CLASSIC DRIVER

Can Automobili Pininfarina revolt the hypercar market?

Lead

A sustainable luxury automotive brand co-created by two very different industry giants, Automobili Pininfarina hopes to revolutionise the hypercar segment in 2020 with a new 2,000hp EV that fuses technological innovation with timeless design...

Following its acquisition of the legendary Turin design house in 2015, Indian conglomerate Mahindra has launched Automobili Pininfarina — an all-electric luxury car brand which realises founder Battista Farina's unfulfilled dream of building cars under Pininfarina's own name.

A startup with 88 years of history



Its first car, a limited-production, 2m-euro electric hypercar for the socially responsible — and incredibly wealthy — enthusiast will arrive in 2020, incidentally Pininfarina's 90th year (expect 90 to be built). Head of Design Luca Borgogno gave Classic Driver a sneak peak at some near-complete renderings, and we're pleased to report the car — codenamed the PFO — looks sensational: a clean, mid-engined design that adheres to Pininfarina's elegance, purity, and innovation principles to the book.

The target headline figures are mighty, too: 0-100km/h in under 2 seconds, 0-300km/h in under 12 seconds, a top speed of 400km/h, and 500km of range. While unconfirmed, expect close to 2,000hp and a curb weight below two tonnes. While the brand will no doubt utilise Mahindra's wealth of experience in electric vehicle technology, including its five years in Formula E, the new company's primary technological partner will be Croatian hypercar brand Rimac.

Sustainable beauty



Certainly, Pininfarina boasts quite the history, but will it be enough to convince devotees of the internal combustion engine to part with their hard-earned cash? "There's not one answer to that question," comments Michael Perschke, Automobili Pininfarina's newly appointed CEO. "Suddenly, it's not chic to drive through Paris or Los Angeles with an internal combustion engine-powered car anymore and people are looking at EVs because they're something new, cool, and connected." Perschke is keen to point out the car's non-performance-oriented technology, such as autonomous capabilities, connectivity, and user interface. "It's about what gadgets you have and could use if you wanted to. As a new kid on the block, we need talking points beyond design and performance to be relevant."



So, expect Pininfarina's first solely badged hypercar to shake up the hotly contested segment and vie for the EV crown when it arrives in 2020. A lower-level, higher production, luxury Grand Tourer will follow, but as Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra firmly insists, "A Model 3 is not part of the strategy." We wonder what ol' Battista would make of this ambitious new endeavour? His grandson Paolo certainly seemed excited during the launch in Rome last weekend. As the big screens rotated images of Pininfarina's most iconic creations, from the Cisitalia 202 to the audacious Ferrari Modulo concept, he proudly proclaimed, "We are not afraid of the future — innovation is the air that we breathe." The story continues, and we can't wait to see more.

Photos and renderings courtesy of Automobili Pininfarina

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