

# THE RETURN OF HORSEPOWER AND SPEED

-Tom Nash

*Hybrids, electric cars and mileage efficiency be damned! It was all about speed and muscle in Detroit.*





If you attended the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, you'd never know the automakers have been trying to "Go Green" for the last several years. Sure, there were lots of little fuel-efficient cars and major introductions of hybrid and electric vehicles, but the distinct odor of burning rubber and testosterone filled the air around several manufacturer displays.

During media days, when future models are introduced to the press before the public is allowed to drool over the cars and trucks, the automakers revealed their latest creations. Shockingly – and pleasantly – many of the new cars for 2016 and beyond are powerful, fast and sleek.

Something had been missing from the OEM offerings for the last few years: passion. While driving hybrids and EVs may satisfy an individual's desire for fuel economy and civic responsibility to protect the environment, that feeling can't be called passion, maybe it can be called "satisfaction."

So, the passion for speed and power has returned, at least in some portion. This time, more horses comes out of smaller engines using newer technologies like turbochargers, direct gasoline injection (GDI), variable cam timing and lighter components to achieve the desired speed and power goals. While these potent machines may not be for everyone, neither are tiny electric cars.

Here are the most significant performance-oriented cars presented at the Detroit Auto Show:

## **FORD GT**

The star of the show was the 2016 Ford GT. To invoke the spirit of the GT40s that swept the podium at the 1966 LeMans

24-hour race 50 years ago, the company will produce the supercar in limited numbers.

It will have a carbon fiber body and be powered by a new 3.5L Ecoboost twin-turbocharged V6 with somewhere north of 500 hp. The engine features a port/direct dual fuel-injection setup to improve engine response, plus a low-friction roller-finger-follower valvetrain. The twin-turbo will be paired with a seven-speed dual-clutch transaxle for near-instantaneous gear changes and exceptional driver control.

The state-of-the-art chassis is suspended by an active racing-style torsion bar and pushrod suspension, with adjustable ride height. The 20-inch wheels wear Michelin Pilot Super Sport Cup 2 tires featuring a unique compound and structure designed specifically for the Ford GT. Multi-spoke wheels encircle carbon-ceramic brake discs at all four corners.

## FORD SHELBY GT350R MUSTANG

The 2016 Ford Shelby GT350R is a stripped down, street legal and track-ready version of the 350GT shown at the Los Angeles show. The limited-edition track version features a naturally aspirated 5.2L V8 that pumps out 500+ hp and more than 400 lb.-ft. of torque. The engine uses a flat-plane crankshaft that provides a different firing order for more power at higher revs. A six-speed manual tranny spins the rear wheels. An air-to-oil engine oil cooler maintains engine temperatures and there's a cooler for the six-speed manual transmission.

## ACURA NSX

Finally! The long-awaited NSX arrives for 2016 with a hybrid drive system. Two electric motors independently power the front wheels and a midship-mounted twin-turbo 3.5L V6 assisted by a third electric motor drives the rear via a nine-speed dual clutch autobox. While the total horsepower of what Acura calls a Sport Hybrid system is said to be over 500, the torque figure has yet to be released



*Ford GT*



*Ford Shelby GT350R Mustang*



*Acura NSX*

by the company. The car features high-performance components throughout with an ultra-rigid and lightweight multi-material body.

## **CADILLAC CTS-V**

Cadillac showed its most powerful production car ever in the 2016 CTS-V, powered by supercharged 640 hp 6.2L V8 that delivers a whopping 630 lb.-ft. of torque and a top speed of 200 mph. The new 8L90 eight-speed transmission offers full manual control via steering wheel paddles, and Performance Algorithm Shifting.



*Cadillac CTS-V*

Standard features include a carbon fiber hood, Brembo high-performance brakes, Magnetic Ride Control, integrated chassis controls, RECARO high-performance seats and a Performance Data Recorder.

## **LEXUS GS F**

Coming to the streets later this year, the 2015 Lexus GS F boasts a naturally-aspirated 5.0-liter DOHC 32-valve V8 that produces 467 hp and peak torque of 389 lb.-ft. with a 7,300 rpm redline. The powerplant will be mated to a quick-acting eight-speed automatic gearbox with paddle shifters for manual-shifting capabilities.

The GS F has four different driving modes: Normal, Eco, Sport and Sport S+, the latter designed specifically for the racetrack or your favorite challenging road. It features a stiffer body structure for high speed maneuvering and a torque vectoring differential to control the traction of the front and rear wheels for desired comfort and performance.



*Lexus GS F*

## **ALFA ROMEO 4C SPIDER**

Last year, the 4C coupe hit US roads. Next up is the 2015 Spider with a removable fabric top. The little speedster squeezes 237 hp from a tiny 1.75L turbocharged, all-aluminum direct-injection, dual intercooled engine with dual variable-valve timing, paired to a twin-clutch transmission and a selector with four adjustable drive modes. It has big Brembo brakes for stopping and a carbon fiber body. The company says the limited-build Spider will do 0-60 mph in 4.1 ticks. ■



*Alfa Romeo 4C Spider*