CLASSIC DRIVER

2005 Los Angeles Auto Show

As the Detroit Motor Show's 'little brother', the West Coast event stands somewhat in the shade of this month's international event. However the first major automobile fair of the year is becoming more and more important to the industry. Because of this (and the location) luxury manufacturers such as Bentley, Ferrari and Spyker used the show to launch new products to the US market. Naturally there was some 'local presence, both Pontiac and Dodge showing their latest offerings.

Bernd Pischetsrieder and Dr. Franz-Josef Paefgen, chairman and chief executive of Bentley, proudly showed the 'production study' Bentley Arnage Drophead Coupé and Paefgen says the cabriolet could go into production as early as 2006. Arch-rivals Mercedes-Benz was showing the CLS, while Ferrari were debuting the Super America (or were trying to, given technical problems with the electro-chromatic glass retractable roof). "Come back in an hour, everything will be alright", said the Italians - thankfully it was.

In the context of the show, a significant part of it was the "Design Los Angeles" symposium, an industry (and interested spectators) forum for car design professionals to meet up, exchange ideas, and discuss the new trends developing. Seen at the symposium were Frank Stephenson (Ferrari/Maserati) and Henrik Fisker (ex-Aston Martin) to name but two. The 'Design Challenge' was to create 'The Ultimate LA Machine' and it marks the first time that Southern California studios have participated in a design competition of this type. The goal of the competition is to showcase the imagination and creativity of the studios. 'The Ultimate LA Machine', as a blue sky project, has been an engaging and fun way for the studios to compete with each other. A very good job was done by the Mercedes-Benz design studio. As you can see to the left.

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Mercedes-Benz

BRABUS
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EXIT
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VIPER

Ferrari

EXIT
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LF-S

LF-S

Passat Wagon

A3

BENTLEY
Bentley

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