

Brazil's Auto Show Opens with Futuristic and Thoroughbred Cars

Contributed by Alexandre Rocha
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The 24th International Automobile Trade Fair begins today, October 19, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil's largest business center. The event takes place every two years and is considered the largest event of the kind in Latin America.

Over 550,000 visitors are expected, according to the organizers, before closing day, on October 29. In this year's edition, apart from the national and imported releases, there is significant space for concept cars and technology.

"Technology, be it national or foreign, is one of the high points of this fair," stated fair director Evaristo Nascimento. "International releases are also present. Some of the cars exhibited here were released a few weeks ago at the Paris Motor Show," he added.

In the technology area, the news is in the area of concept cars, exhibited by a large part of the 30 carmakers present at the fair, vehicles that were not so common in previous editions. They are prototypes like the futuristic Toyota Fine-T, a kind of hybrid minivan that may be powered by fuel cell or electricity; the Autonomy sports car, by GM, also powered by fuel cell.

They also have the sports utility vehicle Concept-T, by Volkswagen, from which the Touareg jeep that competed in the Paris-Dakar was derived; the Zaroot, by Nissan, also a sports utilitarian, van Ford Fairlane and the new Chevrolet Camaro, to start being produced in Canada at the end of 2008.

Most of the prototypes are foreign, but the fair also includes representatives of the national industry, like the Fiat FCC Adventure and the Chevrolet Prisma Y. The option for concept sports cars or off-road vehicles shows one of the other highpoints of the fair, sports cars.

Apart from thoroughbred sports cars and off-road vehicles, like Ferraris, Maseratis, Lamborghinis, Porsches and Land Rovers, the fair also includes a variety of family cars with "fierce faces", like the Polo GTI and the SpaceFox Crossover, by Volkswagen, Idea Adventure by Fiat, Corolla S by Toyota, and Civic Si, a 192 horsepower Honda, among others.

The carmakers installed in Brazil and other international brands also presented imported novelties, like the luxury C6 and the C4 Picasso van by Citroën; the new Sentra and Tiida by Nissan; the small Chinese Chana utility vehicles; the Mustang Shelby GT 500 by Ford, a sports car with retro characteristics, and the Porsches 911 Turbo and 911 Targa.

The Market

According to the National Association of Vehicle Manufacturers (Anfavea), the Brazilian industry produced 1.97 million vehicles between January and September this year, 3.4% more than in the first nine months of 2005. Exports totaled 643,400 units to various markets, including the Arab countries.

This international operation also attracts buyers from abroad. "We meet dealers from other countries, marketing professionals, people in the auto parts sector, importers of accessories. They come to learn about the Brazilian production. They are from Latin America, Europe, the United States and the Middle East, as Brazil sells to these markets, with significant volumes to the Middle East," said Evaristo Nascimento.

In the area of imports, Brazil purchased 96,600 vehicles from January to September, 68% more than in the same period last year, according to information provided by the Brazilian Association of Motor Vehicle Importers (Abeiva).

Appreciation of the Brazilian real against the dollar has been warming up this market, which explains the strong presence of brands that currently only trade imported vehicles in Brazil, like Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Jaguar and Volvo.

Porsche, for example, despite selling cars that cost between US\$ 135,000 and US\$ 358,000 here, has seen sales rising in the country. Sales totaled 76 units in 2003, 128 in 2004, 214 in 2005 and the forecast for this year is for over 400 vehicles to be sold.

Despite the fair being open to the general public, Nascimento stated that deals are always closed. "Financing is negotiated with banks, leasing contracts are made, insurance is bought and cars are sold. Visitors may leave the fair having bought a car," he said.

Service:

24th International Automobile Trade Fair

From October 19 to 29 at the Anhembi Exhibition Pavilion, in São Paulo

From 01:00 pm to 10:00 pm, except on the 29th, when the fair goes from 11:00 am to 07:00 pm

Admittance is 25 reais per person between the age of 12 and 65. Children under 12 pay 15 reais and admittance of those under five and over 65 is free

Further information

Telephones: (11) 3291-9111/6283-5011

Site: www.salaodoautomovel.com.br

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