emission limits and concerns about air quality in cities around the world. And battery capacity keeps improving. But the tipping point where large numbers of people opt for a car you have to

plug in remains several years off at the very least.



This undated image provided by car manufacturer Opel AG, shows a Opel Insignia Grand Sport, right, and the Insignia Sports Tourer station wagon. The cars will be shown at the Geneva Auto Show in Geneva Switzerland that starts Tuesday March 7, 2017. Europe's automakers face huge questions: the impact of Britain's decision to leave the European Union, Donald Trump's proposed border tax on imports, the uncertain prospects for electric vehicles. Meanwhile they have to keep selling cars - in a ferociously competitive market. (Adam Opel AG via AP)

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