

CLASSIC DRIVER

Geneva International Motor Show 2009 - Review



Another Geneva - another feast of ever-powerful luxury cars. And a plethora of 'green' machinery, and - courtesy of Bentley - a supercar that manages to be both environment-friendly *and* tremendously fast.

Needless to say, the economic background cast a long shadow over this year's show. But, old-stagers that they are, the car manufacturers were putting a brave face on things and announced models that had been in the project stage well before today's travails.

Having driven over the day before (in some style - although I say it myself - and you'll be able to read all about it soon on **Classic Driver**), it was an early arrival at **Geneva Palexpo**. Even before [Bentley's 09:00 Continental Supersports](#) unveiling, there were surprises to be seen.

Aston Martin brought not only an unrobed [One-77](#), but also the bare carbonfibre running chassis of the 'No. 1' car. It did look impressive, although how much buyers will see of the technical triumph remains to be seen. So to speak. Also on the stand was the first showing of the [Vantage V12](#) and the [DBS Volante](#).

At **Ferrari**, due to company **Chairman Luca di Montezemolo's** absence, the planned 10:00 unveiling of the [599XX](#) was brought forward and the 700bhp, track-only machine was revealed in all its glory to early visitors. The Italian company also had the highly desirable new **California**, the new-for-Geneva **599GTB** with the [HGTE \(Handling GT Evoluzione\) package](#), and the **Scuderia Spider 16M**.

On the other side of the aisle, its Modenese relation, **Maserati**, was showing its **Granturismo S Automatic** for the first time, as well as the already announced **Quattroporte Sport GT S**. Next to **Maserati** was **Abarth**, now a brand in its own right and one that, after the UK launch of the [Abarth 500](#), is very much 'flavour of the month' in the **Classic Driver** office. The stand was full of all-grey, specced-up, esseesse versions of the little terror, including a one-make race series car that did look rather good fun.

Rolls-Royce unveiled its [200EX](#) to an appreciative audience, the car 'in the metal' appearing larger than its pre-launch studio shots implied but an elegant car worthy of the badge. Company-owner **BMW** had new products on its **MINI** stand ([John Cooper Works Convertible](#), **MINI One Clubman**), as well as its main display. I was concerned that the potentially interesting [BMW Concept 5 Series Gran Turismo](#) would look too big; a variation on the **X6**. In fact, it looked an appealing concept and should - given kinder business conditions - prove successful.

Looking towards the other two marques of the German quality triumvirate, **Mercedes-Benz** concentrated its attentions on the new **E-Class** in saloon and coupé forms, and it also had the **SLR Stirling Moss**. I said the latter looked silly in January and close examination has not changed my view. And, a final dig at the Stuttgart manufacturer - who chose the brown metallic E-Classes for the stand? The colour was rather pleasant but the paint finish was truly appalling.

1970s colour - 1970s (British Leyland-standard) execution.

No such deficiencies at **Audi**; the Ingolstadt manufacturer was positively purring with its wide-ranging model line-up. New at Geneva were the **340PS TT RS**, the **A4 allroad**, and the **A5 Cabriolet**. White was the feature colour at **Audi**, with just a red **R8 V10** and **A5 Cabriolet** taking centre-stage to provide contrast.

Alfa Romeo was still showing its **8C** coupé (amazingly, there are still some to deliver...) as well as 2008-

show-launched **8C Spider**. It also had the cute little [MiTo GTA Concept](#) (I'd rather have an **Abarth 500**) with an original 1960s white GTA.

Plus much more, from **Fisker**, **Zagato**, **Bugatti**, **Koenigsegg**, **Pagani**, **Morgan** *et al.*

And **Lagonda**, the **Aston Martin**-owned brand debuting its [Concept](#) model. It's a large SUV based on – according to reports elsewhere in the press – **Mercedes-Benz GL** running-gear, with an **Aston Martin V12** retuned for low-down torque rather than power. Let's be positive: there's a market in the world – maybe not Europe or the USA – for a spacious 4x4 with generous ground clearance for both visibility and rough-road capability. Would I buy one? Not in a million years but, like the **Rolls-Royce Phantom** at launch, it may well be that today's quirky pastiche is tomorrow's avant-garde style.

Stranger things have happened, and I'm a big admirer of the **Goodwood Rolls-Royce** in all its forms.

Abarth









Alfa Romeo





Aston Martin







Audi







Bentley









BMW & Mini







Brabus





Bugatti







Ferrari







Fiat





Fisker





Giugiaro





Instituto Europeo Design





Jaguar





Koenigsegg





Lagonda





Lamborghini









Lancia





Maserati







Mercedes-Benz





Morgan





Pagani





Pininfarina





Porsche





Rinspeed







Rolls-Royce





Ruf





Spyker





Volkswagen





Zagato







Text: Steve Wakefield
Photos: [Nanette Schärf](#) / Jan Baedeker / Newspress

ClassicInside - The Classic Driver Newsletter
[Free Subscription!](#)
Gallery

Source URL: <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/geneva-international-motor-show-2009-%E2%80%93-review>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.